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LSEE 443

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Pragmatism

     I started my journey in the LSEE program in August of 2021 in the midst of COVID and online learning. I feel as though I got to experience a different approach to the program due to online learning, but my professors worked vigorously to make sure I was able to learn and experience new philosophies and teaching approaches in spite of that. Sara Stener has had the biggest impact on me as an educator and has continually helped me find what teaching philosophy works best for me over the last two years.

     Before this course I didn't know the term 'teaching / education philosophy'. I thought I didn't know what it was but it turns out I just didn't have a label for what I was observing in fieldwork and in my lectures. I am still uncertain of all the different philosophies, it feels like there are endless possibilities. However, from what research I have done I have decided I resonate most with the philosophy of pragmatism. Pragmatism is the idea that the interaction an individual has in an environment is individual to them and always changing (Chamling Rai and Lama). I believe that I clicked with this philosophy most because it not only clicks with me as a teacher but a learner too. A topic that you suggested I look into for this section was social constructionism. Social constructionism is the idea that our knowledge is solely based on ideas that were constructed by humans, such

as gender, race, ability, and sexuality ("Social Constructionism – Introduction to Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies"). The way I see these topics connecting is that with pragmatism, we are constantly dealing with the environments we were in but we made those environments so that means we can change them too! I really enjoyed looking into this topic and how it connects to my adapting philosophy.

As a learner I do not pick up new information auditorily. I have an auditory processing disorder so it has never been my strong suit for gaining and retaining information. I haven't had many issues throughout the LSEE program because my teachers used many modalities for learning new content through jigsaws, group work, short films, podcasts, atlas videos, group discussions, etc. Every student processes information in an environment differently, and in the LSEE program I believe my professors have made each assignment accessible to all types of learners and used real world examples. Another term for this would be the Universal Design for Learning. The UDL also follows the same big idea that the learning environment students are in has a huge impact on their performance. According to pragmatism, what we experienced yesterday will not be the same as we experienced today or tomorrow (Chamling Rai and Lama). The UDL falls under the pragmatism philosophy in my eyes because it changes and adapts the environment in which students learn and accommodates for everyone each and every day ("Universal Design for Learning | Center for Teaching Innovation").

My goal is to be a special education teacher someday and that has a huge emphasis on my teaching philosophy. In any classroom, especially one with varying abilities, what works for you one day might not won't work the next or even the day after that. This is the main reason why pragmatism resonates with me so much is because it "believes that no truth is absolute and permanent as it is ever changing from time to time and place to place and from circumstance to circumstance" (Chamling Rai and Lama). Every circumstance in which I teach students is different whether it's the physical environment, the people, the curriculum, the real life experiences, the connections made, and so much more.

Another philosophy that I believe ties into pragmatism is place-based learning. With place-based learning, knowledge and information alters based on the place or environment it's being taught or learned. This idea is to fully immerse students in the local cultures, ideas, and ultimately real-world experiences. If a place a student is in, whether it's a classroom, a playground, or somewhere in the community, they process information differently in each environment. Seeing all of my students as individuals with all different learning styles and goals is a huge priority for me. I never want to generalize them or only teach in one style. A professor who initially taught me this was Rauhallah. His bilingual class truly taught me a new perspective to see my students through, one I had never experienced before in my community college courses. He taught me that it was my responsibility to educate myself on my environment, the culture around, and the background of the students to create a safe learning

environment that adapts to every learner. I hope that I can carry this philosophy and way of using real-world experiences to teach my students about growth and how to be better people in and outside of the classroom . Pragmatism is all about our growth and development (Boyd) as learners and I am hopeful for the day I get to help young minds grow!

Works Cited

Boyd, Natalie. "Pragmatism: Overview & Practical Teaching Examples - Video & Lesson Transcript." *Study.com*, 30 August 2022, https://study.com/academy/lesson/pragmatism-overview-practical-teaching-examples.html. Accessed 25 April 2023.

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