

Lelia Elliston's Philosophy of Teaching

INTRODUCTION

An effective teacher is passionate about both teaching and her subject matter. With true passion as a motivating force, contagious enthusiasm inevitably fills the classroom to create a positive learning atmosphere. Someone with a passion for teaching creatively introduces inquiry-based instruction and activities that reach and stimulate our youth. I am such a person – a life-long teacher in the true sense of the word - one who enjoys discovering what makes young (and adult) minds tick, who is passionate about the subject matter, and one who recognizes the importance and relevance of science in the world.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Learning is the young person's pathway to personal growth. Therefore, the learning environment should:

- Foster a challenging and joyous atmosphere
- Provide a sense of community and develop trust and respect among students and parents
- Demonstrate cooperation, and acquire an understanding of the rights and needs of others
- Engage students in an inquiry-based style and consider each child's intellectual development
- Cultivate students who ultimately take responsibility for their own learning
- Welcome opportunities to inquire and learn how real-world science works
- Encourage questions, expand hypotheses, and explore a myriad of solutions
- Draw on individual strengths and promote excellent communication skills

STRATEGIES, INNOVATION AND OUTCOMES

Knowing all the facts is not enough to be able to think critically about the challenges facing society, and especially about our natural resources and our responsibility around global climate change. Pure memorization and unconnected sound bites of knowledge do not foster nor develop critical thinking and problem solving minds. Therefore, only through creative curriculum design and implementation can we reach the educational depth necessary, as well as fulfill the obligation of exposing children to the breadth of environmental and biological science. Regardless, if students cannot grasp "How" and "Why" in addition to "What", then we are not fulfilling our teaching responsibility! It is our duty to provide students with a toolbox of skills, consisting of knowing how to learn, while at the same time finding great reward and pleasure in learning.

Educational excellence demands a diverse, inclusive, just, and socially responsible community. With each generation of children, there is an opportunity to remake the world they inherit. As teachers, we have one of the most fulfilling and rewarding jobs – to cultivate and honor children's innate love of learning as they prepare for a life of purpose and academic accomplishment. With compassionate and devoted teaching, students can gain the skills and confidence to meet the challenges of self, family, community, and the world at large. Ongoing assessment methods that encourage students to recognize and take responsibility for areas of weakness will increase student achievement. Assessment should not promote competition, but rather help students cooperate and apply what they learn.

EXPERTISE

Ph.D. Environmental Biology; University Level Lecture and Lab Instructor; Teaching Certificate grades 5-9; BS Biology; AS Horticulture; High School Mentoring Program; Science Curriculum Design and Education for Middle School; Biology Tutor for High School; Director for High School and Middle School Internship Programs. Developed and Directed College Summer Internships in Landscape Ecology

CONCLUSION

Ten years of teaching various subjects and in numerous venues has given me diverse and applied teaching skills. I speak the language of many constituents and fields, and can therefore teach with a wide array of real-life examples in unique and applicable ways. My numerous positive comments and teaching reviews, as well as successful graduates are proof that my teaching methodology achieves results. I cultivate unprecedented enthusiasm and a love of learning in students.