

June 18, 2014

Educational Goals: Past, present, and what has changed

Then

When I applied for this master's program, I could confidently say that I wanted to focus my time in literacy and special education. My goal was to strengthen my knowledge of best practices in literacy instruction and to develop my toolkit of resources and understanding to better accommodate all learners in the classroom. I felt that someday, I would be interested in pursuing a teaching position as a reading or support specialist or as a curriculum creator position developing literacy units.

Now

My master's pursuit is behind me and I can confidently say that I want to support my students to the best of my ability. In order for me to accomplish this goal, I need to continue to strengthen my knowledge of literacy and special education. I understand how hard it is for students to qualify for additional literacy support and I want to provide the strongest instruction and services in my classroom, so that when my students leave me after two years for middle school, they are set up for success. Although I love being in the classroom with my students, I think that eventually I would like to pursue a position as a support teacher or curriculum director.

However

Despite minimal changes in my goals and ambitions, a lot has changed. I know my literacy foundation is stronger, my understanding of learning variances has developed, and my teacher toolbox has expanded. These gains can be noted in 3 ways.

Questions

I have a stronger understanding of what questions I should be asking to help provide the data and information I am looking for.

Example: When seeing a lack of work completion- Is this truly defiance? Is there a motivational struggle? Is there an emotional hindrance? Is fear of failure dominating this individual?

Perspective

I have realized that perspective is everything and in order to gain a well-rounded opinion, it is necessary to look at it from as many angles as possible.

Example: If a student appears to struggle in reading. The obvious reaction would be to do reading assessments to help pinpoint the deficit and to proceed with instruction. However, it is also essential to figure out why the student is struggling in reading. Is it necessary to have a speech pathologist become involved? Does the student need assistance with phonemes? Is the student aware of the struggles- is a confidence boost needed? How is the student as a writer? How is the student's comprehension ability- does it change when reading aloud or silently or when someone is reading to him or her?

Instruction

Repetition and consistency are the keys to insuring the positive execution of well-designed and thorough lesson plans created with careful consideration and assessment, especially with students who are struggling.

Example: When a student is struggling to gain mastery of concepts, regardless of if there is a diagnosed learning obstacle or not, the student can be more successful with multifaceted instruction that is repetitious and straightforward.

Future

Even though my personal educational and career goals have remained similar, my viewpoints and knowledge of the educational world have developed. This new knowledge will assist me as I continue to strengthen my understandings in literacy instruction and my support of struggling students.