

## Randall Snyder's Teaching Philosophy

My philosophy of teaching has evolved from years of experience in a variety of professions. As I reflect on my beliefs regarding teaching and learning, I find that my mission as a teacher is threefold:

- To promote positive learning;
- To spark learner enthusiasm for learning;
- To provide a strong foundation for lifelong learning.

To accomplish this, I apply a wide variety of strategies based on essential educational principles encompassing cognitive functioning, learning theory, diversity issues, instructional planning and assessment.

**Cognitive functioning level(s) of the learner:** Considering the cognitive functioning of learners is essential in order to implement and apply strategies that are appropriate for either concrete operational and/or formal operational learners. I routinely plan activities, such as brief writings and group activities/discussions to help me determine the cognitive levels of my students and tailor my instruction accordingly. Without this consideration, I would risk the possibility of my students experiencing 'hit or miss' learning.

**Learning theory:** I value opportunities to apply significant contributions from various learning theories. Behavioral theory offers a wealth of principles that, when used appropriately, can benefit classroom learning and management at all levels. In concert with this, cognitive learning principles offer significant contributions from the state-of-the-art neurosciences, particularly in brain-based research regarding memory systems and active processing of intellectual operations. Some of my favorites that are well received by students include: think-pair-share, classroom jigsaw activities, constructive controversies, and interactive lectures.

**Cultural diversity, group culture and learning style:** Understanding both the learning style of individual learners and the cultural diversity of the class/group helps me both design and tailor effective instruction by implementing appropriate global and/or concrete strategies. Although a variety of learning styles are likely represented by learners in any large class/group setting, I routinely design my instruction using the research-based learning cycle; this cycle provides the framework for me to encompass a repertoire of effective strategies, which can accommodate individual preferences, engage diverse learners, and help establish a respect for differing preferences and perspectives.

**Curriculum and Instructional Planning:** An essential consideration for teachers pertains to overall curriculum and instructional planning. Whether the instructional approach is based on a behavioral model (direct instruction, mastery learning), a cognitive model (exposition/presentation), or a constructivist model (inquiry-based/Socratic methods, cooperative learning), I plan and implement lessons that clearly identify the lesson objective, anticipatory set, strategies for effective student engagement, and assessment options to measure student mastery. This helps me teach with both clarity and focus.

**Assessment:** I strongly believe that one can employ numerous options to accurately assess understanding of course content among diverse groups of learners. To this end, I have developed a firm foundation in assessment basics, from alternative types of assessment to traditional exams/test construction.

Following these basic principles and using these principles with enthusiasm and empathy will connect positively with learners. As a result, teaching with clarity, passion, empathy, and sincere enthusiasm, effectively impacts learners and this ultimately connects them to their 'passion' and lifelong learning.