

Philosophy of Education

The skills that are necessary to be an outstanding teacher correspond to my Philosophy of Education. I believe that to be an outstanding teacher, one must constantly evaluate himself/herself and be willing to make the changes necessary to meet the needs of all students. My Philosophy of Education expresses my thoughts on how I should behave as a competent teacher, and how I should drive instruction in my classroom.

It is my responsibility as an educator to recognize how each student learns best, what their unique capabilities are, and to design differentiated instruction around those learning styles. This instruction will encompass a variety of strategies including technology, cooperative learning, direct instruction, and hands-on experiences.

Learning is an active process, therefore I am committed to creating an engaging and meaningful environment where participation and involvement are encouraged. Students should be provided opportunities to develop skills and explore a variety of learning experiences. If a student needs interventions or acceleration in his/her learning, I should provide those opportunities.

Assessment data and academic standards should provide the foundation for all instruction. Planning exciting and engaging lessons should be data/goal driven and inspire students to become motivated, insightful, and enthusiastic learners. The instruction I give should allow students the ability to become critical thinkers and to “dig deeper” into areas of their interests. I believe that thoughtful assessment should drive future instruction.

I believe students should be treated fairly and with respect. Growth is inspired in my students by giving them the tools to take into other domains of their lives. When fair and respectful behavior is modeled, students witness appropriate life skills. I challenge my students to understand that I am open to their thoughts, eager to hear their opinions, and thrilled to learn with them and through them.

Providing a supportive and flexible environment is essential to learning. Students learn best when in a positive climate that fosters self-esteem, self-discipline, and self-responsibility. This environment is important for the intellectual development of every student. Students need to be given choices when learning. Differentiating instruction is vital in meeting the needs of all students.

Teachers, students, parents, and the community should be partners in education. When students are given high expectations, they tend to live up to those expectations. We all need to work together for the benefit of our students. Respectful communication between all parties involved helps to facilitate a plan to help students grow into productive and contributing members of society.

Teaching children is the most important profession. Being an educator comes with a great deal of responsibility. As a teacher, I strive to inspire a generation of life-long learners, problem solvers, communicators, and decision makers. The qualities I have mentioned make a teacher outstanding. I believe I possess these qualities and take my responsibility as an educator very seriously. I always strive to be the best teacher I can be.

How do I address a wide range of skills and abilities in my classroom?

Within all classrooms there are a variety of different ability levels and ranges of skill development. As a teacher it is important to understand that students learn in a variety of ways. It is imperative that I am very flexible in order to allow all students to demonstrate their knowledge in ways they are capable of. It is my responsibility to integrate as many different strategies to address as many learning styles as possible.

First and foremost, I would establish a rapport with my students to get to know their interests, strengths, and weaknesses. I would also use surveys and questionnaires to find out what they are interested in. Utilizing a combination of centers/stations, technology, direct instruction, and hands-on activities, I would design instruction and activities that motivate, engage, and help develop critical thinking skills. Differentiating instruction is a key element to meeting the needs of all students. Students would always have choices in the way they presented projects, in the books they read, and on how they would like to be assessed on material.

Some students need their assignments, projects, and tests/quizzes modified in order to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. This may be accomplished by several methods. I may reduce the number of choices given or questions asked on an assignment or assessment. Students may be given a copy of the notes in class and highlight important information. I may design an assessment that has a different format from others so that the student understands the content easier. When appropriate, I may allow a student to answer questions verbally instead of on paper.

Providing technology resources in the classroom is another way I address a wide range of skills and abilities in my classroom. Students love to use computers, iPads, and cell phones, and are motivated when allowed to do so. I believe that by integrating this technology with the wide range of resources it provides (websites, apps, etc.), students can find a variety of instructional tools and games that meet their instructional abilities and address their individual skill development.

Utilizing assessment data to drive instruction is also a very important component in meeting the needs of all students. By looking at a student's strengths and weaknesses, I am able to design lessons that reinforce skills or provide enrichment. My students and I set goals based on this data and I encourage them to attain these goals through determination, perseverance, and a great deal of positive reinforcement.