

Statement of Educational Philosophy

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Learning is a critical exploration of the human experience. As people we yearn to understand our personal lives, our society at large, and our reason for being. As a teacher my role is to be a facilitator and protector of this exploration. I do this by creating and maintaining a positive learning community, upholding classroom norms, and using ELA as the vehicle for this exploration.

The learning process can be both exciting and intimidating. Thus, it's essential to create a learning community founded on trust. Our community is a team of explorers with individual assets of great value. When different cultures, philosophies, and ideologies exist in the same space students can become active participants in their learning. For example, a student who studies Sci-fi could provide a niche perspective when analyzing a text like Orwell's *1984*. A student coming from an immigrant household could offer a different cultural perspective when exploring a text like Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*. It's also important to have students that encourage their peers on the days when learning feels tough. In our community one's academic and interpersonal strengths are valued equally.

The implementation and preservation of classroom norms are paramount for our academic journey. Classroom norms are created on the first day of class and are revisited daily. Will there be days we stray from what we agreed upon? Yes. The question then becomes, how do you react when things fall apart – no pun intended. There are ways to deal with disruption without alienating a student from our community. It's important to break methods of discipline rooted in anger, a need for control, and ego. There is a difference between firmly reestablishing expectations as opposed to damaging a child's self-worth.

English Language Arts allows students to explore the human experience through reading, writing, and storytelling. What does our text tell us about the characters in that world? How does the presentation of this work change our understanding of themes and topics explored? What do our readings, class discussions and writing tell us about ourselves? These questions can be answered by making inferences, analyzing texts, writing responses and more. It's my job to teach students the various ways they can do this. This is where scaffolding, breaking down of standards, and differentiated instruction come into play. Ideally, these skills can also help students find their voice outside the classroom. I want my teaching to have long lasting impact on the lives of my students. Community building, valuing others, and intellectual exploration may begin in my class, but the journey extends beyond it.