

Teaching Philosophy

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Technology is woven through every facet of our lives but that does not make us technologists or information scientists. That is where my role as a teacher begins. My presence in the classroom and on campus is framed by my philosophy which finds its roots during my high school years as a karate instructor teaching basic self-defense moves to a young boy named “Lenny” who was diagnosed with autism. The result was a child who became self-confident and aware. It was from this that I learned patience and persistence along with a passion for teaching.

As teachers we master our content, but we should always be striving to improve our abilities to engage our students and meet them where they are for them to excel in the classroom but more importantly, in life. To do this it takes creativity, patience, persistence and a passion to serve others.

My philosophy, which applies to all modes of delivery, incorporates trust, engagement, rigor, and support. More directly, I believe every student wants to become the best version of themselves and I will guide them along this path to achieve this goal.

Trust begins with being open and honest. I introduce my personal experiences prior to coming to the University setting and my current experiences outside the University as a consultant so they understand I am not just repeating what they find in a textbook, online video, or other available source. I weave stories of a different perspective into the content to reinforce learning objectives. This is done with the intent to let them know I am much like they are and they can reach their goals when they apply themselves.

Engagement is where I spend my most of my time and energy. When students are witness to your passion, they want to learn. Passion is evolved from interest. Engagement is an awakening of interest. I have spent considerable time in looking at making the classroom an experience. One such application is the use of gamification techniques that increase interest and continue to ‘stoke the fire’. If you can ‘stoke their fire’, you will encounter an awakening where they seek more knowledge. Additionally, I believe in exploring how technologies can enhance learning. Whether it is new smartphone app, a feature in an LMS, or a traditional clicker, as a professional educator I feel obliged to try these out and see how I can use them to further engage my students.

Rigor is an odd term and somewhat subjective. But once you have a student’s trust such that they know you will guide them and they are interested, it is now time to introduce challenges which develop critical thinking and analytical skills necessary for all professions. I firmly believe learning is a developmental process much like planting a seed in the ground. If you do not cultivate it the seed may not grow.

As student are immersed in challenging learning assessments, we should be prepared to see students have doubts in their abilities, field of study, and in themselves. I enjoy taking on the role of mentoring and coaching. I make myself available to my students as they uncover questions, doubts, and concerns. Even though I may have office hours, utilize texting and video chat, I seek opportunities to ‘talk and walk’ with my students. It is during these times outside of the classroom I truly learn about our students, so I can better serve and teach them.