

My Teaching Philosophy

Every child deserves the right to learn and the chance to achieve their dreams and goals. Teachers are here to help facilitate this and guide them to a long healthy future. We set the way for the future and help guide the next generation of doctors, scientists, politicians, etc. For this reason and more, it is essential to create a positive learning environment in which any child, regardless of race, sexuality, or gender, can interact with the subject in fun and meaningful way. The reason why I am so motivated to create such an open and positive environment is because of my own school experiences. Starting in my middle school years, math became harder to understand, and no one could help me understand. Because of this, I began find different ways to try and understand math. This was frowned upon by many of my middle and high school math teachers, but I kept with it since it helped me understand. During this time, I ran study groups for math to help others that also had difficult time understanding math. Eventually, I became passionate in helping others gain that accomplishment of passing such a tricky subject. I realized that I wanted to become a math teacher that is open to new ways to understanding the material, and I wanted to make an environment in which all students are welcomed.

Growing a student's confidence through assignments:

Math is a very intense subject that can require a lot of repetitious work to master important key concepts. This means that the work involved with math can be very intimidating for students. That is why it is very important to handle the work required for math with the student in mind. To do this, I want to assign homework that takes in consideration a student's time outside of the classroom. This includes giving out homework that can be checked while at home. Also, I do not want to discredit any student that has a different way to solve problems. This will only lower their confidence when doing assignments. Because of that I will ask that students show their work, but I will explain to them that it is not to judge how they solve problems. I want to use it to encourage students to solve problems in new ways using core math concepts. Finally, it is very important to make sure students can relate to math, so I want to show that math has meaning and use real examples to show how math can be used to solve all types of problems they will have in life. This can be done by using current events and finding way to connect them back to math, like how using statistics can help predict if someone's favorite team will win.

Showing the fun side of math:

It breaks my heart that math is often thought to be the boring subject that students have. I want to show my students that math is not about knowing what " $y = mx + b$ ", but about solving puzzles using various patterns that you learn along the way. I want to invest in different and fun math tools that can help those that are more hands on to understand. I want to use small projects that will get students to engage with the material and spur on their creativity. Getting my students engaged, means that I will have to keep up with current trends to make math relatable to them. This could mean using social media outlets, such as Tiktok or YouTube, to make the time fun and relatable. Also, the various videos and audio clips that I want to use are not just the 'boring' educational videos. There are also content creators that display math in fun way, such as The Game Theory channel, which uses math to answer theories in video games. Using popular

videos will help connect the information and allow learning of new material to become meaningful to the students. This is a great use of Ausubel's theory of meaningful learning. And to keep the fun going, I want to reward students to participate by using rewards like candy, chips and/or chocolates. This way they can see that it is rewarding to participate and answer questions.

Giving struggling students a chance:

All students learn at different paces and in different ways, and it is important to give students that are struggling a way to keep up with the course. The biggest way I want to do this is by giving students fair extra credit opportunities. I do not just want to give them the grade that they want too, so I will promote hard work using various extra credit moments. One of the chances that a student could earn extra credit is by meeting with me afterschool or during lunch hours to finish their missing or current work, or we can go over previous test questions that they struggled with. There is also one other way I want to reach out to struggling students. Students do not just do schoolwork at school; they also must take the work home. Parents are not always equipped to help their children with the work either. That is why I want to also reach out to the parents. With their permission, I will keep them up to date on missing or current assignments. This will expand a student's zone of proximal development, as it gives them more knowledgeable other in which they will be able to gather more knowledge from. Vygotsky's social constructivism believes that learning must have social interaction with someone that is more knowledgeable and with their guidance a student can expand on their own skills and abilities. I also want to make various videos or Tiktoks, which parents can use to help their children understand the assignments. This way a struggling student does not feel like they are alone when doing work at home.

Promoting unity and respect in the classroom:

Secondary school years are some of the toughest times that a student will have to go through. That is why it is important to give my students ways that they can work together and respect each other, regardless of who the other person is. To start encouraging my students to work together, I want to reward those that make study groups or share their notes with absent classmates. If the students were open and inviting to anyone regardless of their race, culture, sexuality, or gender, I will reward them with extra credit. I want to also do fun lessons in which students work together as a class to complete the work and reward them for working together. Maybe even talk to my coworkers and working together to make a fun competition for the classes. According to Tajfel's theory of social identity, people tend to adapt the identity of their group, making various 'in-groups'. This leads to people categorizing each other and eventually can cause students to develop prejudices. Students also gain the mind set of their in-group, which can cause further issues in learning. To prevent this, it is key to preventing in-groups. As for creating a respectful place for my students, I am a firm believer that to earn respect that you must give respect. Because of that I will always do my best to be honest and respectful to my students, but I will expect the same in return. This also means, I will be open to listen to my students, never just telling a student to figure it out themselves or ignoring their questions or hard work. Whether it is inside or outside the classroom, I will never discriminate a student, parent, or coworker regardless of race, gender, sexuality, etc, and I will stop any sort of prejudice that I see.

Promote positive communication:

Communication is key when teaching, but it also matters how you communicate to students. That is why I want to provide methods to communicate in positive ways. One way is if a student wants to talk to me, I will be understanding and attentive to what they have to say, even if it is critique. If a student does have an issue with me, then I want to talk it out with them and find ways that we can work together to achieve the main goal. This way I can self-reflect on any issues that my students are having with me, and they can also understand the reason for the things that I do. When it comes to out of the class communication, I will always keep up to date with my students and, if possible, the parents. Finally, I want to be an example of positive and open communication so that if students are having issues with each other, they can learn how to peacefully settle disputes.

Conclusion:

A classroom is not supposed to be a prison for a student, but a place where they can learn and grow. To do those it is important for teachers to be able to relate to their students and give lesson that can connect with their students. For this, it is key to make a fun and rewarding place for students to learn. While students must do work, the work does not have to be boring or extremely time-consuming. It can be something simple, but it must be meaningful when it comes to math. There are so many new mediums to in which math can be taught, each helping the different ways people learn. A positive and rewarding atmosphere will hopefully inspire students to work happily, instead of just harder. It is also important for a teacher to be an example for the students. In many ways, I am their guide into the world of math. An effective guide is knowledgeable, but also, is patient and knows how to provide an open positive communication with others. As an example, I will promote a prejudice free environment, so that my students understand that I expect this from them as well. Because of this, I will be respectful of everyone and be open to talk to any of my students. This way I can lead by example for my students.