

Philosophy of Teaching and Learning

I believe that the teaching and learning process can be likened to a stage performance. In this performance, children take on the role of performers, showcasing their unique talents and creativity. Families serve as the script, providing context and narrative to enrich the child's experience. Educators, on the other hand, act as directors, skillfully guiding the performance while allowing each child the freedom to interpret their role and express themselves authentically. The community/environment functions as the backstage crew, quietly yet crucially supporting the children's learning journey by providing the resources and setting necessary for a successful production. Together, these elements create a dynamic and collaborative atmosphere where each child can thrive, explore, and shine on their unique stage. This metaphor effectively encapsulates the various contexts in which children learn and develop, reflecting the foundational principles that underpin my teaching and learning philosophy.

First and foremost, I believe that children are like performers, each with their unique abilities and potential. According to Piaget's constructivist theory (Brau, 2020, "Jean Piaget" Section), children create knowledge through the interaction between their experiences and ideas, much like performers bring a character to life on stage through practice and interpretation. I have demonstrated my commitment to fostering this learning environment by creating opportunities for group activities that allow children to express their creativity and individual expression, such as finger puppets for role-playing and collaborative art projects, such as painting and colouring.

Secondly, I believe that families are like the script of a performance, providing the foundational narrative for a child's life and learning. According to Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1977), the family is part of the microsystem, which includes the most immediate relationships and environments in the child's life. These interactions have a direct and profound impact on the child's development. The relationship is bi-directional, meaning that not only do families influence the child, but the child, like a performer interpreting a script, also shapes the beliefs and behaviours of their family (Guy-Evans, 2023, "The Microsystem" Section). I will demonstrate this belief by creating strong partnerships with families, respecting their insights and backgrounds, and collaborating to support the child's learning. Just as a script guides a performance, I will honour the family's role in shaping the child's development while ensuring that the child's unique abilities and perspectives are nurtured and valued.

Thirdly, I believe that educators are like directors, orchestrating the learning experience while allowing room for children to interpret and express themselves creatively. Much like a director guides performers while leaving space for improvisation and co-construction of knowledge. Drawing from Lev Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Pressbooks, n.d., "Zone of Proximal Development and Scaffolding" Section), the educator identifies where the child is in their learning and offers scaffolding to help them progress beyond their current capabilities. The educator, like a director, knows when to step in and when to step back, allowing children to take center stage in their own learning process. I will demonstrate this belief by providing tailored support through active observation, strategic questioning, and hands-on guidance. I will gradually reduce my support as children gain competence, ensuring they become independent and confident to solve problems and think creatively without direct intervention.

Fourthly, I believe that the community/environment functions like the backstage crew of a performance, quietly and strategically supporting the child's learning and growth. In the Reggio Emilia approach (Reggio Emilia Approach, 2015, para. 1), the environment is seen as the "third teacher," intentionally designed to cater to the children's interests and developmental needs. It is welcoming, visually appealing, and culturally representative of the community, fostering relationships, communication, collaboration, and exploration through play. Just as the backstage crew ensures that performers have the necessary tools, scenery, and ambiance for a successful performance. The materials within the environment are thoughtfully selected to spark creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving, much like a backstage team carefully arranges props to enhance a production. I intend to demonstrate this belief by creating an environment rich with open-ended materials to encourage children's natural curiosity and exploration. I will thoughtfully select resources that provoke creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving, ensuring that the environment reflects the diverse cultures and experiences of the community. By regularly observing the children's interests, I will adapt the environment to meet their developmental needs, offering them opportunities to engage in meaningful play and collaborative learning.

Finally, I believe that the Waldorf framework growth (Association of Waldorf Schools of North America, n.d., para. 1), closely aligns with my view of education as a holistic, artistic, and experiential process. It resembles a performance that integrates various learning, expression, and development elements. Waldorf pedagogy is developmentally appropriate, academically rigorous, and experiential. It focuses on the whole child—their physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual. Just as a performance requires the performer to engage fully in body, mind, and spirit, Waldorf education encourages children to immerse themselves in hands-on, creative, and collaborative learning experiences that engage every aspect of their being.

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