

While crafting this teaching philosophy, I reflected upon the teachers who had the greatest influence upon me during my time as a child and young adult. Part of my desire to work in a boarding school, and to embody the diverse roles that go along with this, stemmed from the realization that these teachers had the influence they did due to our interaction inside *and* outside of the formal classroom. While some of these adults taught an academic class that I took, many were coaches or simply informal role models that consistently demonstrated their interest and investment in my well-being and development as a student, athlete, and young man. As a result, my central goal as a teacher is to consistently demonstrate to my students, athletes, and dorm residents that I care about them as human beings and am invested in their continual development.

This reads as a simple goal, but it is one that I believe takes constant conscious reminders and self-awareness. Importantly, it is also a goal that is never complete as each year brings new students and new opportunities to connect with them. A simple method that I use with my students to achieve this goal is set a point early in the year by which time I aim to have a personal conversation with each student that. This conversation need not be long but should enable me to gain a better understanding of this student outside of the information easily available to me from the classroom, dorm, athletic field, etc. Hopefully, this initial conversation allows me insight that enables me to engage with the student in greater depth in the future.

Once I have gained some measure of familiarity with the students, I feel comfortable introducing assignments that ask the students to think critically about themselves. I believe that self-awareness and self-analysis are two of the most important traits and skills that youth and adults can possess. Using reflection and goal setting, I ask the students to assess their past behavior and describe what they want from the future and what they will do to make it a reality. I also ask them to find quotations from historical figures and apply the ideas and foundational messages to themselves and their friends, teams, etc.

Due to the nature of teaching and the continually developing adolescent mind, it is difficult to obtain real-time evaluations that provide feedback as to my success in achieving this goal. I do conduct formal surveys with my students at the end of each year to see what lessons and skills they have developed and internalized over the months prior. I find, however, that the most accurate feedback comes in the form of communication with my students after our formal relationship (teacher-student, coach-player, dorm parent-dorm resident) concludes.

Writing this document has demonstrated to me why teaching is important to me. I value the opportunity to embody the role of teacher for the ability to show young people that an adult is invested in their development. There are, obviously, many specific skills that different teachers can impart to their students, but I believe that communicating the basic trait of care is central to enabling students to find success, both in school and future learning, professional, social, and private environments.

As a result, I am a teacher because of the positive impact that my teachers had on me and my desire to embody a similar role for others. I know that I am who I am due in large part to

several adults who, when I was an adolescent, clearly demonstrated to me that they cared about me and desired to help me become my best self. An important piece of this is that these adults provided an authentic version of their best selves to which I could aspire and a model for various traits that I knew I wanted to embody as well. In conclusion, through self-reflection, goal setting, and with a positive adult role model who asks them to think critically about the type of person they want to be, each student is capable of becoming a positive member of society capable of creating a similar impact on others.