

Sample Philosophy Statement

Sharon Hughes
Psychology
Lansing Community College

Engagement, relevance, and enthusiasm best describe my teaching philosophy. I believe students learn best when they are actively involved in the learning process, and that an engaging classroom best facilitates this. I try to engage students in the course and in the material by using diverse teaching methods, encouraging their use of a variety of cognitive skills. The more ways students process material, the more likely they will be to apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate the information. It is these higher level skills, described by Bloom (1956), that I try to develop in my students. My experience convinces me that using different teaching techniques is the best way to develop these abilities. I also believe that using a variety of teaching strategies keeps all students, regardless of their learning preferences, engaged in the classroom.

Students become engaged in the classroom when they see the relevance of their learning to their lives. It is important for students to think about information in a variety of ways, including thinking about how it is relevant to things they already know, or to experiences they have already had. Students are motivated to learn when they see how the material can be used to understand something about themselves, explain a situation they are in, describe why something happened the way it did, or predict what behavior might happen in the future. I feel this brings psychology alive, and increases their motivation to learn new material.

An enthusiastic environment also facilitates engagement. One way to develop my student's enthusiasm in the learning process is to convey the enthusiasm I have for the subject matter. Enthusiasm is contagious, and by demonstrating the love I have for the field of psychology, I feel my students become more engaged and interested in psychology as well.

The relationship between instructors and students is a key to good teaching. I feel it is important to convey the interest I have for students as individuals, and the enthusiasm I have for their learning. Students are more motivated if they perceive that someone cares about them, and cares about their learning. I try to convey this by creating a classroom environment characterized by knowledge of students as individuals, mutual respect, and enthusiasm for the material.

A model depicting my teaching philosophy is presented below.

