

Philosophy of Education

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"The mind is not a vessel to be filled, but a fire to be kindled." - Plutarch -

Every child can learn and has the right to a quality education appropriate to their individual needs. I am passionate about my profession. As a teacher and administrator over the years, my enthusiasm continues to grow. I thoroughly relish the opportunity to help provide the richest learning environment to enable the growth and development of every student. Each child is unique and valued. They learn in their own special way. It is our task to find the way they learn best and provide the opportunities for them to learn. I endeavor to teach and inspire each child and/or teacher under my care. As an administrator, I value the personal relationships I forge with students, their parents, their teachers and colleagues in my school community. As school personnel, we work in partnership with parents to help their child/ren find their distinctive strengths and gifts. Positive relationships among students, parents, and educators promote learning. We all work toward the same goal and when we collectively focus on the child, learning flourishes. I find joy regularly observing children actively engaged in their learning, collaborating together and learning from each other as much as the teachers.

In recent years, brain research has given us more insight into how students learn and educators have a fuller understanding of what teaching the 'whole' child means as we strive to meet children's intellectual, social, emotional, spiritual and physical needs for the 21st Century. 'Computer' is no longer a specialist class, a one-off lesson or the next 'cool' thing. Technology is an integral part of literacy. Locating reliable sources and using information appropriately are fundamental skills that all students need. We help students understand their responsibility in their own learning now. However, we, as educators need to teach these skills to students and help their parents understand memorizing facts is not the sole indicator success. Students need to use information to make connections with their previously learned knowledge, then organize, share and present it effectively. This is all done in an emotionally safe, encouraging and supportive student-centered classroom with caring and knowledgeable classroom professionals.

We need to provide regular, timely, judicious and meaningful feedback to students on their work in a balanced, creative and systematic manner. It is hard for students to hit a moving target. They need to know what they are learning, how it relates to real life scenarios, why it is important and how they will be assessed. Integrated learning through a rigorous, dynamic, inquiry-based and developmentally appropriate curriculum is vital. Making data based, best practice decisions is the function of every educational team in school. I have been blessed to work in several outstanding institutions where this was the focus.

We are in the education business because of students. My parents were both educators and I knew early in life that education would be my profession. I have not regretted my choice. My professional experience involves all levels of education. Throughout my time in California, Greece, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Japan and now South Korea, I have had the opportunity to teach, coach and administrate at pre-school, elementary and secondary levels. Education is my life and vocation; I love what I do.

The opportunity to live in various cultures over the last twenty-four years has enriched my life; however, overseas life is not for everyone. If one is to enjoy overseas living, one must be flexible, calm, hardworking, adventurous, and creative. I am a proven, successful overseas educator who has lived in six different countries, each with its own unique culture. The camaraderie and adventure of living in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia during the Gulf War provided the opportunity to meet the challenges of a critical situation. As a teacher representative, it intrigued me serving on a select superintendent's committee dealing with the ramifications of the Gulf War on our school. This experience helped crystallize my decision to become an administrator. Being in Seoul, S. Korea this past year, where tensions with the North have been at the highest in memory, has been a challenge; however, one I have embraced by calming fears, communicating regularly with parents and faculty and instituting plans for on-line/off site learning to continue if we were evacuated from Seoul. During the 'H1NI virus' a couple years ago, SFS closed school for a week. We began our journey into the world of online learning at that time. Since then, we have continued to refine systems and adopt technologies to ensure academic success.

I have also worked with several outstanding Heads of Schools/Superintendents as well. They are well known to international education: Dr. John Dorbis, Dr. Daryle Russell, Dr. Jack Davis, Don Shoemaker, Charles Barton, Dr. Harlan Lyso and Dr. John Engstrom. I have learned from them all.

I attribute my successful years in education to my dedication, commitment, patience, sense of humor and my outstanding administrative mentors. The cultivation of positive professional and personal relationships has been gratifying. Working effectively and harmoniously with the entire school community is tantamount to a successful overseas career as a teacher and administrator.