

Philosophy on Teaching
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“The mind is not a vessel to be filled, but a fire to be kindled” (Svinicki & McKeachie, 2014). This statement has been the model and basis for my teaching as it has developed over the years. Too often I have found myself with a temptation to mold and develop students into a specific product. It is true that there are things we want students to learn and skills to have in each discipline in which they are pursuing. However, it takes work to be able to see these skills and information in each unique way for each student. Students do not come into a classroom without prior experiences, assumptions, hurts, fears, talents, and personality. Thus, it is my job as an educator to tap into each of those “fires” and kindle them to be the best counselor that God created them to be.

Since I will be focusing on adult learners, my andragogical approach centers on experiential learning. I have seen through my previous teaching, that adult learners retain information if they can connect with the material in a practical way. Learning and teaching can be considered a fluid process which is a contribution to a conversation. It takes both the student and the teacher to facilitate learning. Within my philosophy of teaching I focus on integrating information, technology, and application exercises in order to develop the student into the best counselor that they can be. The foundation for implementing each of these within the classroom is being passionate about the subject being taught. I must model the value and importance of the topic and subject content in order to increase motivation within the student.

Motivation within students, or lack thereof, can be the biggest form of frustration for myself and educators across the spectrum. I have interacted with many students who have struggled or have been unmotivated in their learning within a class. The goal for myself is to

discover what the student values in taking each course in which I teach. By using a variety of teaching methods, a student can begin to discover which one connects best with who they are. I rely heavily on feedback within the classroom. Through minute reflections after class or direct interaction with students, I can best evaluate which method is connecting value with each student. My goal is to teach in such a way that the student connects value to the material as well as a reasonable ability to succeed.

As a counselor educator, there are key points that all students must grasp in order to succeed in this field. As a teacher, I am a gatekeeper to this field and have ethical and personal convictions regarding what kind of student leaves each course that I teach. They are going into a helping profession in which much harm can be done without proper skills, ethics, personhood, and cultural awareness. Thus, there is a balance between having a student focused course and one that is too structured or even professor oriented. Therefore, focus will be on ensuring proper content and skills are learned. The student, then, will have fluidity in how those skills and content are taught.

Regardless of the course being taught, my ultimate goal is to develop the person of the student. If they know who they are, how they learn, and develop a passion for continued learning, then their path for success in the field will be on an upward trajectory. God has enabled each individual with passions, talent, and abilities. It is my hope that my small part in their lives will leave an impact that develops each of these factors and ultimately brings glory to Him.

Reference

Svinicki, M., & McKeachie, W. (2014). *McKeachie's teaching tips: Strategies, research, and theory for college and university teachers*.