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# Teaching Philosophy: What Makes You A Good Teacher

What will make me a 'good' music teacher? I've considered this in detail and my experiences on my first placement have allowed me to form my own teaching philosophy. This essay will begin with what I believed to be the fundamentals of a good teacher.

A good teacher cares about the young people they are entrusted with, it cannot just be a job. It's much more than that. Teachers want their pupils to succeed academically as well as physically, mentally and socially. 'Teachers play a variety of roles within the classroom, an authority, facilitator, parent, friend, judge and counsellor.' (Pollard, 2014, p5) A modern music teacher is interested in 'Learning for Sustainability'. (GTCS, 2012, p2) The pupils and school should develop together. The classroom teacher is at the forefront of facilitating sustained growth for the pupil and the establishment. The good teacher must be able to work with all departments in their school 'know how to develop realistic and coherent interdisciplinary contexts or learning, particularly in relation to sustainability' This direct quote from General Teaching Council for Scotland highlights the important job that the good teacher has of using Inter disciplinary learning to develop a curriculum that is fit for the 21st century.

The teacher I believe in is equally enthused about the wider education system as they are their own subject or level they teach. They are a fair-minded person who cares passionately about 'social injustice and professional commitment'. (GTCS, 2012, p3). Reflecting on your lessons is also vital skill of an excellent teacher 'Reflection as an aspect of learning is of crucial importance to your own development personally and professionally' (Turnbull, 2009, 29) For a developing teacher, reflection encourages 'professional enquiry and lifelong learning' (GTCS, 2012, p6) This will allow teachers not to continue with teaching that isn't being affective and will allow for greater teaching and learning experiences.

The world is constantly changing, and now more than ever and teachers are being asked to prepare young people for a world of work and study that nobody can foresee. 'we also have to recognize that we need to prepare for a future that none of us can even imagine' (Turnbull, 2009, 4) The teacher must prepare their students for a changing world where the young people are able to work independently and are in control of their own learning. 'if we cannot conceive the future ahead of us the best way, we can prepare young people is to encourage them to understand and take responsibility for their own learning for their own learning' (Turnbull, 2009, 4) The good music teacher is passionate about all types of music for education. Such as the Kodaly or Dalcroze method. Methods that to me allow solid foundations in musical training. They must display 'intellectual music skills' (GTCS, 2019,11) while using while continuing to keep numeracy and literacy at the forefront of their lessons.

I began this placement not really understanding fully the importance of primary music education, I left convinced of its importance. Particularly the significance of active music learning in the classroom. In the short time I taught primary music I was struck by the benefits that appeared when active music learning was introduced into my lesson. I experienced happy students developing not only musical skills but engaging in work that could be used across all parts of the curriculum. In 2007 HMle expressed in their document named 'building the curriculum active learning in the early years' saying, 'the quality of pupils' learning experiences is still too

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variable and too often lacks relevance, engagement and excitement.’ (HMIe,2007,2) Through the Kodaly Method of music education, I think all these criticisms could be addressed. This method allowed me to think of a structure that was exciting and engaging for the pupils. This method of music education was created by academic and composer Zoltan Kodaly. The whole approach is based around the concept of singing. ‘A child’s first musical instrument is their own singing voice’ (Earl, 1987,2) I began using this concept from the start of my placement as I wanted to see for myself the benefits of implement the Kodaly approach into a modern school’s curriculum. The response from the pupils and staff was excellent, one classroom teacher said that the pupils “loved coming to music”. These classes were not only improving their musical skills but helping to improve other schoolwork. Exploring rhythm and language through song was a great way to keep literacy and numeracy at the heart of all my lessons.

The singing of the relatively simple songs opened a large opportunity for creativity in the classroom. Ranging from making up actions for the songs to inventing songs with their peers outside of the music classroom. Especially in early years and level one I could see their imagination sore whenever the young people got to make up actions to a song. Not only were the young people in my class developing their musical skills but they were also developing their artistic skills through the creative process of song and movement .The theorist Vygotsky wrote ‘Creativity is essential to the existence of humanity and society,’ (Lindqvist,2011,249) Too often this concept is overlooked and learning through a creative process is deemed a lesser thing in education. It was very important to me that my lessons had creativity at the centre of them and I couldn’t think of a better way than through active movement. Therefore, I chose understanding the benefits of active learning to be a critical incident in my placement.

Another critical incident in my placement was the understanding of ‘Getting it right for every child’ (SG, 08,2) in my classroom. Pupils entered my lessons from all different walks on life and it was my job to teach music to every single one of them. This is a difficult task as no pupils learn the same way. Music should not be elitist in any shape or form and the music teacher must concentrate on trying to support everyone in their class ‘As music is for everyone’ (Mills, 2007, p2) My placement has a range of young people with additional support needs and it was imperative to me that these pupils came to music lessons as I would try and accommodate their particular needs. The good music teacher should have a clear understanding of additional support needs and should do what they can to support these pupils. ‘and are committed to supporting those learners with additional support needs such as ADHD, Autism, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia and Tourette syndrome’ (GTCS, 2019, p5) As a society we are very focussed on the achievement of our young people. This is understandable however parents and teachers can get so caught up in examinations and measuring the success of their young people that educators can lose sight of what it means to teach ‘Today’s imperatives for standardized achievement take us further and further from a complex and nuanced notion of what it means to teach’(Rodgers, 2006, 265) An alternative solution would be to allow ‘Presence’(Rodgers, 2006, 266) in our teaching. ‘a state of alert awareness, receptivity and connectedness to the mental, emotional and physical workings of both the individual and the group in the context of their learning environments and the ability to respond with a considered and compassionate best next step’ (Rodgers, 2006, 266) This would allow for young people to engage with the educator about their progress and would facilitate a progression in the development of an individual’s particular needs . As good teacher will not just focus on the young people who are excelling in their class, they will try to support the pupils who are finding it more difficult to understand what is being taught. ‘As for all pupils, the national curriculum must be determined in response to individual musical needs’ (Mills, 2007, p2) When I was teaching a lesson to

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primary four on placement there was this one pupil who had additional support needs and at points would find it very difficult to take part in any of the classroom activities. However, at the end of the lesson he walked up to the piano and tried to play a song he had learned on his own at home. I began to help him with this, and this is where I realised that teaching a class is great but it's not for everyone and by adopting this idea of 'presence' into my teaching' I could only fully begin 'getting it right for every child'. (SG,2008,2)

I conclude by saying that both of these critical incidents will have a long-lasting influence on my teaching journey as well as solidifying my initial philosophy.

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