





Carrie Lee

PHILOSOPHY OF TEACHING

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A student-created music list is playing softly, students are talking, laughing, dropping off their bags as they chat. They return to the front of the room to the whiteboard and grab a magnet placing it on the scale to represent how they are feeling. Other students are doing the same, then returning to their seats. The bell rings and the last few from the whiteboard head back to sit down. The kids are still chatting, about the pictures that serve as the labels for the scale. A series of claps call and response and everyone is quiet and ready to start. I read a quote, then note the pattern of where we are as a class. I read the agenda and objectives, and we get started. It's book club day so the students are reviewing notes, reading, and conducting discussions independently, and taking notes to summarize. This is a typical Monday in my classroom. At the end they will publish their updates from book club to their google sites, then they will write in a growth mindset journal in response to a prompt, and I will tell a horrible joke, and they will groan. They love it though.

I believe in providing each student with an engaging learning experience, where their physical, mental, emotional, social, and intellectual needs directly influence the activities and strategies implemented. I will encourage my students to express themselves, accept themselves for who they are through writing and reading representative pieces. I will use creative techniques to expand their perspectives to allow them to embrace the differences of others, embedding inclusivity and belonging through projects and collaborative learning. I will use relationship-building and team-building strategies to create this type of atmosphere where students can meet their full potential. I will provide a safe environment where students are invited to share their ideas and take risks, where mistakes are a normal part of growing.

I aim to bring an open mind, high expectations, and a positive outlook to each day in the classroom. I diligently strive for consistency in rituals and routines and to offer a sense of warmth, caring, and stability as part of my classroom role. I believe students' time should be respected, and educational activities should be equitable. I know I am a better teacher when I am with my students than when they are on their own, so I endeavor to find innovative ways to efficiently use the time given to deliver instruction and measure learning. I will incorporate real-world applications of content, hands-on learning, technology incorporated activities, project-based assessments, cooperative learning, and choice-based challenges to engage and activate each student's learning.

I am a mother of children who have special needs and learning differences, and this fact influences my beliefs on the importance of transparency, communication, and customization of the educational experience to match the student's learning style(s). My philosophies have certainly been informed by the many books read and classes I have taken in my education journey, but the most impactful training is the unique experience of student teaching through a pandemic. I have had so much more insight and skills due to the unprecedented times, and that gives me a far wider set of experiences than a "normal" year would. I have come to understand that being a teacher is a lifelong journey of learning from the students, colleagues, parents, and the community at large. I know that my philosophy will grow and evolve as I do, which is exactly what I want to model for my students.