

### **Student One's Philosophy of Teaching**

It is hard to write down my philosophy of teaching. Teaching is very interactive, in the moment, and real; therefore, it is hard for me to try to describe what I do and believe in a few short pages. When I began to think about my philosophy I knew respect was a large part, but it started me thinking about the famous three R's in teaching: Reading, 'Riting, and 'Rithmetic. There is even another famous set: reduce, reuse, recycle. While neither of these sets of "r" words help to describe my philosophy of teaching, it does provide me with a framework for discussing my teaching beliefs. The following will describe my three R approach to teaching: Respect, Relationships, and Responsibility.

#### **Respect:**

Respect is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as "to treat or regard with deference, esteem, or honor". I want this to be a guiding principle in my instruction and in the attitudes of myself and my students. This is an important part of my teaching because a classroom committed to respect creates an open environment where students feel comfortable and able to learn. In my experience, when I treated my students with respect by listening carefully to them, asking them about themselves, and showing them that I thought their ideas and opinions mattered, the students felt good about themselves and felt ready to learn. I want my classroom to be a place where my students feel respected by me and the others and where I feel respected by my students. This means respecting each other's space, ideas, values, culture, religion, sexuality, and learning. I want my classroom to be a place where people respect the needs of each other whether that means being a shoulder to cry on or a listening ear or by providing a safe haven. Although I want respect to be a guiding principle inside my classroom, I want my students to learn about respecting others outside of the classroom. During my student teaching experience I was able to teach an integrated social studies and language arts unit which focused on World War II and the Holocaust and *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry. While teaching this unit, my students and I often spoke about respect and how to treat others. This was an incredibly engaging unit for the students, and I saw them begin to understand how respect can help eliminate hatred. This knowledge was then translated into how they treated each other. I want respect to begin with me and filter through my students outward. This community of respect can allow for deep learning.

#### **Relationships:**

Relationships can be a part of my classroom in many ways. I want to have relationships with my students and their parents. By building these relationships I can better know my students and their needs. I can create an environment that is a positive place for them that takes into account their interests and most importantly their learning needs. Also, I can make parents feel comfortable coming in to my room and communicating with me about the needs of their child. By creating a positive rapport with students and parents and forming relationships built on trust, honesty, and communication, we can work together to help provide the students with the best education possible. During my student teaching experience I was able to build relationships with my students. Several of them came to me first if they did not understand something or had a problem. I knew about their home lives, their families, their interests, and their after school plans. Through this knowledge, I was able to create learning activities which incorporated student interests and connections between school and my students' lives. In addition to relationships with students and their parents, I want to form relationships with my colleagues and my administrators. This will help me to feel part of the professional culture and will help me to form friends and allies who understand my goals and desires and will work with me to create the best education for my students. As a student teacher, it felt wonderful when one of the other fifth grade teachers wanted to use a website I had found or

an activity I had created. I felt like one of the group, and I knew we were working together to provide our students with the best education possible.

I also want my students to have relationships with others and see relationships between subjects and themes. I want to create a classroom environment that includes cooperative grouping, peer teaching, and a collaborative mindset. This will help the students grow socially, emotionally, and academically. Also, I want my students to form relationships with others, senior citizens, other students, and people in other countries. I want my students to learn about these people and embrace them. One of my most fabulous teaching moments was when a student of mine made the connection between the German occupation of Denmark and United States' involvement in the war in Iraq. I want my students to make connections like that to real things everyday, and I want to help them see those connections. Not only was my student examining his own relationship as a citizen of the United States to the war in Iraq but also the relationship between our learning in class and the real world. These relationships are pivotal in helping my students learn.

### **Responsibility:**

I have a responsibility to my students. I have a responsibility to come prepared each day with lessons that are engaging, differentiated, and focused on experiences my students can relate to. I have a responsibility called teacher efficacy in which I believe that all students can learn and that I know how to and do help students learn. I have a responsibility to teach my students the content they are expected to know and also content that they are not expected to know but either want to or should know. I have a responsibility to teach my students using a variety of instructional methods and assess in a variety of authentic ways. Creating instruction which encompasses those responsibilities can be time-consuming work, but the benefits to students are overwhelming. One of my best lessons, however, was quite simple. I had the students write a prediction for the ending of a chapter we were reading in class. I had the students brainstorm to provide background knowledge and support for each other. Then I went around to all of my students to provide them with help they needed to complete the task. My students created interesting and suspenseful chapter endings that they were proud of and excited about. All of my students were engaged in learning content, and it was because I upheld my responsibilities to my students.

I also have a responsibility to teach my students about responsibility by giving them authentic ways to be responsible. One way I can do this is by giving students jobs in class. Simply by letting my students help deliver papers or pass out the hand sanitizer at lunch, my students felt a sense of responsibility. I also want to teach my students about responsibility in completing tasks on time through setting goals and time management. I want my students to be responsible for turning in their homework when it is due and for completing it if it is not done; I also want my students to learn to set goals and meet them in academic and other realms. I want my students to understand about their responsibilities as citizens and people and what that means for our world. During my student teaching experience my class and I discussed civic responsibilities. During one of our discussions my student told me that she thought that somebody should do something like Martin Luther King Jr. and maybe it should be her. I want my students to know that they can be those people.

I have the respect for my students to create an environment in which they feel comfortable, safe, and able to learn. I have relationships to form with my students and others to help provide the best instruction for my students to help them see relationships between themselves and others and the world. Lastly, I have the responsibility to help all my students learn to the best of their abilities every day.