

Statement of Teaching Philosophy

"The aim of education should be to teach us rather how to think, than what to think - rather to improve our minds, so as to enable us to think for ourselves, than to load the memory with thoughts of other men." – Bill Beatie

It is my love of children, of community and of harnessing compassionate, socially responsible, open-hearted individuals, that has allowed me the proper mindset to reflect upon my philosophy of education. In keeping with these dreams, I believe that in order to fully educate any person, one must grant that person the freedom to learn, to create, to speak their mind and to make mistakes. My goal as a teacher is to channel these freedoms when guiding the young minds of children. I feel that learning can only occur when a student feels encouraged to meet their full potential; I aspire to create an environment which allows children to feel comfortable expressing their needs, personal and academic goals, and aspirations while certain that they will receive the respect of their classmates and myself. I believe wholeheartedly in the concept of the classroom community – each child feeling equally responsible for the well-being of their peers as they do themselves. With an attention for mindfulness, students become socially responsible learners, open to different ideas, values and mentalities – open to learning. In such an environment I will take the role as facilitator, providing materials and outlets for students to reach their potential.

I strive to create student-centered classrooms, where students become united and empowered, playing a larger role in each day's events, decisions and responsibilities. I impart this type of learning by working with individuals, recognizing their goals and values and creating opportunities for them to suggest topics of interest, or different approaches to learning. I believe that this type of classroom sparks critical thinking, as students *create* suggestions rather than becoming constant receivers of instruction.

My goal is to reach *every* student, as opposed to teaching to the typically developing students. While I strive to create an inclusive classroom, I try and use various teaching methods which differentiate instruction and provide students with opportunities to explore different interests, while diversifying their problem solving mechanisms. These learning methods often include, but are not limited to music, naturalist, verbal-linguistic, kinaesthetic, visual, and dramatic intelligences. I often engage students in outdoor experiential learning. I believe that forming a relationship with the natural world opens students to a realm of different possibilities while growing an awareness and love of their surrounding environment, feeling more inclined to protect our earth and its inhabitants.

In holding high expectations for students, we demonstrate our confidence in their ability to achieve their goals. While the expectations for my students remain high, my expectations for myself are even greater. In order to uphold these expectations, I have become a most reflective individual, often assessing my actions and methodology in order to improve. I try to impart this reflective behaviour upon my students, as a tactic in management. If students, of any age, reflect upon their own actions in misdemeanour, they are more likely to understand the consequences and to think twice before repeating such activities. With my students I am gentle and forgiving. Thus it is out of compassion, rather than fear, that they