The education equation is a pretty simple combination. Take good curriculum, add in some creativity, multiply by the enthusiasm of children and that equals life long learners, eager to learn new things, enhance their lives, and learn new skills. The most important part of that equation is the learners, and the key to its success is getting them actively engaged in the process.

 Teaching is both an art and a science. Scientific data drives curriculum, but all children need to be nurtured academically as well as spiritually and emotionally, being encouraged to become lifetime learners for the sheer joy that comes from learning something new! Beginning at a very early age, learning should be supported in all areas of life, because there are always new things to learn about, books to be read, art to be made, music to express ourselves, and skills to master. Children and educators need to understand that no two people learn in the same way or at the same pace, and that even as adults, we learn new things every single day, and all in different ways.

That is the philosophy I teach by in my classroom. I try to provide a safe environment where all students feel free to experience new things, to make mistakes and embrace them as a part of learning, and gain knowledge from those mistakes. We are each on our own educational journey but we can help each other along the way by sharing our best skills and learning from the best that others offer.

 The curriculum outlined by New York State and the Department of Catholic Education drive the scientific aspect of what I teach, and the students themselves, drive the art that I use to convey those concepts. It is imperative that teachers utilize the tools and curriculum outlined by the New York State Department of Education and adhere to the standards that they are expected to teach, because that is what research has shown us as far as what our students need. But, the children in a class dictate the way in which it will be done because they are individual learners and it is my obligation to find a way to reach them all with a variety of methods and learning experiences that will help make the skills part of their everyday knowledge. With that in mind, I try to use a variety of techniques including technology, group activities, real life problems, interactive notebooks, a variety of ways to solve problems and the encouragement to allow all to solve problems in their own way. My methods center on helping students to discover.

 With that in mind, I incorporate a variety of methods and practices that help each child reach their personal goals and I try to provide as much additional help as is needed. I consider myself more of a facilitator in the learning experience. I walk around and ask more questions than I answer because I believe that when students discover methods themselves, it is a more meaningful learning experience. Allowing them to struggle a little with questions, gives them the freedom to try out new techniques and to experience the joy of finding the answers for themselves. Utilizing lessons as are outlined by Engage NY, I supplement additional tools and enhancements to the lesson, so that each student feels as though they can master the skills that will then become lifelong skills.

 Most important to the entire process, is to promote a Christ centered classroom. My focus is always the principles of our Catholic Faith, and I promote that spirit in our daily work. Every child is a gift from God and each has unique talents and challenges to face each day. I try to promote the idea that we all must work together for common good. I am a friendly teacher, and I know that my students know that I truly care about them, their well being, and that I am willing to always help them reach their academic goals. I love my students and I love what I do every day.