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Teaching Philosophy

My teaching philosophy reflects my interests in student success. I prefer student-centered teaching that encourages learning by the students. I favor classroom dynamics that permit dialogue and foster a degree of student input and collaboration. Students in my classrooms are encouraged to think about the class as a community. I have students spend a fair amount of time in smaller groups in which they not only talk and think together, but write together. I work with my students individually when they are needing extra help, thus I arrive to class daily an hour early for those students that need extra time or have questions.

I believe that reading and writing are connected. Reading and writing activities should be meaningful allowing students to explore what they already know and what they hope to know. Reading and writing activities should prepare students for their future coursework. In my current position as adjunct reading instructor, I try to pick readings that are interesting to students that they can relate to and enjoy reading and writing about. I explain assignments clearly, posting the assignments on the board and emailing students as a group so that they know what is expected of them and when they are expected to turn in assignments.

I use Blackboard for all my classes because I feel it is important to post assignments and tests on Blackboard as well as additional resources to help the students. I continuously update my Blackboard site to reflect what I am teaching in class. I think that it is important that students use technology and Blackboard is the perfect medium. Blackboard also allows me to reach out and work with students that legitimately cannot make it to class; the students are able to see what we are working on and to keep up with their work. Technology enhances the learning environment and complements my teaching style.

In the classroom I encourage an open environment with my students where we can share ideas in a respectful manner. I find that with respect it is appropriate to challenge someone's ideas and to ask questions about their writings and rhetorical strategies. I do not believe at any time that it is appropriate to be rude or insult any of my students. I believe that students learn better when they can connect what they are learning with prior knowledge. Grand conversations are important in my classroom allowing students to share and learn from each other.

I have found that students respond positively to my enthusiasm in the classroom. I truly enjoy teaching and working with students. I feel that as a teacher I have a responsibility to my class not only to teach them but to guide them and respond positively to their work. I know from working with my students at the prison that I must take responsibility for my actions and be a good role model, as students do model behavior that they see, even as young adults.

Having traveled around the country and the globe and having studied Arabic, French, German and Spanish, I see the world through a multicultural lens. Introducing students to material that discusses race, gender, age and disabilities provides a tool to open the minds and hearts of the students to help them become more culturally aware and more understanding of the world around them.