

## Philosophies

- Every child is an individual and is special. No two children are the same in a personal or academic aspect.
  - Children are unique in personalities and in learning styles. While one student may enjoy seeing visual aids when working, it might be easier for another student to understand what you are saying from hearing it rather than seeing it. While one student may flourish in math, another might need a method presented in a different way until it clicks.
- Students need a secure, inviting, comfortable, safe, and caring environment in order to grow and become mature socially, academically, emotionally, and physically.
  - If a student does not feel safe in the classroom, they will be less willing to be engaged or to learn. When students feel comfortable, they begin to venture outside of their comfort zones and true learning begins. Students should feel safe to make mistakes when learning, as that is what helps you to remember.
- In order to help each child reach their full potential, the academic instruction must be tailored to individual needs instead of to the masses.
  - Differentiation is a buzzword in education, but it is necessary. After getting to know a student, identifying areas of strength and weakness is essential to help them learn. While the overall lesson can be aimed to the main group, then way students apply and practice learning can be tailored to fit individual needs.
- A teacher is always learning. In order to be a successful teacher, self-evaluation needs to be done to look at what can be done better and what changes should be made to help the students become successful.
  - Many teachers believe that years of teaching mean they are experts. While there is some truth to that, there is always new research coming out and ways to improve instruction (some work and some do not work for your classroom and teaching style). Some days you plan

lessons that make you proud and excited, so reflecting to see what it was that engaged students and how to improve what you have taught is key to becoming a better teacher. Discussing and reflecting with others is also powerful!

- Technology is a powerful resource. Students become more technologically literate each year and there is a large opportunity to utilize the resource to enhance learning.
  - There are many positives and negatives to technology. Some things have value by doing it the “old fashioned way” but there are other things that can be improved or given depth by using technology. Writing, for example, and the process can be done in a traditional sense, but then what students do with those can make a big difference. Instead of writing and printing a traditional paper, students can publish them electronically and share with others (<https://www.smores.com/> for examples). Doing so allows a unique and rewarding experience for our students and puts a technological twist on tradition.
- Students should be encouraged to think critically and ask questions for the teacher and of one another instead of just responding to prompts; student centered classroom.
  - Many students are afraid of being wrong, we have all felt that pressure at some point. We were given the idea in school that there was one right answer and that once someone got it, the teacher would move on. Now, we want students to get to the correct end mark, but we want them to be critical thinkers along the way. We should ask, “What makes you say that? Why do you think that?”. These help develop depth and shows additional understand the student may or may not have. It also opens up conversation with other students who may have different understandings of the topic.
- Lessons should be developed with clear learning goals present in mind and when creating summative assessments to ensure the assessment gauges the student knowledge.
  - Many times I have noticed that students ask what the purpose of an activity is. It is important that teachers are

thinking of the purpose of each lesson and assignment to make sure that they are preparing students for what is needed and what to know. The final assessment should be something that is authentic and requires depth of knowledge of the material so it shows true mastery of content. Having the end result in mind helps to guide the lessons and prepare students for the material.