

My Teaching Philosophy  
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It's okay to not know, but it's not okay to not try. Every single year when I start my class, this is one of the first quotes I talk to my students about. As a special educator, my students are often frustrated and disheartened with school, especially by the time they reach my eighth-grade classroom. They often choose to avoid tasks instead of having resilience and continuing to try. One of my goals is to inspire and motivate my students to continue to try, even when it seems impossible. I seek to teach them the power of persistence and resilience, as these are skills I think are crucial as a student and in life.

I think using this quote and providing some background in my classroom is an excellent way to explain my personal teaching philosophy. My teaching philosophy can simply be stated in one sentence that encompasses many facets of teaching and learning; I simply want to teach my students to learn. My goal is to enable them to develop their learning skills so that they can be successful in future academic and non-academic settings alike. My teaching follows a progressive philosophy. My goal is first, for my students to become productive students, and then to become productive citizens in their community.

I can enable my students to learn these skills by creating a respectful environment with cognitively engaging material matched to their needs. I also want to improve the quality of learning for my students. I aim to do this by creating an environment and experience where students work to discover and uncover knowledge for themselves. I work hard to develop relationships with my students and let them know that I really am their number one cheerleader and am there to support them in any way I can. I build relationships by getting to know my students first through interest inventories, and then through conversations throughout the year. I am genuinely interested in my students lives. I know that by understanding their personal lives and likes and dislikes, I can work to make lessons that are more relevant and engaging to them. My ultimate goal that I work hard at is to make my students independent and self-directed learners that can learn skills and apply them in a variety of situations.

I believe that every learner learns information in a different way. I use research-based principles to guide my student's learning experiences. I provide clear learning outcomes that explain what I expect my student to know. I make the learning meaningful and relevant by creating outcomes that develop my students learning skills. I use frequent formative assessments and timely feedback to gauge my students learning and am reflective and flexible in adjusting my instruction. I also use active learning strategies to engage all students and have high expectations on what my students are capable of. I am clear and consistent and work to provide a place where all students feel like they can achieve.

I am an educator because I believe in the power of helping others. I work incredibly hard to develop strong, long-lasting relationships with my students because I truly care for them and want to see them succeed, not only in school, but in life. I believe that educators have a duty to help each and every student succeed. Because all students are different, education should be differentiated and accommodated to meet these differing needs. I believe that when students are

in a warm, caring, engaging environment with high expectations, they feel supported and are willing to put in more effort. I believe that relationships are the key to teaching. And finally, I believe all students are capable of learning, they just need the right tools presented in the right way.