My Educational Philosophy

The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires. ~William Arthur Ward

Having been in education filed for years, I am still constantly asking myself the questions: what can we do best to make learning happen effectively? Especially in urban education context, where the teacher is facing a class with the diversity in gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion, poverty, cultural traditions, language, and racism. What can the teacher do to make our students better individuals and be successful in the society? What can the teacher do to help our students find their passion to inspire them to learn? In general, how can we provide equitable education to all students, within a culture of inspiration, high expectations? I believe all teachers are seeking the best answers to the same questions when they are teaching. I’ve taught ESL in China for adolescence through adults, worked with ‘disadvantaged young people’ in after school programs, and currently I work at MPS in a challenging diverse environment, and I found that individuals in all contexts seek the same. They want to be engaged, be creative, inspired, they want to be cared and valued. These experiences make me believe that teachers’ being passionate in meeting those needs for students is the key to their success.

I believe students can learn when the teacher has profound knowledge of the socio-cultural and historical context of the discipline. The teacher has enthusiasm for the subject and knows how to translate their knowledge of disciplinary content into appropriate instructional activities and represent this content in meaningful ways for the students. In the mean time, the teacher always seeks to keep abreast of new ideas and understandings in the field. Classroom teaching is not a “give” and “take” process, we are working with the individuals who are thoughtful and creative. It is critical for the teacher to create a positive functioning learning environment in
which students take their own responsibilities, involve in decision-making, and engage in purposeful learning activities. In order to help all students to be successful, it is important to set up high expectations for each individual and demonstrate the belief that every child is capable to learn.

I believe students can learn when the teacher appreciates individual variation and shows respect for the diverse learners, designs learning opportunities that recognize variation in learning styles, creates lessons and activities that operate at multiple levels to meet the development of each individual’s needs and help each student's progress. These instructional strategies will help students to build up self confidence and develop their competence; I believe all students can learn when they feel they are valued for their potential as people regardless the diversity of their gender, race, disability, religion, poverty, cultural traditions, and language; I believe students can learn when their progress and skills are valued. The teacher knows how to appropriately use a variety of formal and informal assessment techniques to draw upon students’ strengths as well as their needs, to evaluate students’ progress and performances, and modify teaching and learning strategies accordingly.

As a teacher, I should be aware that learning does not only take place within the classroom, I should also take the responsibilities of making links with the learners' other environments on behalf of students, by consulting with parents, counselors, connecting student to the communities and seeking to develop cooperative partnerships in support of student learning and well-being. As a teacher of 21st century, I should also realize that educational curriculum and the tools used for instruction are changing as technological information changes. The teacher should not only commit to on going professional development to adapt to those changes, but also help our students to discover the ways in which they can access to information for lifelong learning.