

Teaching Philosophy
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Change is constant in the nursing profession in both practice and academic settings (Popkess & Frey, 2016). These changes include development of new knowledge, creation of new processes, and changing leadership. Therefore, I believe that nurses must be adept at navigating these changes which influence the profession. Teaching the next generation of nurses requires careful attention to philosophies regarding nursing, education, and learning to provide evidence-based teaching and learning strategies to support students. This teaching philosophy statement will describe my philosophy of education and the educational theories which will guide my practices in developing lesson plans, general teaching approach, and interacting with students.

Equipping students for nursing practice involves teaching critical thinking and problem-solving skills in preparation for the rapidly changing healthcare environment. This belief aligns with the philosophy of pragmatism which is based on the idea that change is constant and students need to experience the world through active engagement in learning (Iwasiw & Goldenberg, 2015). In this view, human beings experience the greatest growth when interacting with the environment in an intelligent and reflective manner (Field, n.d.). As an educator, it is my goal to create an environment for students to grow in their abilities to think critically, reflect on their learning, and ultimately be prepared to think independently in order to adapt to the needs of a changing nursing landscape. I attempt to meet this goal using constructivism learning theory.

The premise of constructivism learning theory is that learning is active such that the learner actively creates new knowledge through integration with prior knowledge. People actively create meaning through personal experiences. Therefore, I approach learning with an understanding that knowledge is built on previous learning. I believe that each individual is responsible for constructing their own meanings; therefore, I focus on providing tools to enable

learners to develop their own meanings. The process of constructivism focuses on the teacher as a facilitator and co-learner within the learning process (Spronken-Smith, 2009).

To facilitate the learning process, my approach is influenced by Vygotsky's social development theory and zone of proximal development (McLeod, 2014). This theory highlights the role of social interaction within the process of cognition. A key component is for the teacher to provide the appropriate assistance, support, and guidance (also known as scaffolding), at the correct time which encourages the learner to complete the task (McLeod, 2014). The teacher adds support for learners to enhance learning and assist in mastery of task. The scaffolding strategies gradually diminish as the task is mastered and the scaffolding is no longer needed. This approach necessitates an understanding of the individual student and recognition of their current state of learning. I strive to be a teacher who supports the learner (since the teacher can see potential which the learner cannot) without serving as a crutch or necessary component to the learner. To me this involves co-learning where meaning is constructed together and learner-centeredness which emphasizes learning with students (Iwasiw & Goldenberg, 2015). Therefore, I endeavor to develop an atmosphere of collaboration, collegiality, and a positive working environment to promote learning.

My teaching strategies stem from these philosophies and include the use of hands-on activities, clinical examples, and student driven content. A variety of teaching methods are used to account for student learning strategies such as: in-class discussions, group work, readings, activities/practice using course content, lectures, and case studies. I approach teaching from a holistic perspective, understanding that the learners are situated within specific communities and cultures which can influence their development of meaning and knowledge creation. Throughout all interactions, I seek to foster an open and inclusive classroom where students feel comfortable

sharing different opinions and learning occurs for both the students and teachers (known as creating co-meaning).

Student learning is assessed through a variety of methods including formative and summative assessments. Formative evaluations measure student learning and guide instruction and include discussions, reflection papers, and in-class activities. Summative assessments methods evaluate student learning. These methods include midterm exams, papers, and final projects. Both types of evaluations are aligned with the course and lesson objectives.

In summary, my teaching philosophy is grounded in pragmatism and constructivism with a focus on hands-on application and teacher facilitated learning. I integrate a variety of teaching and assessment strategies to meet the needs of diverse learners. The nature of the nursing profession necessitates a curriculum and approach that can easily integrate new knowledge and changing clinical settings. Therefore, my goal is for students to become learners who are innovative, critical thinkers with a desire to improve patient care.

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