Assignment #3 Critical Reflection

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**Emotional Development**

a) To be emotionally developed means to have an understanding of your own emotional literacy: having the ability to understand, express, and respond to emotions in oneself and others in a healthy supportive way (Nicholson, 2021). There are many ways that the course materials present how a teacher’s emotional development can influence students’ learning. In the case study on Jake, it can be seen that Mr. H has a low emotional intelligence. This is proven because of Mr. H’s lack of awareness of emotions. Instead of approaching Jake with a behavioural approach, Mr. H responds with annoyance when Jake is not meeting expectations. According to Yans et al., teachers need to create relationships with their classroom, and this includes each individual student. Mr. H does not have this connection with Jake and it seems that he struggles with making this connection. The case study presents that Mr. H also influences Jake's learning by having a lower emotional intelligence from rewarding him when he does well. According to Yans et al., intrinsic motivation (through praise) encourages students to make connections between behaviours and the praise. Mr. H instead supports Jake through extrinsic motivation, compelling Jake to only be motivated by the reward. Mr. H does not see how this is impacting Jake in a negative way due to his low emotional intelligence. Mr. H fails to make a meaningful connection with Jake, and fails to be a mentor in addressing behavioural skills (Farmer, et al). In turn, Jake’s success in the classroom is affected in a negative way. In relation, the NVC video shows a teacher with very high emotional intelligence. When behavioural challenges arise in the classroom, the teacher makes a point to involve every party and figure out exactly why students are acting out by asking them how they feel. This is a fantastic example of using behaviourism in the classroom. Students benefit from having a teacher with high emotional intelligence because, according to the PowerPoint on Emotional Development, their teacher is using their EI to develop their students’ EI. This allows students to be intuitive with their thoughts and think about their reasoning behind their actions.

b) We would foster emotional literacy in our classroom by nurturing student development, as well as creating an environment that is positive and supportive. As teachers, we need to make sure that we understand our own emotional literacy. Teachers must be able to express feelings as they come up and model this in a healthy way. For example, if a teacher were to hurt themselves by accident, there are a few things that would help students see how a person with high emotional intelligence would act. Specifically naming these feelings, staying calm, and coming up with a solution will help students witness healthy emotional literacy and regulation. Recognizing our feelings and our students’ feelings will create emotional literacy vocabulary. Vocabulary is essential for fostering emotional literacy. We would have emotion charts, boards, and emotion units in and around the classroom. Within an emotion unit there would be activities such as naming an emotion and getting students to look through a magazine or book to identify what they think these emotions may look like (Emotional Literacy Bulletin, 2005). Additionally, by being able to identify and healthily express emotions students must learn how to problem solve, regulate, and find solutions for these feelings. We would nurture this by having an open discussion giving our students tools for regulation such as deep breathing, breathing exercises, relaxing muscles, finding a safe place in the room to have space to calm down, and thinking of happy places. Doing all of these things regularly and right away would foster emotional literacy in our classroom.

**Spiritual Development**

a) In the article by Vokey it is stated that spirituality means to connect with your deepest selves, other human and non-human souls, the natural world, and larger purposes. It is very important for teachers to create a space for spirituality in the classroom. The first step is to allow your students to practice what they believe. As stated in class discussion, teachers should acknowledge all types of spirituality in their students. To add to this, Vokey writes that person to person interactions are the heart of teaching because teachers teach who they are. Therefore, if educators are spiritually developed they are going to pass this along to their students as well. In class discussion it was stated that teaching growth helps students learn to love themselves and accept others. We can relate this to educators' own spiritual development because in order to teach growth, we need to know how to grow ourselves. Vokey notes that spirituality helps restore life, energy, and enthusiasm in the classroom. In a classroom where there is a lack of spirituality, students may experience boredom and meaningless, and so they are compelled to seek excitement as an outlet. Vokey suggests that spirituality creates support and creative opportunities to explore the meaning of life and understand why learning is important. Therefore, if a teacher is spiritually developed, this will influence students' learning because the teacher will understand how important it is for students to have a sense of spirituality as well. Even if this spirituality is as broad as accepting yourself and others for who they are.

b) Vokey states, “without meaning, learning has no purpose”. We are reminded of how children are trying to navigate through the education system to find who they are as a person. Our students must understand that spirituality and religion are personal, and everyone is different. We believe that spirituality, however it is thought about, has a place in the education system. We would create space for spirit to exist by ensuring that our classroom is comfortable, non-judgemental, accepting, and supportive (Vokey, 2001). To do this, our students must understand that everyone believes in different things and this helps create a growth mindset environment. We would do this in the way of teaching about generosity, kindness, acceptance, and being supportive friends. All of which can be seen as part of someone’s spirit and who they are. In our classroom, we would help students learn how to accept one another through books, activities, and group discussions. Explaining the importance of acceptance and having different beliefs will spark children to ask questions, striking intrinsic motivation and conversation. As we have observed, children will ask questions about spirituality. We as teachers can only accept the answer they choose to believe in.

**Listening Skills**

a) According to the powerpoint on communication, active listening is listening to understand, not only to reply. It is also stated that most children and youth will open up to you if you demonstrate that you can truly listen. A way to do this is by not directly answering a question that a student has. In Tanka et al, students showcased frustration when asking questions that weren’t answered directly, but later realized that not directly answering a question allows self learning. This idea of learning is directly related to inquiry-based learning. When a teacher has strong listening skills, they are able to aid in inquiry-based learning because teachers are able to guide students through their own thinking, rather than directly telling students the answers to their questions. In the powerpoint it is stated that building metacognitive skills is important because students' listening skills will improve, along with their attention skills. Their metacognitive skills are important for teachers as well because educators are models for their students. If teachers are unable to actively listen to their students, it is likely they will reflect this on their learners. As Diana Nicholson stated in the feedback for communication, “we can’t teach well without learning from and with our students.” This statement showcases the importance of teacher learning, which includes active listening.

b) We would foster listening skills in our classroom by allowing students to arrive at answers on their own. In doing this, students must have good listening skills. This would be fostered by slowing down learning and not giving students the answer right away; therefore, critical thinking and deeper connections are made (Nicholson, 2021). Another way to foster listening skills would be to work on a collaborative discussion. In doing this, students will learn how to listen, discuss, explore, and question their peers. Students would be scaffolded before doing discussions and would be given tools to help listen and learn. For example, students could use a talking object and until they have it, they would know it is their turn to listen and be patient. We would also foster listening skills by explaining genuine listening and listening to understand, not to reply. We can also encourage listening by doing activities that promote listening skills, such as the telephone game, oral story-telling, and memory games by recalling what each student has said prior (Nicholson, 2021). Therefore, students will learn how to listen through experiences of being heard in relation to these activities and modeling from their peers. (Nicholson, 2021). Activities like these will foster listening skills in a fun and engaging way.

You have demonstrated some understanding of emotional and spiritual development and listening skills and how a teacher’s state can influence student learning. However, there were places where you didn’t clearly illustrate strong understanding (per my margin comments).

In particular, you moved too quickly to talk about how to support students instead of staying with how teacher’s abilities influences student learning. I hope you continue to think about this more. 20.5/25 A-