

## Philosophy of Education

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Epiphanies often emerge from unforeseen events. Diagnosed with a severe speech disorder at the age of three, my brother's tongue was quickly clipped and he was enrolled into a Head Start program. He stuttered regularly and produced unintelligible speech. Inexplicably, I was the only one who could comprehend him. He released a plethora of sounds, but not a voice. I was his voice. Communication begins at birth. My brother's communication was hindered as he attempted to transition from the infant cry to intelligible speech. While many of his peers focused on finding their voices throughout elementary school, my brother struggled to speak at all. My brother saw a speech-language pathologist, in both the public school and private setting, through sixth grade. The extensive, arduous process my brother went through to learn his sounds made me realize that I took the ability to learn to speak for granted. Watching my brother struggle to express his needs, thoughts, emotions, and the ability to engage with others brought about an epiphany for me. I realized the power of a voice and the need to communicate with others. My brother was too young to write or read to communicate his needs, and his voice was failing him. This made me realize the power of an intelligible voice is a large component of literacy. By witnessing my brother's struggles and being his voice, I gained the valuable insight into the need to be understood is a basic human need. This is why I strongly believe in providing a strong literacy foundation to students starting in kindergarten in order to provide that fundamental need to be understood.

As a future educator, I want to prepare students not only for their subsequent years in school, but for the real world. Being both heard and understood through literacy instruction is one way to prepare students for the real world. I plan on integrating literacy into all core content

areas in order to provide my students a strong literacy foundation. This will maximize literacy instruction so students can be understood from a variety of disciplines, as well as provide the opportunity for students to practice what they learn more times per school day. Another way to prepare students is for educators to inspire the next generation to become lifelong learners, just as I, an educator, view myself. Children are the future, so they need to be prepared for it in order to be both personally and professionally ready. This will be accomplished by fostering creativity, knowledge, character, and providing the next generation of thinking individuals with the skills to reach their potential. In order for this to occur, instruction must be meaningful and engaging while still being conducive to learning in a safe and comfortable environment promoting lifelong learning. Educators have the direct opportunity to make a difference in each child's life by providing the appropriate skills for them to achieve optimal growth. Teaching is an important contribution, and privilege, to prepare students for the future, and I am excited about this opportunity.

Through teaching the next generation, educators get to experience the joy of making a difference. They get to watch their students gain new insights, increase interest in a subject, and discover more about themselves. These are the light bulb moments that teachers live for and I am eager to join educators in watching these exciting light bulbs turn on in hundreds of students.