Every teacher has a different outlook on education and every teacher plays a major role in the lives of many individuals. I am planning on teaching Mathematics in a high school setting. My purpose is not to get my students to learn but to teach them how to learn. My philosophy is based on using different theories to support how I think we should learn, what we should learn, and what the purpose of education is.

When thinking about the purpose of education, one should consider different ideologies because it is the way we view society. I, for one, am a believer of conservatism because I think that the purpose of education should focus on getting our students prepared for life after school and making sure they will be able to succeed in the real-world. Schools need to focus on the core skills and knowledge because they are the basic skills that everyone needs to know for everyday survival in society. For example, integer operations, fractions, and solving simple equations are some of the core skills and knowledge. Conservatism also advocates for ensuring and passing along past traditions. If the students are being taught with new content (the NYS common core for example), when they step into the real-world, they will not be prepared because society is already molded around the past traditions that have worked well for our nation which is why it important to stay with what we already know. For example, with the new curriculum as of right now, the students would learn less than with the original curriculum because they are too focused on trying to memorize all of these extras steps that they are expected to complete as opposed to focusing on the main idea or purpose of the problem. Conservatism in education is what will get us to become successful in society.

What students should learn is a very important aspect of education. I am a firm believer of the progressivism curriculum. By using the ideas of conservatism and teaching basic math skills and making sure that our students will be successful, students should also have the opportunity to take those basic math skills and apply it to learning through what interests them which is another reason that math is a meaningful challenge. Getting the students to apply to their life how solving two-step equations in an interesting way should be the goal of any teacher. Progressivism is learner centered and the goal is to learn how to learn. With progressivism we can develop/improve society gradually. To do so, education needs to be able to get the students’ interest while learning the core and basic math skills from the conservatism aspect by creating math problems that can be centered on the students after obtaining information by collecting data from an interest inventory. Through progressivism, our students will also learn how to work with others through collaborative learning. This is important because in society and inside a mathematics classroom, there will be many instances in which a student will have to work with others.

How we learn is also another important aspect of education. In order for the students to become successful in society as well as learn what interests them, they would benefit most from problem-based learning which is also known as pragmatism. Students would utilize the scientific method when presented with a problems as well as work with others in order to reach a solution. Pragmatism teaches the students through a sophisticated trial and error method. We need to get our students to learn through discovery because sometimes you have to learn from your mistakes. This works best when completing math problems because a student will remember the process to achieve the correct solution easier. For example, if a student is given a Coordinate Geometry problem that requires them to determine if the midpoints of rectangle form a rhombus, they are going to have to go through a series of trials and look back on what they did that did not work the first time when forming their rectangle before they can prove it to be true. This way of how students learn also relates to what interests them because they can approach the problem in a way that is unique to them.

Each one of these theories contributes to the fact that education should be something that leads our students to being successful in society. While I was student teaching, at both of my placements, it was my personal goal to make sure that my students were successful and were going to be able to take something from what and how they learned. I would always make sure when giving the students a word problem, that I would create one that included their interests or activities that they were involved with. Before going over it with the class, I would give them the opportunity to problem-solve and figure it out on their own through discovery that would involve using core and basic math skills such as being able to find common denominators while solving a one or two-step equation. In order to be successful my philosophy states that education needs to be learning through problem-based learning in which you apply core and basic skills towards ideas and ways that interest you.