

My Philosophy of Education

Citizenship

I believe that a teacher should model good behavior and prepare students to be productive citizens. He should also assist parents in teaching them to respect others' rights and properties.

Expectations

I believe that a teacher's expectations of self and students should be high. Instruction should be clear and compelling, but students must take personal responsibility for learning. As a teacher, I am primarily a guide and facilitator; not a taskmaster or rescuer. Neither forcing students to work nor letting them off easy will serve them well in the long run.

Motivation

I believe that there are three ways to motivate: by reward, punishment, and challenge. The first two are largely counterproductive because they require the teacher to continually "up the ante" until it is no longer possible to do so. The challenge has no such limitation. When a challenge is accepted and fulfilled, it should be recognized and respected. Sincere appreciation for a job well done should follow the challenge.

Self-Esteem

I believe that high self-esteem is the natural by-product of hard work and personal sacrifice. It does not come from parents, teachers, ecclesiastical leaders or friends merely telling a person that he or she is special. If a student suffers from low self-esteem, the teacher should explain this principle and present an attainable challenge.

Accountability

I believe that students should be allowed to experience the consequences of making poor choices in both academic and social terms. A teacher should empathetically urge them to make necessary corrections and move on. If a reprimand is called for, the teacher should focus on the behavior rather than questioning the student's character. The teacher deserves the same consideration.

Help

I believe in the spirit of the old adage, *God helps those who help themselves*. After instruction and discussion, the teacher should provide practice problems to be solved, then students should use appropriate tools and resources to find solutions on their own. If help is needed, the student should ask for it. I also believe in providing sincere, positive reinforcement and follow the help model of Fred Jones: 1) point out what the student has done correctly; 2) briefly indicate what the student should do next; 3) leave the student to do so.

Grades

I believe that grades should accurately reflect the student's level of proficiency in well-defined learning tasks. Neither the teacher nor the parent should be arbitrary or unreasonable in their expectations of the child, who should, in turn, do his or her level best.

Extracurricular Activities

I believe that many extracurricular activities offer students the opportunity to develop important skills and pursue excellence by means unavailable in the traditional classroom setting. Involvement in athletics and other extracurricular activities should be encouraged as long as they do not interfere with adequate progress in academics.

Parental Involvement

I believe that parents should always be aware of their child's progress and the best channel for this is honest and open conversation. A teacher should encourage this in every reasonable way. It is important for the parent to remember that a child's perspective is highly subject to their immaturity, emotional state, desire for attention or approval, peer pressure, misunderstanding or ignorance of context, and so on.

Finally

I believe that the most vital aspect of my job is to teach students how to use their minds well, to encourage them to identify and develop their own particular talents to the fullest possible extent, and to strive for excellence in everything they do.