*My Teaching Philosopy*

 I teach because I believe education is a way to change your socio-economic status in life and I feel many students, especially students of color, do not receive the educational and life skills at home to become successful and productive members of society. Therefore, I teach to help these students, and students who do have the home support, to become whatever they want to be in life regardless of color, socio-economic status, and learning ability. I strongly believe that education is the gateway to achieving one’s dreams and goals in life.

 I am initially certified in New York State to teach Childhood Education (grades 1-6) and once I complete my Master’s I will be New York State Certified to teach English as a Second Language (grades K-12). I recently began my Master’s and I plan to be finished by 2013 which will give me my permanent certification in Childhood Education. My objectives for my students are to feel confident and comfortable in a educational environment, to feel they can explore unknown topics without fear of rejection and/or embarrassment, and to meet their and my personal educational goals. Although these objectives are broad I feel they are the foundation that educational excellence and life-long learning is built upon.

 I prefer to use a combination of teaching methods and strategies in my classroom because, as we all know, every student learns differently. I primarily use lecturing to build background knowledge of the subject area we are learning about. However, once that background knowledge is grasped by the students I employ various teaching methods to allow students to explore and question the subject area. For example, if I were teaching the arrival of Christopher Columbus in the Americas I might spend some time lecturing about the facts of his arrival but then I would have the students break into groups and attend stations. One station would be a reading station where they can read about the different views of Columbus (hero vs. villain) and another station would be a hands-on station where students would build and label the parts of Columbus’ boats, etc. Therefore, each student’s learning needs would be addressed and they would learn they may be stronger in certain areas more than others. Also, this would allow to students to evaluate their own abilities and therefore, be better equipped to write their educational goals. By this I mean I would use my experience and the student’s experience to set goals for each quarter of the year and at the end of each quarter we would meet and evaluate if and how that student needs to improve. In addition, I will use other formal and informal forms of assessment however, I strong believe in performance assessment so I tend to assess student learning through projects that the students are able to revise numerous times.

 I assess my own effectiveness as a teacher by how well the students are meeting their and my educational goals. In other words, I use informal assessment during lessons such as checking for understanding and formal assessment such as extension activities to measure how well I am teaching. If the students are not doing well during the lesson and after the lesson then I will revise my lesson plan or write a whole new lesson plan and re-teach the information because I believe if they are struggling with the topic then I have not effectively taught them the information.

 In conclusion, my teaching philosophy is based on the idea that education is the means that students have to reach their goals in life. Therefore, it is very important that they feel comfortable in an educational environment and set educational goals. I use various teaching methods and strategies in my classroom such as group work, leading discussions, and lecturing. Also, I employ formal and informal assessment of student learning and my teaching effectiveness. Therefore, I expect students in my classroom to explore and critically think about topics so they reach educational excellence and become life-long learners.