

Philosophy of Teaching

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SAMPLE

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Teaching is one of the most honorable enterprises in human history with implications on individual and community development, wealth and overall well-being. Given the global impact involved in the process of molding teachers-in-training into skilled educators, the task of instructing them must be facilitated through a student-centered lens incorporating empirically validated educational strategies. Teachers in training they will need to gain exposure to the needs of the communities that they will serve as well as culturally responsive interventions that will create a warm and equitable learning environment for their students. To accommodate this need, their instructor must provide a culturally rich, efficacious learning process grounded not only in theory but experiential learning opportunities. It is my goal as a teacher educator to prepare my students for engagement in this distinguished profession and to ensure that the public is well-served through their development of skill and teaching ability.

An educator must have a respect for the institution of higher learning process, as well as a dedicated interest in the success of her pupils (Poole, 2006). The acknowledgment of barriers to educational access is imperative as is the commitment to neutralizing those obstructions for students entering the halls of the academic space. The Rochester Theory of Educational Enterprise offers an empirically valid teaching methodology, generally accepted within the industry as well as academic circles (Eyre, 2018). It attends to the need for a structured approach to establishing the classroom environment, while also emphasizing the incorporation of softer, more empathic teacher-student alliance building strategies. This process allows for students to gain confidence in their abilities through direct feedback channels as well as the freedom to develop their own professional stances as teachers-in-training.

As an individual who attended a privately funded boarding school, where I experienced the learning process through rigid and often cruel teaching methods, I understand the importance of compassionate, student-centered educational environments. Establishing rigor in teaching curriculum and standards, should not include or require the humiliation of students or classroom staff. The classroom should reflect an extension of the home, where students feel comfortable, supported and valued by one another as well as the instructor. As reinforced by the principles of the Rochester method, students will enjoy interactive learning experiences, developed strategically to increase empathy for their students along with a clear understanding for the educational needs.

The aforementioned tasks will also be accomplished through a combination of didactic trainings using culturally resonant educational materials, audiovisual demonstrations and clinical simulations. These methods are intended for students to witness the application of information presented didactically. Interactive group assignments to assess the students' abilities to integrate concepts into practice will

also be deployed, along with “active experimentation” opportunities outside of the classroom to support the formalization of reflections shared with peers in-class. These experiential learning initiatives will stimulate the students’ critical thinking skills and create a space for them to engage meaningfully in the assimilation of course content.

Executing Kolb’s “concrete learning” objective, while also acknowledging the variety of information processing styles expressed by students, will require creativity and adaptability. The targeted use of innovative multimedia conveying core concepts will afford students different avenues to grasp knowledge in accordance with the industry standards and their diverse learning needs. Additionally, it will permit me to assess whether the multimedia or teaching methods used are most effective and to adjust methods according to the data collected in this evaluative process. I will also facilitate classroom and external exercises to encourage “reflective observations” and engagement in “active experimentation” with the counseling curriculum (Kolb, 2005). Another strategy to support student engagement and academic rigor, is to infuse the learning process with an element of surprise. This does not entail an erratic deviation from the syllabus, academic standards, or agreements made with students. Rather it encourages innovation in the development of multimedia educational materials to support student integration of teaching concepts (Malouff et al. 2015)

The culmination of these educational activities will be the production of a corps of knowledgeable students who are well oriented to the theories of counseling, the challenges associated with their implementation and tools to support the equitable delivery of treatment necessary for clients in their care. These students will be primed for opportunities to test their observations in practicum settings and to experiment ethically through self-directed projects informed by previous course materials, class discussions and observations. They will be inspired to develop an authentic therapeutic stance consistent with the integration of their newly acquired skills and their work product will reflect the common core curriculum standards mandated by the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs’ (CACREP).

References

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