

Seanna Nichols' Statement of Teaching Philosophy

Education is the source of all the world's virtues and vices. I became a teacher to reduce the number of vices in the world. My teaching philosophy has two components: the student's role and the teacher's role.

I believe students absolutely need to be active participants in their own education. Too often I have seen colleagues underestimating the potential of a six-year-old. I support students, but I am endlessly eliciting through higher order questioning (this also allows me to formatively assess learning). I give delayed correction so students have time to process and think. I even question correct answers. I don't wait too long to reassure students that the original answer was correct, but I use it as an opportunity to demonstrate that they need to believe in themselves. It's my unique way of taking them "down the garden path."

I am focused on building the confidence and self-efficacy that students absolutely need to take charge of their education. I am not an authoritarian. I completely believe that building a student's character is every bit as important to their education as the academic strategies a teacher employs - that's why I assign jobs, hold students accountable, and help them understand how the classroom is a community. The classroom is the microcosm that represents who they will become in the larger world.

This brings me to the next point of my philosophy: teachers must create an environment that motivates students to be active participants in their own education. Teachers must create the foundation for students to build upon. Teachers are a supportive, but firm hand in the classroom.

Teachers don't just create motivational moments, but sustainable motivation. They do this by communicating high expectations, giving positive feedback, clearly modeling all concepts and instructions, encouraging metacognition, and giving consistent correction. By using nuanced subject matter with real world application and a relevant frame of reference, students will not just learn content, but be able to use it. While some students respond well to challenges, others may need more positive reinforcement. I have even used positive peer reporting systems to reach some unmotivated students. Understanding my students as individuals is central to my teaching style.

Another way teachers create sustainable motivation is by using creative and relevant materials. The use of technology is paramount in today's society. Finding the juxtaposition between creativity and technology is where students need to be working, encouraging them to be divergent thinkers. This is why I use applications like Class Dojo and Seesaw in my classroom.

The last component of my teaching philosophy concerns myself as a professional. I believe in constant professional development, exercising reflexive practicing. I'm always researching new strategies and trying new methods in my classroom until I find what works best. My current goal is to attain an IB certificate in teaching and learning.

Teaching is not what I do - it's who I am.