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ECS 210

Digital Story

**The Take Away: My Digital Story**

Hi, my name is Kennedi. And in the next few minutes I want to talk about my experiences in ECS 210 as well as my take away from this course. First, I want to talk about the evolution on my understanding of curriculum. Then, I want to discuss my role in the future as an educator. Finally, I will talk about my cognitive dissonance.

**Evolution on My Understanding of Curriculum**

On the first day of ECS 210 we were asked “what is curriculum?” and I came up with a simple and short answer, but it was what I thought curriculum was. I wrote in my notebook, “The collection of information required to be taught to a class by an educator.” Based on this answer and a reflection on my past knowledge, my understanding of curriculum was pretty limited. Since the beginning of ECS 210, and from the beginning of my education degree in general, my understanding of what curriculum is and what it consists of has changed significantly. This semester I learned that there are many different kinds of curriculum, how much effort is put into making a curriculum document, who is involved when creating curriculum, and how to navigate it more efficiently in order to develop a lesson plan. This new information has aided me in creating my first lesson plan/unit plan with my peers as well as informed me on how much time and effort is put into these documents. For the most part I was unaware that there were different kinds of curriculum as well. I knew that there was an official/written kind of curriculum but this seems to be the common sense approach to school. The hidden curriculum are things that students learn in school that are not part of the written formal curriculum document. This style of curriculum can be both positive and negative. For example, when the teacher asks for strong boys to help move a table it teaches the students that boys are stronger than girls and are more capable of helping move larger objects. Another kind of curriculum I learned about is the null curriculum. This style of curriculum is the information and knowledge schools do not teach but students learn.

**My Approach to Curriculum**

In my ECS 210 course we did an assignment where we had to create a unit plan using cross-curricular activities and teachings. This assignment made me realize how useful and beneficial it is to link two or more courses together to reach the outcomes and indicators on the official/mandated curriculum. I want to try to carry on with this skill as I work with curriculum in the future.

In the future I want to engage my students and keep them involved in their learning. I hope to take ideas from my students and include them in my teaching along with their interests and strengths. I want the students in my future to enjoy learning as much as I enjoy teaching! As a teacher it isn’t part of my job to alter or change the way children think or feel but to educate them and influence learning. There is a picture that comes to mind when I think of this topic. Three children are sitting in their desks in a row with round speech bubbles above their heads and the teacher walks by with a pair of scissors and cuts the speech bubbles into squares. This image depicts the teacher shaping the way children think so that they are all the same. The children become robots who are programmed to fit the idealized role of a student. I don’t want to be that teacher. I want to facilitate individuality and diversity in my classroom. I hope that all of my future students feel as if they can be themselves. A reading from the course comes to mind, Against Common Sense, Chapter 2 by Kumashiro. Kumashiro talks about what is viewed as a “good” or idealized student verses a “bad” or unwilling student. I believe that there is no such thing as a good or bad student. I believe that all students are good students if they have the resources and adaptations to allow them to succeed. If a student is struggling, the teacher should adapt the requirements or routine to help the student succeed in similar ways as others.

**Experiencing Cognitive Dissonance: Learnings and Future Growth**

Over the course of my fall semester in my ECS 210 course I have learned a lot. Like mentioned before, I now know the different kinds of curriculum and what and who it takes to make curricular documents. I know how to fight back against the common sense ideas of society through the lenses I developed reading Kumashiro’s work and I am now able to challenge my biases, stereotypes, and single stories that I live with in order to become a better teacher. At the beginning I knew I needed to challenge these concepts because I unfortunately follow some of them from time to time. This is a negative mindset to have when going into the education field so when I read the many readings for this course it pushed me to think past the biases and stereotypes I have and look into expanding my single story to encompass information from other people’s points of view.

At first, when I realized that I had biases, stereotypes and single stories of my own I tried to deny it. I didn’t think that I could ever have those thought in mind when I learnt something new or read an article online. But as I looked into the readings and lectures from this course, I realized that I have these biases and I needed to change that. I took a step back and reflected on my childhood experiences, in which I mostly grew up in a small town that is set in its Eurocentric ways. I realized I was never surrounded by diversity and everyone I knew believed the same things I did. Some of this bias changed a little when I lived in a bigger city but I still didn’t experience diversity to a full extent. Later this changed again as I came to university because the campus and classes here are so diverse with so many walks of life. I quickly realized that I needed to watch what I said or how I acted around people because it could be offensive to them. At this point I noticed that I had biases and stereotypes in my mind. They were the common sense notion for me as I grew up so it became so difficult to change them. However, I have worked to change the way I think and get rid of the biases and stereotypes I’ve accumulated over the years. I plan to continue working on this process in order to free myself.