

Philosophy of Education

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Specialization in Literacy

Schools play a unique role in our society. Through education students will discover the diversity of the world on both a global and a personal level. A successful educational program will encourage students to interact with individuals in various communities allowing them to share common life experiences and recognize that individuals are capable of having an impact on society. Schools, educators, and society need to supplement the students' journey by providing the tools to guide them towards making educated choices. This needs to be accomplished without stifling the creativity and natural inquisitive nature of the child.

Independent thinking is a required tool for making educated choices. For that reason, I feel my number one objective, as a primary teacher, is to teach the skills of independent thinking and problem solving. When confronted with any problem, I ask that students first attempt to solve the problem independently, then with help from a peer and finally with assistance from an adult. Breaking the need for constant adult guidance gives a student the power of independent thinking.

Educators need to provide a nurturing environment that encourages risk taking so students can begin to comprehend and embrace their individuality. This, in turn, will lead to a classroom of independent thinkers.

Literacy is essential to any student's education and should be the number one priority of schools. I feel students should be literate in a

wide variety of subjects. Therefore, the foundation of their literacy should be in a core knowledge program so students can discuss a variety of subjects from geography to the great masters of art and music. However, this method should be used only as a starting point for discussions and not for rote memorization. I believe that if the curriculum is addressed as a sounding board for ideas, it will foster independent thinking and create a classroom culture of academic excellence. These are the keys that will unlock the doors to infinite possibilities.

Access to technology is imperative in creating a well - rounded student. Technology is continually changing in our fast paced society and instruction in this area is a tool students will need for their arsenal. Students who become competent with computer skills will be able to explore new ideas and develop further problem solving skills. They will also begin to recognize the impact of emerging technologies on their world and their life. However, for this to be effective, educators need opportunities for Professional Development to gain the skills necessary to teach with these contemporary tools.

Options such as charter and magnet schools, which offer differing educational philosophies, should be made available to families. However, these options must support the theory that schools should be organized around the way students learn. Therefore, active participation in the classroom must be present, creativity must be valued and nurtured, evaluation should be based on problem-solving skills, and the individual

learning styles must be recognized for any academic situation to be viable. Options can give families a sense of partnership in what can otherwise be considered an overwhelming governmental machine.

Consequently, students must play an active role in the learning processes. Teachers must assess and activate prior knowledge to understand student thinking. Student questions should be encouraged and used as a starting point for discovery. Educators who incorporate group work will encourage students to become effective communicators and dynamic problem solvers.

Schools are unique in the fact that they have access to the minds that will determine the success of our future. Therefore, the educational system must be flexible enough to meet the needs of individual learners yet provide a strong foundation of essential knowledge for all students. We, as educators, should never forget the impact, both positive and negative, that we have on the future. What other institution has this type of influence over society? Therefore, I feel the key to education and schools is to teach students to be independent thinkers and learners which will allow them to be the agents of change which will help create a forward, progressive society.

