

Educational Philosophy

Nelson Mandela once said that education is the most powerful of weapons, which can be used to change the world. I believe that education is the oxygen of our society; it is the sustaining force that governs all aspects of our life, and it is what determines the course of our future. That which our students learn will dictate not only their future on an individual level, but it will also impact society as a whole. Every student has the potential to achieve more greatness than they ever fathomed, and it all stems from what they are taught in the classroom.

Every child can succeed

When looking at education in its most basic and elemental form, I believe that every child is capable of learning. Regardless of age or disposition, every student *wants* to learn and is *eager* to learn, provided their teacher is capable of reaching him/her on a personal level. I find that there is truth in self-fulfilling prophesies, meaning that students reach their fullest potential when they believe that they can succeed, and when their teachers believe that they can succeed. I expect nothing but excellence from my students because I know that they can do anything they put their minds to, and it gives purpose to my life to see students reach their goals.

Education is child centered

Rather than deferring to the modern approach to education, where the goal is to prepare students by having them memorize a wide range of facts, I believe in the system of education developed by William James and John Dewey. This model for education asserts that children are the center of education, and that the content we teach should revolve around them. The children are the focus and we teach them the skills they need to be able to solve not only problems posed in the classroom, but also the massive economic and social concerns that they will inherit as they enter the working force. I believe in educating children far beyond that which the curriculum mandates me to teach, so that students will be prepared to make their impact upon society.

Teaching Methodology

I believe in the Socratic method of teaching, where the teacher is persistently asking questions to involve the class and to stimulate critical thinking. The teacher acts as a guide, and students learn by way of self-discovery. This method of teaching has been proven to be most effective, and its benefits are two fold: Students ability to recall information is greatly increased, and classroom disruptions are greatly reduced. When students are actively involved in the process of learning, they are able to more effectively recall information because they worked with the teacher and classmates to arrive at the answers. I believe that most classroom management issues can be completely avoided simply by making lesson presentations engaging, and by constantly challenging the class by asking questions. By being proactive and making lessons so engaging that students are too preoccupied to distract themselves, teachers can negate the need to raise their voice at a class to keep them focused. Yet all of this can be characterized by the following Chinese proverb: "Tell me and I'll forget; show me and I may remember; involve me and I'll understand."

My purpose in teaching

I entered this profession because I am passionate about art and because I care about each and every student that walks into my classroom. I love the process of teaching and it is what I was put on this earth to do. My life purpose is to teach not only art, but also life principles. Every day is an opportunity to literally change a students' life; the power and responsibilities that teachers have is nearly overwhelming, because every day is an opportunity to shape the next hero of our country.

I believe that education is the profession that creates all others, because all occupations stem from what is learned in the classroom. I believe that art has the power to change people and to change the way we look at life; a drawing or a painting can make more of a powerful statement than anything else because of the inherent power of visual imagery.

Teaching is the core of our society, and it is the most important profession of all because what is learned in the classroom will dictate the fate of our nation.