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Teaching Philosophy

As teachers, we must develop a personal philosophy that answers specific questions. On the surface, these questions may seem basic and exclusive to an individual but are so much more than that. These Questions are: Why do I teach? What do I teach? How do I teach? How do I measure the effectiveness of my teaching? Over time the experiences I have accumulated helped these questions to slowly answer themselves.

Why I want to teach?

The reasons why I want to teach are deeply connected with my own ambition. My ambition to teach is to make the world I live in a better place. By teaching students to engage with their community, each other, and open their minds to more than one interpretation of concepts such as language and culture. I would have had accomplished my goals by creating students with enlightened minds, students who are ready to learn more and dispel ignorance. By instilling those kinds of ambitions into students is how I can help the students make the world a better place for themselves as well.

My teaching philosophy is something I will stand for. It is a culmination of all my teaching experiences and beliefs. In my personal experiences, teaching takes a lot of effort on both sides for the teachers and students. I have been a student for over 20 years and a teacher for over three years. My experiences as a student have helped me gain sympathy for my fellow students and helped me form a view on how teachers

should or should not behave. Teachers should be open to interpretation, culturally responsive and play a very active role in their teaching process. What a teacher should not be is someone who only goes by the book thoughtlessly following a prescriptive set of rules. So as a teacher, I can take my experiences from being a student and be the teacher I always wanted meanwhile doing my best to teach what is necessary for students to succeed inside or outside the classroom.

What I want to teach?

As a teacher, I want to teach in a way where all of the students individual learning styles and backgrounds can be used together. Inside my classroom, there will not just be an individual me, but an individual we. By teaching language, culture and free thought I will be facilitating whole classroom learning that adaptable to all the student's individual learning skills making classroom content that has the potential to be relevant to multiple students no matter where they come from.

The language, of course, will be the target language of the macro environment along with the student's home language. Not only will I teach the target language, but I will be teaching the culture of that target language as well as incorporating the student's personal language repertoire. According to Burkholder & Peláez (2000) Vygotsky believed that "thought development is contingent on language, and language is socially determined. In this way, a child's environment, and culture plays a pivotal role in language and thought development" (Pg. 8). So, by teaching both language and culture, I will be able to help students learn the target language better. For example, while I was teaching an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) course in China I encouraged my students to be more creative like in most American classrooms because of what I

noticed inside standard Chinese classrooms. Inside those classrooms' creativity is not encouraged in the classroom and students sit silently writing notes and waiting to be tested.

Another thing I want to do with my teaching is to make the students more comfortable by lowering their affective filters through free thought. According to Stephen Krashen, the affective filter is the invisible psychological filter that can either facilitate or hinder language production in a second language, the lower the filter the easier it is for students to learn the language. So, by encouraging students to speak their minds through open, group and class discussions I as a teacher can facilitate conversations between the students without the fear of making mistakes allowing the students to develop their own sense of the language while lowering their affective filters.

How do I want to teach?

The teaching approach that I have had the best experience with involved the use of multiple methods. After studying various methods and theories of teaching I was introduced to an approach to teaching that works well with my idea of what I want to teach. This teaching approach is called the Post-Methods Approach and it consists of three main staples particularity, practicality, and possibility. Particularity takes advantage of the students' communicative repertoires, practicality involves participatory learning and possibility makes use of critical transformative education (Akabari, 2018 & Kumaravadivelu, 2001). Teachers who use the Post-Methods approach should be able to practice their profession with competence and confidence (Kumaravadivelu, 2001) and ensure that their practice results in social transformation and the improvement of society by taking into account the life histories of their students (Akabari, 2008).

There are is one technique that I have learned and used which makes the most of the Post-Method approach. This technique is Translanguaging, this ideal technique makes the best of multilingual language users' ability to understand, write, and use other languages. By incorporating the language users' abilities Translanguaging simplifies teaching a language by making it relatable to its learners (Garcia, 2014), which is what I will be doing in my classroom. This technique can be adjusted for group assignments while incorporating critically transformative information.

How do I want to measure effectiveness?

I take three things into consideration when it comes to measuring the effectiveness of how I want to teach. These three things include formative assessment, skills-based assessment, and peer assessment. Formative assessment allows for variability in improving my teaching, this type of assessment is generally used throughout the teaching and learning process. Skills-based assessment allows me to make sure my students hit the set benchmarks, by testing the student's ability to accomplish one or more course standards. Lastly, peer assessment will help students see the problems that we might not catch, because as teachers we may not be able to reach every student. Connecting all three forms of assessment will be effective in measuring all-around course proficiency while allowing the teacher to adjust their future lessons.

Sources

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