

## **Teaching Philosophy / Philosophy of Education: Joshua Trotter**

It has always been my dream to become a teacher. When I reflect back on my K-12 Educational journey, the most impactful and thought-provoking moments for me came from teachers who challenged me to hone my talents and push further than I thought imaginable. I want to be that guiding light for my students, no matter where they may come from. There is a place for all learners in my classroom. In this essay, I will be expanding on my teaching philosophy in education and my widespread values and beliefs when it comes to the education field as a whole. Students and their various successes are the core reason any educator should be in the classroom. I believe students play a pivotal role in the educational process. Students of different academic levels, backgrounds, and personalities can come with their own lived experiences that allow us to have honest conversations surrounding real life, policies, content, and curriculum. In my classroom, students should feel like they can be themselves and explore the world around them through what we are learning in class. In my opinion, it is a student's job to come to school and learn all they can. It is my job to make sure the needs of the whole student are cared for while they are at school. Whether they need social, emotional, mental, or academic help, it is my job to make sure they get what they need to support their success at school. Students must buy into the environment that we create together during the school year, so that environment can be as welcoming and comfortable as possible for students to feel like they can speak up and be heard as their authentic selves. I believe every student has the capacity to learn, and I will push them to do their very best every day.

As an educator, it is my job to teach my students about life in general, in addition to the academic curriculum. As an educator, it is my responsibility to ensure that students not only understand what they are learning, but also why they are learning it and why it's relevant to their everyday lives. I believe as an educator I need to be a lifelong learner myself, and while my students are learning in their classes, I should continue to keep myself updated in the field in which I teach. It brings a real-life and relevant perspective into the classroom that students can use to further comprehend their learned material. I feel like every educator needs to have great classroom management and can achieve it by being fair, firm, and fun (I call it the 3 F's). This is part of my personal learning philosophy. Fair, because the same rules should apply to all students unless accommodations are decided ahead of time. Firm, because in the classroom I set the tone - "I say what I mean, and mean what I say." Fun, because students deserve to engage and enjoy what they are learning about. After classroom management comes active listening. I think all young people are communicating with us the best they can, even if they don't have the complete language to tell us about what's going on. It is my job as an educator to actively listen or listen with intent, so I can find out how to best serve my students.

As a black man in America, I know that education is how you get ahead in life. It is the single most important tool that all people have access to that can change their lives. It is my job as an educator to continue to push and wholeheartedly help foster a "love of learning" within my students. Education, while it is what pushes people forward, is also being currently weaponized to keep people from advancing. The attack on teaching about race and other controversial topics within the classroom is an attempt to hide the truth about events throughout history. There was a point when it was against the law for Black enslaved folks to read or write, in an effort to keep

them from advancing. I believe it is my role as an educator to combat this and push my students to do their own research and have these hard conversations within their own communities in addition to my classroom.

My personal teaching philosophy is that “Everyone can learn.” This was the chant at my elementary school, and I think it applies to my philosophy and teaching style because I think anyone who applies themselves will get something out of my class. I will adjust to each student's accommodations and learning styles to make sure they leave with the knowledge they need.

My approach to theatre teaching is the same as I've stated, that everyone can perform if they want to, but it requires work. I think teaching theatre is a little different from teaching regular academics because art is subjective for the most part. However, finding ways to engage with students to develop their confidence and capabilities is the basic groundwork for a theatre educator. I believe that teaching students that the stories we perform help us get through life.

I myself benefited so much from being involved in theatre. There were so many opportunities for me to grow and push myself as an artist. As a theatre teacher, I want to provide those same experiences. As an educator and an artist, it is my job to craft an environment that strives to learn and create. I think people often forget that Theatre is the only subject that really touches on all the other subjects in school. I believe it's great that students can interact with their academics in a whole new way and can use my class as a way to explore their daily lives and interests.