

Teaching Philosophy

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My teaching philosophy can be stated very simply. I am of the opinion that “teaching cannot exist in the absence of learning” – in essence, a teacher’s value is proportional to the amount of student learning that takes place as a result of his or her instructional efforts. Practically speaking, I strive to set high standards for all students and then do everything in my power to help each student meet those high standards. I believe that learning need not (in fact should not) be dull nor unnecessarily difficult. I constantly remind myself of the important distinction between academic rigor and difficulty. Anyone with advanced training in a given content area can make learning difficult, only a good teacher can make the learning of essential information relatively easy.

I am also always aware that I serve as a role model for prospective teachers in my classes. When I use the term “teacher,” I do so in the broadest possible sense. I remind my students that they will ALL be teachers, whether or not they are given the formal occupational title. Coaches are teachers; athletic trainers are teachers; fitness instructors are teachers. I know that many of my students will emulate my teaching style whether it is effective or not. It is therefore absolutely essential that I model the need for high standards, fairness and flexibility, the use of appropriately valid and reliable grading procedures, an emphasis on true learning as opposed to rote memorization, and the important connections between the course content and the “real world” experiences the students will face in the future. For an elaboration of my teaching philosophy, I refer you to the outline I used in a presentation to the Gamma Omicron Chapter of Phi Epsilon Kappa entitled “The Ten Commandments of Effective Teaching.” During that presentation I addressed the importance of several other elements I feel are essential for effective teaching and learning. The daily implementation of these principles of effective instruction is a tremendous responsibility but, at the same time, a rewarding challenge.

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