

Jennifer Meier

“Keep Moving Forward”

Walt Disney framed his company around one motto, “We keep moving forward.” This motto is exemplar to my philosophy as an educator. *We keep moving forward* to provide children with the necessary tools to progress in their schooling to become ethical, just, and educated citizens. In the twenty-first century, *we keep moving forward*, to recognize the diversity of schools is at its peak, in order to allow for each child to express their uniqueness. *We keep moving forward* to open new doors for our students to explore their natural curiosity in aspects of education and life. Therefore, the role of a teacher is to keep himself or herself and his or her students *moving forward* in recognizing the uniqueness of each child, providing guidance to foster each child’s curiosity, and create a classroom environment that motivates, welcomes, and reaches the uniqueness of each child to grow as both a student and a citizen of this century.

Children, by nature, are curious. They constantly seek answers as they discover the world around them. My job as a teacher is then to keep this curiosity *moving forward*. Students will be active learners in my classroom that is student-centered and does not simply provide the answer, but offers exploratory lessons and guidance to students’ learning. Curriculum will then be engaging and challenging for each learner, reflective of the Common Core and each child’s capability, as it will allow the child to *keep moving forward* in his or her learning and development as a citizen of today’s society. In doing so, I must be the facilitator and give students appropriate freedom in their learning and classroom environment to retain motivation and curiosity in the classroom. Hands-on, exploratory activities are examples of how I will give students the desired freedom, while still engaging and effectively drawing on the students’ curiosity and desire to *keep moving forward*. Instruction will then be student-centered as it should be based off of what they know and where we want them to be. Moreover, the background knowledge of students in today’s digital age is gathered through technology. Therefore, as an advocate for technology, instruction for the curious, twenty-first century learner will be geared toward technology use. Children are using technology and the internet daily, as well as most of society, so I will implement computers, tablet use, and Web 2.0

tools, such as Glogster, Blogger, Voki, Skype, Prezi, into instruction to keep children *moving forward* to prepare for this digital era.

Despite their commonality of curiousness, each child has his or her own story when they enter the classroom. Children possess different intelligences that manifest certain strengths, while they also come from an array of ethnicities. Differentiated instruction will allow each learner to *move forward* in their own education as instruction is based on students' individual strengths and learning styles. Instruction will then be approached using various teaching strategies to ensure each learning style is met. Assessment will be ongoing to capture every learning style. Although summative assessment is needed to ensure student readiness and effective lesson planning, an emphasis will be placed on ongoing formative assessment as it will improve lesson planning, reduce student anxiety, and allow myself and my students to reflect in order to recognize when they are ready to *move forward* in their learning. Nonetheless, it is important to create a community of learners in the classroom while still recognizing the diversity of the classroom. Cooperative learning will then occur in my classroom as it will personalize learning, encourage effective collaboration, and hearten peer acceptance, appreciation, and competency to foster peer diversity.

Our twenty-first century learners need a stable, secure, and welcoming environment that promotes social and academic well-being. Students learn best when they feel welcomed and appreciated each day. Teachers must create a democratic community of learners that encourages each learner to have a voice. A community of learners can be made through implementing a responsive classroom where each child has the opportunity to get to know fellow learners, share stories, and learn how to respect one another before classroom instruction begins. This will help create a bully-free environment and develop socially wise, global citizens who are prepared to *keep moving forward* toward higher education and careers. Therefore, my passion and priorities as a teacher to create an environment that promotes community, exploration, and critical thinking that will allow our children to “keep moving forward, opening new doors, and doing new things” (Walt Disney).