

My Teaching Philosophy: A Work in Progress and Always Should Be

-Tonya N. Clark

I believe that a teacher uses all their experiences and abilities to educate and equip students with life-long skills. Learning skills such as social, academic, real-world, problem solving and research combined with positive experiences will empower children to become healthy and successful individuals. The success of students learning is dependent on how they are being educated and is also dependent on the environment in which the student is being taught. I feel it is vital that a teacher identifies the learning needs of her students and knows how to create and control the learning environment to reach to meet those needs. A teacher must reflect and analyze their instruction methods consistently to improve their teaching. I also believe that a teacher must develop healthy working relationships with her students, their parents, co-workers and the community. A teacher who has respect for her students and their community will develop successful student-teacher relationships.

With respect to a classroom, a single class can have special education students, regular education students and gifted students. Differentiation of lessons/curriculum is often necessary to meet learning needs. I start with current academic assessment and placement already on file and conduct assessment of my own to receive feedback. Differentiation can be done per lesson, per project or even per class. Depending on grade and ability level, the requirements for grading may be adjusted and tests may be modified. In a multi-level classroom, I can create authentic lessons (commonly using a rubric) to allow students to show what they are learning. With different methods of delivery (lecture, project, hands-on etc.) and using formative, summative and authentic assessments would give me a larger picture of the student's abilities and learning gain.

I am very passionate about each of my students and work hard to inspire students from all academic levels and backgrounds. I am a very detail-oriented person and manage time well. I enjoy the freedom and creativity of working independently and respect being part of a team working for common goals. I pride myself on research and communication skills and welcome as much feedback and criticism that my colleagues and students give me. I have used all common Microsoft programs, both Mac and PC and have integrated lessons using technology including a course in integrating technology in education.

I take the time to get to know my students especially their interests so I can make a connection with them. I then use that connection to the best of my ability into my lesson plans. I work to establish a safe and open discussion atmosphere with my classes. Issues can be behavioral and/or academic so knowing where your students are coming from, their background and ability level is very crucial in planning lessons and classroom management. Each student comes with their own set of strengths and weaknesses and I like to focus on the strengths and work on their weaknesses in a positive systematic way. I am very flexible and welcome learning new programs and training to support my students. I consistently adjust lessons, instructions, strategies (my teaching toolkit) to meet the needs of students. I prefer positive reinforcement and identifying the learning styles of students when planning lessons. I work to make academic progress a comfortable pace for students emotional and academic ability.

Our world is dynamic, and teachers need to be at the forefront to give students a solid foundation for their future. Not only with strong core subject skills, but helping them discover the best way they can apply their individual ability and knowledge for the goals and future that they desire.

