Teaching Philosophy

I embrace teaching as a professional to instill inspiration and empowerment to students. I believe everyone can learn and develop to their full potential. Based on my beliefs regarding teaching and learning, I summarize my mission as a teacher as following:

- Enhance student learning as a transformative experience;
- Motivate learners to think critically and be honest to themselves;
- Provide a strong foundation for lifelong learning

To accomplish the goals, I will employ numerous different strategies based on major education principles including learning theory, learner’s cognitive functioning level(s), diversity issues, instructional planning, and assessments. When students engage in meaningful activities and perceive the subject matter to be related to their own lives, it is more likely that transformative learning will occur. Although students are responsible for their own learning, a teacher can mediate experiences by helping them make sense out of it or inspire them to achieve their maximum potential. Observing my students how they learn and listening to their experience will guide me to prepare the lesson plan relevant to the students’ need and encourage critical thinking. Learning is a complex process in which both the teacher and the learners play active roles and work as partners. From my point of view, the learners are not passive as if their minds were waiting to be filled with needed information. Rather, teaching empowers students to learn independently, inspires their courage to think outside the box, cultivates curiosity, fosters honest behavior, and clarifies values.

These are the guidelines of my daily practice in the classroom. First, I treat my students as explorers rather than receptacles of knowledge. Besides text books, other related materials are provided for the students to explore and investigate. I model in group activities and class discussions. Second, I focus on the learners. A few minutes at the beginning of the class will be used to diagnose the student’s preconceptions and prior knowledge. With this knowledge on hand, I focus on building on the foundation of what students already know. Also revisit some concepts they may misconceive. Third, I believe we learn from the mistakes we made. A few relevant concrete examples that disrupt prior student conceptions will be brought up in the class in order to motivate further learning and discovery. Fourth, I construct clear and well versed questions and problems to provoke rather than confuse the process of learning. Fifth, I employ collaborative activities such as buddy reading; therefore, students can teach one another. I organize classes according to students’ strengths and backgrounds. Finally, I create a stimulating yet non-competitive and non-intimidating environment in the classroom. When possible, I offer forums for students to demonstrate what they learned, e.g. power point presentation, poster display, and drama.

“Child should be educated and instructed in the principles of freedom.”
- John Adams –

I agree with John Adams’ statement that every child (not everyone) should be educated and instructed in the principles of freedom. In my view, a child should be taught and be educated whether they attend public schools or home schools. There are many choices available in the system. Parents have the responsibility to teach their children. They make the decision on how,
when, or where their children should go to get education. The role of government should be limited to providing the services.

“The power of knowledge: where to access the information, what to do with it, and how it relates with me as a human being”

I believe reading, writing, and mathematics are fundamentally important for a person to function independently in today society. Human history and knowledge are recorded by written words. It is imperative for an individual to learn how to read in order to access the vast volume of knowledge. Without learning how to write, a person leaves no footprint in his or her life journey. Language is essential to the survival of a culture. If people do not learn it, the language will be gone. Many ethnic groups in South America lost their original languages and end up speaking another language. Besides, children should learn history, science, and arts. History helps students to look back to the past and learn the rise and fall of human society. Science and arts are two different ways to show people’s creativity and spirit of adventure. With the basic skills of language and mathematics, people are able to appreciate and enjoy the arts and science.

The goal of education should be twofold: empower individual ability to be independent and free to pursue freedom and happiness. Attaining an education can help an individual acquire a skill or a job. A person can be financially independent. On the other hand, education also provides a place for people to explore and reason.

An old Chinese proverb says, “A teacher for a day is like a parent for a lifetime” I treasure this special student-teacher relationship.