

## Andrea Reyes' REFLECTIVE PORTFOLIO

### **My teaching philosophy.**

As an educator, I adhere to the Constructivist teaching philosophy, learning is an active process. The learner/student is the one building their understanding of reality. New information is linked to prior knowledge. I do this by pushing students to become sustainable thinkers. Can they identify problems from their experience as a worker, student, and/or consumer and synthesis into working solutions? This is done through conducting small, large, and one on one discussions which give pupils the opportunity to share life experience, information learned from other classes, ask questions to further their curiosity as well as promoting community discussion, accountability, and a higher level of motivation.

In essence, my teaching philosophy is students must be actively engaged in all aspects of their education. Teachers have a responsibility to teach the material in the course and must focus on having high standards, rigorous attention to detail and assess students' understanding of concepts. The only way to do this is to promote the natural curiosity of students. They must want to learn what is being taught. Teachers do this through dialogue: asking questions and sharing experiences and facilitating a quest for knowledge. Young, Millennial students especially want constant interaction/dialogue. They want to express their opinions and feel their input is important and respected. I invite both comment and criticism from my students. I believe in using persuasion: inviting students and having them accept the challenge willingly, instead of coercion:

using an external system of consequence/reward to promote good student behavior. Formal education systems will always have both, but I believe teacher-student interactions are more effective when they are based on the idea that teachers and students are entering into a mutually beneficial relationship where we value understanding and communication. This is especially important when teaching a topic students don't see immediate value in learning. It is my job to connect the topic to the real world and life-long learning. This builds trust so the student will follow, participate, and work hard. Education is more than practice for the real world. Education is a supportive environment where all people can listen, try, make mistakes, achieve personal goals and address global issues.

### **Example of a successful lesson.**

My most successful lesson begins in class one. Studies show new information is best absorbed after 5 interactions. This statement is reiterated bi-weekly to clearly demonstrate to students why, how, and when information is shared. This type of repetition does not have to be monotonous but can provide consistency, stability, and routine which the human brain craves. We begin each class with a School of Life video. These videos are thought provoking animated philosophical nuggets to get students' brains thinking, settled into the new environment, and ready to connect what they are seeing and hearing with that day's lessons. This particular lesson from a Global Sourcing class, we discussed protectionism vs globalism. A presentation was used to go over key terms, concepts, and current events. Students were then separated into two groups and asked to take opposing sides. If they were a protectionist or globalist in the U.S. what were their positions. After some time, a debate between the two sides took place. After students were then asked to maintain their positions but now as a Chinese citizen. The goal was for students to begin to engage in the complexities of our global supply chain. This concept was brought up over the next few weeks adding concepts, case studies, and finalizing in an exam. To review for the exam. Students were put into groups and asked to create an exam. This touchstone, perhaps interaction number 5+,

put their knowledge, soft skills, and strategy to the test.

### **Example of an unsuccessful lesson.**

An unsuccessful lesson was one where I used another professor's materials. Each professor has their own style and flow. Even knowing the material, adjusting images, and revising slides the lesson never had my special sauce. I find my students enjoy the consistency of each class starting with a short video to settle us in, discussion, presentation, and breakout into smaller groups. Keeping students moving and learning in different ways, even within a short class time, keeps students engaged. Teaching a class for the first time takes more time, effort, and energy but starting from scratch is advisable as it gives the professor the same excitement to learn the new material in detail.

### **Introducing technology into the classroom.**

It is the professor's job to meet students where they are at. If certain materials need to be covered but the base knowledge is not there, the professor must find ways to catch students up individually, pair students together (stronger with weaker) and use technology to promote self learning. I've taught over 5 online classes which are very different than in person. In person learning combined with technology is how the industry currently operates. Preparing students for this hybrid world is essential for setting them up for success.

Introducing technology into the classroom also allows us to look beyond our classroom for learning activities. Whenever the curriculum allows, I try to connect students to industry professionals giving them real world problems to solve. These semester-long projects provide students in depth opportunities to analyze industry problems, business strategies, and connect them with professionals who can share current insights. This could not be done without technology.

## **Technology in relationship to student and professor experience.**

Using these technology innovations will push students to “figure it out.” In the work world, especially if a student chooses to start their own business, they are more empowered if they know how to find the information for a new platform, project management tools, or other software if they are able to self teach rather than waiting for formal training. We must all strengthen our inner entrepreneur, technologist, and futurist in order to remain competitive.

As an instructor, my experience differs as I must have the answers to explain the technology but hold back to allow them to work through problems. Informing students you’d like them to try first before spoon feeding the information will give them a sense of empowerment and resilience. Making known mistakes are not penalized and sometimes the process is more important than the outcome is one of the main points of going to school.

## **New teaching ideas.**

Since taking the Technology in the Classroom workshop, I’ve begun to use Padlet, LinkedIn Learning, and other Google products. We used Padlet and LinkedIn Learning to analyze different career opportunities. Using this specific tool for this specific assignment consistently has given students the opportunity to discover positions they may or may not like to pursue. I believe technology can make learning more efficient and effective. I think too much technology can be distracting and counterproductive. Finding that balance where students are spending a smaller portion of the time learning the technology and a larger part of the time learning the material is the goal.

## **New technology tools contributions.**

Using new technology tools adds creativity to the classroom. Using short videos

showing how things are made, supply chain at work, and how fabric is developed brings the student a deeper understanding. Technology consumed independently needs to be balanced with technology that connects us. Each tool such as a youtube video needs an interactive assignment such as a discussion board or in person conversation. Each padlet assignment needs to be followed up with an assignment or breakout group discussion. We can not use technology as the sole form of teaching the as a tool to increase learning.

### **Evaluating success.**

I evaluate the success of my activities through assessments, anonymous surveys, and providing spaces for students to share key takeaways and individual perspectives. Students should report back, the materials built upon their past understanding of the subject while adding a deeper level of knowledge. It is important to share with students not only the materials but the reason behind why they are being taught this material. It is also important to share tips on how, independently, they can continue to teach themselves.

### **Big picture.**

Students should understand that technology is always changing and learning is never over. Technology can also provide students opportunities to problem solve, think quickly, and learn how to communicate when things are not going their way. As we move toward including more technology into the classroom, students observe the professors ease or stress while using technology. Students can learn from the professor what happens when technical difficulties arise which at some point always will. Technology failures can teach us just as much as technology triumphs. Technology and learning, in the big picture, teach us to not give up and to keep trying.