

Teaching Philosophy

There are numerous reasons why one wishes to become a teacher. In my opinion, the most important reason is the inevitable influence that we as educators have on our students. While a teacher's technical job is to teach curriculum and prepare students for their academic futures, their inexplicit job is to inspire and encourage students to reach their potential. By having a career in education, I hope to have the opportunity to work in schools that contain students whose families are considered to have low socio-economic status and have a student body made predominantly of minorities.

Many title one schools with low-income students do not have the resources, funding, or organizational skills to satisfy and meet the expectations of a "good teacher" i.e, a teacher who can teach their students to do considerably well on standardized tests. However, what many students need is a teacher who will not only help them achieve academically, but also achieve in various life endeavors. Students learn best in an environment where the classroom culture is collaborative, the questions pertain to the current lives of the students, and each student feels secure about their placement within the class.

In *The Effects of Cooperative Learning on Junior High School Students During Small Group Learning* by Robyn Gillies, Gillies explains when classrooms are structured in such a way that students depend on one another to succeed, the likelihood of their collaboration drastically increases. The key to collaborative work is to have a clear objective so that students will know how they are supposed to help one another in order to achieve the goal. As educators, we know that every student, regardless of their future occupation, will have to work collaboratively with others. By promoting collaborative work in the classroom, we help students develop social skills as well as increase their cognitive abilities.

While one major way to determine whether each student understands the material is to provide an examination, the assessment of each student in a group assignment, such as their share of the assignment or how they explained the material to their peers, is equally as valuable. In *How People Learn* by John Bransford, Bransford talks about what he calls "the transfer of learning." This is where students take what they have learned and apply it to new problems to which they have not yet been exposed. The transfer of learning can apply to problems within and outside of a classroom setting and as someone who will spend ample time with their students, I wish to teach lessons that apply to all aspects of their lives. One way to do this is to create classroom examples in terms that apply to the students' current lives. This helps to bridge the cultural gap that students may have when reading problems that do not relate to them.

Another key component of my classroom will be to encourage the underrepresented individuals in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), to pursue higher education and careers in these fields. In *Addressing Underrepresentation: Physics Teaching for All* by Moses Rifkin, Rifkin is quick to point out that representation in STEM fields are predominantly white men. Students internalize this information and then feel as though they do not have what it takes to be in this line of work. This is why it is important to diversify the information of individuals being taught within the classroom. In order to combat the stereotype that women and minorities do not belong in STEM, we need to create a classroom in which all students, regardless of gender or race, feel welcomed and encouraged to participate.