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Frame of Reference

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These are the principles, values and personal philosophy that will guide me as an educator. As a life-long learner and educator, I have come to appreciate the absolute importance of relationship building. As an educator, the relationships I build with my students, colleagues, administrators and parents will be crucial to my success as a teacher. Taking time to build these relationships will help to provide a feeling of safety and trust, thus creating a learning environment for understanding rules, boundaries, expectations, and respect.

As an educator, I want to inspire my students to become life long learners, to foster their natural curiosity and imagination, and to always challenge and question. Like Eagan, I want to be an inspired storyteller, to be able to translate curriculum into wonderful humorous stories and analogies. I will use humour as one of the predominant parts of my teaching styles. Through role modeling, I want to impart the importance of professionalism and to always strive to align my behaviors with my values and beliefs. In the community and in my private life, I will always be a teacher to someone and a representative of the profession. I will always come to work with a positive attitude, with an enthusiasm that is infectious. I will always treat people with respect, regardless of race, religion, ability or gender. I will impart these values to my students as well, while teaching them the importance of empathy and the ability to see things from the perspective of others.

As a manager of the classroom, I will be a proactive teacher. I will recognize and anticipate behavioral difficulties before they become challenges. I will employ a calm, respectful and effective way of management. I will strive to be uninhibited as I connect with and manage the different personalities and ability levels. I will make learning engaging for all. As a teacher, I appreciate that a student's behavior is not just genetic or environmental. I will attempt to solve issues from a biopsychosocial perspective. I will

value the ability to look for teachable moments, even for discipline and classroom management. Moreover, I will help children to understand the root of their problem and try to empower them to be better citizens. I like Diane Gossen's Restitution Model where restitution helps move away from consequences, reward to belief-based discipline. From her five positions of control I want to be a manager and then guide my students to be self-managers.

I want to be the type of teacher that can identify and capitalize on individual children's strengths and nudge them toward increasing responsibility and independence. I recognize that all students have a right to learn, regardless of ability levels. I will be an extremely prepared teacher, to always have a backup plan, but I will value the ability to improvise and adapt on the spot.

Assessment can be a challenging process. I worry that the system in place today stifles creativity in children. However, the new BC curriculum is better designed to allow multiple paths towards learning and assessment. Formative assessment is an ongoing process. I want to be the type of teacher that includes students in the assessment process. I will have students set their own criteria for marking work as well as have them assess their personal growth. Self-assessment leads students to a greater awareness and understanding of themselves as learners. I like what Rousseau said about students being the center of their learning. As a teacher of the twenty-first century learners, I have to be ready to be flexible in my planning and assessing, adjusting for the differences in learners in my classes.

In my inquiry project last year, I researched the question of retention versus promotion. I went into the project, expecting to find overwhelming data in support of retention. However, I learned a great deal more about primary education and its roots through this inquiry. I was fascinated with how different the primary program had become compared to the more concrete, lockstep learning systems of intermediate and senior programs. As primary teachers, we are leaving no one behind in those first four crucial years. As with any big issue in education, there is no easy 'one size fits all' answer. The burden on new

teachers will be the diversity of learners in the classroom. I will strive to accommodate all the different styles of learning. I will support the children who are struggling to keep up with their peers through working closely with the students, parents and administrators.

As a professional musician and music educator, I will make music and the performing arts a fundamental part of my teaching. Music and the performing arts have an intangible quality of conveying information without the burdens of method and curricula.

Moreover, I also recognize the importance of physical activity and how it relates to learning. I will therefore incorporate physical breaks into daily activities. I want not only to inspire, but also to empower students. I am not only imparting knowledge, but also helping to shape their personal future philosophies as they grow up.

In relationships with my colleagues, my administrators and the parents of my students, I will always strive to be humble, honest, professional, kind, considerate, forgiving and wise. I will always be open to criticism and never take things personally. Furthermore, I will be a reflective practitioner constantly evaluating myself, reflecting on ways to improve my craft; being confident to solicit help from colleagues and professionals. I will always think of criticism as an opportunity to learn. I will be a patient listener, someone to lean on and debrief with if needed. I will be a diplomat, using the skill of diplomacy whenever called upon. I will be a promoter of collaboration, I realize that I don't have all the answers and look forward to learning from everyone, from the very experienced to the young and enthusiastic.

I am an optimist and believe strongly in a positive attitude. As a teacher, every day I will check in with my students, greeting them with a smile, a laugh and a positive attitude, capitalizing on the benefits of relationship building. I am a confident person and inherently curious. I value being a risk taker and not being afraid to engage in new things. I will accept failure as a positive learning experience, while never forgetting the significant importance of knowing that all of this is based on building safe, positive relationships with others.

*“The mediocre teacher tells, the good teacher explains, the superior teacher demonstrates and the great teacher inspires” (William Ward).*