

# TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

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Education in the twenty first century involves a range of learning experiences and styles. As a future educator in the Early Childhood and Primary systems, there are a number of features that I want to instill in my learning environment.

The goal I have for every student I have the privilege of teaching, is that no matter what age, gender, background, learning style, personality or level of ability, that I provide each with a well rounded learning experience. Learning experiences that involve a multitude of skills (academic and social/behavioural), are approachable for all types of learners and to be extremely engaging.

I believe that children should have the opportunity to learn through a variety of activity models. As Lev Vygotsky claims, children are social beings, and therefore exploration and discovery of new knowledge within small groups or whole class experiences is imperative. On the other hand, as Jean Piaget concurs, it is equally as important for children to learn in an individual setting, providing opportunities for self-reflection. Learning through play is also an essential tool for children to scaffold knowledge. No matter their age, I believe children should be given the opportunity to play on a daily basis.

I value and celebrate children as individuals. Piaget claims each child has the right to be acknowledged for their unique level of knowledge, skills and strengths. Alike the Reggio Emilia Approach, I believe as educators, we are responsible for advocating the rights of children to be heard and grow. Individualised learning is a crucial component of my teaching, as I believe every child progresses at their own pace. It is paramount that children's strengths and interests are integrating into the curricula to create relatable and engaging learning experiences, therefore assisting in scaffolding learning.

I value strong relationships with children and their families. I believe one of the most important jobs a teacher is to be a guide for each child to help become the best person they can be. As Loris Malaguzzi explains, without a trusting, open and reciprocal relationship with the child and the people involved in their life, that job cannot be achieved. Building partnerships with families is cardinal to assist connecting a child's learning within the classroom to the outside world.

I believe a positive learning environment allows children to thrive. As discussed in the Reggio Emilia Approach, physically, having a room that is built for flexibility, creativity and space for a variety of activities is essential. It encourages children to explore and prompt creative thinking. Psychologically, a positive learning space provides children with a safe, secure and comfortable environment to flourish. This includes behaviour management, as I believe positivity supports children to perceive mistakes as a learning experience rather than something to be ashamed of or avoid.

I believe that children should have opportunities at school to develop social and behavioural skills alongside academic curriculum. A significant influence on my teaching is holistic education, where skills such as self-reflection, meditation, self-esteem, self-awareness, independence and social practices are integrated into the classroom. Te Whāriki suggests these skills will assist children to develop deeper levels of thinking and shape their identity as a whole being.