

## Andrew Braun: Teaching Philosophy

My goal as a teacher is to create an environment for students where the students take ownership for their learning, the content is relevant, and they leave more prepared for their future. The way I will teach is largely influenced by constructivist approaches and William Glasser's Choice theory while incorporating 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills. As a science educator, I believe that science is meant to bring us a greater understanding of the world around us. I recognize that many of my students might not enter a scientific career, so I view a successful classroom as one that gives students the tools necessary to be prosperous and informed members of their community.

To help my students succeed in this way, the first thing that I will do as a teacher is look at my own actions and work to improve myself both in and out of the classroom. Teaching is similar to going on a long road trip in a lot of ways. The destination may be known but there is no way of predicting what will happen on the route, so we have to prepare ourselves the best that we can. I know that the only thing in the classroom that I can completely control is myself and I plan to show the expectations I have for my students first and foremost through my own actions. To keep myself accountable, I will communicate to my students the expectations that I have for myself as well as the expectations I have for them. I will work hard to improve my teaching by using feedback I receive from my students and my colleagues. Recognizing my own inexperience as a teacher, I will work my hardest to learn from the insights and experiences of my coworkers so that I can continually improve my teaching.

Another aspect of a successful classroom environment that prepares students for their future is that the students need to take ownership for their education and their actions. Responsibility is not something that can be forced upon the students, but I will work hard to

motivate them and to help them see the importance of education so that they make that choice for themselves. I will communicate my desire for my students succeed both in and outside of the classroom and encourage them to put good effort in to the coursework and projects. Students will also have opportunities to have their voice heard in the classroom. The students will have the chance give their input and make decisions on certain classroom policies and assignments. With disciplinary issues, students will have the opportunity to take ownership for their actions and to set things right again.

The next step in helping my students to succeed will be to focus on the students themselves and all aspects of their lives that impact their learning. The students will come from a variety of backgrounds and might have varying interest in science. To promote engaged learning, the curriculum will have hands on assignments and labs that pertain to their lives and promote critical thinking. I plan to use constructivist theories in my teaching because I think that science is learned best when it is experienced and adds to the student's previous knowledge.

The final aspect of my teaching philosophy will be incorporating 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills and other skills to help them prepare for their future outside of my classroom. My students will have many chances to practice these skills through group projects and assignments, class discussions, and real-world scenarios that require critical thinking. My end goal is not to have students be able to recite scientific vocabulary, but instead have an understanding of scientific concepts and the ability to problem solve so that they are able to make informed decisions in the future.