

Teaching Philosophy

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Throughout my educational career, I have had the good fortune to be subject to many extraordinary educators. It is my goal to emulate these examples and incorporate the strategies and techniques I have been taught from my mentors into my own classroom. The two most important fundamental aspects that have impacted me the most within my own education are exhibiting a high degree of enthusiasm in the material taught and cultivating an environment of critical thinking skills. To best incorporate these characteristics in my own classroom, I focus my attention on possessing a strong interest in each individual student's development, research, and critical thinking skills.

First and foremost, a teacher must possess a high level of enthusiasm for the material he or she teaches for the students to become engaged, let alone participate, within the classroom. I enjoy the material that I teach, and I strive to show the students that by presenting a charismatic attitude when approaching the course material. Once students see this approach, they are more inclined to become enthused with the material, as well. However, enthusiasm in the classroom goes beyond the material; I also strive to show my enthusiasm in each student and their questions, thoughts, and goals. The classroom is a space in which students should feel that mutual respect is the norm, whether it is peer-to-peer or within the teacher-pupil dynamic. This allows for an atmosphere within the classroom that fosters an environment free of bias and judgement, wherein each student can respectfully field their thoughts and questions.

Interest within the classroom alone, however, will not provide the students with all that is necessary to succeed. I believe that students should feel encouraged to seek knowledge outside the classroom. In order to achieve this goal, I try to keep material relevant to the students. This allows for far greater interactivity within discussion. I encourage the students to meet with me outside the classroom, so I can become more familiar with their individual interests and research agendas. I try to incorporate what I learn about my students into the lectures and discussion of different materials by providing relevant examples tending to their interests. I also use feedback from the students regarding what is and is not working within the classroom, and make adjustments accordingly, to evolve the classroom and embrace their educational goals.

Finally, developing critical thinking skills are of the utmost importance within my teaching agenda. These skills are not only a foundation within any classroom, they are a foundation to life outside the classroom, as well. I want each of my students to be able to analyze arguments and make informed decisions of the merits of the argument. I want them to be able to provide feedback of the strengths and weaknesses of each argument. I want them to be able to theorize, hypothesize, and provide support - such as methods and evidence - when making their own arguments. Therefore, I cultivate these skills through a series of guided in-depth discussions within the classroom to better prepare them for life outside the classroom.