Teaching: A Professional Commitment

Gordon and Brown, Chapter 5

Questions for Thought

• What is Early Childhood Education?
• What is the Importance of Early Childhood Education?
• What qualifications does a teacher of young children possess?
• What are the essentials for successful teaching?
• How is my own personal development related to my growth as a teacher?
• What is a professional code of ethics, and why should we have one?

Some Answers

• Read one of the following articles and be prepared to share the key points.

1. What is Early Childhood Education?
2. What is the Importance of Early Childhood Education?
3. The Importance of Early Childhood Education
4. Preparing for School: The Importance of Early Childhood Education Experiences
5. Investing in Early Education is Essential
6. Fact Sheets: The Benefits of High-Quality Pre-K

Who Are the Teachers?

• Work with your partner and create a list of characteristics of a teacher of young children.
• Share your list with the group.

Personal Qualities of the Teacher

Compassion, Dedication, Insight

• Self awareness
  – Who, what, and why I am?
  – Self acceptance
  – Self knowledge
• Attitudes and Biases
  – Teacher must confront own anxieties and accept and enrich opportunities for all
  • Avoid prejudices—personal beliefs on race, culture, gender, disabilities, and economic status
  – Anti bias curriculum accepts that all children are born equal and worthy of respect

Personal Qualities

• From the list, identify the five most important qualifications that you think a teacher of young children should have.
• Which do you possess?
• Which are most difficult for you?
The Teacher’s Role

- What are some of the role’s that teachers perform?
- Read
  - Teaching: A Professional Commitment
    - by Barbara Biglan
    - Page 221

Role in the Classroom

- Interact with children
  - Responsive and reciprocal relationships
- Manage the classroom
  - Safe environment
  - Observe and listen to children
  - Teacher trainer of other adults
  - Supervisor of student teachers
  - Liaison and communicator with parents

Role in the Classroom

- Set the tone
  - Create an atmosphere
  - Alive and supportive air
  - Setting for learning
  - Sensitivity to moods
  - Positive attitudes to all children and families
  - Respect for each other

Planning and Evaluating Curriculum

- Based on what is seen and heard in the classroom
- Building curriculum on children’s developmental needs
- Watching and observing children
- Collecting data for planning

Out of Class Responsibilities

- Record keeping
  - Based on the purpose for which the records will be used
  - Based on the philosophy of the school
  - Part of the teacher training process
  - Part of an accreditation process
  - Commitment to quality and appropriate child development practices
  - Means of parent information and education
  - Means of developing curriculum

Out of Class Responsibilities

- Attending meetings
  - Staff meetings
  - Parent teacher conferences
  - Parent education meetings
  - Professional meetings
  - Student teacher conferences
  - Home visits
- Other responsibilities
  - Organize and collect materials for class
  - Purchase materials and equipment
  - Make phone calls to parents and others
  - Work with parents on multicultural and other issues
  - Attend professional conferences and workshops
  - Attend in-service training or take college credit classes
Beginnings of Professionalism
8 Essential Attributes

1. Knowledge and skills
2. Abides by a code of ethics
3. Continuing education and professional development
4. Professional affiliations
5. Knowledge of career options
6. Cultural competency
7. Advocacy
8. Becoming a whole teacher

Knowledge and Skills
FEAP #8: Knowledge of Subject Matter

- Studying child development, family relations, parent education, and curriculum planning.
- Progression along a continuum of development.
- State regulations may provide for professionalism of early childhood teachers.

Abides by a Code of Ethical Conduct
FEAP #6: Ethics

- Doing what is right is difficult at times.
- Moral dilemmas occur often.
- Florida Code of Ethics
- NAEYC’s Code of Ethical Conduct
  - Appendix A pages 627-631
  - Provides wisdom and advice from broad base in the profession.
  - Provides teachers with a core of professional values.

Core Values from the Ethical Code of Conduct

- Appreciate childhood as a unique and valuable stage.
- Base our work on knowledge of child development.
- Appreciate and support close ties between child and family.
- Recognize children within context of family, culture, community.
- Respect dignity, worth, and uniqueness of each individual.
- Help children and adults achieve their full potential.
Continuing Education and Staff Development
FEAP #3: Continuous Improvement

- In-service training programs
  - Workshops, seminars
  - Sharing information and new techniques among staff
  - Resource specialist to help and assist

Parents who are professionals share their knowledge
Library resources and films, books, videos

The Teacher as a Professional

- Professional Affiliation
  - National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
    - http://www.naeyc.org/
  - Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI)
    - http://acei.org/
  - Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD)
    - http://www.srcd.org/

Prepare My Child For School: Early Childhood Education
http://www.ed.gov/parents/earlychild/ready/resources.html

Reflecting on the Key Points

- Take a few moments to reflect on what you have heard and learned during class today.
- Write down three key points that you consider important to remember regarding teaching young children.
- Share one point.