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Personal Philosophy of Teaching

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If I were to sum up my philosophy of education in one phrase, it would be Isaiah 60:15b (KJ2), “I will make you an eternal excellence, a joy of many generations.” When I am in a classroom, I always try to see the potential in all of my students. My entire education was in quality private institutions. I hope to bring the rigor I experienced to my public school classroom.

The purpose of education is to bring out the best in students. The purpose education can be muddled with standardized tests and apathy for the trade. Students need to learn how to reason, because once they can distil information independently, they can learn independently. It vital that students can learn on their own, because they will not always be in the classroom. The best a student is a student who can grow from what a teacher has taught.

All students can learn, but not all students know that. Students need to be told that they can be successful every day, because many do not know they have potential. Some students excel in some areas and some in others. It is important to encourage students in the area they love but it is also important to challenge them to grow in the areas they don't. If a teacher tells her students every day that they can be excellent they will be.

The job of a teacher is to work hard to get the best from her students. As a teacher, I will stay late to work on plans, I will work one on one with my students, and I will seek out specialists when necessary. Every day I will tell my students they can make a difference and make them say it to themselves. Teachers need to equip their students to be their best by making them believe in themselves.

Differentiation is an important part of education. Students learn differently so teachers need to help students by using different teaching strategies. I think that one of the best ways to do this would be to alternate the style of each lesson. This would help students grow and learn in all areas. If a teacher teaches her students the same way every lesson they won't be able to stretch their learning abilities. Instruction should be adapted to reach all students, with the intent of helping them learn and grow.

The set up of a classroom is also important to the learning process. It should be organized in a way that will encourage learning while maintaining classroom management. The teacher should be able to get around the room so she can help the students and keep an eye on them. The arrangement should be designed to keep students focused on the lesson but also able to work collaboratively.

As far as management goes, the classroom setup should lend itself to that. Teachers should be firm yet engaging. Students should know the expectations and be trained to meet them. A teacher can achieve this through practice. A teacher who does not have her students respect will not be able to teach them. The classroom should be an area where students know their boundaries without feeling restricted.

When I started the education program at Regent I was unsure what I believed about teaching. I knew I wanted to emphasize intellect, reason, and the classics, but I was not sure how that would fit into my philosophy. Up until I began student teaching I thought of emphasizing intellect alone. Now I am more focused on encouraging reasoning in students. I began to realize that through independent reasoning a student could grow academically. Though I still hold some of my beliefs, actually being in a classroom has changed some of my views.

One more thing is vital to my philosophy of education: my faith. I was raised in a Christian home, going to a Christian school as a child through adolescence, and ending up at a Christian University. My beliefs on classroom management are strongly impacted by my faith. Proverbs 22:5 (NKJV) says, “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.” This is a common verse that people are drawn to when it comes to discipline. When I read this, I am not drawn to the first part of the verse, but rather to the latter. I want my students to recall me, their teacher from elementary school, and remember how I taught them to behave. I may not see this, but I take comfort in knowing that, in spite of the things my students may go through in their life, they will know right from wrong as a result of my teaching. The Bible tells me that this will be true.

As I said in my introduction, my philosophy can be boiled down to one phrase, “I will make you an eternal excellence, a joy of many generations” (Isaiah 60:15, KJ2). Students can learn to be excellent and in that excellence bring joy to their family in the present and future. If it weren’t for educators in my life who encouraged me to be excellent, I would have never tried to be good at anything. Through those teachers I was able to find purpose and I want to pass that on to my students by encouraging them to be as excellent as they can be.