

Richard W. de Meij's

PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION



In general, as a *teacher*...



- I believe it is my responsibility to create and maintain a classroom environment in which the activities of *all* students are engaged, dignified and nurtured in ways that lead to growth. This is achieved by means of enhancing the curiosity of *all* students, helping them to be self-starters, and instilling in them a desire to learn and achieve their highest goals. My classroom will be one in which assessment is ongoing and diagnostic so I can understand how to make my instruction more responsive to the needs of each and every student. As a teacher, I must acquire a sympathetic understanding of what actually goes on in the minds of individual students, by acknowledging their individual abilities and *learning styles*, and being sensitive to their needs and past experiences. I then must select learning conditions which will interact with their existing individual abilities, learning styles and needs. My strong knowledge of subject-matters allows me to select the kinds of activities that are *student-centered* and that foster *cooperative learning*, contribution and collaboration, and that also – at the same time – leave ample room for contributions that stem from individual experiences and abilities.
- I also believe that each child's parents/guardians and their community involvement and support are a *crucial* part of what is necessary to nurture and ensure success in his/her education and life. Hence, my classroom will be one which parents, as well as members of our community, are invited to visit and in which to participate, when appropriate and/or possible. I must acquire a sympathetic understanding of the home environments and communities, in which my students grow, live and socialize. To achieve this, I then must be involved in their communities and seek to maintain contact with parents/guardians concerning their needs and progress.

In particular, as a *world language teacher*...

- I believe that as nations become increasingly interdependent, the need for effective communication and sensitivity to other cultures also becomes increasingly more important. Today's generation must be culturally and linguistically prepared to understand, appreciate, participate in, benefit from and contribute to a global society, and hence, attaining proficiency in *more than one language* is essential to meeting this need.
- I believe that *all* students *can and do benefit* from foreign language learning, recognizing, however, that not all students learn at the same rate or in the same manner. Nevertheless, *all* students should have the opportunity to acquire language proficiency to a degree commensurate with their individual abilities.
- I believe that my language use and instruction is reflective of the ACTFL standards, and has a natural cultural context, embedded in history, people and places, complemented by incorporating technology, music and dance in the classroom, thus appealing to the *multiple intelligences*, and thus promoting success by motivating and encouraging *all* students to attain *achievable functional objectives*.
- I believe that proficiency in a foreign language is best achieved by teaching students to think critically and to encourage them to take risks when expressing themselves in the target language, while also recognizing that they should strive for accuracy in communication. While it is imperative that students have knowledge of the basic structures of the language, it is also important that they go beyond the simple manipulation of forms.

In conclusion, as a *skillful, effective and passionate world languages teacher*...

Recognizing the complexity of '(2nd) language acquisition' & 'culture,' and their *invaluable benefits* – cognitively, academically and beyond – for every child, I must accommodate different learning styles, acknowledge and dignify differences, teach higher-order thinking skills, and provide differentiated and multi-modality teaching, in order to *set each/every child up for success!* I must be wholeheartedly committed to enriching the life experiences of all my students. Finally, *I must teach with passion and care passionately!*