

Teaching Philosophy

I believe students learn best when they are motivated to learn by seeing the value and importance of the information presented in the classroom. This is because if the students are not interested in the material presented, they will not learn it. An interactive classroom environment is also an essential component to effective learning. This is because by having students actively participate in classroom interactions, they are more likely to pay attention to and learn. I also believe student learning occurs when students are given opportunities to apply information presented in class to real life situations. This is because it allows for the transfer and maintenance of knowledge. The teacher's role in student learning is to motivate students to learn. Another role of the teacher is to facilitate learning. The main goals I have for my students are to develop and apply their reading, writing, speaking, listening, problem-solving, and study skills to their full potential.

I develop my beliefs in the classroom by using a combination of lecture, classroom interactions, applications of concepts to real world situations, and visual and tactile components. I stimulate interest and motivate students to learn by being engaging and by illustrating the value and importance of the material presented. This is accomplished by utilizing a friendly tone when discussing information in class, by encouraging my students' participation in classroom discussions, and by demonstrating the relevance of course topics to students' work experiences.

In my classroom, I promote an interactive learning environment by allowing my students to raise their hand and ask questions at any time and by asking for student input regularly during PowerPoint presentations and classroom discussions. In addition to contributing to an interactive learning environment, case studies and group work are used to improve students problem solving, reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.

Additionally, I facilitate student learning by allowing the pace of class to be dictated by the students' ability to understand and apply the material uncovered in class. I also do this by administering one-minute papers to my students to obtain anonymous feedback that I will use in adapting my curriculum to better meet the needs of my students. Lastly, I facilitate learning by being available to my students inside and outside of class and by incorporating assignments that meet the needs of students of various learning styles.

To summarize, I feel that in order to achieve the ultimate goal of student learning it is important to use a combination of teaching methods and to make the classroom environment as stimulating and interactive as possible. This will ultimately help students learn and apply the course content to their future careers.

Teaching Narrative

I feel students learn in many different ways. Some students are visual learners, while others are auditory or kinesthetic learners. Visual learners learn visually by means of charts, graphs, and pictures. Auditory learners learn by listening to lectures and reading. Kinesthetic learners learn by doing. Students can prefer one, two, or three learning styles. For example, a student may be a good visual and auditory learner, but not a good kinesthetic learner. Because of these different learning styles, it is important for teachers to incorporate in their curriculum activities related to each of these learning styles so that all students are able to succeed in their classes. As you will see in Appendices 1 and 3, I plan to include in my curriculum activities related to different learning styles. For my auditory and visual learners, I will use PowerPoint to facilitate lectures, multiple choice/ True and False Exams, and videos related to concepts examined in class (Appendix 1). For the students in my class that are kinesthetic learners, I plan to include as assignments three SPSS Exercises, a research proposal, and an oral presentation on their research proposal (see Syllabus in Appendix 3).

The various inventories on learning styles I completed (see Appendix 2) allowed me to gain insight into which areas I can use further development in and which are already well developed. I feel it is dangerous to apply only one learning theory to teaching. If we do this, we are not allowing students to develop their skills in other learning styles that are applicable to real-life situations. I think having moderate to high development in a variety of intelligences (learning styles) is important because it means that despite the way information is presented, you are able to learn from it. Therefore, I attempt to include learning activities that encourage the development of all learning styles (see Appendices 1 & 3).

A course I would like to teach as a Graduate Teaching Assistant is Social Work Research. The course goals I feel would be appropriate for this course are 1) To introduce Social Work students to research methods in Social Work, 2) To promote the value and importance of conducting research in Social Work Practice, 3) To stimulate interest in Social Work Research, and 4) To facilitate learning Social Work Research.

I chose as my first goal, to introduce Social Work students to research methods in Social Work, because I feel this is the main task I need to accomplish in my role as an instructor of this course. This is because this is an introductory research course for Social Work students. Thus, the information presented needs to be basic in order for students to comprehend and retain the material. My second goal, which is to promote the value and importance of conducting research in Social Work Practice, I created because I think many students who go into Social Work do not do so because they are interested in research. Therefore, I think that if students see the value and relevance of research to their practice, they will be more likely to pay attention and learn from the course material presented. In addition to this, the students may also be more likely to contribute to the field by conducting research in their future careers.

My third goal, to stimulate interest in Social Work Research, I devised because I feel that stimulating interest in the subject matter presented is an essential contributor to learning. This goal derives from my personal experiences with learning the most from courses in which I was most interested in and for which I had instructors that stimulated interest in the subject. I also think being an effective motivator is essential because if the student is not interested in the material presented, they will not learn it. My last goal, to facilitate learning Social Work Research, I developed because I feel this is an important goal that influences learning. I plan on facilitating learning Social Work research by being available to my students when they have questions (This will be by email, during and after class, and at specific times by phone). I plan on facilitating learning by tailoring the assignments to the level of understanding of my students, by incorporating assignments that meet the needs of students of various learning styles (For example, student grades will be based on an exam, a research paper, a hands on Statistical Analyses assignment, and an oral presentation), and by soliciting feedback from my students. I have found that in classes where instructors employed these tactics I was most likely to learn the material presented. Thus, my course goals are based on my personal beliefs about the most effective ways to promote learning.

In the syllabus I devised for the course I would like to teach (see Appendix 3), I have aligned my course goals to course objectives by basing my objectives on my goals. I have also aligned my goals and objectives to the assessment tools and assessment criteria by developing assessment criteria and choosing assessment tools that reflect my teaching goals. Communicating with students via the syllabus is very important because the students will read the syllabus on the first day of class to obtain a feel for what the class they are taking is like. If the syllabus is lacking necessary or important information, the students may feel they can get away with not putting much effort into their assignments or may feel their instructor is not qualified for their position. If the syllabus has an unpleasant tone to it, the students may be unenthusiastic about attending class and may not pay much attention to the teacher.

According to my syllabus, there are four formative ways I will assess students' work. These are by means of a research proposal, by three hands on in-class assignments, by a group project that includes an oral presentation, and by a final exam. The summative way I will assess students learning is through one-minute papers. I may also apply other summative approaches when appropriate (see Appendix 4).

Additionally, I plan on providing my students with a syllabus that clearly outlines my expectations of them. I expect my students to turn in assignments on time or receive a grade penalty, to not plagiarize or cheat, and to attend, listen and participate in class discussions regularly. I also expect my students to not come to class under the influence of any substances and to not be disruptive by blurting out or by carrying side conversations with their neighbors. I plan to let the students know that I may use the websites that check to see if their papers are plagiarized and take steps that may result in academic expulsion for plagiarism or cheating. I will also let them know that if they have a disability that may impair them for completing the assignments on the syllabus; they

will need to see the Office of Disabilities Services to see if they will be given special considerations.

Moreover, I plan to align the design of my lesson plans with my teaching goals. An example of a lesson plan, which illustrates how it plans to meet three of my teaching goals, is found in Appendix 5. In my lesson plan example, I attempt to accomplish my primary goal of promoting the value and importance of conducting Social Work research to Social Work Practice by incorporating a lecture component on research in Social Work practice and by having students share their ideas on valuable research that has been conducted. I also plan to accomplish the secondary goal of stimulating interest in Social Work research by letting students see the value and importance of research. My teaching goal of facilitating learning social work research will also be attempted by discussing my availability to students, by sharing my desire to tailor course content to their level of understanding, and by using a variety of formative and summative evaluation methods. Other teaching goals that may be achieved in this lesson are improving student's verbal communication skills, listening skills, and writing skills.

I plan to use project based learning in my curriculum by having my students work together on a group project and also by having them do peer review at least once in the semester. Having my students work in groups on a project promotes teamwork. It also allows for compromise, flexibility, and practice with group roles. Also, the project devised when a group of students works together, the result of a combination of multiple people thinking and producing, usually exceeds the project developed by a single individual. Group work is important because in many careers individuals are expected to work collaboratively with others to meet their work related goals. Also, peer review skills are important because they promote critical thinking and allow you to develop skills in giving and receiving feedback from others. Many jobs require the ability to give and receive constructive criticism. Prior to having my students divide into groups, I will discuss the group process and what problems they may encounter when working in groups and how they can go about solving them.

The classroom atmosphere I hope for is one where my students enjoy an interactive learning environment and one where they respect me as an instructor and respect each other. They will show respect by listening to their instructor and their peers, by arriving on time and attending class regularly, and by completing their assignments and tests without plagiarizing or cheating. I also hope to have a diverse group of students, so that they can learn from each other's different point of views. I hope to have students that are accepting toward diversity and treat each other as they would like to be treated. I plan to model these positive behaviors as an instructor and to clearly describe them to my students on the first day of class.

Lastly, I will describe my philosophy on one-to-one interactions with students. I believe it is necessary to be available to students for one-to one interactions. This allows students that need extra help or guidance to attain it. When conducting one-to-one interactions, I think it is important to maintain professional boundaries with students. This involves making sure your relationship with your student remains professional and

does not become personal. Also, this means that you maintain the appropriate distance with the student and that you give each student that seeks your time outside the classroom equal attention. Keeping the door open and sitting across from students are ways to maintain appropriate boundaries with students. I also feel that in one-to-one interactions with students an instructor has to be careful not to give students too much information, such as the answers to test questions. One should guide them by telling them where to look for the answers or help them better understand concepts, but not just provide them with the answers. This is unfair to the other students. I also think that when an instructor is giving an exam and a student approaches the instructor with a question, the instructor should announce the question and his/her answer to the whole class, so that it does not seem the instructor is helping the individual students that come up to him/her.