Sarah Bean

Dr. Linda Alexander

14 January 2015

Curriculum Development and Assessment

Reflection on Principles for Christian Educators

While each of the five principles for Christian Educators provides a valuable perspective on teaching as a trust before God, I resonate most with the first principle: *Learning takes place best in the context of a community of learners.* I believe that learning happens in the context of relationship; in fact all most every aspect of human experience is bound in a relational context. People are created to need each other. My dream is that my classroom will be a safe place were students feel connected to and supported by me and by their peers. As a teacher, I am a guide and a fellow learner with my students. The teacher’s role is about establishing community even more than disseminating content. This is why I believe so strongly in that differentiation is essential to effective teaching.

Since I believe so strongly in community and cultivating a positive, authentic classroom culture, the second principle that I found most compelling naturally follows: *Students are valued as persons.* One cannot build a healthy community without mutual respect. Perhaps the biggest reason that I want to be a teacher is because to my core I believe that kids matter. Every kid needs an adult to believe in them and love them and challenge them to grow toward good. That’s what I want to do; that’s who I feel that God wants me to be – especially for kids who will not get that belief, love, and respect from anywhere else in their lives. Students come to the classroom not as blank slates, but as real human beings with ideas, experiences, knowledge, interests, and fears. Even when kids can’t see their own potential, we as teachers must see their ability and cultivate growth mindsets that value progress. When we really see our student as a whole person, these unique characteristics that they bring to the classroom, even what some might consider “weaknesses,” can enrich the community and the process of learning. As someone who wants to teach ELLs, I feel like valuing each student’s background and culture is absolutely essential to gain the trust needed for effective learning community.

Teaching is more than a career for me, it is a calling. And I love the idea that our role as students and teachers is an act of worship. My greatest desire is to honor God with my life and my work. The ideal is that I could come to see each day as an opportunity to serve Christ by serving my students. Sometimes the job is just a job, but my prayer is that God would give me a perspective that sees my work as a sacrifice of thanksgiving and worship. It is a beautiful thought.