

Human brains are predisposed to learn - and to love learning. It should, in its purest form, be joyful, rewarding, and revelatory. When the conditions are right, meaning when we feel safe, supported, and capable, an innate passion is awoken: we crave learning, and *we love it*. I remember falling in love with learning as a child growing up in the loud, colorful, multicultural island of Hong Kong; now I am a teacher to **develop this love of** learning in my students.

As the daughter of a single, immigrant mother, I understand that the right to a quality education is something that needs to be fought for. For so many families and communities, even the simplest education is a privilege that is out of reach, littered with barriers, fraught with struggle. All children deserve a fierce advocate for their learning. Someone to affirm their brilliance and worthiness, and fight for their rights as a learner. I believe that my role as their teacher is not only delivering content and developing skills, but as a champion for each student that walks through my doors. Each learner is unique and may come to me from different stages of their learning journey, and I strive to meet their needs wherever they may be. I want to help them gain the skills, confidence, and critical consciousness to be fully-actualized agents of change, and empowered individuals who are their own champion.

Because of this, I prioritize my relationships with my students. Before learning, trust must be established. I teach the best when I know who my students are as learners and as humans, and when I connect with them authentically. I believe that teaching is building connections: connecting student to student, connecting student to content, and connecting student to the world. We cannot learn in a vacuum - my students' families, their experiences, their cultures are integral parts of my classroom. I hope to create a learning environment where all students may freely explore how their identities emerge within and throughout the content.

My passion lies in developing literacy in young readers and writers. As a reader, I know that reading is so much more than 'book smarts.' Being a good reader allows one to be a self-sufficient thinker: means one doesn't have to be 'fed' knowledge. Reading connects us to a rich heritage of human thought and experience. Students should feel that through reading, they have *everything* to gain. Reading teaches us more than what the words tell us - it teaches us that patience is rewarded, to stay humble, **diversity of truth**, and the practice of real empathy. Reading is a central component of my classroom routine and culture - we read daily, we talk about reading, we think about reading, and we write about what we read. I wish to expose my students to an array of mentor texts so that they become comfortable interpreting meaning from diverse genres and styles of literature - from poetry to creative non-fiction.

As a writer, I know that accessing my voice gives me immense power. It is connected to deep self-knowledge as well as agency in the world and affect on society. No matter what pursuits my students may aspire toward - career, higher-education, or otherwise - their voice is central to their power. In my class, students engage in an exploration to discover their voice and learn to wield it skillfully through their writing. In my class, I encourage drafting, experimenting, revising and working through multiple iterations so that students see their own work evolve in front of their eyes. All students feel empowered to communicate ideas in unique and imperfect ways: the idea always comes before the mechanics. From there, we practice and implement skills and

strategies to elevate their expression of thought. With a versatile set of writing tools, students become confident and flexible writers, and as an extension, be more confident and flexible in how they express themselves and engender change in the world around them.

Our world today is complex and oversaturated with information. In order to navigate this world, students must be well equipped to extract and follow threads of meaning amidst the noise. Beyond comprehension, I actively teach relational thinking and systems awareness in my pedagogy. Much of my class will be built on continuing discussion, where the goal is not to 'win' or 'finish' but rather to dig deeper and push the boundaries of understanding. Together, we create a culture where deep listening is supported and students know how to consider multiple viewpoints and move past binary thinking.

We connect: through past, present, and future; through barriers of difference; between internal (self) and external (world).