

Teaching Philosophy

My teaching philosophy consists of the beliefs that guide my teaching actions and behaviors. These beliefs serve as guideposts, or anchors, to direct my decision-making, in particular when faced with challenging situations. It is principles and guidelines for behavior – actions – that do not vary based on environment or situation. As such, it is strategic, not tactical; by necessity these beliefs and principles interconnect and demonstrate consistency in action and outlook.

The over-reaching principle of my teaching philosophy is that as a teacher, I also act as a leader – *a model* – for behavior. This extends beyond the classroom into my personal behavior and interactions. One aspect – professional – is skill competence and being up to date on content knowledge and teaching ideas. But another is personal behavior; I show respect for others, integrity in my actions, humility, and open-mindedness, regardless of whom I am interacting with. It does no good to preach and act in a certain way in the classroom, yet be a different person with colleagues, family, or friends. By modeling behavior both professionally and personally, I hope to instill the same principles in my students so that when behaviors do not match expectations, it will be eminently clear to all, and consequences will not be unexpected.

Academic competence and hard work are values that I hope to instill in my students – learning material, being inquiring learners, and doing things to the best of their ability. We cannot control outcomes, but we can control the effort we put forth. Sometimes modeling hard work may not be enough; students may need

cajoling, encouragement, or critical feedback – all depending on the student and situation – in order to help them become self-motivated learners. Ultimately, I want my students to ‘learn how to learn’; so they can overcome obstacles they initially may not want to face or think they are not capable of surmounting. In this, my role is to lead and motivate.

Being successful learners can also be fun, and students want the learning process to have fun. When a student is able to drive his/her learning process, overcoming obstacles and roadblocks along the way, it can be an exciting, satisfying experience. Not every student will be at the top of the class, but if every student can achieve to levels they never thought possible, and the highest level they possibly can, then that is still achievement.

Modeling good behavior, and putting forth one’s best effort, leads to the next principle: **respect**. Respect for students, respect for colleagues, respect for everyone in the community. One shows integrity by respecting everyone, because every person can contribute to the learning process – and not only in an academic context. As a teacher, I also show respect by looking at and treating each student fairly and giving my best to help each succeed.

Finally, the last principle is to **do the right thing**. Certain outcomes may not come my way on every occasion; but I believe that if I follow the above principles, results/outcomes will take care of themselves. It may not on a particular day; and it may not be in the manner I planned/expected/wanted. All of that is outside of my control. But if I stay committed to the above ideals, my result will be my best

performance, the respect of others, pride in what I have done, and eventually the 'results' will take care of themselves. In the end, its about staying true to that internal compass- if I am not ok inside, external things do not matter. And conversely, if I am ok inside, none of the external things matter either. Students need to be able to develop self-respect and self-esteem and also practice the same with each other. My role is to help in that process.