

Statements of Teaching Philosophy
By 2016 Recipients

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I am humbled and honored to receive the Howard A. White Teaching Excellence Award. My objective as an educator is to develop and stretch a student's mind so that they can apply the concepts they learn in the classroom to everyday business decisions. My advisor has taught me that a teacher is not someone who lectures and requires students to repeat information, but a teacher is someone who equips students to think for themselves. In an effort to accomplish this goal, I focus on challenging, motivating, and actively engaging students.

I challenge my students so they not only understand the core principles of accounting, but that they understand the intuition. The goal for every class I teach is that students leave with the ability to attack business issues with success and confidence. This requires me to challenge students and make sure they know why we are doing what we are doing. Many times I ask students the simple question, "why?" For example, in my managerial accounting class, we examine standar

simulations to see the problem from multiple perspectives. I have found that students learn best when they are exposed to different teaching methods to ensure that the material is reinforced and firmly grasped. This variety ensures that no student is ignored and that each student has the opportunity to learn and to perform to his or her full potential. Additionally, I try to make the topic as relevant as possible while keep the learning principle intact. Rather than have the students memorize formulas and textbook problems, I prefer to challenge them with real-life exercises that will empower them and prepare them for their future careers. For example, when I teach relevant costs for decision making, I ask students to assume they are the managers of their company and must make business decisions for their firm based upon the firm's goals and resources. I also use software simulations where students can see the benefits and costs of their decisions, bringing the managerial role to life. The result is a more memorable experience and creates an engaging topic that opens the mind.

Lastly, I thoroughly enjoy teaching. I believe it is a privilege to be an educator and to be able to instill knowledge and power to students. I find it very rewarding to see students develop a passion about the material and a genuine desire to know more. Thank you for this great honor and award. I am blessed and thank God for giving me the opportunity to be a teacher.

capital in the classroom and prepare students for the reality of today's team-based organizations, and
being a mentor and coach to my students, outside of class time, as they seek to apply what they are learning to advance business practice.

Experiential Learning

While various types of learning are important in business and management education, I favor experiential learning methods whereby students are able to gain applied skills as well as metacognition of its application. My passion for experiential learning is shared by many faculty

John Buckingham

Practitioner Faculty of Marketing

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Grant Nelson

William H. Rehnquist Professor of Law

School of Law

I feel both honored and humbled to receive the Howard A. White Award for Teaching Excellence. Law school teaching has been at the core of my professional existence for almost fifty years. During this time I have been privileged to have taught at six law schools. In each, success and excellence in the classroom have been my constant goal. I hope I have been at least partially successful in achieving that goal. What follows are several observations concerning law school teaching.

The Crucial Role of Preparation

To this day, during the two or three hours before class I experience both anxiety and anticipation. Indeed, fifty years of teaching have not changed those feelings. If the class is successful, I leave the classroom both euphoric and grateful that I chose the law teaching profession. If the class is disappointing, there is always the next day to rectify the situation.

Intense preparation is absolutely crucial no matter how frequently I have taught any particular material. My class notes are the starting point and, invariably, during each preparation, new insights will arise and be shared with the class. Sometimes those insights will come from students during or after class. When this occurs, I will frequently include them in my notes for future use. My strong recommendation is to block out at least two hours before class and to permit little in the way of extraneous interruptions during that period. I remember well several of my law school professors who would discourage student or administrative contact during his or her preparation time. Indeed, one of them gruffly refused to talk with me prior to class. It almost as if he had to “get into the zone” and stay that way until he walked into class. Of course I was upset at the time and believe that one should handle those interruptions in a much less arbitrary and gentler fashion. Nevertheless, he was an outstanding teacher who frequently taught the entire class session without access to his notes. Over the years my respect for his preparation and class performance has risen exponentially.

A few days ago I experienced a situation that only reinforces my prior comments. My spouse had a necessary medical appointment and it was important that I accompany her. The problem was that the appointment was only an hour before I was scheduled to teach. Even though I thought I had prepared adequately the night before, I walked into my class significantly distracted. Consequently the class was less successful than I would have liked. Words and ideas came less fluently and precisely than when I spend a substantial block of preparation time immediately prior to class. It’s almost as if “being zoned in” for me is a condition precedent to

successful teaching.

The Law Professor in the Classroom

of my own casebook or consider my articles in class, there is a self-confidence on my part and a class dynamic that is immeasurable and often dynamic. Students are inspired by those who have helped to shape the law through their scholarship. When courts and scholars rely on a professor's scholarship, that teacher's insights have a significant and meaningful impact on her students.

While a few teachers who eschew scholarship may be admired in the classroom, how much better teachers would they be if they had produced scholarship that had a significant role in shaping the law? Wouldn't their hard work on research and writing enhance their self-confidence and make their insights and ideas more acceptable to their students? Surely, the teacher who writes and publishes ultimately will be more effective and well-received as a professor than one who simply relies on the scholarship of others.

In the last analysis, faculty research and scholarship, of course, has another substantial justification. As legal academics we have a civic obligation to help shape and improve the law. Thus writing articles, treatises, and casebooks advance legal and social progress. Serving as reporters and advisors for Restatements and Uniform Acts also provides a practical way academics can help advance the law. Unless the mission of law schools is to change dramatically, scholarship and teaching should be inseparable for a legal academic.

Again, I will always be very grateful to Pepperdine for the Howard A. White Award. Both the law school and the university share a special place in my heart.

Paul Sparks
Professor of Learning Technologies
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

It is an honor to receive the Howard White award and I am grateful for the opportunity to share some ideas on teaching and learning. I hope my reflections inspire others.

Learning technology is an exciting field. We are witnessing a convergence of powerful new communication tools with a greater neurobiological understanding of learning and memory. At the same time new knowledge is exploding faster than we can keep pace.

Consider some of the emerging realities that are available to today's learners:

- Ask your smart phone any question and get an answer from an intelligent agent
- Engage in games that provide interaction and practice for many 21st century skills
- Learn directly from any professor in any university on any subject in your own home
- Experience unseen worlds in high definition 3D virtual reality simulations
- Collaborate with informal affinity groups on any subject open to billions online
- Watch socially curated quality instructional videos on virtually any skill or subject

The learning possibilities are astounding and they impact us all, not just our students. Teachers no longer control content or discourse. Our roles have necessarily changed. We are all now bound together as learners in a dynamic world where we construct understanding and meaning by interacting together in communities of practice.

The following attitudes and actions have proven most impactful during my 35 years of facilitating learning using technology.

1. Calibrate [Be realistic about what is possible and how learning works]

"I cannot teach anybody anything. I can only make them think." - Socrates

"Education is not filling of a pail but the lighting of a fire." - William Butler Yeats

"I am not a teacher, but an awakener." - Robert Frost

Teaching does not guarantee learning. Traditional education assumes if something was taught, then it was certainly learned and if not the fault was with the learner. Switching ones focus instead to supporting learning, becomes at once much more achievable and more natural. My most effective and authentic contribution has been as guide or as an awakener.

My classes center around helping learning professionals incorporate new theories, new information and technologies into the work place. The learning happens in project based interaction and reflection with others. Maybe the best teacher is the person who best models the process of learning for others.

“He who learns from one who is learning, drinks from a flowing river.” - Indian Proverb

As educators, we need to understand that most learning is social, situated in real life and motivated by relationships. The experience should feel more like being accepted into a professional learning network with authentic relationships to support success.

2. Care and Connect [Learning is social and requires connection]

“Students learn what they care about, from people they care about and who, they know, care about them.” - Barbara Harrell Carson (1996) Thirty Years of Stories

Knowing the names of all my students and building a relationship with each of them around a common interest is a key practice. This is especially important in online environments that can often feel detached. I enjoy getting to know each student well enough to discover their interests and issues and then offer guidance and support. My practice of having an extended phone conversation with each student each semester is appreciated and creates amazing collaborative learning moments.

“Good teachers possess a capacity for connectedness. They are able to weave a complex web of connections among themselves, their subjects, and their students so that students can learn to weave a world for themselves.” - Parker Palmer (1998)

The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life

As we are engaged in building lives of purpose, service and leadership... it is imperative to connect students with others in communities of caring and learning together. I invite alumni to volunteer as online mentors for new students. This practice helps all students stay connected in a larger learning community that encourages academic life and transcends individual classes or years.

3. Create Space [Learning requires safe spaces for social construction]

“The scandal of education is that every time you teach something, you deprive a [student] of the pleasure and benefit of discovery.” - Seymour Papert

This idea confused me when I encountered it early in my career, but makes more sense to me now. We honor learning best when we support others in constructing their own knowledge. Their constructions are ultimately more meaningful and lasting.

“Learners have to construct their own knowledge - individually and collectively. The role of the community- other learners and teacher - is to provide the setting, pose the challenges, and offer the support that will encourage instruction.” - Jean Piaget

My responsibility is creating a safe space for students to collectively construct meaning from the events in their education and lives. This trusted community space allows for deep transformational learning that changes lives. There simply is no profession as rewarding as guiding and supporting the learning of others. Sharing transformational moments with students is a joy and a calling I do my best to honor every day.

Online tools make it even easier to create space for learning. In our graduate programs, we encourage robust student conversations in synchronous chats, discussion threads and social media that support ongoing interaction regardless of time and distance.

4. Contemplate Identity [Help students manage their professional identity]

Learning = Identity Management - Etienne Wenger

To maximize learning, I help students manage their identity with a little fast forward exercise. We imagine together how shifting their identity from student to doctor changes how they think and act in the world.

“All learning pivots on who we think we are, and who we see ourselves as capable of becoming.” - Frank Smith

I have found that students find great value in stretching their identity in the direction of their professional goals and is key to deep transformational learning. When we set the tone for

acceptance of diversity and ideas, a safe environment is created for exploration of relationships and identity. When relationships grow so does the willingness of students to take chances and try new identities. And when they try on new identities, they transform into people they dreamed of becoming.

5. Challenge [Guide students to find their professional passion and voice]

“If he is indeed wise, he does not bid you enter the house of his wisdom, but rather leads you to the threshold of your own mind.” - Kahil Gibran

Finally, I am most effective when I listen and come to know students well enough to challenge them in meaningful ways. Every assignment and project then becomes a personal customized challenge more likely to match with their goals. I encourage students to tailor assignments to match their professional work and aspirations.

“Listening is Teaching. Talking is Learning” - Deborah Meier

Paul J. Contino
Professor of Great Books
Seaver College

I am deeply honored and humbled in receiving the Howard A. Award for Excellence in Teaching – both in 2006 as an untenured professor, and, now ten years later as a tenured one. The fifteen years that I have been at Pepperdine University have proved to be a great blessing to my family and me. I have taught and discussed wonderful works with many unforgettable students and a number of outstanding colleagues. Upon receiving the award in 2006, I wrote an earlier version of this essay on teaching, and I am happy to return to that essay here, adding a few revisions and additions.

I continue to believe that teaching begins with and is animated by love. Love for one's subject and for one's students are vital to good teaching. For as long as I can remember, I have loved to read and to encounter new ideas. This love has helped me to bring what Mikhail Bakhtin calls "loving attentiveness" to my subject, the "great books" that I am blessed to teach. I agree with Parker Palmer that the subject is "the great thing" that stands at the center of any class's attention. In my own case, the subject is almost always a "classic" work of literature or philosophy. Classic works often attain their status by virtue of their wisdom or their formal, pleasing,

more about *how* to teach my students with love, and how to help them to turn

Jeffrey Schultz
Assistant Professor of Creative Writing
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Peter Kropotkin's 1902 study, *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution*, outlines, in the context of evolutionary biology and in response to the so-called social Darwinism that had become in vogue at the time, the central position cooperative efforts and cooperative impulses take in the successful development of communities and the individuals who compose them. While the horrors of the 20th century have certainly diminished the number of self-identifying social Darwinists, this diminishment has been counter-balanced by the near-total triumph of the notion that an unbridled competitiveness lies, and, indeed, must lie, at the heart of all pursuits. Our culture regularly—almost exclusively—frames the totality of our interactions, from friendships and romantic relationships (see, for instance, all television) to the production of art (see, for instance, Bloom's pseudo-psychological theory of "influence" or the general obsession with "schools" and movements) as primarily and necessarily competitive. The penetration of market-based thinking, which, in the end, makes the same assumptions social Darwinists did, only somewhat less forthrightly, into every stratum of society and culture is near-complete: we readily affirm the truth that unbridled competition is both inherently good and necessary, that it drives innovation, that we would be nowhere without it.

As a stand against the universalization of competitiveness, I seek to create a classroom that functions according to something like Kropotkin's principle of mutual aid. Cooperation, approached in this way, does not exclude the moment of competitiveness; rather, it contextualizes it in relation to its own purpose: cooperation provides the end to competitiveness's means. In the mutual aid model of the classroom, competitiveness functions in service of the betterment of the entire group, rather than the individual student or the instructor. There are a number of approaches I take in order to foster this sense of a cooperative project in my classroom. On the first day of my classes, we begin to undertake the project of a far reaching critique, not just of whatever the material for the particular course will be, but also

inherent value in revealing the contours of any such process, but so far as the community of the classroom is concerned, I work to show the students that I too am merely an individual trying to get right what I can get right in the midst of a number of interlocking systems over which I have little or no direct control. By de-identifying with these structures, by consciously not taking up the full weight of the authority they offer me in the limited realm of the classroom, my classes seek to become plausibly antiauthoritarian. If I ask my students to respect me it is as one of them, one of them who has probably been around longer, who has maybe learned more, who has read and thought more, but one of them nonetheless. I find that when my students understand that we are all inside the educational project together, a sense of community forms that is genuinely critical, cooperative, and creative.
