

Throughout my time within my Liberal Studies program, I have discovered new attributes about myself that have contributed to my views on justice-based education and the effects of a structured environment for students. My multitude of experiences within professional work, certifications, leadership positions, and volunteer opportunities have given me the chance to reflect on my current educational pedagogy and have allowed me to alter my views to strengthen them. I have learned about the importance of collaboration, organization, and passion within the field of education and how each of those strengths have built up my confidence. This directly translates to my own style of educating and leading students ranging from one-on-one instruction to large group settings within a classroom and recreational space.

My experience as a day camp leader allowed me to connect with children in a more collaborative and recreational environment in which I was able to build on my skills of fostering positive relationships with children aged 5-17. Building these connections within my career helped build onto my job as an Instructional Aide for San Diego Unified School District in which I was able to lead small groups and on one-on-one instruction in a more academic setting. Due to my experiences in both a flexible environment of camp as well as an intentional environment of classroom-based instruction allowed me to become a more well-rounded educator with students of all ages. Similar to Dewey's perspective of connecting to student's lived experiences rather than only viewing them academically, I believe in viewing the student's social, physical, and emotional experiences as well. (Dewey, 1938)

Another strength I was able to gain had to do with the abilities of many students, as I believe that a student of any ability can be successful with the proper accommodations and modifications. Through my experience as an instructional aide, I was able to work with English language learners and special education students to help them with curriculum in a smaller group setting by utilizing differentiated instruction. Similar to Vygotsky's philosophical pedagogy in regards to guided support and how social setting contributes to a child's learning, I believe the same about differentiated and individualized instruction. (Vygotsky, 1978) Whether that was explaining the instructions more in depth or scaffolding materials to allow for them to comprehend the material in a different way, I used my strengths of patience and problem solving to assist them in learning the same material as their fellow classmates.

Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education* [PDF]. School of Educators.
<https://www.schoolofeducators.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/EXPERIENCE-EDUCATION-JOHN-DEWEY.pdf>

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes* [PDF]. <https://home.fau.edu/musgrove/web/vygotsky1978.pdf>