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Teaching Philosophy

I view my teaching as a part of a process to prepare the college students to think differently about the various issues they encounter and to succeed in the life after their graduation. This pedagogical philosophy requires that my teaching style goes beyond the traditional lecturing style that defines a new role for me as an instructor. My role is, therefore, to build a classroom environment, in which knowledge is experimental rather than abstracted, shared instead of distributed, and confronted rather than accepted. This approach makes the students like learning and develops their critical thinking that helps them to conduct their own analysis of the materials studied. To achieve that, I evoke my students to think, discuss, criticize theory and research as well. In line with that, I also direct the class discussion and activities and help the students conduct their own research. I try to memorize my students’ name early on in the semester, and I conduct classroom activities that help them learn each other’s names which helps break the ice and facilitates the class discussion even for the shy students.

Besides discussion and lecturing style, I use critical thinking exercises in two ways; one is individually, and second is for team work. I ask my students to divide themselves into groups and they share their emails and then they have to work on at least one issue together. This technique gives the students an avenue to pursue and develop sociological ideas beyond the classroom while making friends. Critical thinking skills encourage the students to engage themselves in a discussion rather than only accept their own assumption, which marks the beginning of transformation, helps achieve the purpose behind teaching, and ultimately prepares the students for the market after graduations.
Through this style, I achieve two goals at the same time: making the students like the field by applying it to what they are interested in and enriching the sociological research by recruiting more young sociologists in the future. Sociology courses are among the best courses that can achieve this pedagogical philosophy for different reasons. In sociology the students have an opportunity to talk about many important social issues central to the daily life discussion, beginning with the war to homosexual marriage, which is not the case in history, math, and geography courses. Furthermore, sociology is relevant to other sciences like anthropology, history, economics, philosophy and statistics. This diversity of perspectives in sociology helps the students find something of interest for them, which decreases the alienation towards sociology for the students from other departments. When students do not have difficulty in finding something of interest in sociology, it becomes easy for them to conduct their research.

From my experience, I believe that teaching is not different from other jobs in the sense that the difference between the creative teacher and the non-creative teacher is the degree of love for the job. So when the teacher does his best, it reflects on the soul of the students, which leads to more participation. For me, if the teacher wants to achieve his or her goals in the class, it is prohibited for them to give any sign of dislike for what he is doing. Giving this impression makes the student feel that studying or learning is neither important nor enjoyable.

During teaching, I observed that students like to know a lot about other cultures and other countries, so a global perspective in teaching sociology helps to achieve more than one goal. It makes the students think globally and creates a broader context for understanding the problems, both of which can help the students in their future career. So
I try to provide an educated learning environment through which students can appreciate the diversity of society’s cultures and institutions. Increasing their knowledge about international issues can lead them to have their own global perspectives. In the end they can look at these problems differently when they start to evaluate their situation comparing it to other people around the world.

In the end, each class and each subject in sociology requires a specific method of teaching, so I attempt always to adapt my teaching methods to fit each particular class that I am in contact with. Teaching is a flexible process and I deal with it accordingly while aiming to instill an appreciation for sociology among the students.