

Philosophy Statement

Joshua Rogers

CTE 4401-01/5501-01 Foundations of CTE

Idaho State University

Instructor: Mr. Kyle Moore

2019-12-06

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to state the author's personal experiences as an educator and teaching philosophy.

*Keywords:* career and technical education, philosophy statement

### **Foreword**

I have enjoyed being an educator for most of my adult life. I worked for seven years tutoring and mentoring students of all backgrounds and ages as a CRLA certified tutor at Student Support Services TRiO. I have spent time as an adjunct instructor of computer science, guiding and supporting students in many upper and lower-level computer science courses. For the past three years, I have taught a series of information technology courses, advising and mentoring many students. Over the years, I have developed a philosophy for teaching individuals with varied learning abilities, styles, and personalities.

Ultimately, being an educator has transformed me into a perpetual learner, a fact I enjoy, and a perspective I try to pass on to students. I am constantly educating myself with each topic I introduce to my students. I try to incorporate practical problems, philosophy, ethics, current news, and the latest technology when teaching.

### **Philosophy Statement**

My goal when teaching is to ensure that I have fostered within each student a sense of curiosity, self-reliance, and professionalism. In reality, individual students have varying levels of experience, interest, capability, and motivation. Thus, when interacting with students, I do so by presenting them with multiple examples and perspectives related to the course content. I will often prompt students to consider alternate ways of problem solving and call on them to share their personal experiences. In this way, I help students develop to their full individual potential.

It is important to me to ensure that students are aware of their options when it comes to the resources available to them. I recognize the reality that it is impossible for me to teach everything. Rather, I seek to foster an ability and appreciation for self-directed learning. I encourage students to explore beyond the knowledge learn from me and to develop effective

mental and behavioral methods, through experimentation and exploration, for approaching problem solving.

If a student asks a question, rather than providing the answer immediately, I ask that the student explain to me what they are trying to achieve and why the process they are using is, or is not, working. Frequently, this is enough to get the student to answer their own question, simply by getting them to slow down and reflect. If additional direction is required, I will point the student to documentation, whether it be their textbook or some other resource. If the student is still struggling to grasp a concept, I will generate, and walk them through the steps of solving, a related problem. Finally, after the student expresses that they understand, I test the depth of their comprehension by asking the student to demonstrate or reiterate their understanding.

I find that this is useful for catching those students who respond in the affirmative, (e.g. “I understand now”), but are still struggling with a concept. In cases where this is true, I spend more time explaining, demonstrating and asking the student to explain or prove their understanding back to me until I am confident they have a grasp of the concept with which they were struggling. This iterative method of teaching has the added benefit of addressing different learning styles (e.g. visual, auditory, and kinesthetic).

In my experience, lectures are a useful tool to introduce new topics, and a great way to make sure everyone is on the same page, but it is practical application that cements knowledge in students’ minds. I typically introduce a topic, covering the essentials, and then have my students complete a related project. As questions arise during this period of practical application, I may address my answers to individuals, or if a recurring question pops up, call everyone back to discuss it in more detail.

To summarize, every student is unique and requires some level of instruction tailored specifically to their own level of experience, interest, capability, and personal motivations. It is a practical impossibility to teach all there is to know, nor would this be an efficient approach to teaching. Rather, it is far more effective to transform students into life-long learners and to help them discover their own powerful capacity to teach themselves through practical application and independent study. In my experience, many students can, and want to, become life-long learners. They simply need the guidance to start. On the other hand, some few students choose to shun self-actualization, preferring to drift through life, from crisis to crisis, bemoaning their lot, despite the best efforts of their mentors to empower them. Regardless of this fact, I strive to be a beneficial factor in ALL my students' lives.