

Stephanie Skinner
Teaching Philosophy

The reasons I chose to become a teacher are clear. I love the transformation of the *before* to the *after*, when a student has learned something new. I also love being a constant support in the lives of students who do not always have constant support when they go home at night. However, being a teacher is not only about being a friend, confidant, or helper. Being a teacher means conveying certain information to my students efficiently, creatively, and effectively. Without the engagement of students, my job is not finished. Students need to be active participants in their own learning. When I know that I have finished a lesson and my students know what I taught and can apply it to their own lives, then I know that I am on the right track to being a good teacher.

When I think of the process of learning, I think of a ladder. Learning should be scaffolded, much like a ladder, so that students are guided up to their ultimate goal of finishing a grade level. Students cannot climb the ladder alone; they need the guiding support of their teacher. For example, in order for students to know how to add or subtract, they must understand numbers first. The same goes for multiplication and division; it is important for a teacher to scaffold the understanding of multiplication by relating it to the concept of addition because multiplication is repeated addition. Students must understand the connections between the things they learn to foster a deeper understanding of the way things work in their learning. I appreciate when a student can make these connections for me, so that I can point them out to the rest of my classroom. I think it is very important for students to be “in the know” about their own education.

Learning should be differentiated, and determined in part by the learner. Although differentiation makes a teacher’s job more challenging, it is worth it to put the extra time and effort into creating extra activities tailored to a student’s ability level.

My classroom is a place where students come each day, and are excited to enter. I envision a classroom where students can be the leaders alongside me. My students will have classroom jobs. My students will become so independent that my guidance would be there by request at times! Students will be able to experience how taking their learning into their own hands can be beneficial because they will see that learning can be a fun, enlightening experience! Of course, my supervision will always be there in the fact that I will ensure that we are following the grade level content expectations for my grade level, but I would love to present these expectations for my students in a way that engages all, while involving inquiry. This means taking the run-of-the-mill textbook activities and turning them into activities that students will be excited to complete. I also incorporate group work into my teaching style, so that students can have collaborative learning opportunities with their peers.

A common theme found throughout my teaching practice is RESPECT. I value the respect of my students toward me and other figures around the school. I respect my students; this means, I value their comments, answers, and ideas. I love hearing about their lives and strive to let them know they mean something to me and the rest of their classmates. But, most

importantly, students must respect themselves and believe that ultimately, they have the key to their own education in their hands. I am the person to help my students understand that.