

“What the teacher is, is more important than what he teaches.” -Karl Menninger. The American public wants to see successful people entering the workforce, parents want their children to be intelligent, and the government wants to see higher test scores. The only way to achieve these tasks is by having effective teachers to educate the youth. America has become so adamant about pushing math, reading, and writing onto children that they have lost touch of the difference an effective teacher can make in education. As a future elementary school teacher, I will embrace my belief that there can be intelligent children, successful people, and high test scores with the use of different teaching strategies, understanding of the ways children learn, and exceptional classroom management, these are the qualities that make up a brilliant and effective teacher.

Every child is capable of learning regardless of age, race, or economic status. Each child learns differently and an effective teacher must be able to address all learning styles, because every student is expected to succeed. When I become an elementary school teacher I plan on incorporating all three learning styles into each of my lessons. When I am teaching social studies I will lecture about the topic, as well as have classroom discussion for students to learn from each other to help the auditory learners understand. Many times it helps children who are auditory learners to hear a topic or event described in the words of a peer their own age. Using diagrams on the whiteboard and flashcards for important dates and people, I will accommodate the visual learners, and the class will take part in a skit to reenact the event we are discussing to give my kinesthetic learners a hand on activity to get them engaged. By incorporating all three learning styles into each lesson, every student is more likely to be participating and understanding the material in which I am teaching. If all of my students are able to learn the material I am teaching, no matter the steps it took to get them there, I believe that their test

scores will reflect my efforts. In my Introduction to Education class we read a handout about Gardner's Multiple Intelligences, which explains that all humans possess each intelligence in various amounts. He also explained that teachers can improve education by addressing each intelligence and using them to aid students in grasping concepts. I will address these intelligences not only in my lessons but in the way I present myself as a teacher and manage my classroom.

Classroom management as well as the way a teacher runs his or her classroom has an immense influence on student success, because the students model their teacher's behaviors, and often act completely different depending on how the classroom is arranged. During my time service learning at Rancho Solano Private School, I witnessed a second grade class whose behavior changed drastically when the teacher took the desks out of groups and made them into rows. The rows were according to ability, low performers in the front, and high performers in the back. The transition from groups into rows made the class less chatty and more focused. In the future, my classroom will be neatly organized where all materials are accessible to my students. I will try various desk set ups to see which works best for the class, as my mentor teacher at Rancho Solano did. In order to not only be an effective teacher, but to appear as one, my classroom and the way it runs will reflect me as an educator and be an example for my students on how to act and be organized. Presenting myself as an example to my students is important to me because I want to not only be their teacher, but a role model as well, and an adult figure to take after, because often times students do not have a professional figure to look up to. As a role model for my students I will help them deal with problems and get through to defiant children.

Defiant students need a caring, understanding, yet stern teacher and a safe environment to be able to learn; that is, because contrary to popular belief, they are capable of learning. In

Jonathan Kozol's book Letters to a Young Teacher, he addresses an issue that really takes an effective teacher to deal with professionally. Chapter six in Kozol's book is based on defiant children who disrupt the classroom so much that it is almost impossible to keep instruction going. Kozol quotes, "None of us should make the error of assuming that a child who is hostile to us at the start, or who retreats into a sullenness and silences or sarcastic disregard for everything that's going on around him in the room, does not have the will to learn and plenty of interesting stuff to teach *us* too. . ." (67). It takes a special kind of person to see the way that Kozol does, and I believe that it is the duty of an effective teacher to do so. When I become an elementary school teacher I will work with disruptive children in two different approaches. First, I will use negative punishment, which is taking something away for acting up. For example, if I have a student acting out in class he or she will miss recess. If this does not work, I will ignore the student. In my years of teaching dance, I have found that many students act up just simply to get attention from the instructor, and if that attention is not received, the behavior goes away. I will also create a comfortable environment where my students feel safe talking to me about problems that may be going on outside of school. Developing a level of security with my students will aid in the way I am able to deal with children who pose problems.

In an article titled, "What Makes an Effective Teacher?" by Scott Hayden, he claims that "Teaching is one of the world's most challenging occupations. An effective teacher must be a good communicator, a fair evaluator, an adept manager, a strict disciplinarian and even a surrogate parent. Only by wearing all of these hats will the teacher be able to elicit the best from his or her students." I have come to realize that an effective teacher honestly must be able to wear "all of these hats". Although teaching can be challenging, especially with the demands for high test scores and success throughout America's schools, I believe that I will be a very

effective teacher and a great molder of the future generation. A teacher really is so much more than the material he or she teaches; he or she is the rock for his or her students, a role model, and someone who understands and takes the time to care about how each child learns individually. I will take these qualities with me throughout the rest of my schooling and field work with children and into the future when I become an effective elementary school teacher, and get to begin changing the lives of children.