

## **My Philosophy of Teaching**

I believe that teaching relies on complex human interactions between the teacher and his or her students that involve a multitude of factors such as personalities, listening and communication skills, as well as learning abilities. In this context, I feel that a good teacher should be guided by strong beliefs, which will help achieving important objectives during the teaching process. My teaching is guided by the following beliefs:

I feel that a good teacher must show the students that he or she cares. Personally, I do this by creating a sense of partnership between the students and myself since I feel that we embark on a learning process together at the beginning of each course. It seems that “People don’t care what you know until they know that you care (“The Teaching Professor, December 2004)”. I strongly believe this is true.

I believe that respect is fundamental to teaching and learning. When students feel respected they are more committed to class, more motivated and likely to learn. I try to treat everyone with respect and dignity, and I expect my students to do the same.

A good teacher must know his/her subject and be able to inspire learning to his or her students. In order to achieve this he/she must be a good learner. I am constantly trying to learn what is new in my discipline while continuously examining my teaching methods and finding new ones. I do this based on feedback provided to me in writing by my students several times over the duration of the course. I am always keen and willing to learn from my students as they do learn from me.

I believe that a good teacher is passionate about the subjects he/she teaches and about teaching itself. As far as I am concerned, passion is what drives my teaching. I love the subjects I teach and I know how to make them come alive for my students.

Impartiality, the power to judge others’ work clearly and without biases of any kind, is what also characterizes a good teacher. This I believe is even more important in the United States because of the great diversity of people living here. However, impartiality in administering a class of students should not be achieved at the expense of each student’s individuality. In other words, treating students in an equal and impartial manner should not be confused with treating them as a mass of beings without personalities.

I feel that a good teacher must be creative. He/she can effectively employ ingenious and innovative methodologies in the teaching process. Without creative teaching, the discipline taught can easily become boring for most students. I use my creativity and knowledge of the discipline to encourage and expose my students to critical thinking challenging them to analyze and evaluate all they read and hear. I believe in the power of questions and I try to work constantly to improve my questioning strategies to generate thinking in my classes since I believe that the effective use of questions helps students learn.

Equally, I feel that a good teacher must be flexible and place more emphasis on feedback from students in establishing the pace of the course rather than simply meeting the schedule at any cost.

I have always believed that a casual (but not chaotic) atmosphere, where the course is conducted as an open discussion rather than a formal lecture, is more effective in stimulating active learning and thinking. I believe that among the various factors that can contribute to this atmosphere, one of the most effective is humor. From my own student experience, I am convinced that a lecture or discussion sprinkled with humorous anecdotes and examples that everyone can relate to will persist longer in one's memory. I have always encouraged my students to speak freely and ask a lot of questions. However, since a casual atmosphere can easily degenerate into chaos and, furthermore, individuals coming from different backgrounds can perceive humor differently and even feel offended by certain anecdotes, it is important for a teacher to maintain a certain balance between casual and formal.

Last but not least, I see the teacher as the most powerful of role models. I always try to encourage my students to live their values and beliefs and therefore, I feel that I must do the same. I give the best I can to my students in terms of knowledge and delivery of information to them, I expect the best of myself and others and, hence, on many occasions, I get the best.

After six years of being a full time teacher I have come to believe that a teacher's greatest gift to the student is helping the student be motivated to think, and be willing and eager to learn more. I feel that for many of my students I managed to light a passion for learning, which they carried with them beyond the walls of Rollins College.

I am dedicated to learning, to my discipline and to my students and therefore, these are the challenges I accept as a teacher and I remain deeply committed to them.