Teaching Philosophy

Education, to me, is a process of enriching one's life with knowledge, based on which one seeks more knowledge, and explores the world of unknown. As a language educator, my job is not only to teach my students how to use a language, but more importantly, to help my students to develop a set of learning skills that enables them to think critically and to function independently in the target society. This is also a goal I set for my students.

I want to teach Mandarin Chinese because I love the language and I love the art of teaching. Mandarin Chinese is such a subtle and intriguing language that reflexes rich culture and history. When I was a Teaching Assistant in college I hosted study sessions to help students in the Chinese class. It was then I realized that I am good at communicating and that helping students gives me satisfaction. This is how I decided to teach.

During the process of teaching, students should be the one who shapes how education is conducted. Within a classroom, students show a wide range of traits. For example, some are better at speaking, while some are better at writing; some are from cultures that are closer to the target language, while some are not; etc. These are signs of different talents. On the other hand, one's performance is also shaped by outside forces. For example, some students just need to be properly motivated. Or, some of the students are poor exam takers but they excel in oral communication. This leads to my belief that all children can learn; all they need is a proper method.

In an ideal world, teachers should take all these traits into consideration while planning teaching. Given the limited resources, this might not be possible in reality. However, teachers should always try to teach in accordance to the students’ aptitude. As a result, I always try my best to design a well-balanced curriculum to cater to the general needs of the class, while reserving a small portion of time and energy to help the individuals who need special attention. I will make class assessment as flexible as possible. For example, 70% to 80% of the final grades come from standardized assignments and/or exams, leaving the remaining portion for students to choose what they would like to do, may it be a cultural presentation, a skit, or an essay. My job is to make sure whatever they choose to do is challenging enough. I stimulate my students’ passion to learn by encouraging them to assume increasing responsibility in shaping their own educational experiences. I will also keep in mind that I am not supposed to do everything myself. If a student has learning disabilities, the counseling department should be the one taking over.

To conclude, education is enrichment of life through knowledge. My passion to teach comes from my interest in the language and the satisfaction from helping my students. My belief that all children can learn shapes my teaching style since I adjust my teaching strategies according to my students’ aptitude. I also keep in mind that I am not supposed to do everything myself.