

Teaching Philosophy

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I have been teaching for almost 15 years, since the time I began my career at Adelphi. I was not formally trained to be a “teacher”; my doctoral program did not require teaching as part of the academic course of study. Therefore my teaching philosophy and ability has evolved over the years primarily from my clinical experiences as an Audiologist, and the on-the-job teaching training acquired from the feedback of students and the observation of colleagues. At the core of my teaching skill comes the theoretical and clinical knowledge I have acquired over my 20 years of experience as a licensed Audiologist and hearing aid dispenser, and researcher.

My teaching philosophy is simple. I aim to know the material well, convey it in a clear and retainable manner, build an environment of respect in the classroom, and encourage an exchange of discussion. From these basic premises as a foundation, my teaching skill has evolved, and continues to do so.

In order to know the material well, I stay current on the new information in my field by reviewing recent publications and attending conferences for continuing education. I have conducted research and continue to be involved in research projects that are relevant to the courses I teach. My lecture material is revised each semester to reflect this latest information.

To convey this information in a clear and retainable manner, I rely on several techniques. The syllabus provides a week by week prospectus of topic areas, assignment due dates, and reading assignments. PowerPoint presentations help to provide visual reinforcement of the oral presentation of information. Handouts provide a tangible record of the information, and allow students to listen more during the lecture as reliance on note-taking is minimized. As most of my courses involve clinical methods in Audiology, I incorporate in-class demonstrations of equipment, hands-on labs where possible, and audio or video demonstrations. I also provide access to readings and the audio or video demonstrations through the electronic teaching platform MOODLE.

An environment of respect in the classroom is expected among classmates, from myself to the students, and vice-versa. This is conveyed verbally on the first day of class, and is indicated on course syllabi as part of the student conduct code of the department of Communication Sciences and Disorders. Mainly this environment is conveyed by example. My aim is to listen to every student comment and answer every question with patience and respect, and to never dismiss or humiliate anyone. Finally, an exchange of dialogue and discussion is encouraged by open-ended questions and discussion during class, and invitation to meet with me privately to review or discuss material at times after class.

Student feedback whether verbal, in writing from the course evaluations, or non-verbal (e.g. yawning, looks of confusion, etc.) has been the most valuable for me. From it, I have modified lectures to be clearer and more engaging and assignments and projects to provide a way to allow individual exploration of subject matter. In addition, I have modified my “delivery” style in an effort to attract student interest. My understanding is that lecturing, similar to styles of oral presentation, requires that the professor show interest in the subject matter in order to elicit attention and convey the message to the audience of students. I therefore try to never bring personal emotion into the classroom, no matter what has transpired in the time before class. I find that when I am excited and passionate about the topic, the students are too.

Finally, I am keenly aware that being complacent about my teaching can lead to a decline in my performance. I also know that I have become a better teacher over these years, and will therefore always continue to try to improve my ability.