1)   Teaching is important to me as it fulfills a need in the world that is sorely under-appreciated. I feel that people do not value education as it should be valued. Teaching gives me an opportunity to contribute to shaping the future leaders who are soon to be integrated into a variety of workforces. I love the satisfaction teaching gives me in knowing I am a net positive to the educational system.

2)   My primary concern in educating students is in relation to scaffolding. I believe that scaffolding is an overlooked part of many people's teaching philosophy, particularly noticeable when studying Bloom's Taxonomy. Originally published in 1956, Bloom's Taxonomy remains a relevant framework nearly 70 years later. It asserts that the highest order of cognitive application for students is in the final level: creation. This is where students produce work in original form whether by design, assembly, and various mediums of construction. It is the most difficult level for students to reach, and the one that expert psychologists say is most ignored in modern education. I am of the opinion that much of the cognitive benefit students receive through education is wasted by neglecting this very important skill.

By giving students the opportunity to create their own work based on skillsets fostered in the classroom environment, students are able to draw natural connections on personal, community, and cultural levels that assist in retention of information and skills. It also promotes higher order thinking, and leaves students with a deeper sense of accomplishment. Students need to be challenged. When goals are reached and even surpassed, it is appropriate to raise the bar and encourage students to reach beyond their current ability toward a higher potential. That said, in order for a student to create, Bloom's Taxonomy suggests that they must first develop the pre-requisite skills. Each skill in the hierarchy depends upon efficient application of the skills below. When teaching my students, I make great effort to understand the current level of each of my students, and practice appropriate scaffolding based on their current needs and abilities (Armstrong).

3)   In my lessons, I am always looking to foster **higher order thinking**. This allows students to make broader connections to other subjects, cultural factors, and personal experience. It also gives students a more complete concept of materials that can be used in a variety of situations. Higher order thinking promotes useful abilities such as inferring, predicting, and substitutions.

Two instructional strategies that will promote higher order thinking in my students are posing provocative questions to generate discussion, and requiring students to explain concepts by drawing connections, including by using metaphors and analogies.

One specific strategy to promote higher order thinking is using graphic organizers to more easily show connections and relationships between concepts. I use these often in the classroom for activities such as comparing and contrasting. Another strategy to promote higher order thinking is

practicing inferring. One way I like to do this is to create a PowerPoint with various complex photos. The photo may be something like a walrus being presented a round cake-shaped tray of fish. The students have to infer the meaning behind what is happening (it is the walrus' birthday, and the fish are his birthday cake). This is a fun activity for students, and really gets them thinking outside the box.

4)   Building a positive relationship with school stakeholders such as colleagues, administration, students, and parents is important for the well-being a growth of students. Without proper communication, strategies can fall apart and students do not receive the kind of focused and efficient attention they deserve. Strategies for creating positive relationships include finding ways to incentivize involvement between stakeholders, and creating efficient lines of communication with timely follow-ups. Incentivizing involvement can be done by simplifying communication, such as through the use of Dojo, and making sure communication is done in a timely manner, stakeholders can ensure that important issues do not fall by the wayside.