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TE 803
Vision Statement

Community Environment

I desire for my classroom to be a community environment. I want students to feel free and open within my class to share and question ideas, history, and current affairs. I would like to harbor within my students a constant wonder and critic of the world. I do not mean critic as always bad, simply wondering. Along with this I desire my student to be free to share, feel, and express themselves openly without fear of reproof by peers. I want my classroom to engage students and allow them freedom.

Around my ideal classroom you will see, feel, and hear a variety of things dependent upon the lesson and typical a variety within a given day. I encourage my students to speak openly in a community learning environment manner. I want students to be free to question what I, the teacher, am describing for them during a lecture, their textbook pages, or each other. You would hear student comments, questions, and opinions throughout the visit in my classroom. You would see students interacting with the teacher but mostly with each other as they cooperatively learn and grow together. You would also feel a strong sense of openness and belonging within the class. I want my students to view their classmates as valued members of a community. I want to make this part clear; they do not have to be friends or even to view themselves as such. However, I do want them to feel it is important for each individual to be present within the class as a learning member able to help channel and shape views.

In my ideal classroom I am a fellow community member. I am there, just as their peers are, to help them learn and grow into more globally aware individuals. Although I am a community member I will not be equal to the students. I will be a benevolent dictator. Students will always be allowed to share their opinions and ideas with me. However it is also important

that they note we are not equal within the classroom. I believe this differentiation is important, especially at the start of a new class to maintain classroom order and functioning. If every decision was made as a equal voting classroom many tasks would not be accomplished. A teacher must have the final say on matters, however this can be as generous as the class allows.

Students in my class will be questioning and developing their own opinions, they will be working together in a cooperative fashion to complete assignments and also to help one another question their own thinking. I want students to question myself, the teacher, and each other to constantly push each of us to expand and reason through our thinking processes. Because I desire my students to expand upon their thinking and questioning of the world dynamics I believe your best instigator can be peers. By allowing each student to express themselves and their own ideas we will be helping one another grow and develop and solidify certain philosophies. I believe this type of cooperative learning is extremely important. By having students act as instigator and questioner students are exposed to a variety of mindsets and opinions. If only the teacher is questioning students or if the only person students question is the teacher they may would not have the same sense for the diversity of attitudes. Thus I believe it is important for students to take part and share in their learning process.

In my ideal classroom students are learning about the world. They will be learning about turning points in history that profoundly affected the outcomes and current state of affairs. Constant connection to the past and present situations I want students to make these inferences and begin to see how important the past has been to creating the world today. I will also encourage students to analyze the information presented to them by me, news programs, peers, and media. Through these analyses I hope students will begin to constantly question what they are being told and what they hear to encourage a more actively involved youth. They will work

on this type of questioning process through projects and class work. For instance, critical reading for authorship will be used in my classroom. This is a practice of reading material to discover who the author is and what point-of-view is being represented and which is being degraded. This is vitally important when learning about marginalized segments of society.

I want my students to develop these practices to carry out into the world and spread. It is important for students to have exposure to this type of thinking within a school context because we are preparing students for the world outside of their school walls. As with anything practice is important to master a skill set, and this type of thinking is a skill set. Rather than preparing students to sit and absorb the news programs I want students to question them, which will only come if they are also allowed to question me when I lecture (similar to news programs) or their assigned readings from textbooks equivalent to news articles, or each other equivalent to others they will encounter throughout their lives.

This questioning of each other brings up another very important point, practice at how to share and question each other while maintaining respect. Without being taught people cannot be expected to know how to share ideas and opinions and discuss properly sensitive issues, which is where my role comes into play. I am there as a facilitator of these types of discussions and thus it is also my role to maintain a safe and non-threatening learning environment for all my students. As this is my role I will be teaching students how to keep comments on the ideas not the person and how to hold respectful tones and manners throughout a debate. It is important for students to learn this practice because without it often shouting matches follow and no learning takes place, just hurt feelings and anger. Anger breeds nothing positive, in my opinion, and thus will only hinder the desired outcomes.

This ideal classroom connects to my ideal society on every level. I desire people to know and understand more the connections of the past with affairs of today because I believe that is the first step to preventing more destruction and hatred that seems to be spiraling out of control currently. I also believe it is important to rectify the mistakes of our forbearers and to prevent similar problems in the future. I desire students to question points-of-views because each is unique and has an agenda of their own. I want people in the world to take these points-of-view into perspective more and realize a much more equalizing and non-discriminatory atmosphere. Once we question how and why people and groups are being represented in a specific way the higher our chances of changing hatred into understanding and acceptance. Teaching students to respect other people will help to harbor these changes. Without respecting one another the differences and anger grows and can but a wall between segments of society. The use of respect will help to tear down these walls, over time, and develop into a more open society. Thus in short, my ideal classroom is a reflection of the skills and practices I believe necessary for my ideal world.