Teaching Philosophy

About Me

Hello! I am Leslie Yates, and I am so excited to be teaching Anatomy and Chemistry at Metro Academic this year. I would love to share a bit about me, and can't wait to get to know you as well! I am an Atlanta native and currently live in Marietta with my husband and 3 sons (Luke 5th grade, Caleb 3rd grade, and Aaron 1st grade). We also have a sweet goldendoodle named Chewie. I studied at UGA where I was also a Young Life leader at North Oconee High School, and I graduated with degrees in Biology and German. At Georgia State University I went on to get my Masters in the Art of Teaching and became certified in teaching science grades 6-12, German, and gifted. The next year I taught at Dacula Middle School in Gwinnett County, where I remained happily for several years. I served as head of curriculum for two of those years, in addition to sponsoring Science Fair, Environmental Club, and Green and Healthy Schools. Once my first son was born, I spent the next years staying home with my kids, and one of those years I also taught at Eastside Academic. Volunteering with the kids ministry at church and teaching a mom's Bible study were other ways I enjoyed that time. Now, my family and I worship at Cumberland Community Church where I help teach and lead a small group in the middle school ministry. I recently had additional experience at Griffin Middle School in Cobb County and am now excited to teach at Metro Academic. In my free time, I enjoy running, reading, travel, and journaling.

Communication

What makes me love teaching is the ability to be creative, respond to students' needs, and seeing students go from not understanding to understanding. I see my role as doing whatever it takes to help students understand concepts and be successful. I want your students to feel free to email me any time with questions, and I will respond quickly to help your student however I can- that is why I am here! Communication is so important to me, so you will receive an email each week with what we did in class and what the homework assignments are for the week (kids will get a hard copy of homework assignments as well). In addition I will post this information on my website, leslieyates.com. I would love for you to communicate with me as well! **Email me and tell me a bit about your student. What would be helpful for me to know?**

Inquiry and Labs

This year in chemistry and anatomy, I want to use an inquiry approach to teaching. For every unit, I will have an overarching problem or question that we will investigate to give context to the concepts we are learning. This helps us get a big picture look at what we are learning and why it is important. It also allows students to act like true scientists- acting as explorers, problem solvers, and designers of their own experiments. Each time we meet in class, I want to maximize the time that we are collaborating together and applying and exploring information through labs. I want students to experience different types of technology and tools in class that will help chemistry and anatomy come to life.

Higher Order Thinking

Each semester, we will have one project, one lab report, and one writing assignment. These types of assignments help students to use higher order thinking skills. They are using the basic facts and applying them in a way that involves critical thinking. I will give clear details on how to do these so that your kids can be successful.

Notes and Homework

As we are exploring the overarching problems, we will also be learning the details of each concept. A lot of the work that students will do at home will be reading and answering questions, watching helpful instructional videos, and practicing problems. A part of each week's homework will also be emailing me with a ranking of how well they feel they are understanding each section that they are working on at home. In class, students will receive diagrams and graphic organizers to help go over the information they have been reading at home and make sense of it. Being clear about what we are learning and how it all fits together is one of the most important and effective ways of learning information, after all. We will also spend time going over homework questions together, and **so it is very important that students complete homework in a timely manner**. I don't expect it all to be accurate! But I do expect students to at least attempt all of the questions assigned, so that in class we can address where there is misunderstanding or questions.

Differentiation and Assessments

Having homeschooled your child, you might realize that there are certain ways in which they learn better than others. In our class my hope is to be able to differentiate a bit for each student. I hope to consistently have activities that involve visual, audio, and kinesthetic learning styles. But also, there will be situations where I give students options. I will show them different ways they can take notes at home, for example. They will be able to have a choice when it comes to what projects they do. I hope to assess student learning formally through tests, but also informally in class and through their communication with me. If a student is struggling with a certain concept, I may give some additional resources or practice just to that student to help. If a student is clearly understanding everything, I may offer some ideas for extending that knowledge. Every student is different, and I want to offer opportunities when I can to make sure everyone is learning to the best of their abilities. If a student takes an assessment and doesn't do well, I will communicate individually to see if we can reteach and earn partial credit when possible. Let's do whatever it takes to understand the concepts and show our learning effectively!

Positive Learning Environment

I want students to be able to come to my class, and feel that they are free to learn without fear or discouragement. Having high expectations for behavior and effort can help everyone with this. One rule to summarize how we want to act in class is this: If what you are doing interferes with learning, hurts someone's heart, or prevents you from being your best self, you shouldn't be doing it! Rather, let's come to class choosing our attitudes, ready to be there for each other, looking to make someone's day, and ready to learn and have fun as well. I strive for mutual respect between myself and the students, and if a student is struggling consistently with behavior or academically, I will communicate that promptly so that we can work together to improve. If there are small behavior issues in class, I will simply pull the student aside and have them reflect on what is causing the problem, but the majority of my behavior management is preventing it at all by keeping students engaged and interested and setting clear expectations.

A Prayer for This Year

Lord, we are humbled by your creative hand that is clear in this creation around us. Help us to see how amazing you are as we discover more about the tiny building blocks in chemistry and the human body in anatomy. Let these discoveries draw us close to you. I pray for each student to know how much they are loved by you and to discern if you are calling them to engage in a field in science. Regardless, I pray that they feel a sense of encouragement and that they grow in their knowledge and confidence this year. We love you and trust you with these classes. Amen!

Please feel free to contact me with any questions any time!