Abba Brodt:

Teaching Philosophy Statement

My goals as a Jewish educator are to help educate and inspire the next generation of Jewish leaders and visionaries.  I teach with kindness, warmth and humour, and I try my hardest to frame the content I teach in a manner that is eminently relatable to my students.  I firmly believe that the best Jewish education blends authentic activity, challenging content and skill development while promoting and developing the following three attributes in students: **critical thinking, creativity** and **compassion**.

Additional goals and philosophical musings include:

* Each of my students has his or her own Jewish uniqueness and God-given potentials. In my capacity as teacher, I want to help each student tap into that uniqueness and actualize it.
* To instil a love of Jewish learning and a love of Judaism in my students as I share my own passion for learning about Judaism with them. Many of the students whom I teach come from homes with few Jewish tools or positive Jewish experiences. In my approach to designing their learning experiences, I believe that the teacher needs to model a positive approach to Judaism through curriculum, teaching style, and personal example. More so, curriculum that is structured around authentic Jewish activity is paramount.
* To focus on Judaic skill building – reading, writing, and praying. All too often, students leave the day school system with an underdeveloped set of skills, and the Jewish world and its institutions become something foreign and therefore uncomfortable. I want to be able to give them the skills that will mitigate the sense of discomfort that many will undoubtedly come to feel when in a Jewish setting (e.g. synagogue). What I have learned over the course of the 2010-2011 academic year is that the quickest and best route to building these Jewish-life skills is via authentic activity. If one wants to teach Kabbalat Shabbat and how to make Kiddush, then one has to *do* Kabbalat Shabbat and *make* Kiddush with one’s students, with as much feeling and *simcha* as possible.
* To help my students appreciate and recognize the many pathways to God and Judaism that exist, through learning experiences that introduce students to different voices in, and expressions of, Judaism. I believe that in order to do so in a school, we need to embrace the inherent risks in doing so and to develop the requisite ability to think outside of the box in how we teach Judaism.
* As an Orthodox Jew, I do my best work in a community day school setting. I believe in the uniqueness of each and every Jew, and I believe that in this day and age, Jews from any denomination or background who are active and passionate about their Judaism need to be recognized and supported. This applies to teachers, lay leaders and students themselves.