

## Transformational reflection from my “Inner Landscape”

This course has really opened up my eyes to a lot of things that are important for teachers to understand and be aware of. The content we have covered in this course through all the conversations we have had, the readings I have done, research, watching various guest speakers present a variety of information, I can definitely say that my thoughts, feelings, views on the education system at large, have in fact, transformed.

Politics has always been something that I have avoided! I realize that as a teacher, it is all around the public education systems. It is something I have to face with a clear understanding. After listening to different members of the BCTF, BCTF, and the TRB, I can see the significance of knowing and understanding the different roles that these groups have. They all play a valuable role in the public education system. After taking this class I now am more aware about the complexities of the different roles that the union, the ministry, federation, etc. have in the education system. It is highly beneficial for beginning teachers to not only be aware of this but to also have an understanding of what they do, what they stand for, and how it effects schools, students, parents, teachers, faculty and all other dynamics of the education system.

During one of the presentations from the BCTF I was pleased to hear them say that one of the largest roles we have as a union is to support the teachers. This involves helping with crisis- help to connect to different services and help. Walk with people during crisis. This was comforting to understand that there are all kinds of support for teachers when dealing with these difficult situations in the classroom that sooner or later we will all have to face. This gave me a slight sense of relief to know that we are not alone. There is a lot of support and guidance offered to teachers and staff of the education system.

This year at school I learned even further about what it means to be a professional. I know that we have been working with this idea and concept since 3<sup>rd</sup> year, but I now feel even more confident with my understanding of what it means to be a professional. I have taken some valuable lessons from this course which has strengthened my understanding of the different elements of what it means to be a professional. For example, the professional decision making model was a great assignment where we had to delve right in to a matter that teachers will have to deal with every day, decisions. I am not very good or confident when it comes to my decision making but after doing this assignment I have a much better understanding of the process, the steps, the planning and follow up that is involved in making a decision in the professional world.

After hearing the presentations from the BCTF, BCCT and workers from then ministry, I also

gained further knowledge about what the dynamics of professionalism. There is a lot more to being professional than I thought. Being professional in your class, and not only in front of your students, teachers, staff, parents, administrators, but also this professionalism will continue with you out into the community. I need to always be aware of this. There is a slight negative feeling in my heart when I think of this, only because I never considered all the elements of constriction that the teaching profession carries. I am a fun person, and enjoy have a good time. I will always have to take into consideration what I am doing, where I am doing it, and just be professional at all times. In my opinion, it is better to have the attitude of being professional at all times, rather than at school and here and there. I would hate to get tripped up, caught being unprofessional, whatever that looks like. It is best to keep the professional attitudes, values, and beliefs wherever I go. When reflecting back to before this course, I am not sure how seriously I actually took the phrase 'being professional.' Now, I feel that I am more prepared to set myself up for success.

These attitudes were 'transformed' a little bit after listening to Laura Bickerton from the BCTC. During the presentation a lot of questions were raised for me about my own personal identity. Not only did we discuss what this means and looks like we also discussed what our professional boundaries are. The conversations we have undergone in this class have heightened my awareness and understanding on how society has high expectations with teachers. This is a very valuable lesson to consider, understand, and apply to being professional looks like.

All of the presentations were valuable learning tools for me because they brought up a lot or a little points to consider in the teaching profession that are necessary point to address, understand, and connect with. Unfortunately, before this class I had not spent much time considering all these different 'political' points. For example, I learned a lot after discussing how the legislations impacts education. I did not have a whole lot of information before we had the president of the Nanaimo District Teacher's Union present to us ideas about this. Although this was only a 'Union Perspective', I definitely learned a lot of new information that I can add to my toolkit of 'political knowledge.'

There were some more points brought up during presentations that I am thankful we did as I can see the importance of communicating them. For example, when teachers need to know that our duty to report overrides any duty to protect the privacy of clients, patients, students or your staff. This is very useful information to understand. We also discussed how to recognize child abuse and neglect is what teachers need to be aware of. Recognizing child abuse and neglect is what teachers need to be aware of. We discussed what protocols I need to take. Questions were answered for me during the presentations, for example, when would I call a child welfare worker? I learned that we can look at the lecture ministry

booklet when reporting abuse and neglect. These presentations have and will continue to widen my view of the world. I appreciate the opportunity to be involved with this.

One of the most valuable presentations for me was done by Pat Ross. We addressed leadership with the class and discussed what this was for teachers and the profession. Leadership has a much more complex role than I ever imagined. I love all the points of leadership that were addressed from leadership in the community and school to teachers using leadership to have the power to inspire, encourage, and create self-worth in students. Pat Ross stated loud and clear, 'Develop real, professional, relationships with students. We talked about this for a little while, and his enthusiasm really inspired me and I got excited to inspire others around me. After this presentation I have a great understanding that leadership is a process of 'leading self'. As a teacher I can lead myself, lead others, and lead the community. It will be just as important to lead others as it will be to lead myself. I can ask myself questions such as, "how am I doing as a leader? The entire presentation was a benefit to be a part of. Even if we just discussed some attributes of leadership. It is super helpful to discuss something as simple as this because we can all remind ourselves of these attributes so we can practice them. These attributes are great for a teacher to be practice and be aware of which include being reliable, trusting, caring, compassionate, have a sense of humor, be non-judgemental, loving and show support and empathy. This presentation gave me more confidence and inspired me to start believing that, "I am a teacher. Designer and architect of learning environments."

Not only have the presentations been a valuable way of shaping my beliefs and thoughts, but the reading we have done throughout this course have been just as beneficial for me. The "Key Questions For Educators" is an excellent source of knowledge to refer to regarding almost any topic in the Education System. There are many of those chapters that I thought I knew before reading it. However, after doing the readings I can see more in depth to what the meaning of the questions are. For example, after reading what is freedom of speech? Or what is open-mindedness? I can see a much richer definition than I could have been able to give. This book is something that I will always be able to refer to. I am more than happy to read about all those questions that I do not know how to answer at all. If someone would have asked me before this class what is indoctrination? What is democratic education? What is progressive education? I would not have been able to give a very good definition. After reading these chapters it has really painted a picture for me about these questions that I was unclear about before. I appreciate this text and all the questions it addresses in an easy to read format.

Overall, this course has been much more valuable for them than I could have expected. I have learned many things that I did not even know we would be learning about in the education program. We have addressed some things that I did not even realize that teachers not only understand but ask questions about.