

Josephson TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

I chose exercise science because it both excites and intrigues me. Through my teaching, I try to invoke that same level of curiosity and interest in my students. These elements are what will lead them to success and knowledge. I have taught in a variety of settings and to different populations including higher education classrooms to university students, health and fitness facilities to new and experienced personal trainers, and community wellness programs to anyone in the public interested in the topics. These experiences have driven me to experiment with a variety of teaching methods including straight lectures to hands-on physically and mentally active learning and several steps in between.

My experience and professional development have driven me to center my teaching around two main principles. My first principle is to maximize comprehension of course material. My courses are a combination of both in-class and online lectures and project-based learning that are moderated through my university's online learning management system, Canvas. Students watch online lectures on EdPuzzle.com with short comprehension check questions throughout. Through Canvas, I provide lecture notes, slide shows, supplemental readings, and videos. I create my Power Points lectures with videos, images, and text information. My classes typically culminate with a project requiring integration and application of course material. This acts to reinforce concepts learned during the semester.

My second principle is to guide students to actively engage in their education rather than passively accept it. Student engagement is a key element of learning. Those who are engaged in the class can help guide the direction of the information output and will have a greater take away at the end of the semester. I promote active learning through a variety of methods. I often use the Socratic method of teaching through questions in my lectures. Knowing this is the structure of the class, some students are more inclined to prepare for the class via reading and reviewing material. I also require students to collaborate and complete projects and daily assignments in teams. They learn to function as a group and even the quiet students are more willing to participate. Lastly, I include an element of professionalism and participation as part of their grade. I reward students who regularly participate with a small grade boost and an email explaining the purpose. Not only does this give students incentive to engage in the course but it also reinforces that collaboration and participation will benefit them in the future.

I have consistently worked to improve my teaching. I have attended a variety of professional development workshops on topics such as working with groups in large classes, using technology in the classroom, and learning our LMS. Along with attending professional development workshops, I ask for student feedback regularly during the lecture courses I have

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taught. For example, about six weeks into the semester, I ask students three questions: 1. “What are we doing in class that is not working and should be STOPPED?” 2. “What has worked for you in other classes that we should START doing in this class?” 3. “What are we doing that is working for you and should CONTINUE?”. The STOP, START, CONTINUE activity not only gives the students some input on the direction of the course but it also enables me to gain insight to their general thoughts of the class. When something is not working for a majority of the class, adjustments can be made to improve the course.

Through early trial and error, careful self-reflection, and engagement with pedagogy experts, I have learned that teaching is many things and it is not many things. It is not spoon feeding information. It is not sheer repetition and redundancy. It is not an easy task. Successful teaching is leading. Good teaching is engaging. High-quality teaching is supporting. Moreover, through my principles, I have found a balanced methodology, which students seem to both appreciate and respect.