

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

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Teaching is both an art and a science. Good teaching involves intuition, reflection and technique as well as an understanding of cognitive, developmental and social theories of learning. Teaching is an interactive process that also involves motivation, communication, and a shared context of mutual respect. Given the challenge of the contemporary university context with regard to reduced resources, and the changing nature of the student population; teaching methods and instructional delivery must be constantly revised and improved. It is my belief that good teaching depends upon an informed research base, effective teaching strategies, and the sensibility to interact with the learner within a shared context of mutual understanding.

The Goals of Teaching

1. Students see the relevance of the material that they are learning.
2. Students are given control over decisions in the learning process.
3. Students engage in a process of self-reflection and self-discovery.
4. Students are able to take these skills of analysis and critique into the larger life world.

A Teacher is a leader, a facilitator, a resource and a practitioner of teaching:

As leaders, teachers must recognize that all students have the capacity to excel if they wish to. Teachers must take leadership by providing a number of profiles to the learner. Students need to be challenged and encouraged in their areas of particular difficulty and affirmed and extended in their areas of particular excellence.

As facilitators, teachers must respect the fact that students learn from each other. Forums for small group learning, peer interaction and peer evaluation must be encouraged.

As sources of information, teachers must provide current and relevant information--or at least know how to access it.

As models or examples, teachers must recognize the fact that they reflect a particular set of characteristics regarding adult behaviour; and that they personify a particular model of power. I believe that the most effective model of teaching is one that reflects power sharing and collaborative models of negotiation.

As students of teaching, teachers must be constantly open to new and more effective means of conveying information and ensuring that this information is relevant and meaningful. Teaching is a life long pursuit. It is a passion, which, when felt and enacted authentically, is "caught" by students and peers alike.