Letters to a Young Teacher

Chapter 1

• Supposedly good schools are more like businesses than a learning environment.

• Every child should be treated to have great value no matter what.

Chapter 2

• Students reactions can stem from how the school is, like; a kid getting whipped.

• Going off regular curriculum for something you love and are enthusiastic to talk about.

• Have chemistry to bond and have trust between the student and teacher.

Chapter 3

• Try to have parent involvement, make them feel welcome.

• Show parents that we lead normal lives.

Chapter 4

• Listening to old and wise teachers not just throwing their ideas away.

• Be fun and spontaneous.

Chapter 5

• Listen to your students don’t penalize their writing if they get a word wrong, encourage them to be better.

• As you listen find their motivation or drive and use that to get them involved.

• Should have to worry so much about the word choices and let them find the words to use.

Chapter 6

• With the kids who are acting out or who are not liking us, don’t think that they won’t learn and that we can learn from them.

• Class size does matter.

Chapter 7
Chapter 8

- The officials say to use different, hard words to understand for the more simple words such as “utilize” for use, “implement” for do and “initiate” for start.

Chapter 9

- It’s important to have fun and be creative.

Chapter 10

- Students will get burnt out from too much work, they need to play.
- “These are testing gains, not learning gains” basically stating that these tests won’t necessarily help the students learn.
- Middle school students can’t read very well even though they did well on their tests in elementary school.

Chapter 11

- He doesn’t like that vouchers were invented to help private schools.
- Private school parents are saying that they shouldn’t have to pay for private school tuition have their taxes go to public schools.

Chapter 12

- States are committing obstruction of laws the students should know, put into lesson government.
- Governor of Florida didn’t comply to reduce class sizes, saying to make them bigger.
- Students should know when they are not getting as much money as another school.

Chapter 13

- He is opposed to middle school, doesn’t feel they’re ready for that environment yet.
- He told of an experience when he visited a low-income school, there was fight and the office had to break it up.
- At the same school he wasn’t given a lunch.
- He states “If you treat these kids like animals….they act accordingly.”
- He says it depends on the environment of the school, physical, also the atmosphere the feel of it.

Chapter 14

- He tells of getting fired for reading a poem book written by an African American man that was not on the curriculum.
- Ethnicity and race should not matter or be an issue.

Chapter 15

- He talks about a girl named Pineapple who lifts his spirits and love to see her grow. He still keeps in touch with her.

This book really does relate to education because it talks a lot about the different things a new teacher will face. He talks about how teachers need to be committed to their students. He also talks about the intrinsic values of being a teacher. First of all, making a difference in their lives. Another one is to help them learn through their imaginations and abilities. A subject that he mostly talked about was the funding for the schools and his opinion on private schooling. He says that private schools use lottery for private schools. School choice comes into play and he talks about why he thinks that private schools should not be here. He is very adamant about not having vouchers saying that it’s not a good idea in fact that it’s the worst idea. He also talks about tuition to go to these private schools that even with the vouchers people who are poor will still not be able to afford to go to these “elite” schools.

It kind of put me in perspective of how am I doing right now, what do I need to work on. Also what kind of things will come with the profession? There was a lot of the things I never actually thought about such as the funding, private schools, the board of education and the testing. I know those are things that I should have thought about before going into the teacher education program, but to be honest I didn’t; I was just thinking about the students and teaching them what they need to know.

First of all, I would ask him why he wanted to teach? Does he think if one is not creative that they are not cut out for the job? Does he think it would be okay to, as people say “Stick it to the man,” and go ahead and use plain words and writing that’s easier to understand without going
away from the planned curriculum? What are some suggestions that he might have to help low-income schools, or low-achieving schools? Is he for or against, “No Child Left Behind Act,” or is he neutral and why? I would want him to talk more about his experience not only in the beginnings of his career but throughout his career.

I think after reading this book I know a lot more about the “behind the scenes” stuff I didn’t know about. It made me think about how I’ll be as a teacher, whether I am going to be just like him or be more of a “stick with rules” kind of teacher. As a future teacher I hope to see the growth in children as they are promoted to the next grade level. I think the teacher that he is writing to is memorable because she was creative in having a tooth timeline. I think one of his students Pineapple who made a difference in his life and whom he still gets in touch with is memorable as well.

I would mostly love to make a difference in the lives of those that I teach, just by knowing who they are and respecting them. I think one thing that we could do is to think of some way to help the low-income schools to get more materials, and have better testing rates and improve their learning.