

Teaching and Learning Philosophy

Teaching Mission Statement

An educator's goal is to create an enthusiastic and collaborative environment that promotes lifelong learning by challenging, fostering, and empowering students to become productive global citizens.

Introduction

Digital Media Technology & Production is a field that is constantly changing and updating, even the term itself is extremely broad and has varied definitions. Therefore, as environments where teaching and learning become progressively diverse, it is extremely important for educators to seriously scrutinize their teaching philosophies, every so often, and adapt to change. The current classroom looks nothing like it did at the start of the 21st century. Computers (be it laptop, desktop, tablet, PHONE!) and the internet (Google, YouTube, social media) dominate almost every aspect of ordinary life. These now commonplace technologies create a hyper connectedness (emails and online tutorials) but at the same time can lead to complacency, "Just watch this video and all will be explained." While videos found online are great resources for engaging students and allowing information to be explained more quickly, these should not replace an educator's actual knowledge of the content; as educators should impart said knowledge unto students while also supporting authentic learning and understanding of content.

Compelling teaching is composed of two essential and similar halves of the same coin. Besides content knowledge, educators must possess the ability to communicate clearly and

effectively while engaging student's interest learning. Given this heavy task of not only communicating with students but also engaging their interest to learn, makes the position of educator more of a performance art, which basically makes their role similar to that of entertainer. Hence, teachers should not only understand the concepts being covered and find engaging ways to make the content understandable and beneficial, but learning should also be memorable for students. In order to achieve this goal of clear communication and effective engagement, emphasis in education should be on active learning strategies where tasks require the student to think about what they are doing while they are doing it. Active learning not only ensures students learn the core content of the course, but also facilitates critical thinking skills and develops lifelong learning abilities. This is accomplished because active learning activities activate the higher order of thinking & learning skills, which are creating, analyzing, and evaluating as indicated in Bloom's Taxonomy. In the Digital Media Technology & Production field, this prepares students to function as highly skilled and competent "media" professionals, who understand that while their education prepares them for the professional environment, they will still need to take it upon themselves to "learn" as the technology continues to update and change as time progresses.

Teaching Philosophy

The basic teaching goals of any educator are to distribute knowledge and strengthen student learning; teaching procedures and classroom environment are key factors in this area, be it traditional or online, large or small class sizes. Developing a student-centered

learning environment will encourage students to actively participate in their own learning, while purposeful planning of course instruction supports this active participation. Basically, a set of objectives and skills should be identified, and then a rationale created for each objective and skill. Afterwards, a course plan should be created to affirm the utilization of critical thinking skills when teaching the new material. This in turn encourages deeper learning and expands skills to promote “real-world” problem solving abilities. Embedding activities in the instructional process that are designed to help students develop learning skills, which are also easily transferable across disciplines, will almost assure engagement in the comprehension of course content material. Therefore, throughout the teaching process, it is extremely important to incorporate different approaches to presenting content materials. In addition to how and why certain content is presented, the development of the student-center classroom environment also plays a huge role in the students being able to participate actively in their education through assignments that require them to create, analyze, and evaluate content materials.

Chickering and Gamson’s “Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education” was published in 1987 by the American Association of Higher Education (AAHE) and has remained an invaluable example of principles that serve to guide educators through the forest of creating a student-centered classroom environment. These principles, also relevant to graduate instruction, offer an adequate theoretical framework for the objectives of an acceptable teaching philosophy. Chickering and Gamson affirm that good educational practice does the following:

- Encourages student and faculty communication

- Encourages cooperation among students
- Encourages active learning
- Gives prompt feedback
- Emphasizes time on task
- Communicates high expectations
- Respects diverse talents and ways of learning

These guidelines can be further interpreted and expanded in the creation of the student-centered classroom environment when the instructor does the following:

- Presents an enthusiastic demeanor for each class
- Learns about the students personally
- Amply organizes of each class
- Uses a presentation style that encourages student interest
- Uses a variety of teaching methods to present the material

All of these guidelines further the development of the student-centered classroom environment.

Learning Philosophy

A good learning philosophy should be centered on two principles: active learning strategies heavily influence learning outcomes and assessment procedures considerably determine knowledge retention. As educators, emphasis should focus on engaging student learning and abilities, rather than just dispensing knowledge to be regurgitated verbatim or

selected from multiple choice questions on a traditional test. Educators should promote a passion for lifelong learning and traditional testing may not be the most logical of choices for assessment in all subject areas, especially digital media courses. In addition to traditional testing, some other excellent choices for assessment include speaking & media, researching & writing, technology & production.

Numerous options may be employed to accurately assess understanding of course content among diverse groups of learners. Therefore, a firm foundation in assessment basics, from alternative types to traditional ones, is extremely important when measuring student learning.

Alternative assessments in addition to traditional tests/exams:

- Rubrics
- Checklists
- Collaborative video projects/activities
- Academically credible research papers
- PowerPoint Presentations
- Review activities
- Writing activities
- Written concept summaries
- Student self-assessment
- Student assessment of course
- Portfolios

In addition, lecture presentations and class activities should be created with the student's learning in mind. Therefore, the teacher's knowledge should always be up to date and incorporate more current examples to explore subjects. Regardless of what "setting" the classroom environment takes, utilizing a variety in teaching techniques and an amusing demeanor to make learning enjoyable and possibly fun, enhances the chance that authentic learning will take place. Hence, the knowledge will be not only retained, but beneficial because amusement during presentations triggers student interest and creates engaged learners.

Summary

The above philosophy of teaching and learning asserts that students have the right to beneficial instruction in an active and stimulating learning environment. Students should experience frequent opportunities to interact with each other and the professor. Course materials should be appropriate and current. Standards of excellence should be high, yet obtainable, as well as used to promote maximum student learning. Instructional planning and implementing lessons that clearly identify the anticipatory set, lesson objective, strategies for effective student engagement, and varied assessment options to measure student comprehension, help maintain both accuracy and focus of instruction. Lastly, as teaching is a process not an assignment, this teaching and learning philosophy offers a reflective view on the importance of ongoing, even continuous, attempts at instructional improvement.

Works Cited

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