

Tammy Black-Day's Teaching Philosophy

My teaching philosophy centers around creating an inclusive and engaging learning environment. It is about imparting knowledge and fostering critical thinking skills and a lifelong love for learning. I draw inspiration from my Jesuit learning principles, which have instilled a deep appreciation for understanding and engaging with the world around us. As a first-generation college student, I understand the unique challenges that many of my students face, especially those from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds. My journey through higher education has instilled a passion for fostering spaces where all students feel empowered to bring their full selves to the classroom, confident that they are valued and capable of succeeding.

Collaboration is more than an element of my teaching approach; it is the cornerstone that shapes and enriches every aspect of the educational experience I create. I believe in the transformative power of working closely with administration, faculty, staff, and community members to develop learning opportunities that are deeply meaningful and responsive to the needs of students and the broader community. My goal is to design experiences that go beyond the classroom, engaging students in ways that make learning relevant and impactful. In a collaborative learning environment, student involvement becomes essential to the success of our shared learning journey, reinforcing the values of respect, intellectual curiosity, and a lifelong commitment to personal and community growth. A few of the ways in which I do this is to encourage speeches about issues impacting our community, fostering a safe environment to give and receive constructive feedback, and encouraging students to discuss their challenges and successes both in and out of the classroom.

As a public speaking instructor, I strive to engage students through dynamic classroom activities and assignments. Recognizing that public speaking can be intimidating, I prioritize

teaching self-awareness and anxiety management skills that help many students overcome their fears. This can be especially important to build confidence for students from diverse cultural backgrounds where speaking up is not encouraged, or those who come from traumatic backgrounds experiencing higher anxiety. Passion is the driving force behind my teaching. I aim to ignite a genuine love for learning in my students, encouraging them to explore their interests beyond the confines of the classroom. I want to cultivate students who are global citizens, understanding the impact of their actions on both local and global scales through their actions and engagement in class. I aim to prepare students to thrive in an interconnected world by promoting empathy, cultural awareness, and social responsibility by encouraging them to do informative speeches about a culture other than their own, or persuading others in a speech about an activity happening in their own community.

Creating an effective learning environment extends beyond delivering content; it involves intentional classroom management that fosters a respectful, collaborative, and intellectually stimulating atmosphere. I believe that setting clear expectations and offering consistent support are foundational to building a classroom culture where each student feels valued and encouraged to actively participate. Empowering students to take ownership of their learning journey, understanding that their voices and contributions matter creates an environment that champions intellectual curiosity and respectful dialogue. My approach to classroom management prioritizes both security and confidence, ensuring that students feel supported and can fully engage with the material and one another in ways that enhance their academic and personal growth. I recently received feedback from current and prior students that the skills they learned in my classroom helped them to not only become more confident in their speaking skills but provided them with

life skills to manage the stress of their daily lives. One student, who was most shy and apprehensive, went on to become a teacher herself.

In essence, my teaching philosophy weaves together the Jesuit principles of my Gonzaga University education with a deep commitment to collaboration, community engagement, and lifelong learning. Grounded in the Jesuit ideal of educating the whole person, I strive to cultivate an inclusive and empowering learning environment where each student feels valued and supported. Through passionate instruction, I foster a positive classroom atmosphere that encourages intellectual curiosity, empathy, and critical thinking. By actively promoting diversity, equity, and inclusivity, I do my best to prepare my students to flourish as well-rounded, socially responsible global citizens, ready to engage thoughtfully and compassionately with the world around them. One of the primary ways in which I do this is to create a safe place to learn. We start each class in a circle, facing one another, and begin with a personal introduction including a daily prompt. It is in the prompts that diversity, equity, and inclusivity are promoted. Each one is designed to encompass not only the material we are about to discuss but also what is happening in their lives and the world around us all. For example, during this election year, the prompt was to share one thing on your mind about the election. Many students expressed concerns about the results in their own lives and the impact it would have on the world.