Reflective Teaching   Portfolio

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1. **Define your teaching philosophy.**

   My teaching philosophy is rooted in two methodologies. The first is the Socratic Method, which is how I was taught throughout my academic career.   I have found that asking questions and creating a dialogue with students encourages them to think critically. The student evaluates the information presented by their professor, by other students, or by something they have seen, read , or experienced through some other sense and breaks down the information into its component parts to determine whether it is valid or not. In order for this to work the classroom must be a welcoming, non-threatening environment. Students learn in many different ways so I have had to find many different ways to get them to be part of the dialogue. Sometimes it works best if they write their answers before they come into the classroom, while for others they are most comfortable working in pairs or groups. As a professor my role includes being a guide, a nurturer, a listener and a fellow learner.

The second method I have found invaluable is the so-called scientific method. While the scientific method is often seen as a fixed series of techniques for investigating natural phenomena I have found that it can be used as a series of general principles for understanding information and coming up with innovative solutions to issues. A question is asked, a hypothesis is formulated, predictions are made, and the hypotheses or conjecture is tested through observation, measurement and often experimentation. Then we refine, alter or totally reject the hypothesis. It's a closed circle of inquiry. For students it leads them to use what they know, to analyze information and to engage in experimentation. It also helps them to realize that not everything works out as you think it should. Working with a failed hypothesis is probably more important then working with a proven one. Many students thrive with hands-on active learning techniques which are the backbone of this scientific method.

I am often training students to develop an olfactive memory and vocabulary. They are challenged to take an unconscious action, smelling, and make it a conscious one. Here I have discovered using many sensory stimuli works best. Using graphic representations and visuals encourages the retention of information.

2. Have you ever observed a master teacher? If the answer is yes, what do you recall most from the experience?

This fall I was a student in a graduate class in Digital Strategy. It was a huge lecture class of 350 students taught in an auditorium style setting. I had not been in a class like this in many years and remembered feeling a general apathy towards the instructor, and the information and getting lost in the back of the

auditorium. This would not be the case. I was now being taught by a master teacher who was able to engage every student, stimulate critical thinking on every issue brought up and move the flow of information along at a fast clip. There was nothing boring about this class and I believe it was the professor, who operated as a performer as well as a guide into the digital world that produced the excitement. He challenged his students and made sure they were keeping up with him. He asked questions of individual students, was an active listener to their answers and had other members of the class weigh in on those answers. He used assigned seating in the class and this worked to give this large classroom a feeling of intimacy. As a student you remained in the moment and felt you were moving along with everyone else. He began every class with a review question on what had been discussed at the last class. At first I was not convinced of the necessity of this but realized that it was part of his building method as we moved from traditional business strategies into the digital world.

3. Give an example of your most successful lesson. Why do you feel it was successful?

A successful lesson that has worked in many introductory courses that I have taught combines all of the methods I like to use in the classroom. lecture, discussion, visual representation and hands on experience. The class was created to provide a way for students to communicate with their classmates and with their professor. Some students communicate best verbally, while others communicate best visually. A class on the history of beauty and the meaning of beauty across decades and cultures ends with a focus on raw materials used in the creation

of beauty. Students work with henna, one of the earliest beauty materials, used by a wide variety of cultures across many decades. Students are asked to create a henna design that tells a story about them that they would like to share with the rest of their class. For many students visual story telling is a great ice breaker and they tell a very personal story. Others go back to the heart of the lesson and demonstrate their personal experiences with the beauty culture. I learned a lot about the students and they learned a lot about each other. They become comfortable with speaking in the classroom to their classmates. This class was successful in preparing students for the rest of the semesters' work in which they were expected to take part in the dialogue.

4. **Do you have an example of an unsuccessful lesson? How did you address the challenges?**

I once gave a very unsuccessful lesson in Fragrance Chemistry. I forgot the cardinal rule, never assume. I assumed that since my students had already had a basic chemistry course we could move very quickly into functional groups and their basic odor characteristics. I lost most of the class after the first thirty minutes. I continued to ask questions and try to engage the students. Finally one brave student told me they had no idea what I was talking about and were totally unfamiliar with the idea of functional groups and odor. To save the class and myself from further embarrassment I broke the class into groups and had each group focus on one functional group. They found examples in the lab, smelled them, evaluated the odor and

described it. Each group then shared their findings with the rest of the class. Everyone was engaged. Each group became an expert on one functional group and was happy to share their expertise. Happy class, happy professor

5. **Why are you introducing and/or expanding the use of technology into your teaching?**

My students are digital natives. Their use of technology resembles my use of pen and pencil. I need to meet them where they live. I currently use the online teaching system, Blackboard in all the classes I teach. This includes classes in the B.S. Cosmetics and Fragrance Marketing program, classes in Professional Studies and even precollege classes. I find it allows for the use of visuals including PowerPoint and videos. For some students this is an easier path to knowledge. Blackboard also allows for an easier administrative conduit for the professor and the students. I think that communication with students and between students provides a more interesting and varied learning platform and I hope to use additional technology to improve this system of communication.

I am hoping to continue to increase my comfort level with other technologies so that I might include them in the classroom and increase the distance learning opportunities for students interested in the disciplines I teach. I am now investigating the use of Wikis after being exposed to the Columbia Wiki program. This would provide a platform for all participants in a class to interact in the online world about the subject matter and topics of interest.

6. How do you feel these technology innovations will affect the student experience? How do you think it will affect your experience?

I believe that the student experience can only be improved through the use of technology in the classroom. They need to upgrade their memory skills and attention span and I think that technology can assist them in doing this. Many of the classes I teach involve sensory experiences. Sensory experiences can be enhanced through storytelling and technology affords us the ability to tell stories in different ways. I have not yet settled on one technology to enhance this storytelling but it is something I would like to investigate.

7. Please describe new teaching ideas you plan to implement as a result of this technology certificate program.

One of the reasons I so wanted to take this brief technology program was to begin to investigate the distance learning opportunities for the CFM program. Currently we are investigating the use of videos which could be used to demonstrate lab techniques and experimentation protocols. I recently found out that we can produce videos through Blackboard Collaborate. Using a video of a demonstration will allow students to repeatedly go over the demonstration and improve their retention of specific methodology they will need to use to complete their own experiments. Once students are familiar with how something is done they can move ahead with experimenting on new methods which may be improvements.

This is the path to innovation and technology can help us get there.

I think the teaching portfolio should be a living document and as a teacher I should consistently be adding to it. As I delve into using additional technology in the classroom I will have to change my assessment methods. At this time I am not convinced as to what they should be. Traditional testing and group projects do not seem to provide an accurate measure of what a student has learned or what he has achieved in the class. Peer assessments of student work also have limitations. My goal is to arrive at some newer assessment methods as technology plays a larger part in my teaching techniques.