

## STATEMENT OF TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

“I never teach my pupils, I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn.”  
~ Albert Einstein~

I am grounded in the belief that everyone has the capacity to learn, and learning takes place most effectively when individuals are ready and motivated. With this notion guiding my teaching practice, I view my role as educator as one who creates conditions for learning, where students feel supported, safe, and eager to grasp new concepts, ideas, and theories. I teach courses in both Psychology and student development, for an Access department within a post-secondary educational setting. The students in my classrooms may come to the College with issues around mental health concerns, varied learning abilities, living below the poverty line, past trauma and/or uncertainty of career path. Working in an Access department has grounded me and provided me with a clear understanding of the importance of accessible education for all individuals. These experiences have shaped who I am as an educator today.

I recognize and value collaborative learning and community building in the classroom, as I am grounded in the belief that learning is a deeply relational human endeavor. It is important that I create connections with my students as well as encourage them to create connections with one another in the classroom. I seek to help students develop and enhance their soft skills such including understanding other perspectives, effective team work, and celebrating diversity within the classroom. I firmly believe that these skills are essential for both College and the workplace. I model these behaviors in the classroom and encourage dialogue on how these behaviors are important for the successful development of not only our own learning community, but also a democratic society. Thus, I incorporate a collaborative approach in the classroom, one that encourages lively discussion, peer support, and continuous opportunities to learn from and with one another. In every class, I plan and incorporate a blend of learning activities that supports the various learning styles and abilities within the classroom, as I am aware that each student will engage with the material differently. I feel it is my responsibility to ensure that I use varied approaches, not only for the delivery of content but also varied approaches towards assessment.

My educational perspective is rooted in Humanism. I firmly believe all individuals are trying to attain their full potential; however, there may be barriers that are limiting self-actualization. Therefore, I view my role in the classroom as a motivator, encourager, and supporter of the possibilities of learning. As a teacher, my role is to be an active part of the learning process. I achieve this by supporting my students and never making assumptions about their character. I focus on getting to know them as unique individuals who are complex and multi layered. With this always at the forefront, I am better able to focus on how I can assist them in achieving successful learning outcomes.

My perspectives on teaching and learning are rooted in Constructivism. I earnestly hold true that individuals learn by creating their own meaning to content, and this influences the learner-centered pedagogy I employ within the classroom. I am always mindful of incorporating relevant and timely examples when discussing psychological concepts to students. In understanding my students and who they are as individuals, I am more able to provide examples that are relevant to them personally, which in turn allows them to make the connections necessary for deep understanding. Additionally, I understand the importance of student questioning and I encourage students to think deeply about concepts and theories. I ask them to share their own examples in the classroom. I stress at the beginning of courses that one of my goals as a teacher is for students to become critical consumers of knowledge. I continuously create opportunities for students to view content in new ways, to ask questions and to challenge theories we discuss in the classroom. I do this as I believe that students are more engaged when they are challenged. My overall teaching goal is transformative learning for the students.

A driving force behind my teaching is to assist students in developing self-esteem and self-efficacy. I have come to this awareness upon reflecting on my own experiences as both an educator and as a student. I understand a teacher's pivotal role in this process. As a College educator, I provide varied opportunities for students to develop confidence in the attainment of new skills and knowledge. I am keenly aware of the importance of providing students ample opportunities to practice, discuss, and unpack new concepts and ideas. In addition, I focus on building confidence by providing opportunities for continuous feedback for students. For example, in one of my courses titled, *Introduction to Psychology*, I ask students to complete a self-reflection activity after quizzes and tests, where they respond to a set of questions on what specifically they did to prepare. This process encourages students to become accountable for their actions as well as set goals on how to improve moving forward in the course, which are important aspects of being a successful college student.

As an educator, I believe my role is not only to inspire others, but also to learn and grow in my own practice every day. I have a passion and love for what I do and I consider myself fortunate to have a career that inspires and challenges me. I understand the importance of continuously reflecting on my own teaching not only with my mentors and students, but also with my colleagues. This awareness was amplified during the completion of my Masters of Education at the University of Toronto, where I researched the impacts of a Faculty Learning Circle on the professional development needs of College educators. Through my research and participation in this group, I came to understand the importance of evidence based research methods to investigate my own teaching and learning practices, a practice in line with the philosophical traditions of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. This ongoing critical reflection is a vital component of my own professional growth and development.