

Philosophy of Education

I grew up in a single income home as a product of violent divorce. There were many days that school was an escape for me; a way out of my present reality. Of course, I wasn't always interested in learning... that was just a side benefit. But there were also many days that being in school was difficult, as I was distracted by the events of the night before replaying again and again in my mind. When I was a 6th grade student, I learned that I always had somewhere to hang my hat. I always had a place in our band hall. I loved it there, and spent an impressive amount of time inside its walls. There, I was someone with a purpose and drive. I had an escape. I had a family. I had meaning.

Growing up with such a meaningful experience in that classroom has had profound impacts on my outlook on education. You never know what goes on in a student's home, and in a student's heart. Someday, mine might be the classroom a student hangs their hat in.

Educators carry a large weight on their shoulders. Not only is the love of their content area a driving force in their career, but the weight of a student's background *and* future is forever a lurking presence. My love of music is pretty powerful, but I know in my heart that music alone is not enough. My love of students is perhaps the strongest driving force in my career. Education is a powerful tool, and if treated with care and attention, can make a significant impact on a student's future and aid in the development of character and integrity for many years to come.

I believe in cultivating a classroom that any student can learn in. I also believe that any student can learn. I would not have hung my hat in that band hall if it weren't for the gentle

understanding and high expectations of my director. He always believed in my abilities to learn, and fostered an environment that forced me to believe that as well. Now as an adult who has been teaching privately for years, I grow aggravated when a student isn't grasping a concept, but not with the student, instead, with myself. A student can only learn as much as they are given. Most students want to learn! Every day I ask myself: How am I failing to serve my students? This question continues to shape my approaches to education, personal development, and personal relationships.

I am sometimes so surprised by the different dispositions of my students. It's often difficult within the context of a classroom to teach to a group of completely different individuals, each with their own story and own personality. However, that does not mean impossible. One of the most useful tools of teaching is to know your students! I believe the time I spend learning about my students is valuable to their education, and gives me more chances to help make meaningful connections to the content I'm presenting.