Teaching Philosophy

As author Taylor Mali wrote in his poem, “Miracle Workers:” “Then she saw the pencil on her desk and screamed. ‘You’re a miracle worker! How did you do that?’ I just gave you what I knew you needed before you had to ask for it. Education is the miracle, I’m just the worker. But I’m a teacher. And that’s what we do.” Ultimately, this is my goal as an educator. Education is a beautiful gift that I believe everyone should have the opportunity to receive, and I want to be the one to ensure my students receive it. I give and work selflessly to help my students rise above the challenges that face them both inside and outside the classroom. Similarly, I expect my students to return the favor of hard work and diligence. A belief I hold to be true is that in order to gain anything in this world, one must put in what they expect to receive. Poor work will lead to poor results. However, exceptional work coupled with patience, perseverance, and a supportive teacher will lead to exceptional results that the student can be truly proud in. I intend for my students to meet these high expectations by implementing lessons that stem from a progressivist philosophy and are varied, interactive, group-oriented and designed to motivate and inspire.

I intend to incorporate a progressivist curriculum within my classroom that seeks to relate what is learned in a lesson to real-world applications. I am not only responsible for ensuring my students fully comprehend the subject matter, but are also prepared to function and feel confident as members of society. I believe that being an actively involved participant in lessons provokes curiosity and questioning optimizes a student’s academic potential. In order to reach this level of involvement, students should be engaging in hands-on projects and testing theories instead of merely analyzing what lies within textbooks. Beyond meeting standard requirements and addressing topic material, I believe in preparing my students to be life-long learners. Learning about the world around us should not conclude at the end of the school day or upon high school graduation, but continue into time spent at home and long into one’s life.

In order to implement these philosophies, my lessons will incorporate group work that encourages students to develop communication and active listening skills. The development of these skills is crucial for students to possess both inside and outside of the classroom. My subject concentration is in music. As a music teacher, I believe my students should always have hands-on practice within music. Lessons in which students are applying skills learned in the classroom is necessary when learning how to play an instrument and create music in an ensemble setting. In addition, my lessons go beyond simply analyzing what is heard within music. They will incorporate assignments designed to hone reading, writing, and critical thinking skills—all of which can be utilized throughout other subjects. Assessment will be a vital tool to help and not deter students from achieving their best. The most vital forms of assessment in my classroom will reside in informal observation of student performance and participation.

As the Pakistani activist for female education, Malala Yousafzai, once wrote, “One child, one teacher, one book, one pen can change the world.” Positive change in this world sometimes has the most modest of origins—one of which can be the classroom. Knowledge helps pave the way for a brighter future, and I intend to make sure all of my students have access to that future.