

**Statements of Teaching Philosophy  
by 2009 Recipients**



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I'm sincerely honored to be considered for the Howard A. White Award for Teaching Excellence, especially since teaching is deeply important to me. I love teaching philosophy because, I'm convinced, philosophy really matters to everyday people, and it matters a great deal. I think G. K. Chesterton was right in saying that the most practical and important thing about a man is his general view of the world—what William James later dubbed our 'dumb sense of what life honestly and deeply means.' As Chesterton aptly noted, a landlady needs to know whether a potential renter can pay his bills, but it's even more crucial for her to know his philosophy. Similarly, it's important for us to know the numbers when we're going against an enemy, but it's even more fundamental that we have a sense of our enemy's philosophy. It's important to know this because what one believes about truth, reality, God, human nature, society, the meaning of life, beauty, and morality informs how he will lead his workaday life, and it shapes who he is as a person. And to the extent that that's true, I think it's fair to say that the study of philosophy is central to the process of trying to live well. So, as a philosopher and as one who teaches philosophy, I see my ultimate aim as one that involves trying to help myself and others live as well as we can, both as individuals and as a community.

When I step into the classroom as a teacher, my immediate goal is to *motivate* the philosophical issue at hand in order to inspire genuine inquiry. Generally, my approach is to start by urging my students to reflect on their own deeply held intuitions about human experience and values. I do this by posing questions that more or less force those intuitions to the surface. For example, if we are considering whether Mill's utilitarianism is true—whether, in other words, the ethical course of action is in fact the one that promotes the greatest amount of happiness—I ask my students something along the lines of whether it would be morally permissible to slaughter an innocent baby (say, in order to harvest her organs) if doing so would somehow secure the most happiness for the largest number of people. (I generally take a few liberties in coming up with thought-experiments; by all reports, students seem to love that, and it usually helps to get them fired-up). It's no surprise that the students think I'm crazy to ask such a question; of course we think *that* would be reprehensible. But, if all goes well with this sort of intuition-pumping exercise, the students now confront a real philosophical dilemma: either killing innocent babies is permissible if doing so would promote overall happiness, or maximizing happiness *can't be* the correct decision-principle, at least not without considerable qualifications. I've found that offering these sorts of puzzles serves a number of functions: 1) students very quickly start to see what hangs on the issues at hand; 2) they critically examine their own intuitions, and, in so doing, move closer to having self-knowledge; 3) they start thinking analytically and creatively because they want to find answers to these puzzles; and 4) they start practicing honest and serious philosophical deliberation with me and their classmates. In many ways, of course, this all looks very similar to the time-honored practice of Socratic dialogue, in which Socrates'

and his interlocutors are, time after time, brought to a state of perplexity—what the Greeks called *aporia*. Properly provoked, and under the right conditions, this *aporia* stimulates *real* inquiry.

Once the issue at hand is properly motivated, my goal is to help students develop the intellectual resources and skills with which they can start formulating solutions to the problems they face and, in so doing, bring their own philosophical intuitions into reflective equilibrium. The best thing I can do to accomplish this goal, I think, is to get the students to focus on and be prepared to follow the arguments wherever they may lead. First, I try to help the students tease out the best available reasons in support of the various positions on all sides of a philosophical or moral issue. Usually, this involves getting knee deep in some of the great contributions to history of philosophy—from Plato and Sextus Empiricus to Descartes and Hobbes to Rawls and Plantinga. Next, I coach the students on distilling the relevant views down to their essential logical content, analyzing the arguments into their constituent parts, and reconstructing them premise by premise in their most charitable form (usually on the chalkboard). This process is aimed not only at giving students experience in interpreting historically significant texts and combing the past for its wisdom, but also at giving the students an appreciation for and practice in developing a crisply organized and precise view of the logical landscape of the philosophical problem, the relevant distinctions involved, and the range of probable solutions, objections and replies. Then—and this is always one of my favorite steps—I challenge the students to refute or defend the crucial contentious premises of the arguments so as to check them for validity and soundness. If all has gone well up to this point, students have a structured forum for rigorous group-deliberation in which they can: 1) practice the intellectual virtues (e.g. charity, empathy, modesty, etc.); 2) develop their own criticisms of the philosophical views at stake; 3) test and sharpen their own views against the argument pool of their fellow deliberators and the history of philosophy; and 4) ultimately approximate the best possible solutions to the problems at hand on the road to developing epistemologically responsible philosophical worldviews. Exciting things start happening when students engage in group-deliberation of this sort: not only are they learning *about* philosophy, but they start *doing* philosophy and *being* philosophers.

Of course, it's one thing to get students excited about philosophical speculation, and it's another thing to get students taking philosophical reasoning (and the conclusions it yields) *seriously*. I constantly stress to my students that what we're doing when we logically analyze and assess the problem of evil (or Kant's deontology, or the nature of the self, or whatever) is not some sort of academic game, however enjoyable it may be. That is, philosophizing is not about winning points in a debate, impressing ourselves or others with emotively charged rhetoric, or enriching our vocabulary. There's much more at stake, for philosophical exchange is serious business insofar as it's ultimately about finding the best views about truth, beauty, or goodness and adjusting our beliefs and lives accordingly. So, in an effort to get students to take the exchange of reason seriously, I encourage them to take *themselves* seriously as thinkers, as scholars, as writers, and as deliberators—to being what Aristotle called *ho spoudaios*, or (loosely translated) the person who is *hard core*. The trick to this, I think, is to empower students to become, and to recognize themselves as capable of being, constructively critical about the very

framework of human experience so as to offer alternatives for improvement. To pull this off, I try to create situations in which students can, in fact, come to recognize themselves as being responsible for adding to and taking away from group-deliberations and philosophizing. This is no small task, of course, because students actually have to be in a position to be philosophically *spoudaios* in the first place. Once they reach this point, they need to recognize themselves for what they actually are—potential experts on matters of great importance to being fully human. It's not enough that students have an awareness of and an appreciation for the old saws of the philosophical cannon. That's where we start, of course, but it shouldn't stop there. My goal is to get my students not only listening to the great thinkers of the past, but also to extending, challenging, engaging, and responding to them with confidence, acumen, and responsibility. When this occurs, students feel empowered to take themselves even more seriously and, in turn, the dialectical asymmetry between them, the text, and me eventually starts to fade. And since we're after the best epistemic outcomes, the less asymmetry the better—in other words, we need deliberation to be as *democratic* as possible.

It's equally important that the students feel empowered to *challenge me* as their teacher. I frequently point out to my students that it's not my goal to get them to agree with me simply because of my status in the classroom. In other words, I'm not after sycophants. Rather, it's my goal that they come to be able to see the best reasons and arguments for the views at hand and decide for themselves—but, importantly, *in light of the best reasons available*—which views seem most promising. To this end, I think it's necessary that my students see me practice the virtue of epistemic humility. I want my students to know that, when they take my classes, not only will they be challenged by me, but I'll be challenged *by them* in return, and I'll freely adjust my views and methods when necessary. I think this not only demonstrates a proper respect for the autonomy and deliberative equality of the students, but it helps focus all of us on the importance of fallibility in relation to the reasoning process. Doing so, I believe, promotes a proper concern for truth as front and center to all of our inquiries—above power, above social conventions, and above pride and ego. In turn, this emphasis on the importance of truth helps create an environment in which we can better develop and practice the other intellectual and deliberative virtues that enable us—as *fellow* deliberators—to attain justified and true beliefs. And I earnestly believe that the cultivation and practice of the deliberative virtues in the classroom can help shape the students into better democratic citizens—citizens who are able to respect and reason well with their compatriots (with whom they will frequently disagree) about important matters of basic justice and public policy.

But, my task as a philosopher in the classroom doesn't stop with the promotion of good democratic citizenship. One of my primary aims as a teacher is to get my students thinking long and hard and *systematically* about their own Christian convictions, as well as the host of objections that threaten to undermine them. I want my students to know the best arguments in support of biblical Christianity and to listen attentively to and *take seriously* the harshest objections. I'm firmly convinced that knowing the best objections to the Christianity—as well as knowing how to offer an open-eyed, cogent, and intellectually respectable response—is absolutely *sine qua non* for educated Christians in a pluralistic society such as ours. So, I encourage my students to consider the objections

in their most charitable form and to know how to respond in good faith. I have confidence in promoting this kind of honest inquiry, for not only are Christians called to prepare answers for those who ask about the hope that's within us (I Peter 3: 15b), but also because I believe that every tongue will indeed confess the central truth of Christianity at the end of all *possible* inquiry (Phil. 2:10-11; Rom. 14:11; Is. 45:23).

Probably one of the best things I can do as a teacher is to share with my students my own enthusiasm for philosophical reasoning and the pursuit of truth. Because enthusiasm can be as contagious as any virus around, I strive to let my students see me love what I do. And I sincerely love doing philosophy because I'd really *love* to live well and know God. So, I routinely try to let students see the little man behind the curtain and how I love my research, writing, and exchanging reasons with colleagues and students alike. And, equally important, I think one of the best things I can do as a teacher is to build rapport with my students and to know them *as people*, and not just as students. It seems to me that the best learning occurs within the context of genuine friendship. So, I try my best to earn my students' friendship by being invested meaningfully in their lives and by helping them in any way I can, in or outside the classroom.

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*Ann Feyerherm*  
*Professor of Organization Theory and Management*  
*Graziadio School of Business and Management*

### **Teaching is ultimately about learning**

Learning takes engagement of the student and the professor. My teaching philosophy starts, therefore, with engagement. How do I engage the minds and hearts of the students who enroll in my classes, those who I advise on their theses projects, and those who come to an executive education seminar? That is the question I always ponder when I am planning to teach. I've found that part of the answer is making the material relevant to their lives. This can be done through student generated cases, some self-directed learning or by paying attention to the management issues of the day and making sense of them – establishing a framework or asking students to link the theory to practice. I will also ask students to create their own “sense-making” frameworks or examine their own “theories-in-use.”

### **Teaching as the architect of learning experiences**

I'm a believer in experiential education. I have found that when students can experience a theory in action, they absorb the lessons of both the concepts and how those concepts appear in their world. For example, I have developed an inter-cultural experience where students immerse themselves in a “culture” and then interact based on practices of that

culture. After the exercise is debriefed, they understand, often at a visceral level, how and why communication can be fraught with assumptions and attributions about the “others” that make understanding and interactions difficult. Students also understand their own experience in conjunction with theories of cross-cultural communication and development of culture. I have many exercises and assignments that I create which enrich the learning and stimulate new thinking.

### **Learning can be fun!**

Actually, this premise came to me when I thought about what students say regarding the class and me. It always surprises me when I hear that they have fun, or that I bring a humor to the class and my presentations. Upon reflection, however, I can see that when I received this feedback it is because I took delight in teaching. Maybe I made a whimsical statement or asked a provocative question or presented a paradox that added curiosity. Perhaps it is my tendency to respond freely and spontaneously in class discussions or the willingness I have to be self-effacing. At any rate, I’ve embraced the concept that learning can be fun. Perhaps it is my early training as an elementary school teacher that is still with me today. Children learn through play – why can’t adults?

### **Co-creating learning**

I believe that I bring a deep understanding of the topics I teach, Organization Development and Management, to the students. I believe that they bring experiences and curiosity. Together, we can create a learning community. This happens not only in the class, but in other activities. I actively advise students on master’s theses and this is a joy, for the most part! The students generally come with a vague notion of what they wish to study and by the end of our 1.5 years together, they have a well-honed understanding and competency of whatever subject they have selected. I take joy in seeing the emergence of these early scholars. In fact, I have co-authored papers with several of my students in the hopes of continuing to support their academic curiosity and contribution to the field.

### **Continuous learning for myself**

There is a concept in Organization Development (my field) that is framed as the “use of self” when speaking about the consultant. I believe this translates well into the educational realm. This teacher makes a difference by using herself as an instrument of learning. What does that require? It requires me to be curious, to pay attention to new information by attending seminars, reading, listening to other scholars and listening to students. It also requires discipline, to take patterns that I see and translate those into learning activities and lectures so that students have the opportunity to be exposed and challenged by new thinking. I also practice the deepening of myself – spiritually, intuitively, emotionally, intellectually and physically. The better I am at bringing my “whole self” to the teaching experience, the better I am at helping my students bring their “whole selves” to the learning experience. There is an old adage that those who can’t do, teach. I wholeheartedly reject that notion. Teachers must engage in thinking and acting;

being and doing. I'm a better teacher when I've tried to put into practice what I am thinking. My voice rings hollow when I'm spouting a theory that has no meaning for me.

### **Teaching with love**

When I'm at my best, I love the students I teach. This attitude allows me to be patient, generous and see the best in the student. It allows me to be tough with them – because I care that they succeed. It allows me to focus on what is important. Sometimes a personal discussion is what is needed to move someone beyond what first appeared as a block about the material. I don't think I would notice if I didn't care about students as human beings.

### **Teaching and values**

In manifesting my values in the classroom, I treat each student as a unique person with his or her particular gifts to share and life lessons to learn. Beyond this, I stress demonstrating ethical values as part of a leader's mission. I use readings and cases to illustrate that a values-based business is also a profitable business. At the beginning of each new MSOD class, I encourage students to examine their own values as they make decisions and create organizational systems that will help people behave ethically. As part of the course in Organization Theory, an organization study is required. I was one of the first faculty members in Organization Theory to introduce an option for this study that students volunteer for a not-for-profit organization and write their study from an "insiders" perspective. In essence, I created a service learning portion of the course (in the mid 90s). During the time since its inception, my students have offered their time and talents to the work of Habitat for Humanity, ERAS foundation, Red Cross, Goodwill Industries, Boys and Girls Clubs in several communities across Southern California, the Orangewood Home, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, the Boy Scouts, the American Kidney Foundation, Red Cross, and the Salvation Army. Many students continued their volunteer work beyond the required class time. I believe that this reinforced the final statement in the Pepperdine's affirmation statement, "That knowledge calls, ultimately, for a life of service."

### **Honoring the teachers I had**

My teaching philosophy has been shaped by my own teachers. There was my 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher who took us to a nearby park to write poetry under the trees. From her I learned creativity and to think outside the boundaries. I think of my junior high history teacher who had us create Congressional debates on the Civil War. From her I learned how to make material come alive and the fruitful discipline of research. In high school, my French teacher took the class to Chicago to eat at a French restaurant and go to a French concert. She taught me that knowledge is relevant to our lives and also, learning could be an adventure! I also learned from my high school yearbook advisor that it was OK to trust students and let them experiment and that the teacher was a guide to learning. In college, my best teachers were those who made the material interesting, who challenged my thinking and who demonstrated deep interest in the material they were teaching.

However, my most powerful role models were my parents – both educators. My mother taught pre-school and shaped the experiences of three year olds. Miss Ruth (as she was known) was both firm and loving. There was no nonsense with her and yet her tiny pupils knew that she loved them. I marveled at her blend of discipline and joy; caring and discernment. If you were a parent with a three year old, you wanted to have them taught by Miss Ruth. My father taught biology at the university. I heard him talk with pride about the students that went on to medical school, through his encouragement and tutelage. I knew that, in spite of being the department chair and teaching the advanced classes, he always wanted to teach the beginning biology class at least once a year. He knew he made the class interesting to the general student population and that it was important for them to know about the human system. He believed in his topic and he believed in his students.

In being nominated for the Howard A. White Award for Teaching Excellence, I feel that I am honoring my parents and the love of learning which they instilled in me by their example. Thank you for your consideration.

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*Owen Hall*  
*Professor of Decision Sciences*  
*Graziadio School of Business and Management*

I love to teach. My primary goals as a teacher are to inspire my students to appreciate the joy of learning and to provide an environment for optimizing the learning process. It has been my experience that business students are interested in a practical curriculum that focuses on results and convenience. This is a major teaching challenge in today's hectic world. To meet these demands, I have increasingly turned to the Internet for support. The resultant blended learning approach combines the best practices of the classroom with the power of the Internet. This paradigm allowed me to transition from the traditional method of teaching that features the constraints of fixed location, time, and learning pace to a more user friendly and customized learning framework.

One teaching strategy that I utilize is based on the Instructional Management System initiative. This initiative, which is geared towards higher education, is designed to promote systematic thinking, to improve learning outcomes, and to increase return on instructional investments. Integrated learning is a key ingredient of this teaching paradigm. In this regard, I utilize an integrated learning approach throughout my courses including business simulations and virtual facility tours. A second teaching strategy that I employ is based on the E-Learning Success Model. This model consists of three stages: system design, system delivery, and system outcomes. I am presently implementing an upgrade of the E-Learning Success Model using Blackboard as part of GSBM's Blended Learning Initiative. Among other things, this project supports Pepperdine University's ongoing commitment to



sustainability in higher education by reducing student travel and the use of paper based content material (e.g., print books). I have found that the interactive nature of e-learning awakens the intellectual interests of my students and stimulates them to think creatively and independently. For example, one of my class assignments to encourage creativity is having students identify and develop a feasibility study for a new business opportunity using web-based templates.

The core materials for my courses are provided via the Internet. These include PowerPoint lectures, cases, computing Java applets, homework examples and solutions, practice examinations, and reading materials. Students are able to access course content through one convenient portal. This method of content delivery illustrates my approach to effectively organizing and presenting course material in a cogent and coherent manner.

I have an abiding interest in maintaining academic rigor in the classroom. This is manifested by the use of carefully designed lesson plans. As an example of rigor, my students are exposed to the standard business processes of best practices and benchmarking. I continue to stress to my students the importance of tapping into the existing body of knowledge through the use of the digital library. My induction into the Beta Gamma Sigma and Delta Mu Delta Honor societies is further evidence of my commitment to academic rigor.

During my 27-year tenure at Pepperdine I have strived to demonstrate good academic citizenship through service to the University and the larger community. I serve on a variety of committees and boards both inside and outside of Pepperdine. I maintain an active involvement with students outside of the classroom, including advising, counseling, and mentoring. I provide references for present and past students on an ongoing basis (e.g., Director of Student Relations for the Graziadio Alumni Network Council of Orange County). I recently helped launch the student volunteer program at our Irvine Graduate Campus. One of our first clients was the non-profit Working Wardrobe Foundation. I also regularly participate as a faculty representative at student recruitment events.

My student evaluations reflect my enthusiasm for teaching. Some recent specific student comments include:

- Dr Hall was a very motivating & supportive teacher which is definitely necessary for students starting the program.
- Dr. Hall is a great professor. Material was informative and he's really entertaining. I was eager to go to class.
- Dr. Hall is a great asset to Pepperdine. He is the reason I chose Pepperdine over other nearby schools.
- Really enjoyed Dr. Hall's teaching, his energy is very effective. His teaching enthusiasm is infectious.

My extensive publication record emphasizes my ongoing commitment to scholarship particularly as it can be translated into the classroom. Over the past few years I have received several prize paper and presentation awards. The material contained in these papers and presentations has been used directly in my classroom. Furthermore, in my capacity as Editor-

in-Chief of the Graziadio Business Report, I have the opportunity to work with my colleagues on a variety of scholarly issues. My scholarship also strengthens my ability to maintain mastery of the subject matter. I have recently completed the implementation of the Graziadio Virtual Learning Center as a result of a grant from GSBM's Funds for Excellence program. This resource center helps facilitate my teaching philosophy through the distribution of web based customized material.

Pepperdine's mission and affirmation statements appear in my syllabi and are emphasized in class on a continuous basis. Specifically, my abiding passion is to create a learning environment consisting of academic excellence and value-centered education in which my students prepare for lives of purpose, service and leadership. I believe that a blended learning approach can best achieve these objectives. In summary my teaching and learning philosophy is designed to develop positive and supportive attitudes towards oneself and others; to cultivate skills in problem solving and decision-making; to formulate an understanding of the interactive and dynamic nature of modern business practice; and to inspire a values-centered approach to leadership and a life long commitment to the pursuit of learning and service.

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*Joanne Hedgespeth*  
*Professor of Psychology*  
*Graduate School of Education and Psychology*

I am so pleased to have been selected as a finalist for a Howard A. White teaching award. Teaching is my greatest passion and it is an honor to be acknowledged in this manner, especially because there are so many talented faculty members at GSEP. It is also a pleasure to spend time reflecting on my experiences and thoughts about teaching. I have taught at Pepperdine for over twenty years and am grateful for the many positive experiences and opportunities I have had. Most rewarding over the years has been the interaction with my students. Their positive comments about the impact of my teaching have provided a great source of inspiration. My professional and personal goals have always centered on making a positive difference in the lives of others, and teaching has afforded me the opportunity to touch many lives.

It is interesting to see how the role of teacher has evolved in my life. I was privileged to have the opportunity to complete a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology and envisioned a career as a full time practitioner. At that time, I had little interest in teaching per se, however I was chosen and offered a Graduate Teaching Assistantship and found the experience to be highly enjoyable.

I started my professional career as a Clinical Psychologist in the United States Air Force and during my five years of service took the opportunity of completing a one-year Postdoctoral Fellowship in Child Psychology. After completing the fellowship the Air Force had me listed

as an “expert” on children and assigned me to serve as a Clinical Faculty member at one of their Predoctoral Internship facilities. It was during that time that I came to discover the “teacher” in myself. Although I did not view myself as an expert, I realized that I did have more knowledge and experience than the interns, with much to offer them. I truly valued the opportunity to continue being a “learner” as I gained clinical experience and knowledge while at the same time being able to teach. I experienced the joy of training and teaching others and watching them grow and develop, both personally and professionally. Prior to this experience I had never considered an academic career. However, while serving in the USAF, one of my Graduate School mentors encouraged me to apply for a position at GSEP and I readily agreed.

My professional identity has also evolved over my years at Pepperdine University. When I began teaching at GSEP, I would refer to myself primarily as a Clinical Psychologist. Ever since Graduate School, I had dreamed of becoming a Psychoanalyst, and was fortunate enough to be accepted for training at the Psychoanalytic Center of California. I completed the intensive four-year program and did become a Certified Psychoanalyst. However, now when I am asked what I do for a living I proudly say that I am a Professor. I am a teacher at heart and have fully accepted that role. I see this in every aspect of my life – when I learn anything new, I want to share my knowledge with others.

There are many individuals who have inspired me along my journey as a teacher and I will be forever grateful for their influence and mentoring. Professors in my graduate training were examples of compassion, dedication, and the importance of being genuine. They also modeled passion for the subject matter and the importance of lifelong learning. I left Graduate School knowing that I had just scratched the surface in my knowledge of Clinical Psychology. The seed of my desire to learn more—and particularly my desire to go through psychoanalytic training—had been firmly planted. Mentoring during my postdoctoral fellowship helped me to recognize the importance of personal development in my professional life and continued to nurture the desire for greater clinical skills and psychoanalytic training. I was also able to see the value of ongoing constructive feedback. Those who provided training in my psychoanalytic studies served as role models in their commitment to their work as well as helping me to develop a deeper understanding of the human condition. The influences of all my mentors have contributed to the success of my teaching today.

When I teach, I attempt to inspire my students to become the best that they can be. I want them to build on their strengths, recognizing what they have to offer others and acknowledging the areas in which they need further training and development. I strive to instill in them a greater respect for themselves and others. I think one of my greatest strengths as a teacher is my compassion and respect for all human beings. I look for the good in people, and believe in their potential for growth. I am tolerant of differences in others, and encourage my students to be tolerant. I welcome diversity of opinion, different perspectives, and people of all backgrounds and experiences. It is surprising how many students have little understanding of or contact with people of diverse backgrounds or beliefs before coming to Pepperdine. It is rewarding to see them grow as they are exposed to a variety of people and ideas. I teach a course in Interpersonal Skills and Group Therapy in which students have the

opportunity to learn about others in the class from diverse backgrounds and interact directly with those individuals. It is not always easy--for me or my students--to engage in topics that might be highly emotional, but I believe it is a positive learning experience for all of us. I know that I have learned much from my students over the years. And I want them to be prepared for working with any and all types of clients.

One of my aspirations in teaching is to fully engage my students in the learning process. For learning to be most effective, I believe students need to be involved both intellectually and emotionally. In order to accomplish this, I am fully engaged in the classroom. I am thoroughly prepared and actively involved when I teach. Even after many years of teaching some of the same courses I continue to be passionate about the subject matter as each new class brings unique perspectives and ideas. I believe my advanced training has helped me develop expertise in these topics and I want to convey this knowledge to my students. I attempt to accomplish this by keeping the discussion interesting, by using multiple examples, and by demonstrating how to apply theoretical knowledge to clinical practice. It is important to me that students build on their natural curiosity to understand themselves and others. I think this curiosity is helpful not only as a student and but also in clinical practice as they try to understand their clients and to help clients understand themselves.

I expect my students to think for themselves and to not blindly accept what they read or hear. My assignments are challenging as I ask them to write reaction papers which are not just summaries of the material. I want to know that they have truly thought about the concepts presented in the text. I also encourage my students to be creative in their work. At the end of the semester in the Theories of Personality class, students are required to write an integrated personality theory. Many students are quite creative with this project, even developing unique terms for their ideas.

In conclusion, I would like to add that despite my many years of advanced training, I am humbled by the limits of human knowledge. I hope to convey to students that I make mistakes and that I do not have all the answers. I think this helps them to continue to have a desire to learn more, and also to have realistic expectations about themselves. Tolerance for ambiguity can be difficult for students, but I personally feel it is incredibly important in the learning process. I believe we can all learn from our mistakes, but this is only possible if we are able to acknowledge that we make them in the first place. It is my hope that my love of learning and teaching has been communicated to my students and helps them discover their own passions and a sense of what is truly important in their lives.

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*Martine Jago*  
*Associate Professor of Education*  
*Graduate School of Education and Psychology*

**TEACHING WITH PASSION AND COMPASSION**

Since my arrival at Pepperdine University in September 2005, I have taught a variety of courses within the Master of Arts in Education and Teaching Credential programs. I follow the Christian mission of the University very closely, being ‘committed to the highest standards of academic excellence and Christian values, where students are strengthened for lives of purpose, service, and leadership’. My philosophy of teacher education is to provide research experiences and clinical practice that allow teacher candidates to develop and demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required of informed, reflective, and responsive professionals who are prepared to meet the diverse needs of their students – race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, gender, age, (dis)ability, faith background. I aim to teach with passion, compassion, and cultural sensitivity.

**THE PEPPERDINE FAMILY: IDENTITY AND PURPOSE**

As a recent immigrant to the United States of America, I have been asked about my birthplace and family of origin. I have always enjoyed genealogy, and many people have shared with me their ancestry. The Bible is family oriented: the history of Israel begins with the family of Abraham. We read in Genesis that he is highly esteemed of the Lord as a father and teaches his children properly. Jesus Christ epitomized the qualities that we now esteem as those of a highly effective educator. From the moment that prospective candidates cross the threshold of the Graduate School of Education and Psychology, I inform participants that they are joining the Pepperdine Family: ‘an innovative learning community where faculty, staff, and students of diverse cultures and perspectives work collaboratively to foster academic excellence, social purpose, meaningful service, and personal fulfillment’ (GSEP Mission Statement).

During the orientation course for new candidates, I pose the following question: What qualities define our community? During a brainstorm session, we list cherished beliefs and principles, review personal histories, and share common goals and objectives. Our professional journey begins as a community of scholar-practitioners learning to create, educate, and evaluate in compassionate classrooms. We pass through phases: the search for identity; the need for support; the taste of empowerment; and the joy of contribution. As a dancer, I believe there is an energy that is unique to each human being. As an adviser, I believe there is a responsibility to address the concerns of our candidates. As an educator, I believe there is a vision for each individual in the class. As a scholar, I believe there is a desire for accountability to students now and in the future. Am I serving in the community, learning from my experiences, and constantly aiming to improve? Active learning and a constructivist approach toward inquiry and reflection are embedded in each of my courses to make learning lively and purposeful. High expectations and a safe environment contribute to the quality of discussions in the classroom.

Candidates build a foundation of knowledge and explore theories of development, management, communication, and community building. They become informed on campus and in the field, and develop reflective and responsive practice documented in journals. After focusing on themselves in the role of teacher, they extend their focus to the child as learner, developing ethnographic studies in which they apply content pedagogical learning, assessment knowledge, and multicultural awareness. Learning is taken to a deeper level when candidates are required to apply research techniques and special education accommodations to classroom realities in a small-scale inquiry. The second language acquisition course adds a further dimension to lesson planning and the clinical practicum. Candidates articulate a personal philosophy of education, submit a portfolio, and prepare presentations as evidence of their competence, reflecting on practice and sharing a vision for implementation in their new roles. They are consistently guided in their understanding and development of a professional identity and of teaching as a vocation.

### **THE PEPPERDINE MISSION: COMMUNITY AND SERVICE**

Boyer's conceptualization of scholarship (discovery, pedagogy, integration, and application) is perfectly aligned with my understanding of the teaching profession. An educator must be well informed, reflective, and responsive. Teaching is community property and never an isolated activity: collaboration with professionals and partnership with school districts must be modeled. Research and inquiry are inextricably entwined with scholarship: interdisciplinary work has been a consistent feature of my research projects both in the United States of America and in Europe.

The scholarship of discovery is investigative: the search for information. The scholarship of pedagogy encompasses several key areas: clear goals, adequate preparation, appropriate methods, significant results, effective presentation, reflective and reflexive critique – traits of the research process as well as mastery of knowledge. The scholarship of integration is largely interpretive in nature: it involves making connections, building bridges, developing professional partnerships, and understanding the big picture. Finally, the scholarship of application addresses the need to serve educational settings and the wider community. It is imperative that my research findings feed into coursework, publications, and classrooms with the aim of improving teaching and student learning in the school districts affiliated with Pepperdine University.

As a Fellow of the Royal Society for Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce (RSA), I have been presented with opportunities to contribute to the global debate on language learning, develop transnational education projects on cultural awareness, and promote educational improvement through action research by professionals across the learning spectrum. I am a Member of the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages and the American Educational Research Association. In 2004, I became a Senior Member of the Civil Air Patrol (US Air Force Auxiliary) within the Air Cadet Program in Juneau, Alaska. In September 2008, I transferred my records to Saddleback Composite Squadron 68 in Orange County, and was promoted to the rank of Captain with the role of Assistant Aerospace

Education Officer in January 2009. This responsibility enables me to work with youth (12-21 year olds) in a unique learning environment.

Faith in a Supreme Being permeates the philosophy I uphold and the principles by which I live and work. The Apostle Paul taught that ‘faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen’ (Hebrews 11:1). Faith is trust in God in all circumstances – through faith, I have been able to persevere and remain loyal to God and His Word in challenging circumstances. I refer in my lectures to ‘building bridges in the community’: between teachers and students; between universities and school districts; and between diverse groups in our midst. My faith is centered in Jesus Christ: the transmission of knowledge alongside fundamental truths offers a powerful message. Jesus’ love was clearly linked to, and resulted from, His life of serving, sacrificing, and giving on behalf of others. Right thought, speech, and action are paramount in the teaching profession: ethical research, sensitive communication, and intercultural understanding.

The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians (Chapter 13) reminds us of the need for faith, hope, and charity: these qualities are needed as we face the challenges of educating children in the 21st century. It is imperative that, as human beings, we maintain the eternal perspective: the death of my father in 2003 has had a profound effect on the way I approach all aspects of my life. I was raised in a Christian family and espouse Christian beliefs. My childhood was spent in the heart of London, England. I attended multi-faith schools in a culturally diverse community, and later studied in the university cities of Oxford and Cambridge. I am guided by the ‘still small voice’ (I Kings 19:12), the prompting of the Holy Spirit within. Outward demeanor reflects the Spirit within. I endeavor at all times to be worthy of the status granted me as a naturalized citizen of the United States of America, by offering diligence, loyalty, integrity, and a commitment to serve.

### **THE PEPPERDINE LEGACY: TALENTS AND LEADERSHIP**

As a new faculty member, I had the privilege of participating in the Pepperdine Voyage (Lilly Vocation Project) to Florence, Italy, during December 2005. Here is an extract from my journal: ‘This assignment presented an opportunity for reflection on my life with its twists and turns, the personal and professional challenges, and the people who inspired and facilitated those growth experiences. I began to consider significant events and to discover a pattern: every seven years brought a spiritual, emotional, or professional growth spurt. These teachable moments occurred with regularity as evenly-spaced slices of bread: the intervening years, like sandwich-filling, provided a series of learning activities which allowed me to grow and attain higher goals – my personal, professional, and ultimately spiritual timeline ...’

Faith is not passive belief but is expressed through action. We are given talents and gifts to help us fulfill our purposes on this earth and to help us bless the lives of others. The identification and development of talents and gifts requires persistence, courage, and patience, but brings great joy. During the early weeks of the program, I ask candidates to reflect on their interests and passions in education, and challenge them to seek opportunities to use their talents and gifts in the workplace. Some need constant, positive support in this

process and share inspirational stories about overcoming challenges in the development of skills and dispositions. I encourage candidates to foster an atmosphere of compassion and care in the classroom. In special education, we talk of ‘people-first’ language (a child with autism) – we see the person before the disability.

I believe that I have been endowed with certain talents that should be shared. From a young age, I have enjoyed teaching children and adults to dance. I model principles which I hope candidates will apply in their classrooms, including the encouragement of critical thinking and the need for frequent, detailed formative assessment. My implementation of the individual tutorial system (a legacy of Oxford University – my alma mater) has received positive reviews. The Oxford style ‘tutes’ offer an intense learning experience whereby tutees meet with me individually or in pairs to receive direct feedback on papers and assignments in a discussion setting. The sessions are intended to be rigorous and academically challenging, as candidates defend, analyze, and critique their own ideas and the philosophies of others within a conversation. This pedagogical model creates authentic learning and assessment opportunities for an in-depth study within a chosen field.

I believe that our graduates are agents of change and embody the ideals espoused by Jean Piaget: ‘The principal goal of education ... should be creating men and women who are capable of doing new things, not simply repeating what other generations have done; men and women who are creative, inventive and discoverers, who can be critical and verify, and not accept, everything they are offered’. Ackoff R L and Greenberg D (2008) *Turning Learning Right Side Up: Putting Education Back on Track*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Wharton.

I write this paper with humility and thanksgiving in my heart for the privilege of being nominated as a finalist for the Howard A White Award for Teaching Excellence and recognize the unique contribution of this outstanding educator and administrator to the history of Pepperdine University. The life of Howard A White is a testimony of perseverance, dedication, and faith in adversity. As the founding director of the Year-in-Europe program, he paved the way for global initiatives and enabled students and faculty to engage in intercultural dialogue and international activities that continue today. I am grateful for the blessings bestowed upon me as a member of the Pepperdine family: for the tremendous legacy of Howard A White; for the leadership and service of those in administration; for the scholarship and dedication of the faculty; for the energy and sacrifice of the candidates; for the love and support of family and friends who have enabled and encouraged me to lead a life of purpose, service, and leadership.

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*Anthony Miller*  
*Professor of Law*  
*Pepperdine School of Law*

It is a great honor to be considered for the Howard A. White Award for Teaching Excellence. I knew Dr. White, though not as well as some others here at Pepperdine; he was a wonderful role model for those of us who aspired to be college teachers. I have spoken to some of his former students, and they all report that he was a truly wonderful teacher.

Since I started school, there has never been a year of my life when I was not a student or a teacher. I have always followed the academic calendar, and, even now as I write this in the middle of summer, I feel the anticipation of the new school year. I first started teaching in my junior year of college when I answered a typewritten notice on a college bulletin board for a teacher's aide at a local high school. After I graduated from college, I became a high school English teacher before deciding to go to law school. I had no idea that when I graduated from law school I would have the good fortune to end up teaching law school, and for that good fortune I am very much indebted to former Dean Ronald Philips and two professors of mine, Wayne Estes and Charles Nelson, both of whom, like Dr. White, were wonderful teachers. Thirty-two years later I am still teaching, and I must say that I enjoy the company of my students and the pleasure of teaching law more every year.

At the outset, I think that it is important to say that I consider myself a work-a-day teacher, a journeyman teacher, an ordinary teacher. What this means is that I do the best that I can for my students on a day in and day out basis just like hundreds of thousands of teachers throughout the country and millions throughout the world. While there are moments of excitement in my class (I was once tackled by a professional wrestler--female--in class), moments of brilliance (usually by the students, not me), moments of humor (hilarious to me, though maybe not to the students—except for the wrestler), I cannot promise that my classes will be exciting, brilliant, or funny, although I love it if they are. What I strive for instead is to make my classes good, solid, worthwhile, and helpful. I want the students to feel that our time together was well spent, I want them to know that I greatly enjoyed and cherished their company in the classroom, and I want them to know that a life devoted to the study and practice of law is a rewarding and meaningful life. In order to accomplish these goals, I emphasize several aspects of teaching.

The first is preparation. I think preparation is everything in teaching a good class. It means deciding what to teach and how to teach it, and then learning it myself. I know that I teach best when I can do so without looking down at my notes or a book, when I know the material so well that the inherent structure of the material becomes the structure of my class. And even though I have taught most of my subjects for years, I always try to find that one aspect of the material that tickles my intellect. If I find something interesting, usually my students will too. I am always amazed how often this appears to

work, almost like magic. In this regard, I should add that there is no subject that I teach which I do not find fascinating. And, finally, preparation also means mastering the details of the class: learning the students' names (we have classes of 70 to 80 students at the law school), having a readily understandable syllabus so that the students know the direction of the class, setting out the basic standards and rules of the class clearly so the students know where they stand, and most of all maintaining generous and welcoming office hours.

Another aspect of teaching I find important, particularly in law school, is employing the Socratic Method, or the question-and-answer approach. There are vastly different styles of teaching, and, while everyone must find his or her own, I find this method of teaching to be the very foundation of legal reasoning, and thus a good learning tool for law students, although if I still taught literature, I think that I would use the same method. In law school teaching, it is sometimes considered fair to deceive students during class—better known as “hiding the ball”—and sometimes law teachers will hide the ball so well, that students begin to wonder if the professor ever knew where the ball was in the first place. To avoid this kind of intentional obfuscation, I sometimes lecture and I always provide many handouts. I feel an obligation to let the students know in the end where the ball is, and, by the way, to let them know that I can remember where I hid it.

Being able to relax and enjoy the classroom is another aspect of teaching I find important. Having a style of your own helps, but there is more to it than just that. Teaching gets good when you begin to feel at home in the classroom, when you start really enjoying the time with students, time which should not be rushed but rather savored. The good news for new teachers is that this comes with time.

I also find that having some involvement with my subject beyond teaching it helps me in the classroom. For many at the college level, scholarship and research serve this function, as well as creating pedagogical materials and writing text books. I love doing research and I like writing, although the writing is the real work. For law professors, there is also the opportunity to participate in the world of lawyers and judges, to experience real cases and share that experience with students. Without a doubt, all of this outside participation in the law enhances teaching.

Since a part of a teacher's job, at least in the system within which I work, is to grade students, I think it is essential to have a system of grading that strives for fairness and accuracy, one that measures how well the students have mastered what we have attempted to teach them and one that provides feedback to the students not only so that they can understand the basis for their grade, but also so that they can learn from their mistakes.

And finally, I strongly believe that good teaching requires that the teacher address the students with love and respect. This is a corollary of the great commandment of my faith and, I believe, of every faith. In teaching, it means listening to students, sincerely trying to do what is best for them, demanding rigor in their thought and study, respecting them

when they refuse to conform, supporting them when they do not do well, and sharing their joy when they succeed.

Teaching, what a great job!

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*Victoria Myers*  
*Professor of English*  
*Seaver College*

Let me express my profound gratitude to the students and colleagues who have recommended me for this teaching award. No teacher works alone. We perform our labors in an environment of mutuality and collaboration. Nowhere, I believe, is this more true than at Pepperdine University, where the concepts of calling, service and inquiry blend in a special way within the teaching profession. In this context I have found that the truisms of teaching are distinctly challenged, and distinctly deepened.

Class participation has long constituted the most valued element in an English teacher's goals. Very likely, this is because literature flourishes in contexts of vigorous intellectual conversation, within cultures of ethically committed inquiry. The repertoire of teaching techniques therefore emphasizes the skillful formulation of leading questions. If used well, this technique will guide students in a collective interpretation of texts and they will end up with a coherent understanding of the subject matter. It has been the paradox of my teaching career to learn the limitations of the leading question. The leading question, dependent upon selecting key passages and selecting the most relevant among student responses, often implies a pre-conceived single interpretation of the text; it conveys the message that the teacher intends to control the discussion. This sort of questioning, even when it puts students in possession of a certain body of knowledge, often excludes creative engagement and may even silence inquiry.

Through my twenty-three-year involvement in the Great Books Program at Pepperdine I have learned (but only gradually) to relinquish the leading question, or rather to change it into a more capacious concept of collaborative inquiry. Great books resist the single or simple interpretation; they challenge pre-conceptions, throw readers off their secure base, and require them to re-situate on a wider understanding of their own values. In the face of such challenges, instead of posing a leading question and then doing the leading, I learned to pose a problem and ask students to find the passages that are key for themselves. For example, I ask: "By the criteria available in *The Iliad*, can Achilles be called a hero?" Given this question in advance, students can read the text searchingly and critically. Considering Achilles' ambiguous ethical status at the outset, it proves difficult to say whether he deserves the epithet of "hero." The question naturally arises whose

voice carries the Iliad culture's authority on heroism. Our own confident views (born of previous education and accident) interfere with our clear perception of the text: even though Achilles is humiliated, it may not mean that humility is a Greek value. My role in such a discussion is a modest one: to hold the question open as long as possible so that all the students can discover their own stake in it, yet to make sure they do not mistake their values for the text's values, and yet again to help them find a path of continuity between themselves and the past. Our judgments must continually be revised, agreements get re-negotiated, the text continually raises new problems. Even when we conclude our reading of *The Iliad*, though we have worked toward consensus, we may not have reached it.

I believe it is the complex (or the simple-but-elusive) problems that are interesting: these stimulate thinking, exchange of ideas, discovery of possibilities. But to pose a genuine problem concerning a text admittedly requires preparation. For me, preparation has taken two forms. A teacher must have thought about the text through and through—its arguments and themes, its strategies and styles, its significance in its time and ours. As an undergraduate I received extensive training in close reading and much enjoyed the pleasure of solving the puzzle of the text. Over the years this process has turned into mode of meditation, and when I lead discussions on texts like Augustine's *Confessions* or Dante's *Divine Comedy*, I show my students how to employ this meditative-explicative method to creatively engage with the text and thereby answer—and pose—problems worth their attention. Last year this engagement resulted in essays so fine that I had them collected into a book so the students could share each other's experience.

A second form of preparation involves wide reading in philosophy, as well as in scholarly interpretations of the texts and their contexts. These alert me to problems and issues and possible common grounds among various texts. They enable me to order the texts, so that they can dialogue with and mutually illuminate each other. Often simply discovering a principle to guide inquiry can take the place of much explicit lecturing. In one of my upper-division seminars Michel de Certeau's concept of place in everyday life enabled students to bring together chapters on landscape gardening, anti-slave trade propaganda, and ladies' conduct books with Jane Austen's novels. Above all, studying other scholars' various and competing interpretations acts as a check on single-mindedness. No one scholar's views can prove definitive for me; rather, I try to reach the point where I undo the absoluteness of self-confidence, so that I will genuinely listen to the text.

This condition of mind also enables me to listen to my students. One of my students may have a better answer to the genuine questions; or all of us together may arrive at a more satisfying understanding than I was able to reach alone. Through their attention to textual evidence, reasoning, personal experience, and classroom give-and-take, they may arrive at interpretations that I would have missed. When, therefore, we study texts, we do it together, sharing observations, developing arguments for one view or another, all of us (including myself) making concessions to the better view. The condition of mind I'm describing is a spiritual as well as an intellectual condition; I find it's quite close to what Martin Buber describes as the "I-Thou" relationship. Instead of treating my students as objects, say containers to be filled with information about other objects, the texts we read,

I want to know what and how they think, become privy to their infinite variety. As Toni Morrison says, I see each one as potentially “a friend to my mind.” More than one of my students has given me the precious compliment: “We feel she really listens to us.” If this is true, it is because I know they have something to tell me.

So wonderful is this collective search for truth that I want my students to know how to conduct it as well. That is why I define listening as a component in participation. I model it in a number of ways, but I also guide my students through explicit advice: To listen to the text to discover the problems it poses for their life; to search the text with a problem in mind so they can discover the form and value of its answers; to think about the issues texts raise for understanding other cultures and personalities and the otherness of themselves. To listen and respond directly to what a fellow student says, making sure they understand his or her meaning, asking for evidence and reasons. To keep a discussion diary, so they can reconstruct the trajectory of a discussion, and so they can retain continuity from one discussion to the next. Finally, not to be anxious about reaching a definitive solution, because given where we are in the trajectory of our lives we may have to admit the viability of competing answers. These are all listening behaviors I encourage in my students: in these ways we practice respect for each other and for truth. What else can finite beings do? For, as Paul says, “now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known” (I. Cor. 13:12).

For me, the listening attitude informs every phase of the teaching experience. I place a great deal of weight on my students’ writing, and I spend much time responding to it. The writing process is, in a way, a continuation of the classroom dialogue. I hold pre-essay conferences on their topic and intended argument; I want to make sure they write something meaningful to their intellectual and spiritual growth and to show them how to tap what they honestly want to say. While I evaluate the essays according to explicit criteria for good writing, I always comment extensively on the intellectual, spiritual, and even entertainment value I have found in the essay. I also ask my students to post-essay conferences and frequently invite them to revise the essay to make it more what they intended. If in class discussion I perceive that a student is struggling with a text—not just having trouble expressing his or her understanding of it, but finding that it undermines a favored value—then I invite the student to “chat” with me about “life.” I always make time, even if it is outside my regular office hours and stay as late as necessary to see everyone (sometimes a student will bring me a slice of pizza so we can keep going).

Although I have said very little directly about my scholarship and professional service, I have been pleased to discover many bridges between these activities and teaching. In my special field—British literature and culture from 1660 to 1830—scholars have been discovering the increasing importance of sociability and collaboration in political, commercial, and literary work. My early research on Coleridge and Southey’s utopian project and my more recent work on William Godwin’s concept of conversation have contributed to this collective effort. Moreover, I have engaged in several collaborative projects myself: with my colleague Robert Maniquis (UCLA) I recently organized a conference on Godwin and co-edited the resulting volume of essays; with colleagues at

the University of Oxford I am co-editing the diary of Godwin; and for ten years I have edited, with a changing committee of editors, the journal Pacific Coast Philology. All these experiences have shown me the difficulties and delights of collaborative endeavors and made me think about the strategies and deeper meanings of co-operation. These I have extended to my students through the several senior thesis classes I have led, through collaborative research with students in the SURP program, and through involving students as assistants in my research projects. In this, and in many other ways, teaching has been continuous with my life.

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*Cathy Thomas-Grant*  
*Associate Professor of Theatre*  
*Seaver College*

*I want you to know that your life in the theatre can be full, can be rich, can be drunken with beauty and power. And that elation can be your daily life, your daily bread. I want you to get a sense of responsibility toward the theatre. I want you to realize that what you are, shows through what you do in the theatre. I want you to move out of the shallows into the deep current. I want you to acknowledge the fundamental mystery of the theatre. I want you to learn that observation is not a substitute for insight, that ingenuity is not a substitute for imagination, that cleverness is not a substitute for culture. I want you to realize that we are beginning to see that America and Americans are not in the least like what we thought they were. And I want you to create a new theatre out of this new awareness of ourselves and of our country.*

**Robert Edmund Jones**  
**Harvard, Lecture #1, 1952**

Theatre has been my vocation for as long as I can remember. I was so determined to work in SOME part of the theatre for the rest of my life that I was willing to work in ANY area of theatre to be a part of it. My high school and undergraduate training included the areas of sound, props, lights, costumes, acting, stage management, directing and scenic construction. Graduate work gave me the opportunity to focus my energies on the craft of acting. It was during my graduate work that I had the privilege of working with an older company of actors. Sydney Walker, Annie Lawder, Ruth Kobart, Bill Patterson, Peter Donat, Randall Duk Kim, Edward Hastings, Larry Hecht and Sabin Epstein were artists who had worked in the theatre for the majority of their lives. They shared with me their passion, their philosophy of performance and most importantly treated me with great respect and collaborated with me as if I was one of them. They embraced my shortcomings, mentored me through challenging roles and tasks, always with understanding and positive reinforcement. I learned the value of the word “yes.” I learned that no matter what obstacles were before us, together we could accomplish

anything. So it is this philosophy, this attitude, the ensemble effort that colors exactly how I work as a mentor, professor, director and fellow artist with my students.

My classroom is more than just a room that I meet in twice a week for an hour and fifty minutes; my classroom is the rehearsal studio, the hallway, the scene shop, the loading dock, my office and my home. The classrooms that are open to the public on a regular basis are the Lindhurst and Smothers theatres, where in the moment of performance my students, both acting and technical, experience the communion between audience and artist. I work to infuse my students with confidence. I demand much of them, but it is no more or no less than what I demand of myself. In all my efforts I work to create a safe and free atmosphere where my students can fail, fail miserably. Fear of failure is the artists' biggest enemy and I work diligently to make failure a welcome thing. In creating theatre it is important to make choices. Some choices are better than others. An artist who is afraid to make choices will be lost within the work at hand, on the path to future employment and even living life outside of the work. I MUST NOT hinder choices made in the creation of a theatre piece and always keep fast to the motto "keep digging." I closely collaborate with the young artist on what choice is best based on their own thoughts, personal strengths and weaknesses.

There is technique to teach, research to be done, and (what I call) a personal "archeology" that MUST take place. It takes a lifetime to fuse technique, research and personal archeology into the moment of performance. Whether it is a two minute monologue, a five minute scene, a full production, from the smallest role to the largest role a full exploration in all of these areas must take place. My aim is to instill a love of life long learning. I am continually pushing the young artist to ask the right questions and then search for the answers to these questions. I inspire and open their imaginations through music, sound, photographs, works of art, biographies, newspaper and magazine articles, and of course the text, the words that the playwright has written. I work to infuse them with a hunger to question and research every aspect of creating a character or a design.

After all is said and done I believe that the single most important thing that I try to do is to "walk the talk." I try to exhibit exemplary behavior as an artist. I am always prepared for class or rehearsal. I am on time and most importantly do not pretend to have answers to all of the questions that must be asked. I treat others the way I want to be treated. I am respectful of their strengths and embrace their shortcomings. I am honest, forthright and DO NOT humiliate. I am a collaborator and regardless of the age or experience of my students it is the collaboration between us which propels us through sixteen hour days, sometimes seven days a week. I attend load ins and strikes, sweep the shop, pick up screws, put away tools, and like MY mentors try to instill in my students that together we can create amazing, sometimes life changing experiences for each other and our community. My students have chosen one of the most challenging careers there is and it is always my hope that when they leave Pepperdine that they have not only developed skill but a spirit of wonder and the ability to walk fearlessly down the road of rejection.

Within the spirit of encouragement, I demand great commitment and discipline from my students. It is my belief that if I demand it of them now, they will demand this of themselves when they graduate. To say that a career as an actor is competitive is an understatement. My students must be armed with a routine of caring for their bodies as an instrument, their minds must be focused, and their spirit confident and strong. This is a career that requires great vulnerability on the part of the actor and each audition/project is a window to the soul. It is important to walk away from every audition/project saying, "I was prepared and did my very best." Once the actor figures out what preparation IS, then they can walk away from each audition/project knowing that there are circumstances beyond their control. They must know themselves, accept themselves, and embrace the qualities that make them unique. Crooked teeth, perfect teeth, dark complexion, light complexion, height, weight, and a myriad of other things. They must reason through what they are able and/or willing to change about themselves in order to work.

Every year I set up a series of master classes where industry professionals come and work with my students on audition material, how to present themselves, what works and doesn't work in the real world. The students begin to see that these people who supposedly have the "power" are just ordinary people who want every single one of them to be good, to succeed. They also find out that answers to their questions about the business are as varied as the people who give the answers. There is no single formula for meeting success EXCEPT being prepared, passionate, positive, pleasant, punctual, and to cultivate the drive to keep pushing through the obstacles. These classes are paramount in squelching the "fear" inherent in any graduating senior.

My relationships with my students go years beyond graduation. It is humbling for me to realize how important my encouragement is to alumni and also how fondly they think of the past. All those tough times, late hours, long days and still they keep in touch with me and are also willing to help and encourage me. I am truly blessed to still be a part of the theatre at my age, to be able to continue my vocation, my calling and to use the gifts that God has given me. I have worked with so many wonderful artists who have gone on to work in many different cities, in many different careers, who have overcome personal struggles and found their way to employment, families, and lives of purpose. I do not regret for one moment the energy, passion, sleep deprivation, laughter and tears that I have shared with my students.

The Theatre Department produces a yearly banquet where the students pick a theme, people dress in costume and we eat together and "roast" the season. I always read *Oh, The Places You'll Go!* by Dr. Seuss to my graduating Seniors. In this book he says:

On and on you will hike.  
And I know you'll hike far And face up to your problems  
Whatever they are.  
You'll get mixed up, of course,  
As you already know.  
You'll get mixed up  
With many strange birds as you go.



So be sure when you step.  
Step with care and great tact  
And remember that Life's A Great Balancing Act.  
And will you succeed? Yes! You will, indeed! (98 and  $\frac{3}{4}$  percent guaranteed.)  
KID, YOU'LL MOVE MOUNTAINS!

In the Kennedy Center hang the words of President John Fitzgerald Kennedy which say ***"I am certain that after the dust of centuries have passed over our cities we too will be remembered not for our victories or defeats in battle or in politics but for our contribution to the human spirit."*** It is my firm and passionate belief that theatre is paramount to the spiritual and mental health of the world we live in. Theatre is essential to the well being of a society just as it is essential to the young artists who choose to study it, the communities that experience it and those of us who teach it. It is a noble calling and a precious gift from God.