

Jessica Costa's Teaching Philosophy

The purpose of education is to transmit the skills that are necessary for participating in human society, to provide experiences that lead others to feeling comfortable with working with people who are unlike them, and to analyze the past in order to build a more just, inclusive, and equitable future. While several theories and major ideas have shaped the way I view education, constructivist ideas, the thematic approach, and differentiation have played key roles in my journey. Consistent with constructivist theories, I believe that students should actively participate in learning new information and strengthen their understandings through social interaction. As an educator, I see the benefits in using a thematic approach, where students connect major ideas and can walk away from lessons knowing the larger relevance of what they have learned. I also use differentiation to meet my students' diverse needs. For example, I plan on using sheltered instruction to help my English language learning students, assistive technology to aid my special education students, and interest-based projects to further the learning of my gifted students (Guillaume, 2016).

As an educator, I create supportive learning environments by utilizing funds of knowledge and democratic classroom techniques. By honoring funds of knowledge such as culture, life experiences, and diverse skillsets, I let my students and their families know that they are welcome and respected in my classroom. I make a difference in my students lives by having high expectations for each member of my classroom, checking my own biases, and actively working to halt the perpetuation of inequities in the community that I serve. I also create supportive learning environments by modeling my classroom after the democratic classroom model, where students learn to care for one another, are treated as equals, and included in the decision-making processes within the classroom. Lastly, I feel that a supportive learning

environment is not complete without interesting and engaging activities. I plan on using project-based learning activities, where students can learn complex concepts, and create meaningful products, such as a blue print for a house or a three-dimensional model of an ecosystem impacted by mass pollution (Guillaume, 2016).

I use multiple types of valid and reliable assessments to ensure that I am teaching effectively. Along with final, or summative, assessments, I also enjoy using formative, or instruction guiding, assessments (Guillaume, 2016). I like to assess my students before, during, and after learning so that I can tailor my instruction to the needs and lives of my specific students. Before lessons, I like to use opinionnaires and informal discussion, whereas during instruction I use strategies such as numbered heads together and partner journals. After concluding a lesson or unit, I enjoy assessing student learning through portfolios. I find it exciting to see which pieces of work students are proud of most and how they have progressed over time.

While managing my classroom, I like to develop a classroom culture. By verbally expressing the care I have for my students, building relationships with parents and the wider community, calling home with positive messages, celebrating accomplishments, empathizing with struggles, and using restorative circles, I cultivate a community within my classroom. As my classroom community develops, it is easier for me to promote intrinsic motivation and to encourage self-discipline. In my experience, the authoritative classroom model promotes positive classroom management. This model promotes high teacher expectations, a clear classroom layout, supportive relationships, caring communication, warm demands, high nurturance, and high control (Guillaume, 2016). By implementing each of these facets of an authoritative classroom, I am able to manage my classroom in a way that is beneficial for everyone involved.

The commitment I have to my students inspires me to be a lifelong learner so that I can continue refining my philosophy and practices to provide the highest quality education that I can.

My Visual Teaching Philosophy:

