

Philosophy Statement

The first part of my philosophy statement is knowledge transmission. This is what I believe high school students should learn in the subject of history. The main concept that I would want students to understand is how people and events have changed the course of history. George Washington, the Revolutionary War, Abraham Lincoln, the Civil War, WWI, Adolf Hitler, WWII, the Great Depression, and economic trends are major ideas that I would address. I would teach students how these people and events changed the world. Another concept that I would like students to grasp is how history can repeat itself. I want students to be able to understand the process of writing a research paper. This process includes researching a topic, analyzing sources, generating a thesis, drawing conclusions, and writing the paper. The last thing that I believe my students should know is how to give reasons for their answers and be able to think critically.

The second part of my philosophy statement, is the cultural transmissions. This section includes the values that I want to teach in my classroom and cultural paradigms. First, let's begin with the values portion. The first value I would want to instill in my students is hard work. A good work ethic is something that no matter what profession a student wants to go into, it will always be valued by the employer. A good work ethic is something that a student can carry with them for the rest of their life. Honesty is the next value that I would try to instill in my high school classroom. With new advancements in technology, it is becoming easier for students to cheat on homework, papers, and tests. One might argue that it is becoming easier for teachers to catch students in the act of cheating. That is a legitimate claim, however, with all of the other duties that a teacher must perform on a daily basis, this can be difficult to accomplish. It would be a lot to ask for a teacher to check every source a student uses in a research paper. An honest student would respect the teacher enough to not even try and cheat on a paper, an assignment, or a test. The third and final value which I would choose to teach my students is that of teamwork. Many jobs in the professional world today are geared towards team work versus individual work. Corporate America is focusing on team projects, rather than individual business proposals. This is based off of the idea, that two heads are better than one. However, it is not just big businesses that are moving towards this idea of teamwork and cooperation. Professions such as education, manufacturing, and the United States military are focusing even more on group related success. Teaching students how to work effectively in a group would prepare them for life after high school.

The next part of my philosophy statement is the professional transmissions. This includes what I know about high school students. According to Piaget's theory of cognitive development, by high school, students should be able to solve abstract problems using critical thinking. Students should be able to solve complex verbal and hypothetical problems, use hypothetic-deductive reasoning, and use scientific thought processes. They have a new way of egocentric thinking and believe that the normal laws of nature do not apply to them. Another thing that affects high school students is puberty. This causes students to go through physical and emotional maturity. High school students start to value their peer's opinions over their teacher's opinion. They are also going through an identity crisis, in which they are trying to find out who they are and where they fit in. They are dealing with the formation of cliques and entering a rebellious age, not only at school but at home, as well.

The next part of my philosophy statement is educational psychology concepts. The first grouping of educational psychology concepts deals with issues of reinforcement and behavior modification. One technique that I will use is called shaping. Shaping is a technique where teachers guide students towards

their goals by reinforcing the many positive steps that lead to success. Another educational psychology concept that relates directly to shaping is the use of a variable-ratio schedule of reinforcement. This style of reinforcement is one in which the number of behaviors required for reinforcement is unpredictable. This leads to students not knowing when the reinforcement is coming. Hopefully, this leads to more student participation because they do not know when the reinforcement is coming. Another strategy that I will use to modify students behavior is weekly report cards. These weekly report cards will be given out to let students know how they are doing, not only in the class itself but from a behavioral standpoint, as well.

The next grouping of educational psychology concepts is related to instructional strategies. The first principle is the Premack Principle. The Premack Principle is when a teacher takes a less enjoyable activity, such as participation, and links it to an enjoyable activity for the students to encourage participation. The second principle that I will use is teaching strategies that engage students actively in lessons. Students that are actively engaged in lessons take great pride in the work they do. I will use discovery learning, which encourages students to learn largely on their own. I will do this by giving assignments such as, research papers and group projects. These will give students the opportunity to choose what they want to learn.

The next part of my philosophy statement includes concepts over assessment. Formative assessment is very important in the classroom. If I as the teacher understand what students do not understand what students do not know how will I be able to better improve their learning. Formative assessment is one way to check to see if students understand what I am teaching. Next, when it comes to testing I believe in using alternative response for knowledge questions. I also believe that multiple choice questions can be very useful if good distracters are present. However, I will also include at least one essay question in each test that sums up one major concept of each unit. Essay writing is very important because this will not only push students critical thinking skills, but it will also prepare students for college. Finally, assessment will be used for three purpose: the first being to improve learning and instruction. The second will be to report to the guardians, and lastly for other school purposes.

The last part of my philosophy statement includes specific teaching methods for the subject area of Social Studies. One of the key aspects of teaching Social Studies is making the content relevant. This can be done in a number of ways. One way is to relate what is being talked about in class to current events that are happening around the world. One example of this might be when teaching an American Government class during an election year I will pull up recent polls to track candidate's progress. This will demonstrate that voting is an important civic duty, and everyone should take part in it. Discussion is also a great way to get students involved in Social Studies. I will ask higher order thinking questions in order to spark student interest and challenge them to analyze information.