**Educational Philosophy**

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I believe that education is an individual, unique experience for every student who enters a classroom. In order for children to benefit from what schools offer, I think that teachers must fully understand the importance of their job. First, I believe that teachers must consider teaching to be a lifestyle, not a mere forty-hour-a-week job, because a teacher's goals for his/her students encompass much more than relaying out-of-context facts to passive students. As professionals entrusted with the education of young minds, teachers must facilitate learning and growth academically, personally, and ethically. By providing a quality education to each individual in one's classroom, a teacher equips children with the tools necessary for success in life.

In order to accomplish these lofty goals, I think it is important first to establish a mutually respectful, honest relationship with students. A relationship in which communication is of the highest priority. Through this relationship, a fair, democratic environment based on trust and caring can be established in the classroom, making it possible to interact confidently and safely in an academic setting. Once this foundation is established, the educator has already accomplished a major goal: the ethical characteristics of equality; open, honest communication; and trust have been emphasized and put into practice without having to preach to students. Demonstrating these ethically correct behaviors in the classroom and expecting students to model them prepares them for adult interaction and survival in the future.

Academic learning must begin with motivation and inspiration. Students deserve an educator's passion for both the subject at hand and learning as a whole. Teaching and learning become a simultaneous journey for both the teacher and students when students' energy is aroused by a teacher's genuine intensity for learning, because everyone is ready and willing to participate in active learning. To achieve active learning, a teacher must demonstrate enthusiasm and express confidence in the students' abilities to learn and be successful. Employing constructivist methods of teaching in one's classroom forces students to take an active role in their education by making choices and assuming responsibility for intelligent inquiry and discovery. For instance, discussions, projects, and experiments ensure student achievement and allow students and the teacher to discover individual student's preferences and strengths. This approach facilitates differentiated activities for each student's distinctive ambitions, making the subject more relevant to every student's life.

Personal growth is accomplished when a teacher adopts a mentoring role. Displaying warmth and compassion shows students that teachers love them and are empathic, feeling human beings. One-on-one mentoring involves personal conversations about goals, and taking time to share ideas and experiences. To be a mentor to every student, a teacher must project positivity, exhibit flexibility and confidence, set high expectations for oneself, and demonstrate fairness and consistency. In doing so, students can see appropriate adult behaviors first-hand and begin to emulate them as they mature.

I believe that all children have the ability to learn and the right to a quality education. All youths, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, and capabilities should have the opportunity to learn from professional, well-informed teachers who are sophisticated and knowledgeable, both in their area of expertise and life. Certainly, every child has different learning styles and aptitudes; however, by having a personal relationship with every student, a teacher can give each an equal chance of success. By recognizing every student's potential and having separate, individual goals for each, a teacher can accommodate personal needs and abilities and encourage the pursuit of academic aspirations.

I think that teaching and learning are a reciprocal processes. When teachers nurture individual talents in each child, educators can build self-esteem and may encourage a lifelong skill. By supporting these special abilities, teachers can, for example, guide students' research, and students can, in turn, enlighten teachers about subjects in which they may not be as knowledgeable. This mutual respect for individual skills cultivates a professional academic relationship, leading to a give-and-take educational alliance. This liaison allows students to feel that they are on equal intellectual ground with their teachers, thus creating a strong academic atmosphere.

In addition to having a reciprocal relationship with one's students, it is vitally important for teachers to form partnerships with fellow educators. Solid communication among teachers will promote the sharing of ideas and methods and provide a network of support. By working as an educational team, teachers will continue to develop their craft and give the best education possible to their students.

In choosing to become a teacher, I have made the commitment to myself and my future students to be the best academic, personal, and ethical role model I can be. It is my goal to have a mutually enriching teaching career by keeping an open mind and continually communicating with my peers and students. I am prepared to rise to the challenges of teaching in the 21st century, and I promise to try to provide an honest, well-rounded education to every student I encounter.