

My Philosophy of Teaching

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My Philosophy on Teaching in Counselor Education

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PHILOSOPHY OF TEACHING

“Teachers who love teaching, teach students to love learning.” – Robert J. Meehan

For as long as I could remember, teaching has been a large part of who I am. It runs through my veins, and it has given me drive, purpose, and meaning. To transmit valuable information from one generation to the next is meaningful, but what is even more satisfying than that is seeing students get their “Aha!” moments. Watching them struggle with understanding a concept, feeling their frustration, allowing them to battle with themselves to find answers, and then seeing them arrive at the right answer is the most fulfilling experience a teacher can have. Furthermore, it is a privilege to be part of someone else’s academic and personal journey. It is my desire to be an effective channel for their learning. I want them to be inquisitive and ask questions. I want them to be interested in the course content. I want them to respect each other’s opinions. I want them to apply what they have learned. I want them to transmit to others what they have learned in class. Lastly, I want them to grow as human beings.

Humility is Key to Learning

“All I know is that I know nothing.” – Socrates

I have many years of teaching experience, and yet, I always find that I still have much to learn. The more we study our field, the more we think we know what it all entails. Yet, one of the hardest statements to sometimes tell your students is, “I don’t know”, which I often quickly follow with, “...but I’ll find out and get back to you.” I was always shocked when my professor whom I deemed the most intelligent would say, “I don’t know”. At the same time, it was also very comforting because it made me understand that maybe I am not supposed to know everything, but I am supposed to search for the answers. When I did not know the answer to one of my student’s questions, I would need to seek out answers from those who were more knowledgeable and experienced in my field. I was taught at a very young age that I should always be receptive to learning from anyone and everyone. If I ever reach the point where I believe I know all I can about the field of psychology, my life, or my faith, then I will no longer be able to learn and grow. To be a continual learner, I am required to be humble. By seeking the advice and knowledge of others and then sharing it with my students, I am essentially modeling for them what to do when they do not know the answer to a question. It is a three step process: 1) be humble, 2) seek answers, and 3) develop your thoughts to present your conclusions. Without humility, we cannot learn.

Instilling a Love for Learning

“Education is the kindling of a flame; not the filling of a vessel.” – Socrates

Nothing has meant more to me than when my professors instilled in me the desire to learn more. They displayed a love and enthusiasm for their field that was infectious. It spurred me into a

journey to be curious about the world around me. I was and continue to be naturally curious about human behavior, but the fact that my professors sought to light a flame in my heart and mind to seek truth was the greatest blessing they could have ever given me. In my own class, I encourage self-learning and remind them that my job is not to fill their minds with information, but rather with questions about content of the course. This, in turn, moves them to search for answers, essentially kindling a flame in their hearts to appreciate instruction.

Connecting Matters

“Seek opportunities to show you care. The smallest gestures often make the biggest difference.”
— John Wooden

The power of connection is the power of influence. It has been said, “No one cares how much you know, until they know how much you care.” I have found this statement to be especially true with younger students. They are seeking acceptance, affirmation, and most importantly, connection. Who better to make these impressions on them than their professors? Connecting is not easy because it requires time, effort, planning, and involvement. Though difficult, increasing my efforts to relate to my students is the most important task I have as an educator. Additionally, I seek not only to connect with my students myself, but I also find creative ways to get them to connect with each other. Classroom discussion, group projects, and pairing them up allows for the potential to make connections that can last a lifetime. In fact, research shows that students in doctoral programs tend to fare better when they stay closely connected to their cohorts. I know that there is no certainty that they will connect, but I will do my part in providing them with as many opportunities as I can for them to potentially connect.

It’s Okay to Disagree - Disagreement is Part of Learning

“Together, we form a necessary paradox; not a senseless contradiction.” — Criss Jami
“I don’t have to agree with you to like you or respect you.” — Anthony Bourdain

Disagreement is fertile ground for learning and applying. When we are emotionally invested in anything, we find ways to adapt ourselves to the environment which produces an atmosphere of discussing beliefs and ideas. In my classes, I purposefully select difficult topics to discuss because they initiate activity in the emotional brain. As the amygdala activates, I quickly help students navigate their emotions by asking them to think about those emotions. I use disagreements purposely for two things: 1) it forces students to develop arguments for why they believe what they believe, and 2) it makes the experience memorable because it is emotionally charged. In general, it is safe to say that no two people have the exact same views on most issues in life. Therefore, preparing students for the reality that they will encounter views different to their own is essential to the learning process.

The foundation of my overall teaching philosophy is to teach students to think about the content, wrestle with it for a while, discuss it with their peers to hear different perspectives, ask questions in class, and then find ways to apply those lessons in their everyday life. Then, rest, meditate, sleep, and repeat. My joy for teaching comes from seeing my students’ desire to search for truth. I am reminded of the apostle John when he says, “There is no greater joy than to see my children walk in truth.” Though my students may not be my biological children, I think most educators

would agree that we definitely see them as such, and to see them “walk in truth” is definitely a blessing.

Teaching Philosophy Grading Rubric

One-Two single typed pages 10 points	Yes: 10/10	More: 0 We must learn to keep to assigned pagination!	Less: 0
APA formatted 10 points	Perfect: 10/10	Somewhat: 5-9	Less than somewhat: 0-5
Grammar, Word Choice, and Structure 10 points	Perfect: 10/10	Near perfect 5-9	Far from perfect: 0-4
Compelling: Makes me want to hire you! 20 points	Very much so: 18/20	Gives me some concern: 15-20	Gives me a lot of concern: 0-15