

Through the Gates of Success with an Education Passport

by TJ Pak

"Education is not the learning of facts, but the training of the mind to think!"
- Albert Einstein

Believing strongly in the value of education and innovation, my goal as a teacher is not only to inspire, encourage, and educate, but to facilitate students in developing a sense of autonomy through student-led learning.

One way I believe students can take control of their education is by integrating inquiry-based learning, project-based learning and design thinking into the classroom. These active learning tasks afford students opportunity to expand creativity and to experiment, which exercises complex cognitive thinking through the application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation of knowledge. Investigating an inquiry or exploring a problem further enables students to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills while building self-confidence, resilience and the ability to effectively adapt. These transferable skills better position students to succeed in an uncertain future as they have the necessary skills to work collaboratively with others and to solve problems by generating new ideas and innovations.

Teaching students how to effectively learn requires both a top-down approach and a bottom-up approach to education. Informed by a universal design lens, I enable equitable access to knowledge and help each student achieve their full potential by preparing learning materials that accommodate diverse learning styles and by offering individualized support. I encourage students to take ownership of their learning by providing opportunities for students to explore individual learning styles and to develop strategies to maximize individual learning.

Creating a classroom environment in which students feel safe to explore topics that are meaningful and relevant to them can be achieved by investing in teacher-student relationships. Taking the time to get to know each student on a personal level builds trust and rapport which translates into increased motivation and higher learning success.