

Teaching Philosophy Statement  
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**College Instructor Experience**

**Co-Instructor - Models of Curriculum (Graduate Level CUI 4021)**

(Winter Quarter, 2021)

- Researched schools representing examples of various curriculum presented in course, communicated with wide range of school leaders for course presentations
- Provided direct feedback to student reflection papers
- Instructed and facilitated course discussions
- Co-planning responsibilities with course Co-Instructor, including revising syllabus and construction of course assignments

**Teaching Philosophy Statement**

*One of the great tasks in our time is to 'hear people to speech.' Behind their fearful silence, our students want to find their voices, speak their voices, have their voices heard. A good teacher is one who can listen to those voices even before they are spoken – so that someday they can speak with truth and confidence. (Parker Palmer, 1998/2017, p. 47)*

My most consequential goal as an educator of both adolescents and adults is to provide an appropriate learning environment to foster transformation. Transformative learning is defined by Mezirow (2012) "as a process by which previously uncritically assimilated assumptions, beliefs, values, and perspectives are questioned and thereby become more open, permeable, and better validated" (Cranton, 2016, p. 2). Such transformation can take place in numerous ways during the educative process, and might only be integrated by the learner after they have left my classroom. As the most significant focus of my teaching practice, transformation is the global purpose of curricular and pedagogical decisions made in courses that I teach.

As a secondary English Language Arts (ELA) teacher for over nearly two decades, my experience has made concrete the idea that the ELA classroom, and critical literacy practices can serve to support students as they "read and write as part of the process of becoming conscious of one's experience as historically constructed within specific power relations" (Anderson & Irvine, p. 82; as cited in Shor, 1999). In secondary ELA and college composition classes, students not only have opportunities to strengthen skills, but also to begin to connect their work to personal and professional reflection, the type of which gives them the confidence to make themselves heard in the world.

Two broad principles motivate my teaching practices in the classroom. One speaks to the question of *What* happens in the classroom, the pedagogical beliefs that I hold; the other speaks to *How* it happens which focuses on the curricular choices made in organizing classroom interactions and materials.

My work with students centers around the relationships that are built during instruction and personal interactions. There are the individual relationships between my role as an instructor and their roles as individual students; there is also a relationship with the course members as a group. Constructing relationships in which each student intrinsically has worth and value both

within the boundaries of the subject taught, but also completely apart from the learning material, is the starting point from which I extend all other duties and responsibilities to support students in their learning process. This requires active actions and deliberate choices, including during the stages of course construction and planning. It requires treating students as "persons not things" (Gillen, 2014, p. 20).

I develop my curricular choices through a synergy of standards and the particular needs of individual classes and the specific population of students I will be serving. For example, as a secondary English teacher I pay attention to the Colorado State Standards (Common Core), in addition to the standards of my professional organization, the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). Similarly, as a community college instructor, NCTE has an affiliated group to which I belong, the Two-Year College English Association (TYCA). In addition to TYCA standards, I am familiar with standards created by state and local college organizations. Syllabi act as a roadmap for course objectives and learning goals, but the document is brought to life through acquiring knowledge about the particular students in the class, their backgrounds, and experiences. In addition to integrating Culturally Responsive Teaching Pedagogy, each of my lesson plans has a component of multi-modal teaching to allow for strategies that promote engagement and retention of material as suggested by *Hitting Pause* (Rice, 2018) the book I reviewed with Dr. Paul Michalec for *Teachers College Record*.

Neither the *how* or *what* can be separated in the classrooms where I instruct. Knowledge of the student population informs my actions and focus of instruction, with the roadmap of standards guiding curricular focus. In my presentation of material, I am not a uniformly similar teacher, but one who approaches each new classroom and community with opportunity and openness to share in a reciprocal educational experience.

## References

- Cranton, P. (2016). *Understanding and promoting transformative learning: A guide to theory and practice* (3rd ed.). Stylus Publishing.
- Gillen, J. (2014). *Educating for insurgency: The roles of young people in schools of poverty*. AK Press.
- Michalec, P., & Viskanta, P. (2018). Hitting Pause: Book Review. *Teachers College Record*. ID 22451.
- Palmer, P. (2017). *The courage to teach: Exploring the inner landscape of a teacher's life*. Wiley. (Original work published 1998)
- Shor, I. (1999). What is critical literacy. *Journal of Pedagogy, Pluralism, and Practice*, 1(4), 2-32.