

PHILOSOPHY OF TEACHING

Describe your personal feelings and beliefs about teaching. Describe the rewards you find in teaching.

“May they know I care” Genuinely love and care for each child as if he/she was your own. Recognize all of the students’ needs and ensure those needs take precedence over your own. These are the cornerstones on which I base my teaching philosophy.

I was charged with teaching eighth graders social studies. However, the nature of our content area pales in comparison to the relationships we hope to form with our students. We cannot successfully teach a child social studies or any other subject if we do not first connect with that student in some meaningful way. When a child recognizes the teacher has real concern for his/her well-being and a genuine caring for his/her learning, the most significant hurdle in the teaching process has been cleared. I want each individual student to know that I hurt when they do not learn; that I will take all the necessary steps to ensure they learn as much as humanly possible; and that I will place their feelings above all other concerns on our journey together. One hundred eighty days is not nearly enough time to teach them all we wish to convey, so not a second must go to waste

I spent my first six years out of college as an auditor. Almost every night when I placed my head on the pillow I asked myself the following question: “Did I really make a difference in a person’s life today?” I always answered, “no.” I can honestly say since I became a teacher nearly sixteen years ago I have never had to ask myself that question again. To witness a child beam with self-confidence as he answers a difficult question To witness children exhibit genuine caring for their fellow classmates To watch students destroy social barriers and establish a more accepting and nurturing environment These type instances have become commonplace in my life and not a day goes by that I do not thank the Lord for providing me with this opportunity. Countless friendships have been forged, countless lives have been touched, and I have been so blessed by each child who has entered my life over these years endless thanks to every one of these students

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How are your beliefs about teaching demonstrated in your personal teaching style? Describe innovative teaching methods.

Due to my perpetual efforts at connecting with the students, I always teach from the heart. I stand in front of them. I lean over their desks. I pace the aisles with a look of genuine concern for the learning process. I get in their faces. I give them space. I never sit down -- ever. Recording attendance electronically during every class period has always infuriated me as it wastes precious minutes that we cannot afford to lose. I wish we had more time

As any teacher, I prefer my students remain actively engaged for the entire class period. This is a constant challenge and requires cutting-edge techniques. Several years ago I developed a graphic organizer rooted in Learning-Focused Strategies. We call these graphic organizers our "Essential Question (EQ) Charts". *** See page 3 for a student example and page 9 for student reflections on their effectiveness. The EQ Charts are student-friendly as we build the graphic organizers together with all terminology in student-developed language, not textbook definitions. These charts provide detailed steps and examples for the students to follow and serve as a constant reminder of our goal for that day. They have proven to be the single most effective strategy I have utilized over the years.

I am also a strong proponent of working at the board in pairs. This provides the added comfort of a partner to lean on while ensuring the student is actively engaged. Students complete the problems together then must explain the steps to the entire class. If the students can explain the procedure in their own words, learning is inevitable. This strategy is an integral part of my teaching approach.