

Teaching 101

A Personal Manifesto on the Art of Being an Educator

Introduction

Although a teaching degree is required for a teaching career and teachers are continual learners, educators do not need to take expensive classes to become better at their craft. There are several resources including books, websites, and even other educators who can serve as options to improve at the teaching profession. I paid for my entire undergraduate degree with student loans and I work 2-3 jobs in addition to teaching so that I can obtain a master's degree - there are several things that I can use to help my career that don't involve paying thousands of dollars. This manifesto will explain this to you.

What is the Personal Manifesto?

Teaching is a job that doesn't stop at the classroom door at 4:00 on a Friday. Teaching is a job that comes home with the educator and sticks with you in the heart because we do this job for certain reasons that go beyond bank accounts. This manifesto will give teachers resources to improve their craft, think deeper about it and provide perspective. This manifesto is a resource that pushes communication and collaboration and supports the notion that teachers need other teachers to do their best work.

What is the Personal Manifesto Not?

This manifesto is not the only example of what it takes to be a good teacher. Teaching is a constantly changing profession that differs greatly depending on different factors within the classroom, school, and school district. There is so much research being done on this profession all the time that the way I've compiled this manifesto may have differed 5 years ago and for that matter 5 years from now. These resources are how I have developed myself into a quality educator.

Selection Criteria

When creating this manifesto I thought for a long time about what to include in it and I came up with these 4 criteria. If I answered yes to these questions I deemed the resource useful in the creation of this manifesto.

1. Is the resource something that I have gone back to over and over again in my teaching career?
2. Do I use the ideas provided in these resources on a day to day or week to week basis?
3. Do I recommend these resources to my colleagues?
4. Have the ideas I've gotten from these resources lead to improvement in student learning?

Personal Manifesto Organization

Do not take the order of these topics as an iron clad journey from start to finish. Each idea is an aspect of teaching that I feel is essential to being an excellent educator. My advice would be to start where you feel you struggle or start where you are most interested.

Management

Conscious Discipline

Dr. Becky Bailey

Dr. Becky Bailey is an elementary education and early childhood expert. Her program and award winning books are motivated by the idea that there is a better way to handle difficult and defiant children than threats, anger, and punishment. The idea of Conscious Discipline moves away from the compliance method to the community method of a classroom environment. Her belief is that people work on changing themselves before they worry about what others need to change.

As a second year teacher I was asked to participate in a year long PD program called Conscious Discipline. Although the PD offers additional resources, the book is wonderful at explaining how the process works. It is set up in 7 different sections or skills that promote "Brain Smart Classroom Management." Each skill develops positive strategies that help each student concentrate on their choices and their reactions. Each skill is presented in a simple way and implementing each skill in the elementary classroom is easy and painless.

Elementary Classroom Management Jr.

Carol Simon Weinstein & Andrew J. Mignano

Carol Simon Weinstein has a career with the Rutgers Graduate School of Education as the professor emerita in the Department of Learning & Teaching. Andrew J. Mignano is assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction for the public school district in Freehold, New Jersey. Both are renowned in their professions as Weinstein has written many other books on organization and management in the classroom. Mignano has a wide range of experience in the elementary classroom and has a great deal of experience with student teachers.

The purpose of this text is to help beginning teachers understand how to build and manage relationships when first starting out in their field. Teacher preparation programs are challenged by beginning teachers when they begin their teaching careers. This text is a comprehensive explanation of all aspects of classroom management from relationships with families to managing work time in addition to working with challenging students.

Planning

The First Days of School

Harry K. Wong & Rosemary T. Wong

Harry and Rosemary Wong are both award winning teachers who write their books in order to share their knowledge on effective teaching. This book was given to me the first day I walked into my building as a salaried teacher. It is a wealth of knowledge containing all the little details that new teachers are trying to remember as they get ready for the first days of school.

This book is divided into 5 units: The Basics, Positive Expectations, Classroom Management, Lesson Mastery, and The Professional. Each unit is further divided into chapters to further break down the characteristics of a great educator. This book is a partner for new teachers and teachers looking to improve their craft.

Instruction

A Quick Guide to Making Your Teaching Stick

Shana Schwartz

This book has been of great help to me recently in my teaching. It's a short, easy read and the principles that are taught are wonderful and easy to implement. Simple implementation includes making "stickier," easy to read anchor charts that appeal to the students,

repetition of the teaching point 5-7 times throughout the lesson, hand motions to increase engagement and understanding. All the concepts taught in this quick little read can be implemented the next day with just a few tweaks to routine lesson planning and the results are endless. They are also applicable to all subject areas.

The Art and Science of Teaching

Robert J. Marzano

Marzano explains his framework for instruction in the form of questions; 10 to be exact. Each chapter answers one question that helps teachers form their instruction by looking closely at their knowledge and skills and developing them further. Each chapter is divided into action steps to help educators walk through the process of effective instruction successfully. Examples of various concepts are provided as well as the research results for each piece of the framework.

Assessment

How to Assess Authentic Learning

Kay Burke

Assessment is something that can be daunting for many teachers. This text provides many usable and easy to create assessments for any subject area. The assessment examples go beyond the standardized testing format and provide teachers with a variety of avenues to take when it comes to assessing their students learning outcomes. This resource measures effectiveness of assessment as well.

Literacy

Apprenticeship in Literacy

Jones

Linda J. Dorn + Tammy

This book was a component of my building level team (BLT) during my third and fourth year of teaching. These meetings focused on how to help struggling literacy learners in each grade level. This book provides teachers with an idea of how to differentiate each component of a balanced literacy program to fit all learners. The teaching in this book is explicit and makes it clear to teachers how to further help their students and also by further explaining what students who are struggling in different ways may need.

Literacy for the 21st Century

Gail E. Tompkins

I used this book in most of my teacher education classes during my undergraduate coursework and during my teaching internship. By reading this book, teachers get an in depth look into what a balanced literacy program looks like in an elementary classroom. The readers of this book are introduced and taught to understand every aspect of literacy from reading, to writing, to phonics.

Differentiation

The Next Steps in Guided Reading

Jan Richardson

At the elementary level, differentiation is important especially in reading. Success in reading is crucial to academic achievement far beyond learning to read. Lower elementary teachers feel a great deal of pressure to get students to grade level and pulling groups of students for more direct and explicit instruction is how we succeed in this matter. Jan Richardson sets up a teacher friendly, step by step action plan for teachers with students at all reading levels. Each section of the book is dedicated to students with separate skill levels. Plans are provided and lesson activities are explained as well as skills that students from each level should have mastered or should be working on. This book helps teachers to provide consistency to struggling readers. This is differentiation for just one subject area but differentiation in literacy is exceedingly important at the lower elementary grades.

What Really Matters in Response to Intervention

Richard Allington

Richard Allington provides several researched strategies that help bring students up to grade level in reading. His strategies include providing children with more time to read and focusing on small group instruction with interventions that are built into everyday classroom routines. In my school district we have looked at Allington's ideas for intervention and we have tried to carry them over to other subject areas like math. Structuring your school day around these interventions and working through them collaboratively will make you a better teacher with higher learning outcomes.

Data & PLC

Learning by Doing Many

Richard DuFour, Rebecca DuFour, Robert Eaker, & Thomas

Professional Learning Communities or PLC is not an uncommon phrase in schools. I was taught to teach on the foundation of PLC and the DuFours were the family that gave me that education through the books that they wrote. Teachers need to collaborate for the welfare of the students that they teach. Learning by Doing teaches teachers how to do that. This book is a 6 part journey on how to transform a school into a successful operating PLC. It provides teachers with a purpose and a how to for transforming their work to fit a PLC. I have been part of grade level teams that are PLCs and I've been a part of the opposite. The opposite is harder. Teachers have no common data to drive their instruction and they teach in isolation. Although this operating system is hard on the teacher, it affects the students learning under this system even more. Working as a PLC where teachers are striving to give all students the same education provides teachers with common data that drives their future teaching. Teachers have a support system with each other that in turn provides students with more support. This book provides teachers with the tools they need to make this transformation.

Professional Learning Communities at Work

Richard DuFour & Robert Eaker

This was the first reading assignment my mentor teacher suggested to me as a teaching intern. It took me a few days to read only because I read it in sections. This book is a collection of evidence from schools that have begun the transformation to Professional Learning Communities. It's very straight forward and to the point and provides easy steps to start the transition from isolation to collaboration.

Leadership & Relationships

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

Stephen Covey

This book was originally a model for successful businesses that has been adopted by schools and school districts in recent years to help students and teachers alike lead more meaningful lives. My school did a book study and took the 7 Habits training on Dr. Covey's work and it was powerful. Every skill in this book is useful to teachers. Each habit is a

powerful message for an individual in any profession but I think that the message this book can send to teachers is an important one. Each habit can easily relate to teaching seamlessly and what is covered in the book carries from classroom to home life if teachers allow themselves to live the 7 habits. The book is a quick read and worth it even if you aren't looking to improve your teaching.

The Leader in Me

Stephen Covey

Leadership and change starts with the individual but teachers can take the 7 habits into their classrooms and teach them to their students. It starts with the Leader in Me. This book is for parents, teachers, and community members who want to help prepare students for the world they will grow up to live in. In 1999, a school in North Carolina, A.B. Combs, was noticing that something wasn't working. Scores were low and behavior was awful and teachers didn't like the work they were doing. When faced with losing their charter, the principal started searching for a way to reinvent her school. Stephen Covey gave her an interesting idea about teaching the children in her school each of the 7 habits. The staff started researching things that business leaders and community members were looking for in today's employees and they went back to looking at what good teaching really looks like. With their new research and plan and, of course, the 7 habits they created the first school with a charter theme of leadership and they kick started a trend that spread on the international level.

Organization

Classroom Management in Photographs

Maria L. Chang

This visual compilation was a wonderful resource to me as a beginning teacher. The photographs are dated but the ideas are SOLID. The entire purpose is "Show don't Tell" which is fantastic because all teachers like to wander and "window shop" in the classrooms of their colleagues.

Pinterest

Created by Ben Silbermann + Evan Sharp

This is an interesting addition to my personal manifesto but pinterest can be one of a teacher's very best friends. Pinterest is a door to almost anything you can imagine that you want ideas for. I got most of my ideas for classroom organization both this year and last from Pinterest. In addition to great ideas and easy to find resources it also connects teachers to other teachers. Teachers get their best ideas from their peers and Pinterest provides an insight to others in the profession from anywhere in the world. Pinterest also provides an organizational method to all of the ideas you find. Pinterest is an online

collection of ideas that helps teachers collaborate and share at the click of a button...it's also fun.

Technology & Resources

Merlot
Learning

California State University Center for Distributed

Merlot is a peer reviewed collection of materials for both learning and teaching. It is designed for use of educators internationally. Merlot promotes the forming of learning communities among teachers. It's easy to use, add to, and search for materials. I was first introduced to Merlot for a graduate class assignment that asked me to contribute to the Merlot educational materials. Here is an example of something I have contributed to Merlot: [Drill & Skill](#)

Blogger

Pyra Labs & Google

Blogger is another way for teachers to collaborate with teachers at the click of a button. Teachers can get information, resources, ideas, and they can problem solve all from their desk or their living room. Blogger is a thinking outlet that can help teachers in any aspect of their job. Take a look at the blog I have begun as I have worked through my master's degree at Michigan State: [Educational Technology](#).

Teachers Pay Teachers

This is another online resource outlet for teachers. This website is set up for teachers as another way to collaborate with teachers across the country. Teachers have the opportunity to make money for the materials they design for their classrooms and share them with other professionals in need of similar resources. Teachers learn best from each other and this is one way to do that. I love using teachers pay teachers and I have even uploaded my own materials for sale. This site has helped me supplement my teaching with materials that are sound and has helped me communicate with colleagues I would have otherwise never met or been able to communicate with.

How to Win Friends & Influence People
Carnegie

Dale

The teaching profession is a huge network where talking to people and making friends is an everyday part of the job. Teachers network with their students, parents, and, of course, other teachers and educational professionals. Teachers represent what should be a strong sense of community because they are in charge of creating and managing one each day in

their own classrooms. Teachers have a permanent expectation of being “people people.” Dale Carnegie’s book teaches people in any profession things they can do to be well liked and easy to work with. His methods are straightforward and seem like common sense and since teachers have the ultimate job where success and respect are measured by how well those you work with respond to and like you; reading and acting on these techniques will help any educator.

Ending Comment

As you work your way through these resources please note that they are suggestions on how to improve your educational craft. I recommend taking notes and asking questions as you work through the sections of this manifesto and make them public via a personal blog or website. The strongest piece of advice I can give to be a solid successful member of the educational community is to ask for help from those who are available to give it - fellow educators.