

**Statements of Teaching Philosophy
by 2012 Recipients**



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It is an honor to again be nominated for a teaching distinction. It is especially an honor at a school such as ours where teaching excellence is the norm. As part of the selection process, it is customary to offer some thoughts about my teaching philosophy.

First, I believe that every one of my students should “get it,” that is, that all of my students should understand and come to grips with the subject at hand. If the folks running the admission process believe that every admitted student has the potential to succeed in this demanding environment then it falls to us, the teachers, to help all of our students realize their potential and succeed. I strive to reach the entire class, not just the stars, but everyone. And when I sense some students drifting behind I will slow the class trying to catch them up. I frequently invite struggling students to my office for further help. When one of my students fails, I take it as my personal responsibility and my failure.

My second thought is a follow-up to the first. A teacher’s job does not begin or end in the classroom. I take this business of an “open door policy” seriously. We are more than classroom teachers – we are counselors and friends as well. In my experience so much of our calling takes place outside the classroom. Whether it is clearing up a murky point from class, discussing career decisions, or listening and counseling on personal issues, our job continues well beyond the classroom. Some of my best “teaching” takes place outside the classroom.

Third, I try to maintain some flexibility in how I teach. Adapting to each generation of students and incorporating new technology is essential to maintaining effectiveness in the classroom. Two years ago I wrote and produced two trial videos with my students playing the various roles. The goal of these videos was to reinforce my classroom lecture on the various component parts of trial by actually showing a finished product. The results have been gratifying and have resulted in substantially enhanced classroom efforts.

And finally, I see my position as a challenger and motivator. Many of the classes I teach are related to trial advocacy, from the basic class on to the intermediate and advanced advocacy classes. It is the basic class I find most demanding. The majority of students in the basic class bring with them the insecurities many people experience in public speaking. So the task is not only to teach trial advocacy but to help overcome the anxiety of public speaking. There is a delicate balance to be struck – pushing the students through the demanding critiquing process necessary to learning the basics of trial, yet sensitive to their insecurities. I strive to strike that balance, to be an encourager yet remain intellectually honest.

Michael Gose
Professor of Humanities
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Former Seaver College Dean David Baird once observed about me that I see teaching as a sacred undertaking. I do. I wrote the following “*Creed of the Teacher*” for my own students who are considering teaching careers. Naturally enough the creed begins with a part of the Pepperdine University affirmation that centers my philosophy of teaching.

I affirm that,
“the student, as a person of
infinite integrity, is the heart of the
educational process.”

Because of this I will appreciate the diversity among my students seeing them as students-teachers, and I will diversify my curriculum to include them all in a meaningful way.

I affirm that education comes about through experience, “hence the central problem of an education based upon experience is to select the kind of present experiences that live fruitfully and creatively in subsequent experiences.” (John Dewey, *Experience and Education*)

I affirm both the present and future of my students signifying my intent to avoid the Theodore Roethke dictum that “the cardinal sin of an educator is to be boring,” while insisting that the work I do with my students is significant. I will work diligently to help each student assume an increasing level of personal and social responsibility.

I affirm my own veneration for the role of Teacher.

About to start my forty-fifth year as an educator, I remain challenged and humbled by the role of teacher. For whatever success I may have had in the classroom, I am extremely conscious of my debt to all of my own teachers. I am especially appreciative of those extraordinary teachers whom I wrote about in my book, *The Challenge of Greatness: The Legacy of Great Teachers*. Further, I suspect that the role our students have in forming us as teachers has long been under appreciated. For whatever modest contributions I may have made to my students’ education, such effects pale in comparison the gift and blessing that they have been to me.

Effective teaching requires meaningful content, but the extent of student learning depends very much upon the relationship of the teacher and students. Nel Noddings describes this relationship in terms of “receptivity” and “reciprocity”. Watch words of my teaching include “appreciate differences; diversify instruction” and “different, not deficit”. President Howard White, for whom this teaching award is given, was a major influence on my coming to Pepperdine. I am confident in stating that one of his expectations was that

teachers need to be open, receptive, to each and every student to invite their full reciprocation in the teaching-learning experience.

Finally, I especially appreciate the way Rabbi Zev Schostak captures what it means to be a teacher:

“For I am charged with the most
sacred mission—to transmit
all that our forebears lived
for, live for, and died for to
the next generation

I span the generations—
making the wisdom of the past
live now so that the future will
have meaning

I make wisdom live for I am
no mere bearer of knowledge

I do not simply teach the mind
I read the heart and – when I
reach the heart
I touch the soul”

As Martin Buber says, “where there is no sharing, there is no meaning.” The truest meaning of teaching is found in some measure, whether we are atheists, agnostics, or believers, in those blessed moments when we with our variety of understandings stand outside ourselves, transcend ourselves, are both teacher and student, and realize our connection with and commitment to the oneness of ourselves and the universe.

David Holmes
Professor of English
Seaver College

I have never considered myself a great teacher. Even after teaching on the secondary and university levels for over twenty five years, attending countless workshops, and serving as a faculty mentor, I feel as though almost every one of my colleagues has a better handle on the craft of teaching. According to students that have loved or hated my courses, passion is the quality I possess in abundance. I am a true believer.

Why I Teach

I believe that students can be taught to think outside their comfort zones. I believe that from canonical, marginal, and popular culture texts they can learn timeless academic, vocational, and spiritual lessons. I believe in teaching as the purest expression of community building. I don't mean the insular academic community that secular institutions value almost exclusively. Rather, I am referring to what Martin Luther King, Jr. calls the "beloved community." As a community of teachers and learners, we read, write, and think rigorously, but hardly for the sake of these activities alone. Rather, as global citizens and servants of God, we are called to question all ideas, even and especially those we hold dear.

How I Teach

The essence of a learning community, not unlike any other closely knit group, necessitates candid and critical yet affirming exchanges. I remind my students that spot on learning typically shakes you to the cognitive and affective core. I employ many methods of teaching, including PowerPoint presentations, Sakai, YouTube, and role-play. However, I place the lion's share of my pedagogical faith in dialogue. I believe that teachers and students can talk their way through anything, including the differences that divide them.

This type of dialogue approaches what some thinkers have labeled as "dialectic." "Dialectic" has been defined in a variety of ways, from Socrates to Peter Ramus and from Hegel to Kenneth Burke, to cite a few examples. One faint thread that surfaces from many of these definitions is the potentially nebulous distinction between teacher and learner. If absolute truth, depending on which definition of dialectic one prefers, ranges from being obtainable through the most deliberative analytical discussions to hardly accessible through any medium, then who retains indefinitely the status of teacher?

Hence, I characterize my overall approach to teaching as curiously organic and dialectical. I confess that my approach derives partly from my experience with the African American call-and-response ritual. This rhetorical ritual is primarily concerned with the communicative give and take among preacher, sermon, and audience. Rooted in West African notions of communal consciousness, politics, and aesthetics, call-and-response allows a preacher and her congregation to change roles as the subject and setting demand. The preacher's prepared remarks are routinely modified on the spot by the audience's feedback. In this sense, the church transforms into neither a preacher-centered nor congregation-centered space but a moment-centered one. Similar to the seamless blend of structure and spontaneity one might find in a black church, I try to allot time for the "spirit" of impromptu inquiry to move within my outcomes driven classrooms. I find this to be at once the most daunting and rewarding tasks of teaching. But I remain a true believer.

Faith, Teaching and Research

Like my colleagues, I also seek out meaningful connections among my major areas of research, teaching, and service. This could strike one as ironic, since many relationships among my research interests alone (English composition, religious rhetoric, and cultural studies) might seem contrived at first glance. In one course, my students may experience

an academic rollercoaster ride between aesthetics and linguistics, the qualitative and quantitative, or prophetic hope and political skepticism. Through our discussions, I often showcase my own intellectual vulnerability. I try to model my acceptance of cognitive disequilibrium as an essential step towards learning about the subject, yourself, and others. In other words, I want my students to realize that living a life of “service, purpose and leadership” is an evolving undertaking. Most of my published ideas and conference presentations have grown out of my teaching and vice versa. At age 50, I still don’t have it all figured out, and I wouldn’t have it any other way. On one level or another, all of us are wrestling our way from being Jacob to becoming Israel.

Many of my students wonder how I could be so comfortable with uncertainty. I try to explain that this has to do with my faith. I am not referring to faith *and* learning but faith *in* learning. Regardless as to one’s theological positioning or philosophical presuppositions, I believe that there is something spiritual about the learning process, something transcendent, something at least partly elusive but quite real. In the end, this is why we can expect the best from ourselves and students on the one hand and extend mercy to them on the other. I learned this lesson from one of the kindest yet demanding professors at Pepperdine: Dr. Connie Fulmer. Several years ago, when I was trying to figure out what to do with a difficult student, Connie remarked, “Err on the side of mercy.”

My students have extended mercy to me in return. They have endured my organic pedagogical approach and what may appear to be disagreeable subject matter. Literary and language theories often interrogate one’s traditional assumptions. Similarly, rhetorical studies can encompass extensive cultural critiques. However, over the years, my students have commented on the grace with which I discuss these formidable notions. I think my students have been gracious when making such an assessment.

One to One

Given my background in public speaking and preaching, it may surprise some that I enjoy working with students one on one far more than I do classroom presentations. I especially relish the opportunities to help students generate ideas for their writing assignments. Arriving at a cogent claim or thesis statement represents an overwhelming undertaking for most students. Over the years I have become so carried away with talking to each student about writing that I have frequently run out of time. Many students have told me that they came either to like writing or loathe it a little less because of the excitement I exuded during these sessions.

These one to one sessions on student writing have morphed into moments of mentoring and counseling. Since beginning my career at Pepperdine in 1993, I have written countless letters of recommendation, sponsored clubs, spoken at special events on campus, and provided moral support for students participating in other extracurricular activities. My stint as visiting faculty in London during the spring of 2006 enriched my understanding of mentorship. I have always tried to be available to encourage my students to develop as well-balanced persons. Now I am driven to do so. Perhaps this is largely due to me having two sons in college. Or possibly the drive comes from me finding my groove within my

vocation as a teacher. Did I say “groove”? I must be getting old. When I was in my thirties, Rick Marrs told me that one day the students would, for better or worse, relate to me as a father. I laughed that prospect off. I’m not laughing now.

No, I am not a great teacher. But I am a great learner with greater models. Besides, I’d rather be known as a growing teacher than a great one. With the Pepperdine community of colleagues and students, this believer can talk his way to and through any challenge.

Dennis Lowe
Professor of Psychology
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

At the Graduate School in Education and Psychology (GSEP), I primarily teach in the full-time masters program in clinical psychology that has an emphasis in marriage and family therapy. Our students begin working as providers of mental health services in mental health agencies during their second semester.

Real-World Relevance

I mention this context because it influences the goals and objectives that I have as a professor. There is some need for urgency and real-world relevance to the course material. Within a few months of beginning our program, students will be engaged in assisting individuals and families with a wide range of issues including substance abuse, depression, schizophrenia, autism, eating disorders, ADHD, domestic violence and other forms of family discord. Therefore, the classes I teach in the first semester of the program are designed to help prepare students for these important roles as mental health professionals.

Various components of education and training are necessary to become a competent mental health professional. Included among these components are knowledge, clinical and interpersonal skills, understanding of and compassion for those with mental health needs, integrity, ethical decision making, personal growth, and ongoing professional development.

A first-semester course that I teach is titled Diagnosis and Treatment of Mental Health Disorders. I will use this course as an example of how I attempt to address some of the training components mentioned above. Mental health professionals are often required to provide a mental health diagnosis for those they serve. The mental health agencies in which our students work expect them to understand and utilize standard diagnostic procedures. Therefore, one aspect of this course is to learn to employ the diagnostic manual used by practitioners and researchers. This is a significant undertaking because this manual includes nearly 300 mental health conditions.

Engagement

I attempt to use a number of strategies to help engage students in the learning process. As a starting point, I have a high level of interest in the subject matter and I think that this interest and enthusiasm comes across to the students. I learned the most from teachers who conveyed a personal interest in the subject matter and am fortunate to teach courses in my interest areas. Second, I want to increase the odds that students will be prepared for class and ready to engage in the material. I provide reading questions in advance and inform the students that I expect that the readings will be completed before class. This expectation allows me to invite their participation in class discussions related to the readings. I also inform students that we will utilize their pre-class preparation during in-class exercises. So, I will start a class on the topic of Mood Disorders with questions like “Jessica, what is your understanding of Major Depressive Disorder (MDD)?”; “Nino, what are some of the symptoms required for this diagnosis?,” “Illiana, what is your impression of the ways in which MDD is similar to and different from Dysthymic Disorder?” I try to involve as many students in class as possible during these discussions. If we only rely on those who raise their hands, class discussions cater to students who are more expressive and comfortable with participating. Instead, I often call on students who are less inclined to volunteer in order to achieve a wider range of involvement. Providing students with questions in advance helps the more reflective students to be better prepared to contribute.

Following these introductory discussions, I share information about the disorders based on my professional experience and study. I often show clips of training videos that have interviews with individuals who have personally experienced these disorders. We discuss what students noticed about these individuals and the relevance of the symptoms observed for diagnostic decision making. I then distribute brief case vignettes of individuals with various mental health symptoms. Students work in small groups to review these cases to determine the most likely diagnosis while also engaging in differential diagnosis (i.e., determining why a case is more like one diagnosis and less like others). This process requires critical and creative thinking because they have to apply what they learned from the readings along with the material covered during class. It is exciting to see the energy and effort that students bring to these types of learning experiences.

Modeling and Practice

To conclude this class, we examine standardized and evidence-based treatments for the disorders on which we focused that day. We learn about implementing these interventions through such means as a video that shows an example of the intervention, a pre-arranged treatment demonstration by student groups, a role play of a therapy session that I conduct, or in-class practice sessions. As is the case for practitioners in other fields (e.g., medicine, dentistry), mental health practitioners need to remain current in their knowledge and constantly update their awareness of the most effective treatment strategies available for the range of mental health conditions they face. I attempt to utilize up-to-date readings and articles to help students learn the value of being informed consumers of research related to the practice of psychotherapy.

Compassion

The diagnostic process can be done in a way that creates distance between the provider and the person seeking services. Therapists are vulnerable to seeing a person as a case or solely as his or her diagnosis (e.g., the anorexic, schizophrenic, autistic). To counter this, I encourage students to develop compassion and understanding of those with mental health conditions. I invite members of the community who have first-hand experiences with a mental health condition to my classes. For example, guest speakers in my class have included individuals who cope with bipolar disorder, schizoaffective disorder, depression, and substance abuse. I have had parents whose children have symptoms of autism or bipolar disorder as well as adult children whose parents have schizophrenia. They share not only their stories of these experiences, but also what they think mental health professionals need to know about individuals and families who face these conditions. This is a very important part of our students' training. They are able to learn from these individuals (rather than trying to "treat" them) and develop not only a greater understanding of mental health symptoms, but develop a greater sense of compassion for the challenges they encounter. Research indicates that efforts like these help to increase empathy and reduce the social stigma associated with mental health conditions.

Learning in the Context of Relationship

So far I have not emphasized a major element of my approach to teaching which is my relationship with students. I realize that learning takes place within the context of our relationship. Today's students are interested not only in what I know, but in who I am. When appropriate, I do share some of my values, interests, and perspectives. When done in a constructive way, it encourages them to do the same. Also, I share mistakes I have made related to class topics. I find that students tend to learn more from my mistakes than successes. I try to convey that "mistakes provide wonderful opportunities to learn" and that it is important to "seek improvement rather than perfection."

Some of the roles I adopt as an instructor include an informed educator, facilitator of learning, mentor, coach, encourager, guidance counselor, and someone who challenges them in a caring and concerned manner. I would like to see all of our students do the best they possibly can in our program. I attempt to provide as many resources as possible to help in that quest. I make myself available to students throughout the week and often invite students into my office. Sometimes we discuss a question they raised in class or a paper they submitted. Other times I do so to encourage students with noticeable promise when I think they can further grow and develop in particular ways. Just as frequently, I initiate contact with students about whom I have concerns to discuss their situation and brainstorm strategies to help them improve. I hope that students experience my personal interest in them and my efforts to encourage their professional development.

Overall Goals

I have described my approach, primarily around one specific course, in order to provide some specific examples of the major goals and objectives that I bring to all of my courses. Some of these goals include:

- Stay informed, engaged, and up-to-date in my teaching areas.

- Prepare for each class, no matter how often I have taught it, and have an organized plan for each day. At the same time, I attempt to be flexible by revising my plans or re-ordering the material to best facilitate the pace needed on a particular day. I like to have a Plan A and Plan B.
- Convey my own enthusiasm for and interest in the course material.
- Utilize various methods to cover course content, taking into account different learning styles.
- Engage the students in the class and its topics. Make the class informative, interesting, and relevant to their development as a mental health professional. I also enjoy humor and stories, so I use them to make the learning an interesting and engaging process.
- Provide challenging assignments to stretch the students along with guidelines about what is expected of them. Inform students of resources and recommend opportunities available outside of the classroom that will help maximize their performance.
- Encourage greater compassion and understanding of those who experience mental health issues and seek services.
- Promote personal and interpersonal growth and development. Students are advised to increase their coping and interpersonal skills in preparation for a demanding profession.
- Convey a genuine interest in the students regarding their learning and performance in the class as well as their goals, interests, and plans for the future.
- Make myself readily available to the students via phone, email and office visits.

I attended Pepperdine as a student, completing both a B.A. and M.A. in psychology. While pursuing my doctorate, it was my dream to return to Pepperdine as a faculty member. Because of my personal Christian commitment and interest in academia, I knew that this setting would be a good fit. In my classes, where appropriate, I attempt to bring faith-based principles to the table for discussion. I strive to express my Christian faith in my work at Pepperdine, including the way I conduct myself in my relationships with students. I admit to being a work in progress. I hope that, in some small way, I contribute to the lives of current and former students so that they will have a fulfilling Pepperdine experience similar to the one I have enjoyed.

While I have been teaching at the Graduate School of Education and Psychology for almost 30 years, I continue to grow and develop as a teacher. This ongoing process is invigorating and challenging. I look forward to the second half of my career at Pepperdine.

Scott Miller
Assistant Professor of Finance
Seaver College

It is my belief that every student has an enormous, God-given capacity to learn. I also believe, as a teacher, it is my responsibility to motivate and assist each student in a manner that allows them to realize their full potential. Teaching is a tremendously rewarding vocation for me. I find great satisfaction in knowing that I have had a direct impact on the academic and personal growth of my students. It is my goal to prepare each student to attain success in their career and fulfillment in their future life. I try to accomplish this with personal attention that emphasizes not only the practical application of financial principles, but also how these principles can be so greatly enhanced by ethical action and Christian values.

Teaching Inside the Classroom

By its nature, finance can be a difficult subject for many students. It is a very dynamic field that requires a high level of quantitative ability and theoretical comprehension. One of my primary objectives in teaching is to generate student interest by explaining the importance of a course as it relates to achieving their future goals. While many of my students will not ultimately pursue a career in finance, I make sure they understand the importance of being well informed about financial issues. The knowledge can be very powerful in both their professional and personal lives. Once this concept is established, the students are more likely to take a dedicated and eager approach to learning, which helps stimulate creative thought and classroom discussion. I believe it is essential that each class is well planned and properly structured to promote learning and encourage productive interaction. I generally give the students an intense workload early in the semester to ensure they have a solid foundation and understanding of the basic concepts covered in the first few classes. As the end of the semester approaches, I reinforce these concepts and challenge the students to explore the ideas and methods more broadly, seeking answers to questions that are firmly grounded in practical reality. Throughout the semester, I solicit anonymous feedback from the students about the course and the subject being covered. In addition to providing general comments about the class, students are offered the opportunity to anonymously ask questions about specific topics they do not fully understand. Although my classes are very interactive by nature, this process allows me to address questions from students that are reluctant to ask questions during class, office hours or even through an e-mail. I promptly deal with these questions and often use current, real world examples to supplement my explanation and enhance the students' level of comprehension and interest.

My goal as a professor is to motivate and inspire students to do their best work. To accomplish this, I believe it is necessary to set high standards in my classes and then do everything in my power to help the students reach those expectations. My classes have a reputation for being difficult and many students are not used to struggling with the complexity of the material. In response to their apprehension, I believe it is crucial for me to provide constant support, assistance and encouragement. Moreover, it is just as important that I convey the reason for pushing them so hard. I make a concerted effort to ensure my students understand that we are not working against each other, but instead working together toward

the same goal. That goal is to ultimately provide them with a career they can call a vocation, rather than just an ordinary job that will make ends meet. As my office hours are not always convenient for every student, I offer to work around their schedules, coming in on weekends, late at night, or whatever is most convenient for them. This eliminates excuses students may have and holds them personally responsible for their performance in the class. It helps them understand that their success in the class is ultimately their choice, and not an inevitable result of their perceived skill set. This approach helps develop a strong work ethic in all students, especially those that have a genuine desire to be successful. In addition, it demonstrates the commitment I have to the success of every student. I make it clear from the beginning that I have unshakeable confidence in each individual student's ability to succeed and therefore I will not accept anything less than their strongest effort. As they observe my confidence in their ability to succeed and my willingness to work hard to provide them with support, their own self-confidence grows as they gain a genuine appreciation of being challenged. This gratitude has been confirmed by strong, positive comments on my teaching evaluation forms and creates a valuable culture of hard work and discipline that carries over into many other aspects of their lives. Students begin to recognize the magnitude of their full potential, inspire each other and realize that there is a true purpose for their hard work. They understand the power of the knowledge they are gaining and the endless possibilities that are being created by their efforts. Students are frequently reminded about the current state of our economy and the bleak prospects that can await them after graduation. While this reality needs to be considered, I believe providing students a foundation of encouragement, reassurance and confidence in their own abilities is precisely what students need when entering a job market that has become increasingly competitive over the past several years.

My objective is to make the content of my classes not only academically rigorous, but also relevant to realistic issues in the financial industry. It is important that students develop the capability to address real world business problems they will face in their careers. I have been able to offer undergraduate students a firsthand account of working in the financial sector and relating this experience to topics covered in class. In addition, I keep in close contact with many of my former students who seek advice, discuss their future plans and are eager to share their experiences. These former students often remark that they feel well prepared to not only demonstrate a sound mastery of the material associated with their job, but that they also possess the ability to competently apply these concepts in a real world environment. They are truly grateful for how this knowledge has helped ease their transition into their first job. My experience has been that conducting an active mentoring process with students can help build an alumni network that eventually develops into strong, valuable connections within the local business community.

Teaching Outside the Classroom

In my view, a truly effective teacher is one who leads by example both inside and outside of a classroom setting. When I began working in finance, I decided to pursue a PhD because I realized very quickly that it was a research intensive field. My research activity as a scholar has kept me on the cutting edge of new developments in the field and it has contributed greatly to my success as a teacher. In addition to my own scholarly activity, I have been heavily involved with several student research projects, one of which has already been

published. I have observed how the creation of new knowledge can spark intellectual curiosity among the students and nurtures an environment for deep classroom discussion.

In addition to research activity that directly supports my teaching efforts, I have created and developed the first microfinance initiative for students at Seaver College. Microfinance is a concept that provides small loans that charge little to no interest to entrepreneurs in developing countries. The program empowers these entrepreneurs by providing them with a sustainable method to lift themselves out of poverty rather than remaining dependent on the help of others. Bi-weekly meetings are conducted to structure and provide microloans to entrepreneurs in developing countries all over the world. In the club's first two years, we have loaned over \$10,000 to entrepreneurs in 26 different countries and have maintained a zero default rate. More recently, we have begun an effort to reach out to the local community as well. We have partnered with the Al Wooten Jr. Heritage Center, a community center in south central Los Angeles, to provide microloans to entrepreneurs in the Los Angeles community. The model created for this particular project will not only provide entrepreneurs with the startup capital from the microloan, but also provide them with business related consultation, support and mentoring from Seaver College students. There are joint benefits realized from this program as it provides students with uniquely relevant and valuable business experience, while also giving an economic opportunity to individuals in south central Los Angeles. Although this work is outside the traditional classroom setting, I strongly believe it is directly linked to the learning process. Participating students are given the unique opportunity to pursue a Christian vocation in finance while gaining real world, hands on experience.

Preparing Students for a Vocation

Perhaps most importantly, I feel very fortunate to teach in a Christian environment that has high ethical and moral expectations of its faculty, students and staff. As a professor, I make it a priority to ensure my students understand that, while we are not perfect, each individual has worth and something valuable to contribute to society. A college education is simply a process for them to discover their special talent or contribution that will ultimately result in a distinguished career they can call a vocation. When teaching a subject like finance, it is inevitable that some students will struggle comprehending the material. To avoid discouragement, I often remind students that they each possess different strengths. While they may struggle in a particular area where some of their peers seem to easily succeed, they must also remember that they themselves excel in other areas where many of these same peers struggle. This discussion helps relieve anxiety for many graduating seniors and reassures them of the importance of finding their true calling. To further cultivate this culture of pursuing a vocation, I have sponsored two convocation speakers and participated in the spiritual mentoring program as a part of the convocation series.

Since many students are concerned about entering an uncertain economic environment, I think it is absolutely essential to remind them that employers are looking for candidates that display characteristics that are consistent with Christian values. Success in the business world is not only measured by what you accomplish, but more importantly how you accomplish it. Employers seek candidates that are passionate, diligent and dependable. They want individuals who will represent their organization well by consistently demonstrating the utmost integrity in all of their actions. Potential employers use the academic and professional

accomplishments the students have accumulated as a tool to measure these desired traits. While these achievements might be impressive on paper, employers will probe to ensure they accurately reflect the true identity of a job candidate. When students genuinely possess, and put into practice, these highly regarded Christian values, they will find it much easier to find a fulfilling career that is consistent with their own personal ideals. It is at this point, when we have successfully instilled this understanding, that I feel confident we have genuinely prepared our students for a life of purpose, service and leadership.

Linda Purrington
Lecturer in Education
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

Teaching as a Calling

My career path was set in motion 37 years ago when I responded to an advertisement in a local newspaper. The advertisement, posted by a local elementary school, solicited a classroom bilingual instructional aide. I applied for the position and was selected to serve in a number of classrooms, one of which was taught by a doctoral student who also served as vice principal. Serving in this role was life-changing for me. I had worked in a number of jobs to help support my way through school, but this work was truly different. This work was both vocational and avocational. I had discovered my calling-- to serve as a teacher.

Serving as a bilingual aide inspired and motivated me to pursue a lifelong career in education. I served 23 years in K-12 school districts as a classroom teacher and administrator. The last 14 years of my service have been in higher education, beginning with 2 years of adjunct service at five different universities and continuing with 12 years of full-time service at Pepperdine in the Graduate School of Education and Psychology (GSEP). At GSEP, I have taught courses and served as the director for three education programs: Masters of Art in Education and Teacher Credential Program (MAETC), Educational Leadership Academy (ELA), and the Educational Leadership, Administration, and Policy Doctoral Program (ELAP). Every day I am reminded of what a privilege it is to be able to dedicate my work and service to teaching and learning in community with others.

Guiding Philosophy Highlights

My teaching philosophy has developed over time as a result of professional training, my personal experience as a graduate student, and my current work with adult learners in the ELAP program at Pepperdine. I believe that adults are autonomous and self-directed. They desire to be free to direct themselves. Teachers of adults must actively involve adult

participants in the learning process and serve as facilitators for them. Specifically, they must get participants' perspectives about what topics to cover and let them work on projects that reflect their interests. Teachers need to allow students to assume responsibility for presentations and group leadership. They need to act as facilitators, guiding participants to their own knowledge rather than supplying them with facts. Finally, they must demonstrate how class learning experiences will help students reach their goals.

Adults have accumulated a foundation of life experiences and knowledge that may include work-related activities, family responsibilities, and previous education. They need to connect learning to this knowledge/experience base. To help learners do so, teachers should draw out participants' experience and knowledge which is relevant to the topic. They must relate theories and concepts to the participants and recognize the value of experience in learning.

Adults are goal-oriented. Upon enrolling in a course, adult learners usually know what goal(s) they want to attain. They, therefore, appreciate an educational program that is organized and has clearly defined elements. Instructors must demonstrate how a class will help adult learners attain their goals. This classification of goals and course objectives must be done early in the course.

Adults are practical and relevancy-oriented. They must see a reason for learning something. Learning has to be applicable to their work or other responsibilities to be of value to them. Therefore, instructors must identify objectives for adult participants before the course begins. This means, also, that theories and concepts must be related to a setting familiar to participants. This need can be fulfilled by letting participants choose projects that reflect their own interests and those they perceive to be most useful to them in their work.

As do all learners, adults need to be shown respect. Instructors must acknowledge the wealth of experiences that adult participants bring to the classroom. Adult learners need to be treated as equals in experience and knowledge and allowed to voice their opinions freely in class.

Philosophy in Action

ELAP students begin their program journey with an orientation and three units of course work titled Leadership and Technology Training Education (LATTE). The LATTE experience is one of breaking bread together, learning about one another's backgrounds and identities. It is a time during which we explore personal beliefs, values, and assumptions. We explore key ideas from a number of texts, read in advance, and students negotiate meaning and develop essential understandings. Students experience new technology and learn how to navigate online environments and technology tools and applications. Students are engaged in discussion, role-playing, presentation, and performance. They learn and practice collaboration norms and strategies for leading and engaging in productive conversation, deliberation, dialogue, and discussion. We take walks together and explore the campus. The new students enjoy purchasing Pepperdine

regalia to take home. We enjoy late night informal conversations and have fun sharing our living in residence experiences. We conclude LATTE with a diamond reflection and a ceremony in the Heroes Garden. This summer in advance of LATTE, we invited ELAP graduates to share words of wisdom with the new students in Cohort 10. We titled this activity message in a bottle and shared some of the messages in our closing circle. We shared tears, joy, and excitement as we left the Malibu Campus and headed for home. I will continue to team-teach and work with these same students fall term in their continuing personal leadership, communication/information technology, and scholarly writing courses. In the fall, we will continue to explore strengths-based leadership constructs and practices. Students will re-visit the leadership practices we explored in LATTE that create frameworks for new possibilities and promote extraordinary and transformative outcomes. Students will engage in a Legacy Statement project that entails participation in a number of interesting exercises and steps that lead to a summary of what they believe, value, assume to be true and to what they are willing to commit to enact and support as an educational leader. Students pressure-test, revise, and share their final statements. They also describe how they intend to live into their desired legacy in the present and in the future. The Legacy Statement Project draws on students' personal and professional experiences. It taps into students' beliefs, values, and assumptions and invites them to challenge these entities as a regular leadership and learning practice. Each legacy statement is unique. We re-visit student statements throughout the ELAP program, a check-up, to see how they are living their desired legacies and accomplishing related goals.

In the fall I teach or team-teach Participatory Action Research (PAR). PAR is a series of five courses that span five academic terms. Through PAR work, students lead change initiatives related to the "work that matters most" in their respective organizations and that is within their spheres of influence. Students select their areas of PAR focus, based on data. They design and engage in iterative cycles of research in collaboration with others. Each cycle entails planning, acting, assessing, and reflecting and the outcomes and learning related to each cycle inform the subsequent cycles. The intent of the PAR work is for students to make a meaningful difference in their organizations, to translate the learning from all of their ELAP courses into practice (field experience praxis), to develop researcher knowledge and skills, to study and increase their leadership capacity, and to build the learning, leadership, and adaptive capacities of their learning communities. Students participate in Learning Circles throughout their PAR work via which they share leadership responsibilities, dialogue, provide reciprocal critical friend feedback, discuss next steps, and provide support in general. Through journaling and Learning Circle work, students engage in is described as reflexion as opposed to reflection only. Reflexion refers to reflection and taking informed action.

The particularly motivating and powerful aspects of PAR are: the inquiry nature of the work; the self-direction and self-pacing; the multi and concurrent dimensions of studying self, others, and accomplishing a shared purpose; and the multiple loop and transformative learning. Students culminate their PAR studies with a conference format presentation in which they share their PAR Final Reports and Portfolios. Students "tell their PAR story", describe outcomes, draw conclusions and make policy and practice recommendations.

Students are then encouraged to seek other conference presentation and publication opportunities to hone their scholarly writing and presentation skills and to distribute their scholarly work to a wider audience.

A Valuable Take-Away

When I received notice of my nomination and an invitation to share my teaching philosophy, the first thing that I did was to read the philosophy papers of award recipients. I was very moved by the passion, talent, and dedication that I discovered in everyone's writing. I was reminded that what connects us is our shared commitment to Pepperdine's mission and our genuine love for teaching and learning. Our different school, division, and program affiliations; our different titles and ranks; and our general "distributedness" are bridged by shared purpose. I would like to invite all of my ELAP colleagues to share their teaching philosophies in the spirit of furthering our "knowing" and understanding of one another and in support of collaboration and community building

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Although teaching is clearly a dynamic and complicated process, much less clear are the underlying factors that both make the teaching process unique and differentiate successful teaching engagements from other experiences.

Consider this simple example. If person A goes out and hits some golf balls, the golf balls do not have much say about what actually happens. When A hits a ball, it moves from one location to another, eventually coming to a stop.

On the other hand, suppose A enters a classroom occupied by two students, namely B and C. Suppose further A says exactly the same words to both B and C and throughout the session A makes certain both B and C can see everything A does. In this scenario is it possible for one student, say B, to learn something while C does not? I think everyone would agree such situations happen and probably happen more often than we would like. However would we then also say A taught B but did not teach C? If the answer is yes, then what A does in the presence of B and C does not alone suffice to ensure teaching actually takes place.

I believe difficulties arise if teaching is narrowly conceived as essentially an action performed by an individual. (The writings of David Hume and Donald Davidson have influenced my thinking on the nature of actions and causation.) For example, assume A

says something like, “I teach subject D in classroom E on Mondays from 8:00 to 9:00 am.” At a minimum I think everyone would agree that A needs to have students involved (just as A needs golf balls present in order actually to hit golf balls). But what else is needed? I believe the situation becomes clearer if we move from the subject-verb-object model and instead start with the notion that at a minimum teaching may be more like a complex relationship among a set of individuals, a collection of information, and most importantly a change that is brought about by the combination of the specific information involved and by what the individuals involved actually do. In other words, I believe the critical element is the change that takes place, since A’s physical activities alone may not amount to teaching (even if A speaks loudly, prepares slides, gives lots of assignments, etc.) unless A successfully brings about change.

What is the nature of this change and how does this change differ from what occurs in the golfing example? It may sound obvious but I think a component (though likely not the only one) is learning. If no learning occurs, then no teaching has taken place. So what should we consider to be the essential components of learning and how does teaching relate to this learning? Although I would not assume to have a full answer to these questions, four oddly connected influences have shaped my thinking on this subject.

First is what I call the “Croddy experience.” During my junior year of college, I enrolled in a philosophy elective. I was unsure what to expect in the course but I soon discovered much more than the course catalog described. I recall vividly the first class when Professor Stephen Croddy stormed into the front of the room, hurriedly took off his jacket and tie, removed his watch, emptied his pockets and bellowed to the class that merely studying and reporting on philosophical positions would not suffice in his class. Rather the expectation was for each of us to *do* philosophy.

Professor Croddy stated that we would certainly read works by intellectual giants such as Bertrand Russell and P.F. Strawson and we would also be expected to capture key points of their individual philosophies. But that would be only the beginning. The expectation would be to *do* much more -- to analyze the various positions, identify strengths and weaknesses of those positions, and most importantly, employ this information as a base from which to establish and defend our own positions.

During Professor Croddy’s course I learned something about philosophy but I learned much more about the nature of learning, especially about the element of learning by *doing*.

Second is what I like to call “the Lassie approach.” I recall the many black and white television episodes in which this graceful collie would bark excitedly, drawing the attention of her family, friends and even strangers. Upon much later reflection, it seemed to me that Lassie was issuing a call to action: Come follow me, trust me and you will find something truly important around the corner.

If there is merit to the Lassie approach, I believe it places two critical responsibilities on each instructor: first, to ensure in advance that there truly is something valuable to be attained around each academic corner, and second, to maintain a keen sense of wonder and

enthusiasm so that even initially reluctant individuals will be encouraged to invest in the journey.

Third is the swimming phenomenon. Although many valuable books have been written about swimming, I have yet to meet anyone who actually learned how to swim by reading a book. Somewhere along the way most of us got into a pool, got water up our noses and down our throats, and generally experienced a not so pleasant first attempt at swimming. But most of us kept jumping into pools, flapping our arms and legs, and somehow eventually ended up swimming (probably without ever knowing exactly how we managed to do so). When students arrive at a class with little background in the subject matter, I remind them of their initial swimming experiences. I encourage them to jump into the material and accept that the initial experience may be rather unpleasant, but to keep moving forward and before too long they may find themselves actually swimming through the subject matter, and perhaps even enjoying the experience.

And fourth is an adage that has been expressed in many forms but essentially comes down to something like this: What an individual does next is what really counts.

From my perspective, to teach is (at least in part) to effect change through specific content and prescribed activities. If an instructor is not changing students, the individual is not teaching, even if that instructor prepares handouts, delivers long lectures, etc. At a minimum, this change means effecting in the student an understanding that was not present beforehand, whereas a truly high quality teaching / learning experience occurs when the process actually results in students striving independently beyond the mere course requirements to learn what is around the corner, so to speak, despite potential for some unpleasant encounters along the way.

The real payoff from the teaching / learning experience occurs when students take newly acquired knowledge into the world and actually *do* something more than they would have done otherwise, in other words implementing changes that will enhance not only themselves but also their families, friends, and communities.

For centuries scholars have debated about a distinction between episteme (sometimes characterized as *knowledge that*) and practical knowledge (*knowledge how*) and some may argue that my views on teaching and learning focus too narrowly toward the latter. My response is that teachers can certainly be instrumental in expanding student knowledge and understanding. But we should also acknowledge that *doing* can facilitate and enhance this understanding. Moreover, when students translate this understanding back into additional *doing*, these students can then independently confirm the strength of their understanding and confidently employ their enhanced understanding to benefit themselves and their communities.

Returning to our opening golfing example, if an individual hits a golf ball, the ball moves from one location and to another, and that is essentially the end of the story. By contrast the successful teaching / learning experience serves as an accelerating step in enhancing student contributions to family and community, and perhaps even to a much broader

constituency. So even though the golfing experience essentially ends after the golfer hits the ball and the ball returns to a resting position shortly thereafter, the successful teaching /learning experience is only beginning when the classroom interface concludes.

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In the midst of so many extraordinarily talented colleagues, I am honored to be considered as a finalist for the Howard A. White Award for Teaching Excellence...humbled really. I am grateful to the wonderful examples in my life that have shaped in me a passion for teaching, greatest amongst them my father, who also taught mathematics. Like him, I derive great joy and vitality from the classroom experience, and am more confident with each semester, that God has called me to teach. I am delighted to share observations on my teaching experience at Pepperdine, yet confess that my philosophy of education is always developing as I learn much each semester from students, colleagues, business professionals, and distinguished researchers in my discipline.

Teaching courses in the Decision Sciences can be somewhat challenging at times given the broad range of highly technical topics covered, including: probability, estimation, linear models, decision analysis, optimization models, and risk analysis. I believe that my responsibility to students goes beyond simply helping them understand/memorize formulas or use the latest computer software. In a dynamic and increasingly complex world, where significant problems have yet to be imagined, it is far more important that I engage students in processes that allow them to ask the proper questions, think critically, and construct knowledge for themselves. This appreciation for empirical inquiry and practicality is fundamental to my teaching philosophy.

In the Classroom

The majority of my teaching units each semester are devoted to two core courses: Applied Data Analysis and Quantitative Business Analysis. In addition, I have had the opportunity to develop and teach two advanced elective courses in the areas of discrete multivariate analysis and multi-attribute decision making. All of these classes focus on decision analytic techniques that allow students to gather and create evidence...evidence that can be used to make better informed managerial decisions. I also want to insure that my students develop a proficiency in mathematics and spreadsheet modeling that will likely be expected of them in their future professional careers and that they understand well, the moral obligations associated with the final presentation of statistical results (there is often great temptation in our discipline to present results in a way that supports a desired outcome). I spend a good bit of time helping students understand what conclusions are

appropriately supported by the data and what conclusions cannot be supported by the data for each example/case study. As C.S. Lewis observed, "...education without values, as useful as it is, seems rather to make man a more, clever devil."

I believe it is equally important for students to see that what they are learning in my course will have practical value in their professional lives. To this end, I use thought-provoking case studies based upon my own consultancy experiences and applied research projects – projects rich with "data deficiencies" such as outliers, missing data, errant data, ambiguous goals, etc... Students need, I believe, such practical challenges for the development of the intellect and also for the development of character. I often ask students, as well, to share their own experiences with "real world" problems, messy data, and uncertain objectives. I have been able to incorporate many of these experiences into new case studies and projects for my classes.

I believe that students will learn only as much as the teacher expects of them. As such, I expect much of my students, but do so, in what I hope is an exceedingly reverent classroom environment, where intellectual risk-taking is encouraged and where virtually any question can be asked. I believe that students have the right to expect much of the teacher as well. As such, I make every effort to be well prepared for each class session and I use extraordinary care when evaluating student performance. Finally, I believe that students have the desire and a right to know something about me, personally. To this end, I host students in my home, I share my personal faith inside and outside of the classroom, and I make an effort to participate in as many student-oriented, extra-curricular activities as possible.

Methodologies

When teaching classes of 4 (sometimes 8) hours in duration, the lecture, however well prepared, can lose its appeal. I think my students are expecting more than this, and I know that I want more for them. My desire, then, is that they learn to take knowledge from my lectures and extend that knowledge in ways that will allow them to discover elegant solutions to significant problems, indeed, the sorts of problems that have yet to be imagined. I need to do more than transmit knowledge; I need to inspire the "mathematical imagination" within my students. To accomplish this, I use a mix of proven teaching methodologies including lecture, case/experiential exercises, and shared inquiry. Further, I have discovered that these methodologies work best when everyone is involved. I therefore learn the names of my students as quickly as possible, and I regularly call upon each student by name (at least two or three times in each class session).

Case Studies:

In addition to published case studies, I make use of a number of original cases that I have created from my own business experiences and research projects. These cases typically describe real-world scenarios in which decision-makers are looking for solutions to very practical problems in business. To find reasonable solutions, students must make use of the basic knowledge and tools of decision sciences, of course, but they quickly discover that theoretical solutions can be inadequate. To address these inadequacies requires that they extend basic knowledge, ask questions that haven't been asked before, and

sometimes, create new knowledge. Students have told me that they enjoy these exercises most, and they remember them well after the class has ended, because of the fascinating examples shared (by me and by the students) as the cases were being analyzed. I have made every effort to create at least one new case each time I teach a course.

Shared Inquiry:

Many problems in business go unsolved, I think, because the analysts and decision-makers working on those problems have asked the wrong questions. Whenever possible, then, I have started using the method of shared inquiry in my classes, hoping that students will develop proficiency in asking questions. When teaching in this mode, I frequently answer a student's question by asking another question, thereby forcing them to think more critically and philosophically about the matter at hand. My "return questions" are typically interpretive or evaluative in nature (rather than factual), forcing students to synthesize and extend basic knowledge. I have been impressed by how quickly they learn, in turn, to answer my questions with deeper and more thoughtful questions, themselves. Students are at first uncomfortable with the ambiguity of this teaching methodology, and yet at course end, tell me that they learned much from the process.

Authentic Assessment:

I am hopeful that the methodologies described above have made me successful in getting students to become a part of the process of "knowledge-construction." If I have been successful, however, I have an obligation to insure that my evaluation tools assess that level of learning. There are fact-based questions on my exams, to be sure, but I make every effort to ask many questions that require synthesis of basic knowledge. Tests like these, when designed carefully, actually serve as a teaching tool.

Integration of faith and the learning process

My entire academic career, to date, has been spent at two Christian universities where the integration of faith in the learning process has been encouraged, indeed expected. I have always felt comfortable, then, sharing my faith, both inside and outside of the classroom. Whilst at Pepperdine, however, I have contemplated more deeply my commitment to the demonstration of my faith to others. I have discovered, in that process, a couple of important themes. The first derives from a compelling lyric in a Larnelle Harris song that goes something like this: "If you were arrested for being a Christian would there be enough evidence to convict you?" I wonder, often, what evidence students have found in my life that would confirm the Christian testimony I have given. I believe there is a clue to what they are looking for in the lyric of another powerful praise hymn, "they will know that we are Christians by our love." So, in addition to sharing my testimony when possible; discussing pertinent quotes by Pascal, Lewis, and others; or describing the wonder of God in the natural world and in mathematics; I am constantly asking and depending on God to show me how I can share, with my students and colleagues, the love He has put in my heart. The kind of love, for example, that insists on the highest of academic standards, with gracious patience and understanding. I also hope that I am found with the sort of prejudice toward love that finds me encouraging others rather than discouraging them. With love, I want to celebrate the successes of others and yet, be quick to lend an understanding ear and thoughtful prayer when a student's circumstances

outside the classroom are causing pain. Because of His love and grace, I am able to open my house to students and share the rich blessings God has given us. And then, I am reminded, daily, of my own imperfections and I pray that because of the love of God I will be found merciful and forgiving just as I have been mercifully forgiven.

A second theme that emerges as I contemplate the integration of faith in the learning process, relates to some very powerful words found in Matthew 25: "...When you did it to the least of my brothers or sisters you did it to me..." I hope, then, that students hear and understand me well, when I share with them that I have known true joy, best, on those occasions where I have simply lost myself in service to others. This is why I took a one year leave of absence from teaching several years ago to join a mission effort in service to the underprivileged of Mexico. My wife and I were richly blessed by this experience, and we have eagerly volunteered for several shorter term mission opportunities since then. The desire to serve others also explains why I take on, with enthusiasm, the sponsorship of many student organizations and various extra-curricular activities here at Pepperdine (e.g. Business and Professions Editor at the *Christian Scholar's Review*; MBA Ethics Case Competition, Christian Surfers Malibu, SOS, Values-centered Leadership Lab, and Net Impact).