

Philosophy of Education

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Education is an essential part to the well-being and quality of life of an individual, especially a child. It is a natural part of the human growth process to learn and explore new things. The role of a teacher to guide and facilitate that process is one of the most rewarding and important roles in society and in a child's life. In fact, it may be the most influential role in a child's life besides the parents', and sometimes teachers are even taken on as another parent—or perhaps the only one.

In my opinion, a teacher must be professional in all aspects. Professionalism as a teacher in my mind is not just reflected in a teacher's dress, his or her register of speaking, or other traditional ideas of professionalism, but also in the degree of excellence he or she exudes in every interaction he or she has with a student, parents, fellow teacher, administration, and anyone else in the school. Professionalism as a teacher involves being ethical, kind, and compassionate, and doing the job to the utmost of one's ability; going the extra mile. Professionalism as a teacher brings many more definitions to mind for me, including being persistent, patient, good-humored, and hard-working. But my favorite summarization for professionalism in education is that as a teacher, I must have an "It's up to me" attitude—meaning that all trials, hardships, and roadblocks I encounter are simply challenges to my ability, and can be mastered if I simply take on the predisposition that excuses cannot be made, and success is up to me. Professionalism in teaching is having that "It's up to me" attitude.

Curriculum is a crucial part of education—it's what the teacher teaches. However, though we will try to make the curriculum as developmentally appropriate as possible, children grow and develop at different paces and with different strengths and weaknesses, and are not always on target-level—or grade-level—with the curriculum. That is normal; it is the nature of individuals. As a teacher, it is my duty not to dwell on those students' weaknesses, but to find

and magnify their strengths. It is my duty to get to know the student as an individual, and to use what I know about his or her experiential background—life experiences—to tailor the learning experience to the student.

As a teacher, I will encounter a variety of learning styles. It is my role as a teacher to provide a variety of teaching methods and activities to meet those different learning styles. It is my role to combine all sources available to me, along with some that may not be available to me for which I may have to go and search. These methods and activities may range from project-based learning, to reading aloud to students, to providing text, audio, and graphic content for all brain types and learning styles, and meeting every need; teaching and encouraging the asking of questions, problem-solving skills, critical thinking, and adjusting the methods and activities I use as I go, and reflecting before and after each lesson to see what I can improve.

It is my belief that excellent classroom management is one of the most vital parts of the teacher's role. Classroom management refers not simply to discipline and order in the classroom, but to the practices of making the classroom a safe, kind learning environment where everyone is respected. The best way to do this is by building rapport with students; by treating them fairly, remembering that fairness does not equal sameness, but rather, making sure each student gets what he or she needs; creating a positive environment and prophecy over the students, and getting to know each student as an individual, showing kindness and compassion in every step of the journey.

Another role I will have as a teacher is the role of assessing and evaluating students to see what they have learned and what academic level they are performing on. This is done not to intimidate, shame, or arm-twist the student into doing better, but for me to be able to monitor student learning and growth (or lack thereof) and understand where my students are

academically. Once I do that, I cannot leave them where they are. It is my role to adjust the methods and activities I am using to best fit the strengths and weaknesses of my students as I monitor and understand what their strengths, weaknesses, learning styles, and personal needs are.

As a teacher, I will wear many “hats,” so to speak. I will have many roles and jobs, and it is my duty to do them as well and with as much excellence as I possibly can. I will lead with compassion, kindness, excellence, and an “It’s up to me” attitude. I will make sure that my predispositions are always favorable, and that I bring my all every single day, leaving any negativity at home, because excellence must begin the moment I pull into the parking lot. Being a teacher is an immensely important role, and one that I will take very seriously.