

Teaching Philosophy

As a teacher I strive to instill many attributes into my students. Self-sufficient students are my primary goal. If a student is able to use all available resources when relevant, (i.e.; physical documentation, digital sources, their peers, online forums, etc.) then they are able to work independently. This allows the student to lose their feeling of intimidation with any given subject matter. When the student is no longer frightened by unknown variables they are much more likely to sense the overall structure of any given event, skill set or body of information. When this structure is understood, truly understood, the missing variables can be logically deduced using the aforementioned resources. Many students believe that there is a concrete answer to everything; they waste precious time trying to find this answer. I would like my students to know that in many situations the answers are quite fluid. Information is a dynamic system that is forever changing and evolving, if the overall structure and process is understood, the answers will be clear no matter how the variables may change.

There are many ways in which I will attempt to encourage these qualities in my students, thus allowing them to refine their problem-solving skills. I believe in showing by example rather than merely explaining various situations. Very young children learn directly from their environments, this acquisition of data appears to actually become part of the child, not just another detail pressed into the surface. By allowing them to experience the situation in an active manner I believe they are more likely to retain and integrate this information. Periodic group assignments allow me to illustrate first-hand the value of their peers as a resource. In addition to the group projects, assignments that build upon their previous work allows the student to put their new skills to use many times in the course of a single semester. This will be achieved with small projects in the beginning, adding information to these assignments until the larger, late term work progresses to the final project. Much of the information used in each assignment will be used again in the next with additional aspects combined until the skills are much more ingrained and become common. Inspiration, especially in art, can be a major driving force in a student's desire to create. This can be fostered with in-class or independent field trips that allow the student to experience things that trigger the creation of art. Also a source of inspiration is the use of small presentations by the students on their favorite artist (regardless of origin; visual arts, music, dance etc.). This lets the student share a personal passion with the class thus inspiring themselves further or perhaps inspiring another member of the class. Collaborative sessions involving the entire class can be used to let students answer their own questions through critical thinking, again using their peers as a dynamic resource. If students observe how their peers reached a specific conclusion, the logic used to reach that answer becomes apparent. Focused conversation is one of the most creative, inspiring activities that artists and professionals can be involved in. Task specific conversation allows the student to relax and actually think about the system without the stress of producing an "answer". Active learning, participation and logical understanding are the keys to successful students.

The rewards of teaching can often be truly epic. The interaction of the classroom not only benefits the students but also allows the teacher to learn from them and cycle that experience right back into the classroom. Students that can successfully adapt quickly and use their skills of logic to reach a viable conclusion will encounter few, if any, tasks that cannot be conquered. The classroom allows students to learn how to think and interact effectively in various academic or professional environments. If I am able to help my students focus on how they think rather than expecting them to re-learn existing knowledge, I have made my difference. I hope to inspire them to love what they do, and to be skilled with logical effectiveness that allows the absence of intellectual fear.