

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

“Be a guide on the side, rather than a sage on the stage”

Anonymous

Nothing expresses the core of my teaching philosophy better than the above quote: Learning is a discovery process and learners should be guided to discover on their own. I strongly believe that my main responsibility in the classroom is to be a facilitator who transforms her students from knowledge consumers to knowledge creators and interpreters. My commitment to become a facilitator during this process is reflected in my teaching in three ways: (1) the learning goals and outcomes that I set for my students in the higher order thinking level, and the assessment methods that facilitate the goal achievements, (2) the learning environment that I set for my students (specifically, the dynamic interaction among each other, and the interactive relationship between me and them), and (3) my personal improvement and professional growth as a mentor and a facilitator.

I believe that the most challenging part of being a facilitator is to set learning goals and outcomes for students. The basic question that I ask myself before I interact with my students is *how can I prepare my students for the learning they will engage in throughout their lives and works?* I believe that the learning goals that I set for my students should be compatible with the highly competitive and dynamic business world. As a marketing academician, I know that one of the requirements for firms to have success in the challenging business world is to be heavily committed to marketing. Therefore, one way to succeed is to have competent marketing professionals. As a result, I believe that I have a high responsibility to turn out marketing graduates who are liberally educated, competent, and socially responsible professionals. To meet this learning objective, for example, in the first day of the class, I give a presentation about professionalism, and I get their points of view about the presentation.

Another requirement for a firm to survive in the competitive environment is to hire marketing professionals who have higher order thinking and effective problem solving abilities. One of the learning objectives that I set for my students is for them to be able to solve real world marketing problems. In order to help them achieve this goal, I encourage them to put themselves in marketing managers' shoes and use “outside of the box” psychology. For instance, I provide my students several real life business scenarios throughout the semester. In each scenario, a firm needs advice on a marketing problem. I encourage each student to behave like a marketing manager and be able

to defend their recommendation to the firm in a precise way. Before they start their brainstorming session, I provide them a guidance and ground rules for analyzing business cases. In assessing their work, one of the criteria is whether the advice that they provide and the rationale behind it is creative. After they submit their folders, I provide them what the real firm's decision was about the problem at hand. Then, we compare their recommendations with the firm's actual course of action. They then see that there is more than one way to solve the same problem. The crucial point is for them to see how creative and critical in their analysis. In addition to solving in-class, real marketing case studies, I am a believer in service-learning activities and their incorporation into the class curriculum. I agree that this experiential learning activity provides opportunities for students to learn civic responsibility and develop through their active involvement in social communities.

Another challenging part of being a facilitator is to apply various assessment methods that facilitate learning objectives. I believe that the best way to learn is to learn from your own mistakes. In my assessment of students' work (e.g., exam, case studies, exercises), I provide them my notes about why I don't agree with them and give them a second chance to tell me why they think in that way. I give them extra points if they are successful in explaining themselves in a self-critical way. When I first time encouraged them to write their reasoning and justification about their answers, I was pleasantly surprised to realize how re-thinking the same questions could be constructively redirected once students were given the chance to see their answers and think about them one more time. I believe that this assessment method contributes to student learning in several ways: reading and critically thinking about the questions, linking concepts and subjects in a more efficient and effective way, and gaining confidence and motivation to embark on more complex challenges.

A part of my teaching philosophy includes the learning environment that I set for my students. I believe that learning is a social process. Therefore, students become more effective thinkers and feel more confident in their potential for problem solving when they interact with each other. By initiating a team-work atmosphere, I hope to emphasize the truly collaborative and participative nature of learning. For instance, at the beginning of the semester, I encourage students to have teams they will be members of throughout the semester. Due to large class sizes, each team has 4 to 5 partners. I select the members of each team and in the selection process I pay attention to their learning styles and diversity regarding their identities, backgrounds, and experiences. For instance, each team should have at least one female and male, and each team should represent a different aspect of business (e.g., accounting, finance, and marketing). I also encourage different ethnicities

in each group because teams with cultural differences will produce a variety of perspectives. I observe that in mixed groups, the creativity level of team-based assignments is higher than the homogenous groups.

I place great importance on students' relationships with each other. Therefore, in the first day of the team gathering, I want them to get to know each other. I prepare a folder for each group and include some question papers in it. I want them to ask these questions so that they can get to know each other in an entertaining way. I also request that they to come up with ground rules for their own team (e.g., what the each member's responsibilities are, how they define their team-name, how their team is different from others). My main objective is to show them how to develop team synergy, how to manage team conflict, and how "one plus one" becomes more than two. I see myself as a facilitator in this process. I believe that my students and I are equally involved in the learning process. Therefore, I feel the need to know each of my students by name. I feel the responsibility to know them better to create a comfortable, safe, and flexible learning environment (e.g., what they like, what they do in their spare time, what their dreams are and what their unique stories are). For that purpose, I provide them an information sheet in our first class. The purpose of doing this is to break the ice between me and them early.

Finally, as Socrates said "all I know is that I know nothing." I believe that learning is two-way street. When I am teaching them how to be professional, they are teaching me how to be an effective facilitator. I am excited to learn from my mistakes. Therefore, my teaching philosophy demands the vital role of feedback and self-assessment for my continuous improvement.

In summary, I plan to achieve my objectives by encouraging my students to be active participants, socially responsible, and mutually respectful learners. I believe that an open-minded, safe, warm, and collaborative learning environment motivates and encourages students to express their thoughts without hesitation, and be creative in their thought process. I believe that these activities help train students to think critically not only about marketing but also about the world around them.

I am excited and enthusiastic about continuously discovering new ways of encouraging student learning and critical thinking in a challenging class environment. In this process, *I aim to be a guide on the side rather than a sage on the stage.*