

Philosophy of Teaching and Learning

Lindsay A Holden

As a graduate student I have spent the last five years exploring and learning about how to be an effective instructor. My primary goal is to be a clear communicator. I am not perfect and I have my own learning style, but I try to adapt to my students needs. Some of my approaches include backwards design of coursework (identifying learning goals, determining learning outcomes and assessment, and planning activities that align the goals and outcomes) and active learning strategies for student-centered learning (e.g., think-pair-share, role playing situations, group quizzing, generating lists, cooperative learning, minute paper reflections, problem-based learning, case studies, and concept maps).

I aim to mold my teaching to the students' needs so that students feel safe and can be honest with me about their learning challenges. Having a safe and inclusive classroom is essential for the learning process. I want to help students explore the learning space and to do this while working with students who may be different than themselves. My teaching philosophy is student-centered and ever-evolving as I continue to learn new ways to introduce and reinforce content inside the classroom and laboratory.

My teaching goals are to be clear and succinct. I want to make sure that students are engaging and incorporating the lesson. This would include having clear expectations and goals. By using rubrics in my teaching I make assignments accessible for your students: they know what to expect and how to achieve the goals of the assignment. It also serves as a summative scoring tool for student assessment.

I aim to have a reflective practice using self- and peer-assessment of my teaching. Reflecting on my teaching makes me a better teacher by being responsive to student needs and always revising my classroom strategy. To incorporate different student learning styles I ask students what they need in the classroom and try to incorporate those needs. I also actively reflect on my teaching and think about ways to improve my delivery. One of my major strategies is to use as many different examples of a concept as possible, because students come with their own perspectives and a single example won't always work for everyone.

Being an effective teacher is important to me because I believe knowledge is power and that informed people make better decisions. I do not want everyone to make the same decisions as I would, but I aim to empower students to be able to rationally argue their point through a scientific lense. Outside of the classroom these skill may be essential for health decisions, lifestyle decisions, voting on environmental issues, etc. I also want to empower students to feel that they have the knowledge to make those decisions, including decisions about what they want to do with their life and careers.