

STATEMENT OF TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

By

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I will discuss herein how I work constantly to lead a diverse group of students to think for themselves. These **culturally inclusive instructional interests and themes** have been influenced by my opportunities and experiences in diverse cultures, variations in student backgrounds and my reflection for a broad-based but rigorous program that is not frightening to the average student. Basically, I value and try to build upon (previous) knowledge and values of every student by maintaining a teaching log for each course and giving each, individual customized attention where and when possible.

Courses Taught:

Freshman Studies... *Unorthodox Medicinal Therapies*
General Chemistry I & II, lab and lecture
Introduction to Cellular & Molecular Biology, lab and lecture
Biomolecules, lab and lecture
Cellular Metabolism, lab and lecture
Organic Chemistry I & II, Lab and lecture
Biochemistry & Biotechnology I, Lab
Organic Spectroscopy, lecture
Analytical Chemistry, lab and lecture
Invitation to Research
Chemistry Today
Chemistry Frontiers
Instructional Strategies in (General) Chemistry

My **challenge** has always been to help students develop the skills to build self-confidence and cope with the rapid expansion of knowledge and technology. To me passing on knowledge per se is not too critical; after all, nowadays information and things are made to change and become obsolete very quickly. I find it more appropriate to try to impart learning skills and processes that will broaden student perceptions and guide the student become an independent life long conceptual learner. I do this as I stand in front of them, wandering around them, talking with them; questioning them individually or in a group format, discussing with them and making them the focus of attention.

As a teacher, my job is important and I strive always to be better, to enjoy and love what I am doing. I accept challenges and have the drive to do my best always by learning about what needs to be done and working hard to get it done. I work as a mentor to my students and believe their contribution in the future is directly proportional to the skills they develop through my impact, enthusiasm and attitudes. I further believe each student, every student must be provided with an equal opportunity to have an adequate education.

In my teaching, I try to provide a challenging atmosphere for the student. In the process, I am a facilitator, who gives generously of my time and energy in guiding the students to make progress towards achieving their full potential. My desire is always to develop in the young and precious treasures; habits and responsibility that would help build for them a rich and successful life. Education to me is an important cultural function. I embrace **cultural diversity** and accept that it creates fertile ground on which learning can sprout and blossom. Thus, in my teaching, I work to arouse students' interests in the value and worth of diversity and challenge them to welcome dissent, work collaboratively and seek the truth, which truth they should communicate effectively to one another in our active classroom setting and beyond. Often, I wish my students can all become people of courage; think deliberately, critically and analytically, and determined to do things respectfully.

As I teach, **goals** emerge. However, in the beginning, I communicate some reasonable and initial goals by which students' progress can be monitored and measured fairly. I am particularly interested in their abilities to collaborate and communicate with confidence. I encourage participation but I avoid forcing students to be inquisitive because I know shyness and other inhibitions may overcome some students. I have seen a large percentage rise above satisfactory performance through semi-anonymous participation involving post-it notes or finger-chest responses.

I believe in **program measurement and evaluation** to assess performance with a view to improving and rewarding merit and not preference, but without making grades a competition. My experience is that some students learn superficially, some memorize, and others prefer to search deeper. I prefer to evaluate on a relative scale rather than on a curve. I am always prepared as a facilitator to sort out and enhance students' specific qualities through a variety or mix of assessment formats. My lecture material and problem-oriented questions are integrated in a relaxed manner into everyday examples that seek to motivate and encourage students to see the relevance in what is done. I have not found any reason to modify this approach. In addition, we try to connect the material to other disciplines and to life, society and eventually the universe to re-enforce their learning. By this we also awaken and arouse their curiosity, correct misunderstandings and clarify any expectations.

Learning as a process is not synonymous with knowing more. Learning also implies that one should be able to recognize any personal and socio-cultural limits. Consequently, I do not teach the students my thoughts but I teach them to think and to reveal themselves. Here we make use of the available resources, the library, **instructional technology** and World Wide Web to provide an additional level of interaction. *My experience is that students' participation increases in my classes because they frequent my web page to access information as well as other resources and assignments; and they also frequently email me.* I am open and available through electronic mail, office hours, open door and an open ear policy. Overall, I believe in accessibility and the willingness to help the students. My excitement and enthusiasm about the material I teach often overflows to my students and I see they work with me closely on and off the lab and classroom.

From an inventory of **students file cards** that they prepare at the beginning, we arrange teams or study buddies through lottery draw for participative pedagogy, and help students identify their personal strengths and weaknesses; and articulate their skills and knowledge freely. The mix is necessary to accommodate the needs of the potential interested (*stronger*) and frustrated (*weaker*) students. We use a weekly data sheet to monitor (co-)pilot contributions. I also troubleshoot the class by looking at "barometer students" for facial expressions of confusion or lack thereof and or a nod. Lectures, where possible, are filled with fun and visual demonstrations, models and problems as well as challenges of sorts (discussions, seminars, humor, brainteasers...). Of course, I support and encourage **school rules and goals**, expectations and a consistent and effective discipline plan. I support and encourage informal and formal evaluation of faculty by students and peer mentoring by faculty. I encourage the use of standardized tests to ensure that course content and outcome is consistent with (inter) national standards. The results of all the evaluations form part of my course log.

I take the **implications of teaching** serious as I continue to look for new approaches to improve my instructional delivery and the value of students' learning, considering the changing demographics of students. I have instituted two interview-conference meetings with each student per semester; and thus far the response is satisfactory. I believe I **have good fortune to be a multicultural competent educator who cares, inspires, instructs and laughs with my students.** Nevertheless, I monitor the success of my teaching very often to continue to have the courage to teach and to earn the accusation from one of my daughters who claims, I would have everyone believe that everything is based on chemistry.