

## **Statement of Beliefs**

As an educator, I would consider my pedagogy as rooted in a humanist philosophy, and fostering good future citizens of society is the core foundation of my pedagogical philosophy. My belief in fostering good citizens is born out of my passion for social justice, and the empathy I possess for my fellow human being. This is why I decided to pursue a career as a Social Studies teacher. I believe that our youth are the very future of our species; societal progress is steady and slow, but as the youth become adults and by extension, citizens, the norms and values they possessed as youth begin to influence the greater norms and values of society; in the words of John Dewey, “I believe that education is the fundamental method of social progress and reform.” (Dewey, 1897). As a result, my education opts to forgo the more traditional focus on content in favour of a holistic approach, in which I utilize the required subject knowledge as a vessel in which to teach the necessary skills and attitudes that I believe are pivotal to being good citizens. Especially since, as demonstrated in the publication, “Little Kids, Big Ideas,” by the editors of Rethinking Schools (2019), our children are becoming more and more aware of complex and disturbing truths about the world at younger and younger ages.

My instructional strategies are similarly based on good citizenship, as I believe what takes place in the classroom mirrors what takes place in society. I aim for students to work collaboratively, learn collaboratively, and teach one another. In order to accomplish this, a student must have a decent sense of self-esteem, and I as a teacher feel I am responsible for contributing to that confidence. A student must feel confident and comfortable participating in class activities. As such, I ensure that I am an inclusive, engaging educator that works diligently at making his classroom a safe and enjoyable space. I engage with students outside of instructional hours to form a positive relationship, which both increases student participation and

exemplifies what good citizenship looks like. To continue modeling proper citizenship, I employ a Democratic style of Classroom Management (Şenturk & Oyman, 2014) I go further by employing inclusive practices in this democratic classroom, so that every student has a sense of belonging; like Sapon-Shevin before me, I believe inclusion is a matter of social justice (2019). In order to foster that inclusivity, I believe it is important for educators to understand their privileges, and how their students may not have those privileges. (MacIntosh, 1988). This includes basing my instruction on culturally relevant topics, providing copies of pivotal documents in a different language, or even just placing posters of prominent historical figures of various races, genders, religions, and so forth. This can also mean just something small, like doing research on any unfamiliar names on the class list prior to the term; in the publication, *Honor Their Names*, it is correctly stated that “Student’s names are the first thing teachers learn about the students coming into their classroom,” (Christensen, 2020). I also do not believe that inclusive practices are limited to simply respecting a person’s cultural background. It further extends to varying my instructional strategies, as every student learns differently, based on Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences (Gardner, 1992). As such, I believe students learn best through experiential learning, most popularized in the works of David Kolb (2014). As such, I work diligently to design engaging lessons in which the students learn by doing.

My assessment strategies are similarly based on raising self-esteem, in the service of fostering good citizenship. I employ scaffolding to gradually familiarize my students with complex topics. I design my formative assessments so that all students who work hard will achieve a high grade, while still indicating to me their level comprehension. My summative assessment takes into account different strengths students may possess, and as such contain multiple avenues for completion. For example, students could write an essay, film a mock news

cast, record a mock radio show, and other methods of assessment that allow students to play to their strengths while also providing me with the content necessary for evaluation.

I believe all students have the potential to be outstanding, and that this is a necessary achievement in order for the most rapid possible societal progress. In order to foster this, I enter the role of both coach and cheerleader, ensuring they're rightfully proud of the work they're doing, while also forcing them to strive to be better. In the words of Rita Pearson, "Every Child Deserves a Champion," (Ted Talk, 2013).

## References

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