

Jeremy Mitchell

Philosophy of Education

The most valuable piece of advice I've been given regarding becoming a teacher is something that has been burned into my mind. I was told by a former teacher, "The students need someone in their life to not give up, to show them they care. Treat each student as though they are the most important child in the world." This piece of advice is where my philosophy begins.

**I believe in compassion.** While rules, structure, and discipline are vital to the management of your classroom, the most important entities are compassion, care, and concern. Without offering your support to the students, or understanding their specific struggles and frustration, the teacher-student relationship is bruised and classroom management is lost.

**I believe in community.** By consciously developing the community and climate of the classroom, you set up an atmosphere that promotes not only friendships and support, but also group learning. Offering the students yet another place of support and encouragement in their lives is a fantastic way to set them up for success.

**I believe in second chances.** As teachers, we often find ourselves depending on previous teachers' experience with students to give us an idea of how our students might be that year. Though our colleagues are great resources for knowledge about how to work with certain students, I feel that every student deserves a clean slate at the beginning of the year. If we treat the students how they've always been treated, allowing them to, in a sense, have the same behaviors they always have, their actions stay the same. However, if we allow for positive change and growth from our students, we see positive change and growth. I think this is also true for general classroom behavior. Giving the students a chance to start over, says to them, "I believe in you, and know you can change."

**I believe in critical life messages.** As teachers, we are also mentors and life coaches. Often times we spend more time with children than their own family. For this reason we must provide our students with positive interactions such as “critical life messages.” These are phrases, which help empower our students to trust in themselves and feel confident in their life now, and in their future. They need to hear:

- I believe in you.
- I trust you.
- I know you can handle this.
- You are listened to.
- You are cared for.
- You are very important to me.

Giving students this secure, safe, and supportive environment encourages so many important positive behaviors.

When all is said and done, I believe in **positive-ness**; positive attitude, positive language, positive encouragement, and an overall positive environment. This does not mean that my students and I won't encounter challenges, but through positivity we will be resilient.

“Be the change you wish to see in the world.”

-Mohandas Ghandi