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| **Beth A. Powers** |
| **PHILOSOPHY OF TEACHING AND TEACHER LEADERSHIP** |
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*My philosophy of teaching evolved from years of teaching experience in several diverse settings. My mission as a teacher is four-fold:*

* *To promote positive, self-regulated learning*
* *To spark learner enthusiasm for learning*
* *To provide a strong foundation and love for lifelong learning*
* *To act as a positive cog in the wheels of education, using and offering collegial support*

Students

I believe that all students can and want to learn. I believe that each and every student has something unique and special to bring to the world. I believe that I, as the teacher, am the guide to lead each student to success, and the best way to begin is by building respectful relationships and a community of learners in which students feel safe to take risks and share ideas. For students to construct meaning and knowledge, they need the opportunity to discover ideas and concepts for themselves through higher-order thinking and practice skills in authentic situations. My desire is to motivate and train all students to become self-regulated learners who care about and are invested in their own learning, now and in the future.

Cognitive Functioning Levels of the Learner

Considering the cognitive functioning of learners, especially in the area of literacy, is essential in order to implement and apply strategies that are appropriate for either concrete operational and/or formal operational learners (differentiation). I routinely plan activities, such as brief writings, that help me determine the cognitive levels of my students and differentiate my instruction accordingly. Teaching from each student’s zone of proximal development, I hope to lead them to success. Knowing the importance of literacy on the success of the rest of their lives, I strive to increase levels of literacy in order to ensure each child’s ability to successfully navigate life after school.

Learning Theory

I have had opportunities to implement various learning theories over the years. One model I recently implemented is the Learning Focused Schools model of teaching and learning. This model incorporates the best practices of various seminal learning theories to increase student achievement. I especially love studying and learning more about brain-based research regarding memory systems and active processing of intellectual operations, such as think-pair-share, classroom jigsaw activities, small group literary discussions, a and extended-thinking activities.

Cultural Diversity, Group Culture, and Learning Styles

Understanding both the learning styles of individual learners and the cultural diversity of the class/group helps me both design and tailor effective instruction. Because a variety of learning styles are likely represented by learners in any large class/group setting, I routinely design my instruction using research-based learning strategies, which can accommodate individual preferences, engage diverse learners, and help establish a respect for differing preferences and perspectives.

Curriculum and Instructional Planning

I begin with backward unit planning to plan and implement lessons that clearly identify the lesson objective, anticipatory set, strategies for effective student engagement, student use of higher-order thinking skills, incorporation of technologies, and authentic assessment options to measure student mastery.

Assessment

I strongly believe that one can employ a wide variety of formative and summative assessments -- rubrics, checklists, projects, portfolios, performance/diagnostic checks, presentations, writings, etc -- to accurately assess understanding of course content and adapt instruction accordingly.

Professional Support / Teacher Leadership

As a member of an educational community, my job includes that of being a positive, encouraging faculty member setting the example of continual learning and growth. I have found that every professional with whom I have worked offers insight, strategies, and experiences from which I can learn and grow. I use my enthusiasm, passion, and positivity to support and encourage colleagues, as well as learn and grow from the wealth of gifts they offer.

*Following these basic principles has helped me grow in my love for teaching and learning. More importantly, I have discovered that, by sharing my passion for teaching and learning, and using these principles with enthusiasm and compassion, I am able to connect with the learners I teach. As a result, teaching with clarity, passion, empathy, and sincere enthusiasm effectively impacts learners, ultimately igniting in them their own passion for lifelong learning.*