

**Statements of Teaching Philosophy
by 2015 Recipients**



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Graduate School of Business and Management

June Schmieder-Ramirez

Graduate School of Education and Psychology

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of management science is not easy for all people to understand, so I need to do my best to make it understandable to all of my students. Furthermore, I need to communicate the relevancy and impact of the course material to the real world. When the students can see how the information they are learning has made and can make a huge difference in improving companies and society at large, this helps the material come alive for them and motivates them to learn that much more.

Convey

I need to convey my passion for the subject matter. Passion is not taught, but caught. I cannot expect my students to be excited about the course unless I am REALLY excited about it. If I can convey my passion about the material to my students and they themselves become passionate about it, then this can create an electric environment for learning. My being passionate about the material helps inspire my students to learn.

Thank you for this great award! I thank God for giving me the privilege of being a teacher. I hope and pray that He will use my teaching to positively impact students as I continue my career here at Pepperdine.

June Schmider-Ramirez

Professor in the Education Division

Graduate School of Education and Psychology

I am always supportive of students and realize many of them do not have the experience of reading through many journals in the field. In the area of global leadership and change, I bring my own experiences to class. I have developed an inventory called the Schmieder Global Mindset Inventory (SGMI) which assesses where students are in acquiring an outlook toward global issues. I am very much a student-centered teacher—mostly of doctoral students. I spend many hours with students, but I feel that I have learned more from them than they do from me. I publish the Global Leadership Journal and hold a Global Leadership Conference in Belize, (www.icglconferences.com), every July.

2) My interest in the international/global aspect of policy: As part of our doctoral instruction in the Ed.D. and future Ph.D. we provide immersion trips to countries such as China, Belize, Argentina and Chile. We have included these trips in the curriculum because we feel that students should have a global mindset. This mindset is important because of the increased importance of international business. We have a “Fast Pitch Belize” where students select a company and present ways to help that company utilizing macro and microeconomic theory.

3) Faith, Values and Learning: I feel very strongly that one must have a spiritual focus in their life. The Bible was an essential book in my youth. Both of my grandfathers were ministers. I studied the Bible several days a week and was brought up in a religious household. In *Building Catholic Higher Education*, by Smith and Cavadini, it states that universities should be the home of “human thought, experience and belief.” The open table as described by “A White Paper Presented to the Religious Standards Committee, Dec. 9, 2014), characterized by charity, humility and diversity.

I feel strongly in enabling students’ learning about social justice, social entrepreneurship, and the importance of having strong ethical values. I believe in the importance of humility and the spiritual life, (John 13: 13-14).

In conclusion, the great leader embodies qualities of the conceptual, the technical and the interpersonal. I have followed theorists like Kolb, Knowles and Boyer. I hope that my students hryhuy.

Steve Schultz

Assistant

there through their own active learning – I try to be a guide rather than a lecturer. Frankly, that is much more challenging and fun for me as well.

Endeavoring To Make The Material Relevant

I have been very fortunate to teach subjects I love. Over the years, I have taught each of the following courses on multiple occasions: Employment Law; Remedies; California Civil Procedure; Legal Research and Writing (the introductory writing course for first-year students); and Advanced Litigation Writing (an upper-division writing course I created). As someone who practiced law for many years, I believe that all the courses I teach are important for aspiring lawyers. At the same time, I recognize that law students may not understand why the material is important. I also understand that they think some (perhaps much) of

Don Hancock
Professor of Mathematics
Seaver College

Permit me to begin by sharing a short story from my teaching infancy. While an inexperienced teaching assistant at the University of California Santa Barbara, I had the opportunity to substitute-teach several large calculus classes for Professor Max Weiss, one of the finest mathematics teachers I have ever known. At the end of the semester, he let me read all of his teaching evaluations, because several students had commented on my teaching as his replacement. This simple gesture on his part truly helped my development as a teacher, but not for the reason he had expected. Happily, the student comments concerning my teaching were mostly complimentary, but what impacted me most was reading the views about Professor Weiss. Indeed, although most evaluators thought he was outstanding, I was shocked to find that some students felt he was terrible. I took away from this two obvious but useful lessons: first, no matter how well you teach, you cannot please everybody; second, even an outstanding teacher may not be effective with every student. To the latter point, this is one reason why I strongly believe having teachers with diverse teaching styles and philosophies greatly strengthens a college; we should not all be doing the same things in our classrooms. These simple lessons were liberating, allowing me to confidently develop and refine teaching methods that optimize my particular talents, while keeping me from becoming too distraught if (despite my genuine best efforts) some students are not particularly pleased.

In the rest of this statement, I will reflect on my teaching philosophy, strategies, and experience. As I analyze my teaching of mathematics, I find much to agree with in the words of Alan Schoenfeld, noted Professor of Mathematics Education at U.C. Berkeley and an expert on teaching problem-solving, who wrote in the February 2012 issue of *Notices of the American Mathematical Society*:

“the first moral imperative of mathematics instruction is that mathematics must be seen, and taught, as an act of sense-making. Students must be led to see that mathematics is not arbitrary but natural and inevitable – and that they can, with the right experiences, come to grips with it in ways that provide powerful tools for thinking.”

I also agree with Professor Schoenfeld when, in the same paper, he goes on to say that (at least up through the undergraduate curriculum) “mathematics can be seen as a set of sensible answers to a set of reasonable questions,” and that students should experience it as such “so they come to see mathematics as a domain that not only makes sense, but that they can make sense of.” In my teaching, there is much attention to asking probing questions and getting students to see how and why the mathematics being considered fits together the way it does, which also helps expose the beauty of the subject. My goal is for students to

come to appreciate that by understanding the mathematics they are being taught (rather than trying to treat it as a collection of arbitrary rules to be memorized and applied mechanically) they can more easily retain, apply, and build on what they learn.

Just as in sports, where two coaches can achieve equal success using widely incongruent styles, two instructors can be equally effective even though their teaching strategies and philosophies might be very dissimilar. Although I have experimented with a number of different teaching strategies during my 35 years of teaching at Pepperdine, I still firmly believe that in mathematics an *active* lecture format works best for me and my students. By an *active* lecture format, I mean one where the learning is lecture driven; classroom discussion and interaction is encouraged and expected, as opposed to students being simply passive listeners. I try to adeptly handle student responses to my questions, whether they are correct or incorrect, fostering the development of a positive classroom environment that is inviting and facilitates student learning. One of my strengths is in understanding the nuances of where my students are in their learning process, and then being able to quickly adjust the classroom discussion on the fly to better meet their needs. Analogous to a musical jam-session, where there is both an underlying melody along with improvisation, the melody of my classes is oftentimes provided by a lecture outline or example worksheet, but there is plenty of improvisation in the form of alternate explanations, pictures, questions, and examples. I also try to keep my lectures lively, in part through my sincere enthusiasm, sense of humor, and informal chatty style.

Students also enjoy and benefit from the numerous connections and analogies I draw between mathematics and common life experiences. Here are four examples to illustrate, out of virtually an endless supply of possibilities: (i) in a beginning calculus class, the relationship between a car's odometer, speedometer, and tachometer is linked to the relationship between a function and its first two derivatives; (ii) in linear algebra, student experience with walls, floors, and ceilings in a building is tied to the nature of solutions of systems of linear equations; (iii) in a business math class, the connection between the purchase price of an extended warranty for a computer is made to the expected value of a

my students that they deserve and should demand high (but reasonable) expectations, and that they can achieve the course goals through hard work along with my help.

In my upper division courses, lecture handouts are given to each student several times a week as a classroom supplement. In part, these materials allow students to spend more class time thinking and answering questions I pose, and much less time passively copying down copious amounts of material from the board. (I also prepare lecture guides, or at the very least problem worksheets, for almost all of the courses I teach. However, experience has shown me that sketchier outlines tend to be more effective for the less rigorous and larger lower division courses.) In my opinion, there is nothing more boring in upper division courses - for me or my students - than copying down precise mathematical definitions, theorems, and overly refined textbook style proofs, but with my lecture guides there is no need to. Instead, the outlines free us to focus in class on what is more important and interesting--motivating a mathematical concept and observing connections with previous knowledge and working examples, showing why a result is plausible and certain hypotheses are necessary, and then determining an appropriate proof (with a "picture" and preliminary outline or "scratchwork," whenever possible). During class, I display the relevant pages from the lecture guide on a screen using a document camera, and (with student input) write down missing pictures, proofs, conjectures, questions, and other details on the white boards. The handouts help keep the students much more engaged and the classroom atmosphere relaxed; moreover, class time is used more efficiently and productively. Furthermore

I believe it shows. As a familiar adage claims, students have to know that you care before they care what you know.

Finally, in order to improve my teaching effectiveness and help keep my skills current, every year I read many journal articles and attend numerous conference talks, special sessions, or workshops devoted to teaching undergraduate mathematics. These activities provide me with concrete ideas concerning new topics to add to the curriculum, how to

Brian Newman

*Associate Professor of Political Science
Seaver College*

I teach with three goals in mind: to stir up a love of learning and truth, to convey the knowledge base necessary to understand political phenomena, and to help students think and communicate better—more comprehensively and clearly, with greater sensitivity and wisdom. I will forgo a deep discussion of all the literary, philosophical, and spiritual roots of these goals and just say that it seems to me that learning, communicating, and laughing comprise a big part of the good life.

I try to meet these goals through four overlapping means. First, I hold students to a high standard and work to help them meet it. The first day of every semester, I tell students that my goal is for them to reach the next level intellectually and that I will hold them to the standard of that next level. I also say that my job is to help

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and making arguments are not only fundamental skills for academic and professional

Darren Good

Assistant Professor of Applied Behavioral Science

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