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Teaching Philosophy I – The Power of Communication

Anxious would be an understatement for five-year-old Allison walking through the red paint peeled doors of Wild Rose School. As a child, I was very attached to my family but specifically my mother. Since I am an only child, my parents tended to every want and need growing up. My older cousins went to this school, so I was familiar with the building. As we walked through the doors, I was glued to my mother's side the whole time, gripping her hand as tightly as I could. My sights were widened as I began to scope out the room, five other kids were inside the classroom staring right back at me. These kids consisted of four boys and one girl. As the parents filtered out, I vividly remember hysterically crying and an older woman came up to me and spoke "You must be Miss Allison, my name is Mrs. C, let's introduce you to the rest of the kids". Not like any of these words meant anything to me then, but little did I know she would be like a second mother to me as the years went on. That little phrase gave me the reassurance I needed to gain confidence little by little as that kindergarten year went on. Being able to look back and see what kind of connection is needed between a student and teacher, makes me feel as if it is my duty to learn to give back to my future students as they did me.

Now, a year older, I walked through those doors with just enough confidence every morning to greet the teachers in a polite manner. I still was anxious greeting all these teachers but when Mrs. C came around and all that anxiety went away. They had moved her up into the

Grades 1 and 2 split that I was going to be in that year. She was my safe space, someone I could trust, confide in, and learn from. Having this bond really helped me strive through Grade 1. Being called upon in class was not as scary as it used to be, of course I still got nervous, but it was not the same. Grade 2 came around and I would have never guessed who my teacher was again! Having built a connection with that teacher over those three years really boosted my confidence and lowered my anxiety. I really felt that I had attained someone who understood me outside of my family. She just knew how to create meaningful conversations with me and found ways to enhance that connection.

Grades 3 and 4 were different stories, new teacher, new classroom, new learning environment. Getting familiar with this next teacher was very hard, she was a tough shell to crack. The first few weeks, I had reverted into my old ways because there was no real connection trying to be made there yet. This is where I learned you must take initiative if you want it bad enough. Making connections is never only one-sided, it takes two to really create a bond. The more I asked questions, the more I found this teacher would try to connect with me. As the two years went on, we did develop a connection and she did help me develop an understanding of how independence is key.

Grades 5 and 6 were some of the most important years of my life, this was when I was introduced to team sport and how it would change my life. I now learned that making connections through sport would be how I connected to my teachers. My grade 5th teacher was my coach for volleyball as well as my homeroom teacher for the next two years. She saw how passionate I became for volleyball and used the concepts of it in helping me learn in the classroom. This powerful but simple skill showed me that being able to find something you are

familiar with and be able to apply it in learning will help you with the concepts of understanding what to you was unknown at one time but will become second nature.

Grades 7 and 8 were learning years. These two years taught me to be adaptable to your learning as well as how a teacher is teaching. Not every teacher has the same teaching style and yes it may be hard to adapt to sometimes but finding a happy medium was where I found success. Asking questions was where I found answers to not just the questions but in the way their response was given. Finding a way to read in between lines is not just helpful in English Language Arts but is also helpful in the art of communication.

Moving from a K-8 school with not even a hundred kids in it to a 9-12 school with over twenty-five hundred was a shock to my system. I was in classes with twenty to thirty kids and for only an hour a day. I was now a fish in a great big sea with no sense of direction. Being able to talk and initiate conversation was a big deal to see how far I had come for that first day in kindergarten. I went from having one teacher for every subject to having a different one for every subject. Being able to connect and find a way to stand out in classes was what I learned in those 4 years of high school. Be the person to ask questions even if you think they are dumb, I have found teachers would rather answer questions then stand up and talk for an hour and to end with no one understanding a single word they said. Being able to come forward and ask my teachers questions was a huge accomplishment for me, looking back to how I was ten years ago. I will take this observation into my future classroom to create a safe space as I did feel when I was a student.

Throughout my school experience, it has been shown that going to school is not just to learn but it is to build connections with teachers and peers, and how crucial connections really

are to learning. Watching myself build connections with my teachers and how rewarding it is having clearly made my decision for me. A relationship between a teacher and their students is built on a foundation of trust and respect. After being introduced to such caring teachers, I have concluded that such a common denominator is behind why I have chosen to start this journey into the field of education and to attempt to make positive differences in my future students' lives as my teachers did mine.