

Lora Vimont's Teaching Philosophy

I've been a teacher for twenty-three years now and have experienced many paradigm shifts in the ways schools go about educating our children: from the whole language approach, to brain-based learning, to the current shifts into differentiated, student-centered, inquiry-based learning. Along the way, I've attempted to take what was good about these various approaches and incorporate them into my own teaching practice. But despite any changes I've made in the way I go about educating children, three essential beliefs, or philosophies, have tended to remain constant in my day-to-day work as an educator.

The first of these beliefs is that each student is unique and in possession of his or her own personal learning strengths, weaknesses, and ways of taking in information. Mindful of this, I plan my lessons to meet these different needs so that each student in my charge has the best opportunity to learn in the way that is most suitable for him or her.

The second belief I have about teaching is that the best way to promote student learning is to assure their active involvement in the learning process. I embrace a hands-on/minds-on approach to instruction by creating real-world opportunities for my students to problem solve creatively, both independently and in small group situations. Students in my classes are valued as equal stakeholders in the decision-making process for their own learning. They are invited to think of their own meaningful questions within a unit of inquiry and inquire by creating and implementing activities that will help them discover the answers.

Finally, I believe that the lines of communication between all stakeholders in a student's education, particularly between parents and teachers, must always be kept open. I've found this to be perhaps the most essential and powerful aspect of my teaching practice. Effective and constant communication with parents through daily correspondence books, e-mails, weekly notices and reminders, and monthly class newsletters has helped me establish a strong alliance with each of the families I have worked with and has allowed all of us to work together toward one common goal: helping the children get the best education possible.

In sum, my longstanding philosophy of teaching is comprised of three key elements that I find indispensable for creating a quality program in my classroom: differentiation, meaningful student involvement, and effective parent-teacher communication. While shifting educational trends always present opportunities to incorporate new thinking and methodologies into my teaching practices, I believe these three pillars of my educational philosophy will never go out of style, and will always form the foundation of my classroom teaching.