

Jessica Welsh's Teaching Philosophy

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Ideas Towards Teaching and Learning

My ideas toward teaching and learning are ultimately shaped by experiences I have had both in and out of the academic space. Learning can happen in a variety of contexts and teaching can happen from anyone who holds knowledge to decimate in those contexts. My goals in teaching include (a) creating self-directed learners, (b) fostering an inquisitive nature in students to research topics they are passionate about, (c) developing informed and competent citizens and (d) encouraging caring for the broader societal community. After students leave spaces of learning with me, I hope they carry with them a critical nature of questioning policies and structures to creatively approach controversies they encounter.

Teaching Strategies

My teaching strategies include active learning strategies and transformative learning. I integrate active learning strategies into class by providing students a hands-on learning activity where they role-play or experience the content through activities in the class. By interacting with their peers, I can guide students through the connection of content to their previous knowledge. Secondly, using transformative learning methods students engage in reflection of the self and having a disorienting dilemma to work towards addressing. By proposing a problem and working towards finding a solution as a community of learners.

Learning Environment

Creating a space where learners feel valued and welcomed is vital to education, and a space I strive to create. However, due to COVID, I have rethought about what it means to be “present”. I

have adapted HyFlex teaching policies to foster an environment where students are able to take ownership of their learning. Through HyFlex, students have agency to choose their modality and interactions with the course. Whether they attend fact-to-face, through Zoom, or an online asynchronous discussion the course material aligns and students have the ability to choose the format. The practice of HyFlex also requires me as the instructor to be intentional about creating the course in a way that engages students through different modalities. When there is no flexibility in the learning environment due to course modality restrictions, my goal is to create an engaging course that makes students feel seen.

Student Learning Objectives and Assessment Activities

The learning objectives I set forth for students align with the kind of learning environment I strive to create. With the six categories for significant learning proposed in Fink's (2013) taxonomy, my students can use critical, creative, and practical thinking throughout a semester in their development of assessments. Students engage in assessments that encourage self-directed learning by applying the criteria from rubrics to their own work and go through a revise and resubmit process. According to Fink (2003), the practice of assessing areas of growth in their own work is part of the design of significant learning experiences. In addition, students are assessed through their ability to apply and integrate course concepts into the work they complete.

Professional Growth and Development

I consider myself a lifelong learner, and have high expectations of myself. Due to this perception of myself, I seek out opportunities to learn new methods for teaching and learning. The areas I want to continue to develop in are meeting the needs of diverse students, integrating technology, providing an accessible learning environment, and developing high impact learning practices

within all courses taught. I strive to find ways to connect to students and adapt my teaching styles to the changes in the world, both in academia and beyond.