

SHARON LINK, PH.D., M.ED.



Teaching Philosophy Statement

The outcome of my teaching is to develop wise, honorable, and cultivated citizens by preparing graduates for a successful transition into employment, graduate school, and/or licensure. I invest in the lives of my students through informed andragogy, mentorship, managing students' action plans, and research, and providing culturally responsive learning opportunities. My students have advanced in their careers and are earning more money as a result of my course design and teaching presence.

My classes are challenging, engaging, relevant, and enjoyable. I strive to be the teacher I would want as a student. I design courses that I would want to take. As a lifelong learner, I regularly engage in online learning so that I continue to develop subject matter expertise. I integrate concepts I have learned from previous classes, student evaluations, and a variety of practical methods from business. I focus on formative assessment to modify teaching and learning activities to improve student attainment. I rely heavily on effective discussions and offer opportunities for clear communication.

Incorporate Action Plans

First and foremost, I challenge students and push them out of their comfort zone through Action Goals, Personalized Action Plans, and coaching. I identify the Instructional and Leadership Paradigms where students are most aligned from a Culturally Responsive perspective. I work with students to seek opportunities to grow, change, advance, and cultivate. I then identify specific teaching strategies, methods of evaluation, and leading theorists to bolster learning which is translated into their Individual Action Plans.

Communicate Expectations

Second, I include a detailed course syllabus and course overview to effectively communicate course expectations. The course overview generally provides basic course information, a detailed course description, a friendly welcome, clear learning objectives, links to course resources and expectations, policies for attendance, participation, and discussions, and should communicate technical support services, tutoring, and office hours, and web-based lectures. A syllabus is a contract, learning tool, and permanent record.

Design with the Learner in Mind

Third, I design to incorporate an intuitive course design and structure. Adhering to a clear design structure ensures continuity and more effective student-directed learning. Quality Matters offers quality assurance tools for course designers in the form of rubrics, research, peer-reviewed standards, and professional development to effectively regulate course models across an entire curriculum or learning program for higher education institutions (Quality Matters, 2021).

Engage Students by Being Present

Fourth, I engage students through social presence, teaching presence, and cognitive presence. Redmond et al. (2018) set forth an engagement plan for online teaching and learning and combined these presences into five categories of engagement: social engagement, cognitive engagement, behavioral engagement, collaborative engagement, and emotional engagement. With this framework, online instructors can create multiple opportunities for students to become engaged, which are intended to handle issues concerned with learner isolation, feelings of distance from the institution, and high dropout rates (Martin & Bolliger, 2018).

To foster engagement, I facilitate a sense of community. As a professionally trained teacher, I am a constructivist and facilitate a sense of community, interactivity, higher-level thinking, and collaborative learning experiences increasing participation and a sense of belonging through critical thinking, shared reflections, and helpful feedback (Liu et al., 2007; Holley & Dobson, 2008).

As an instructor, I offer feedback and often make videos in the grade book to show learners how to make adjustments to assignments. I create video tutorials. I integrate a facilitated learning model and favor Grow's (1991, 1996) staged, self-directed learning model, which specified that students advance through four stages, and teachers act as a coach, motivator, facilitator, and then consultant as individuals progress through each of the stages.

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Utilize the Discussion Board "Freely"

Fifth, I make use of the discussion board as a way for students to solve problems, work on group projects, provide peer review feedback, and present their learning. I include opportunities for open discussion forums, and also incorporate pre-structured threads, scaffolding, role assignments, and debates.

Ultimately, I embrace education "as a practice of freedom." I envision education as the process through which we learn about the world and imagine how it might be changed for the better.

bell hooks (2021) wrote: “

"The classroom, with its limitations, remains a location of possibility. In that field of possibility, we have the opportunity to labor for freedom, to demand of ourselves and our companions an openness of mind and heart that allows us to face reality even as we collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries, to transgress. This is education as the practice of freedom." (p. 207)

My commitment and approach to learning and development have been rewarded with the highest teaching evaluations an instructor can receive. I can share these types of evaluations. To see a positive video evaluation, please view the following: <https://youtu.be/Gp3TpGz4GQ8>.

References:

Grow, G. O. (1991, 1996). Teaching learners to be self-directed. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 41(3), 125–149. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0001848191041003001>

Holley, D., & Dobson, C. (2008). Encouraging student engagement in a blended learning environment: The use of contemporary learning spaces. *Learning, Media and Technology*, 33(2), 139–150. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439880802097683>

hooks, b. (2021). *Teaching to transgress education as the practice of freedom*. Routledge.

Liu, X., Magjuka, R. J., Bonk, C. J., & Lee, S. (2006, November 30). Does sense of community matter? an examination of participants' perceptions of building learning communities in online courses. *Quarterly Review of Distance Education*. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ875048>

Martin, F., & Bolliger, D. U. (2018). Engagement matters: Student perceptions on the importance of engagement strategies in the Online Learning Environment. *Online Learning*, 22(1). <https://doi.org/10.24059/olj.v22i1.1092>