

Teaching Philosophy Statement

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Who I am today has been significantly influenced by the teachers I have had in my life. Coming from a socioeconomically disadvantaged background and being a first-generation student, I lacked role models and guidance outside educational settings. However, at each stage of my educational journey, from primary to tertiary education, I had one or more teachers who supported, inspired, and motivated me to learn and grow. As a living product of transformational teachers, the goal of my teaching practice is to create a space for my students to make meaning of their lives by exploring theirs and others' thoughts, emotions, and behaviors.

Although I have taught informally as a teenager, my formal teaching career began in 2013. Since then, I have been teaching psychology at both pre-university and undergraduate levels. To facilitate the deep processing required for meaning making of my students, I employ active learning as my primary approach to teaching and learning. I encourage my students to think deeply about any new information by relating it to their existing knowledge and personal lives. I generally activate this process by providing appropriate reflective prompts. For example, while discussing attachment styles in my Introduction to Psychology course, I invite students to think about the attachment style that best captures the bond they had with their primary caregiver.

To gain insight into my students' meaning making progress, I utilize a variety of formative assessments including gamified quizzes and puzzles. I also use these assessments as means to provide formative feedback to my students. Further, I assign varied graded summative assignments such as graphic essay, interview, poetry slam, song, talk show, meme, children's story book, and presentation using any medium of students' choice. I vary the medium of learning tasks so that my students have alternative ways to acquire and demonstrate learning, in not just intellectually stimulating but also fun contexts. I ensure that all assessments correspond to the particular course learning outcomes as well. Moreover, I communicate high standards for my students so that they are always striving for excellence. I further emphasize to my students to maintain academic integrity as they engage in any learning task.

As meaning making is a lifelong process, I encourage my students to be independent learners and embrace humility, so that they are continuously learning beyond the completion of my courses. To this end, I encourage my students to always try finding the answers on their own before seeking guidance from me. I also assign certain subtopics as self-learning challenges, where students are to master the materials on their own.

To create a positive space for meaning making of my students of diverse age, gender, ethnicity, (dis)ability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, nationality, religious/irreligious belief, and political belief, I promote mutual respect among members of the course at all times. I also try to always use inclusive language and represent diversity in my course materials (e.g., examples, images). As peers can be excellent learning resources, I encourage my students to connect with and support each other throughout the course. For

instance, I request students to identify and exchange contact details with at least two other peers (course buddies) at the start of the course.

To assess my own performance in facilitating the meaning making of my students, I periodically request feedback from my students. In addition to the institution-level student evaluation at the end of the semester, I request students to share their views on aspects of the course that they like and that can be improved at least twice during the duration of the course. I also have an online form via which students can share their feedback at any time anonymously. I take all student feedback seriously and make the necessary modifications moving forward. To continuously develop as a teacher, I attend trainings (at least 40 hours per year) and be part of professional communities such as The Society for the Teaching of Psychology, American Psychological Association and Malaysia Educational Psychology Society.

Ultimately, I wish to see my students grow like a glorious lotus, rise above their murky circumstances and shine. I aspire to give my best to each student I get the privilege to teach so that they too reach excellence.



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