

Philosophy of Teaching Statement

Methods of Data Collection

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To outline my philosophy of teaching, I will use five broad guiding themes: what it means to learn, what it means to teach, goals for students, implementation of this philosophy, and professional growth.

Conceptualization of learning:

To learn is to do more than simply memorize. Learning involves critical thinking, application, and reapplication; hence, learning is a process. I believe that everyone learns at a different pace or through a different method – it is the goal of the student to utilize their strengths and the goal of the instructor to foster these strengths.

I conceptualize learning as a path from simply acting to a stage of developed competence: to learn is to be introduced to new ideas, and to apply new ideas; to apply is to practice these ideas; to practice is to develop new capacities and strengths.

Conceptualization of teaching

Teaching, in line with learning, is also a process. It is the means through which learning is cultivated. To teach is to motivate the learner, regardless of their level of development, and follows the same path from presenting new ideas to developing competence in applying the material. On this path, opportunities should be provided to learn through different methods as, for example, lecture, application, conversation, and critique. This is also intended to challenge students, to learn in different ways and provide space for intellectual growth and academic legitimacy.

To conceptualize teaching, then, is to provide the opportunities for developing competence in new material and ideas that foster growth intellectually and academically.

Goals for students:

For a research methods course, students will develop skills in asking questions of the social world, conceptualizing these questions, and developing a competence in *doing sociology*. The methods of sociological inquiry, for students, should be illuminated through a development of their competence as researchers and sociologists.

To reach these goals, students follow the same path highlighted above from learning new concepts and ideas, practicing these concepts, and applying them within the research process. This process, hence, not only develops knowledge, but connotes the ability to think critically, to write effectively, and to problem solve. My research methods course, therefore, culminates in a full research proposal including the students initial problem or questions of interest, a review of the literature, a sampling plan, the development of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, an analysis plan, and relevant ethical considerations.

Implementation of philosophy:

My teaching philosophy is implemented in the classroom my providing various mechanisms for learning. Lecture, for example, introduces and outlines new material. Similarly, providing contextualized and applied readings beyond the textbook introduce ideas and foster critical thinking. In-class exercises provide opportunities to practice new skills, and the research proposal project is intended to help the students develop competence in the process of social research.

Professional Growth Plan

As with the path students take to develop competence, instructors also follow a path for professional growth. As my teaching career has been brief, my professional growth plan is simple: take every moment as a learning moment and think about what can be done differently or better next time. Moreover, listening to feedback and seeking input is vital to growth at any stage of teaching, especially at the beginning of my career.