Philosophy of teaching

I believe the purpose of education is to prepare students for the next step in life, whether that step is going to college, entering the workforce, joining the military, or starting a family. Students should be educated in communication and problem-solving in order to be successful in life. As a future English teacher, I believe it is my role to prepare students to learn how to communicate with others, whether this communication is with colleagues, fellow students, professors, supervisors, or spouses. Students cannot learn to communicate with just reading or just writing; to truly be successful, students should be capable in both fields. It is my job to introduce students to these skills and train them to be adept at both. My goal is to teach students to love both reading and writing. Reading enables them to find out more about their world and about other people—things they may not already know. Writing enables them to analyze that world and to use imagination they may have thought they lost a long time ago.

I believe that the most important aspect of learning is fun. I think that students of all ages want to enjoy what they are learning, and that that joy enables them to retain more information and makes them want to learn even more. In our classrooms today, the focus on testing and scores takes the fun out of learning, and students are told that what matters most is how they perform. I disagree with this sentiment—instead of the end result, I believe the process is the most important part. It is more important for students to learn to learn than to focus on their scores. If they try to learn throughout the process, I believe the end result will naturally turn out well. Otherwise, they will feel too much pressure, and the end result will most likely not turn out as hoped.

I believe in creating a classroom community for all students. Whether students go on to the workforce or to college, they will need to know how to properly converse with others. The best way to learn this is to practice, through class discussions, small group work, and pairing. I also believe in creating a safe environment for my students; one way to do this is to ensure that all students feel comfortable with their peers. To achieve this goal, I intend to make sure all of my students know each other on some level—names, hobbies, likes and dislikes. This is important, especially for adolescents, to help create a sense of belonging.

To create a sense of community in the classroom and to create a fun environment requires that the teacher be disciplined. For this type of classroom, management is key. I believe students can have fun in a structured way; in fact, I think if students lack structure, they stop having fun. I feel the best way to manage a class is to have their respect. To have their respect, they need to feel you respect them. This can be done in many ways, whether it’s expressing interest in their lives, hobbies, or activities or creating common ground. The goal result is to realize your students are human beings, the same way they will realize that you and their peers are human beings.