

Philosophy of Education

As a young, aspiring educator, many professionals in the field have repeatedly asked me if I am sure I want to teach. My reply comes naturally, not as though I have rehearsed it, but instead comes from a deeper, intrinsic part of my unconscious. "Without a doubt," I respond. What is it about teaching that moves and inspires me? I feel as though it is in my blood, and has always been there, offering me support and guidance when I stray from the metaphorical path. I owe a lot to the educational system; it has been (and always will be) a kind of academic sanctuary, forever nurturing my abilities as a scholar and creative thinker. I believe strongly that successful teachers are perpetual learners, curious souls who wish to have their ideas challenged and made immortal through the passage of knowledge. It is in this passage of knowledge that we accomplish the ultimate goal of education. If we accept that teachers are learners in the same way that students are learners, then maximum learning can only occur when students and teachers work collaboratively. Thus, these roles are interchangeable; the student can influence the teacher as profoundly as the teacher influences the student.

Within the context of the bidirectional student-teacher relationship, appropriate goal-setting is critical, but we must never lose sight of one of the primary objectives of education: to motivate students to want to inquire and not to receive extrinsic rewards. My classroom will greatly focus on humanity's interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships, so that we can better understand ourselves and prevent prejudicial discrimination. With respect to pedagogy, discussion forums will be commonplace in the classroom. Additionally, I will provide students with the opportunity to submit answers individually and publically, so that they can better appreciate the diversity of specific points of view in the class. I will strive for acceptance, inside and outside the classroom, not just tolerance. And I believe, all too well, that this is a realistic goal.

Curiosity, open-mindedness, honesty, and effort are the values to which I hold the most importance. All students are deserving of a just, equitable, and quality education, regardless of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, disability, or any other discriminatory factor. Students are, at heart, observational learners. The evils we see in others are primarily a product of our own beliefs and actions. Therefore, we all are accountable for our student's behaviors. I believe also that we must have a keen understanding of our student's backgrounds and belief systems. We are all different people, with different views on life. I will serve as a facilitator and manager in the classroom, but a blend between teacher-centered and student centered approaches will remain at the forefront of my educational philosophy. Each student's point-of-view is a valuable asset to the classroom. I believe strongly in accommodating students with special needs, using differentiated instruction, having regular contact with parents, redesigning lesson plans, and going above and beyond what is required of me in order to ensure that every student has an opportunity to succeed in learning.

While technological advances have resulted in numerous alternative strategies aimed at better facilitating learning, I vow never to stop using the chalkboard as a means of communicating information. Students feel as though their opinions and work matter when they are placed on the board; it is still a vital component of the classroom. While advances in technology provide students with opportunities they have never had before, it is the balanced combination of new-age and

traditional pedagogies which will prevail in my classroom, and will allow students to appreciate a diversity of methodological approaches in the acquisition of knowledge.

It is my belief that a high level of respect for authority figures, the rules, and each other thrives innately in a classroom that fosters situational thinking. That is, thinking that takes other's views into account. I will be an enthusiastic and effortful educator, determined to inspire by example. Discussions about the way we think, the choices we make, and the skills we build throughout life will be extremely prevalent in the curriculum I plan on adhering to local, state, and federal standards, though few exist in the field of Psychology. Each class period will be conducted with a great amount of respect for each other's voice and opinion, utilized through memorable and unconventional methods, such as games, personalized activities, and active classroom discussions. The Socratic Method, to which I hold the highest esteem as pedagogical technique in the classroom, is important in the development of student's applicable knowledge. In the Socratic environment, where each student has a voice and develops comfortability in sharing that voice, each student is wholly capable of succeeding, both in the present and in the future. It is our job to nurture their educational experience so that our students grow into healthy, whole, and involved citizens.