

Teaching Philosophy

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WHY BE A TEACHER?

When you're young, you love to go to school and be with your friends and learn. But if you're asked ten years later who was in an elementary class, you won't remember more than a handful of names. The people you remember are your teachers. After high school and college, if you ask someone who the most influential person in their life was, chances are they'll say a parent or other family member. Chances are, the next person to be mentioned will almost always be a teacher. If you go further and ask them who their favorite teacher was, if they're like me at all, they'll probably say it was an elementary teacher. For me, that person is my 1st and 2nd grade teacher: Mrs. Hanson.

I was lucky enough to job shadow her and work with one of her students during my undergraduate studies. I consider her a mentor to this day and she reminds me how important my job is. Mrs. Hanson is the reason why I am an elementary education teacher today.

In my opinion, teachers have one of the most important jobs – molding the minds of children and making sure they are pointed in the right direction for a successful future. That is my goal as an elementary teacher.

WE ARE A CLASS FAMILY

As an elementary teacher, my role is to make my students' time learning as effective and enjoyable as possible. My job enables me to not only teach them subject matter but also life skills. In my classroom, they will learn to read and write, to cooperate with their peers, and to treat others as they would like to be treated. They will learn to value what they are learning and what they know.

My love of teaching stemmed, like most, from an influential and memorable elementary teacher whom I spoke of above, Mrs. Hanson. As a teacher, I try to create an environment where my students feel safe to express themselves, every day. I teach children to be confident in their abilities and to be themselves among their peers, not to question or downplay their abilities, but to recognize their difficulties and strive to overcome them or make them less of an obstacle.

During the first few weeks of school, I teach my students about their brains and how they can grow and stretch their brain. We also apply this knowledge and learn about Growth Mindset. I feel that this foundation to our year is important to create a class family of students who don't back away from a challenge, but embrace it and strive to try their best and take their time. To get this point across I come to class every day with a positive attitude and a desire to learn alongside them because even though we are the teachers, our students teach us things every day, as well. I show them

that I'm human. Even I make mistakes sometimes, but I choose to learn from them.

INTEGRATION OF THE ARTS

I am a role model as well as a teacher. To show interest in a subject allows students to become interested and excel in their own learning. Academically, I feel that it is important to expose students to all subjects, including those that influence their interests (art, music, writing, etc.). As a student I greatly benefited from the Art classes I took in school. They created an outlet for me and built my creativity/imagination and problem solving skills. It's important that I incorporate this within my own classroom.

One addition in my classroom is my own photography. By using photographs taken by myself I help students connect to subject matter in a way that they can't when reading or viewing images in a textbook. My photographs make the world real to them. Seeing their teacher in a city they've had little experience with or that they've never heard of shows them that it is a real place where real people live within a community - just like they do. Photographs can be used to learn about a community, culture, or even as a writing prompt. Showing students a landscape or a photograph of an event and asking them to write a story based on that image allows them to think creatively and express themselves through fun, legitimate writing.

I make sure to start each day with the same routine. At the end of our Morning Meeting I show a photograph. I then take a moment to teach my students about the photograph. Where it was taken, in this case what the building was and what it's used for now. Sometimes it leads us to inquire about more information. In this case, we connected it to our Reading Lesson about 21st century resources online and did a search about Kylemore Abbey to find more information about our photo of the day.

At times student thoughts will cause me to open up Google Maps and show them a street view of the location. It opens up their world from being their school, home, and city to something so much greater and full of wonder! It's by far one of my favorite routines I have started as a teacher. Allowing my students to explore the world of photography and other art forms can help them learn and remember information and grow more interested as they're acquiring new knowledge about the world around them.

It is a routine that my current students enjoy and past students remember fondly when they come back to visit. This 5 minute routine opens them up to new thoughts and new places in the world - sometimes leading to Google Map searches, sometimes learning about new cultures or things they've never seen or heard of before. For my students, it's an

eye opening, learning experience that I plan on continuing throughout my teaching career.