

PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

My philosophy of education starts with teaching students to interpret and adapt to an ever-changing world. My field is mathematics where I stress the ability to reason with logic and to think analytically and precisely in the solving of mathematical problems. I encourage students to question how mathematical thinking can be applied to problems in both pure and applied science, economics, and architecture.

A teacher not only must be a master of his/her subject but also have an appreciation and an enthusiasm for it. This enthusiasm will make teaching a pleasure and will inspire students to study and apply themselves. Since I started my teaching career at the Borough of Manhattan Community College, I can tell which topics and concepts students have the most issues with and how to remedy those issues. I then provide more examples to reinforce topics.

Today, as technology is having an impact on mathematics, I take time to show the use of the TI-83 and TI-84 plus calculator and Geometer's Sketchpad; powerful tools to help students become better organized in their solutions and clearer in the presentation of examples. A strategy of mine is to motivate students to use this technology in preparation for continuing it in their careers.

In a classroom, keeping students interested in a subject is critical. I believe it is the teacher's responsibility to work one-on-one with a student or in small groups to answer questions that were not discussed in class. As a student, I

always talked to my professors about concepts and problems unclear to me. There is nothing worse than a teacher unwilling to listen and not answer questions. Students feel at a loss and the chances that the students will do well are slim. Therefore, one of my priorities as a teacher is to always extend a helping hand to all my students.

For a course to be successful, ideas must bounce off between teacher and students. For this to occur the teacher should plan lessons that motivate students to think critically and to ask “what if” questions. In my classroom, I combine traditional, directed teaching of the subject and its topics with a combination of constructivist teaching that allows students to work in groups in their own zones of proximal development. Students will have a continuing interest in the subject matter.

A teacher is a professional and must know how to handle any problem with students, fellow teachers, and administrators. Teachers need to reflect on what they teach and ask themselves, “What do I want the students to know and know how to do?” I believe a teacher must be organized, strict yet open to discussion in their lessons, take an interest in their students, be fair in grading, and most importantly of all, be a beacon of knowledge for the students to absorb. In addition, a teacher must take the time to professionally plan their lessons and take the time to write assessments of the subject.

In conclusion, I continue to improve my teaching techniques. I *strongly* believe there is a difference between “teaching” and “teacher.” I do “teach” mathematics to my

students but I always have an open-door policy for my students whenever they need help with anything else. I do not spoon-feed all the information to my students; I try to extract answers from my class and love to have a lot of interaction with my students when involved in board work. The description above is a “teacher,” not someone who just “teaches.” I believe, when one is a “teacher,” one is always learning about oneself and there is always room for improvement. I’m always there for my students, involved within the college and in the community, and always willing to improve and professionally develop.

It is because of the teachers who inspired and encouraged me that I decided to enter the teaching profession. In turn, I hope to do the same for my students – to give them goals, a sense of accomplishment and, hopefully, to make a difference in their lives.