

Teaching Statement

My teaching embraces the notion that learning comes from the heart, where learners should have the confidence to try without fear of failure. This approach has been central to my own learning, allowing me to explore my chosen field and find my passion which has propelled me to the successes I've enjoyed. I seek to provide similar experiences to my students, equipping them with the skills and capacities they need to think on their own and formulate their own lines of inquiry—a foundation they can use when they move on to subsequent classes, clinical practice, and research. In the information age, it is simply not possible to teach nursing students every detail that they might use in the future. That is why critical, reflective, and creative thinking are the central themes that predominate my teaching. These three teaching principles are grounded in the scholarship of appreciative inquiry, a strength-based approach that is focused on the person.

In my classroom, empowering students with the capacity for critical thinking means equipping them to be able to systematically assess the validity of evidence. This manifests itself in every assignment or reading I give. For example, if I assign students a research article, I'll include a series of critical questions to help them comprehend the article. These not only assist students in asking deeper questions when reading research articles, but also guides them in critically assessing what they are reading. By asking them if this is the only study or what do other studies say about this, I prompt them to ask where they can find more valid and reliable evidence to either confirm or counter the findings.

As a student, I've benefitted enormously from the process of reflection, and feel this is an overlooked aspect of teaching. Being able to examine one's own underlying biases and assumptions is crucial for seeing all dimensions of an issue, and certainly has made me a more compassionate and understanding instructor. In seeking to inculcate that approach in my students, I will often divide them into groups to discuss current debates in biomedical ethics but ask them to argue for a perspective different than their own. Students have commented that these exercises helped to stimulate reflection not only on the issue at hand, but helped them see that what might just seem like a debating exercise actually has a good deal of applicability to the course materials and their professional outlook.

Last but not least is creative thinking, which is arguably the most challenging to teach and yet perhaps the most crucial to learn. I use variety of creative and innovative teaching strategies to engage students with diverse learning styles from interactive feedback modalities to case studies from my own research. What's important is leveraging these different teaching styles to continually assess their effectiveness: just how much learning is going on? Monitoring progress through low-stakes mini-quizzes has allowed me to design PowerPoints and structure lectures to better meet the needs of my students. On evaluations, over 97% of my students agree or strongly agreed that I present the subject matter in an interesting way. I even created a classroom research project with the students to examine the association between class attendance and students' study hours on their grades, creatively teaching them both essential research skills while presenting high-leverage information they could act on. In short, what's essential to my pedagogy is a commitment to reflective creative thinking that results in creative outcomes for my students.