

Philosophy of Teaching

Cynthia Winbush

As an instructor of adult learners, I have a set of core beliefs. These core beliefs guide and shape my every decision of instruction. My beliefs are grounded in the Progressive and Humanistic Adult Education Philosophies.

I believe:

It is my privilege and honor to educate adult learners to live productive, responsible lives, to obtain their educational goals and to become lifelong learners. Education can transform lives and provide opportunities where none existed before. As your instructor, I am your coach and co-pilot on your unique educational journey. You are the one that determines the direction of your educational journey, I provide the compass, maps and guidance. Our relationship is based on mutual respect and trust. Because no two students are alike, no two journeys will be alike. I will support, encourage, and challenge you to do the best of your abilities. All instruction will be designed with you in mind, to include your perspective and values. I will utilize your wealth of life experience and knowledge. I want you to see yourself as an agent of productive change as an individual, in the workplace, in your family or at the community level. I have chosen to use the Motivational Framework for Culturally Responsive Teaching as my teaching model because it supports my core values (Wlodkowski, 2008). The four motivational conditions of the model are establishing inclusion, developing positive attitudes toward learning, enhancing meaning in learning, and engendering competence.

Be Inclusive:

I will create a learning environment that you feel is safe, respectful, connected, and values you. I will avoid having an ethnocentric view in training, and provide opportunities for diverse opinions to be heard. I will make sure my learning objectives and goals are clearly identified and show you how this information will matter to your life/work. I will strive to understand your perspective, your goals, and expectations and provide opportunities for you to be successful in meeting those goals. I will respect all cultures and provide an environment of understanding for all people (Nieto & Bode, 2009).

Build Positive Attitudes toward Learning:

I will be sensitive to your emotions, feelings, and attitudes and how that can impact your ability to learn. I will encourage you to be responsible for your own learning. I will be your guide, your partner, but not the exclusive source of your knowledge. I will also provide opportunities for you to work collaboratively to learn with and from others. I will expect you to have an open mind and be willing to consider viewpoints different from yours. I expect you to be prepared, engaged, and ready to contribute in a meaningful way. I expect you to ask questions when you are not sure. I expect you to challenge yourself and stretch outside of your comfort zone to achieve educational growth.

Enhance Meaning in Learning:

I will work to make the class interesting, engaging, thought provoking, and provide relevant examples that speak to your life experiences. I will strive to provide clarity and show the benefits of the

instruction as it relates to your life/work. I will allow you to have input into as many decisions as possible in order that the instruction better aligns with your culture, interests, concerns and is relevant to you. I will utilize various ways of learning that best meet the intended learning outcomes (Davis & Arend, 2013). I will provide instruction that is culturally relevant and meaningful to you. (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Engendering Competence:

I will provide timely, specific, relevant feedback to let you know what you have learned. Feedback will be constructive and positive. I will provide authentic (practical, reality based) assessments that mirror content reviewed in class. I will provide a variety of assessments that address the needs of diverse learners in an unbiased way. I will provide assessments that recognize the diversity of our class and that, there are multiple ways of knowing information. I will allow alternative methods of assessment if it better meets the needs of an individual.

Following the Motivational Framework for Culturally Responsive Teaching will allow me to teach adult learners in a manner that is authentic to my core beliefs. Thus, providing a way to enable all adults to be successful in their educational journey and become lifelong learners.

Works Cited:

- Davis, J.R. & Arend, B.D. (2013). *Facilitating seven ways of learning: A resource for more purposeful, effective, and enjoyable college teaching*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). *But that's just good teaching: The case for culturally relevant pedagogy*. Theory into Practice, 34, 159-165.
- Nieto, Sonia, & Bode, Patti (2009). Affirming diversity: *The sociopolitical context of multicultural education* (5th ed.). New York: Pearson.
- Wlodkowski, R.J. (2008). *Enhancing adult motivation to learn: A comprehensive guide for teaching all adults* (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.