

Philosophy of Teaching

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Understanding one's teaching philosophy is vital to conducting successful adult training. There must be a clear understanding of one's values, beliefs, and attitudes to ensure an organized vision, while providing direction, stability, and understanding of why we teach the way we do (Galbraith, 2000). There are many elements that contribute to one's teaching philosophy but no three stand out more than authenticity, safety, and retention of knowledge.

Authenticity

Brookfield (2002) states that an instructor must be perceived as an ally to learners which is built on trust, honesty, and openness. Without these, a student will be less likely to participate in the classroom. An instructor can be successful in establishing authenticity with learners by ensuring they follow Brookfield's (2002) four indicators of authenticity which include congruence, full disclosure, responsiveness, and personhood. Learners need help making connections with their instructor in order to see them as similar to themselves. One way an instructor can establish a connection is to incorporate an introduction at the start of class where they share information about themselves such as work experience, hobbies, and anything else that may prove interesting to learners and in turn, allow students to share as well. Next, transparency needs to be established in regards to the classroom curriculum, objectives, and expectations. Learners need to have a feeling of trust and confidence that the instructor is being straight with them and honest about any changes.

Safety

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs states that safety is a basic need and if this is not met, a learner cannot move into the highest level of self-actualization (Chao, 2009). For learners, it is essential that they have a feeling of physical safety in the classroom, but along with this is the

need for psychological safety as well (Clapper, 2010). It can be overwhelming for a student to sit in a classroom full of people they do not know. Fears, such as embarrassment and judgement, can cause a learner to feel psychologically unsafe and leave them unwilling to participate in class. Instructors can support a safe learning environment by celebrating learning that comes from incorrect answers, reminding students that errors are a natural part of learning (Clapper, 2010). Acknowledgment of answers from all participants is key to building classroom safety, which leads to learners feeling safe to freely share their ideas and questions without being disregarded or disrespected (Vella, 2002). Also, respect and connectedness help create a climate where adult learners feel accepted, safe, and capable, allowing them to better connect to their experiences, engage in classroom dialogue, and drives reflection (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 2017). It is essential to build a relationship with each student to determine their needs and barriers. This helps an instructor make connections on what each learner needs in order to feel safe.

Retention of Knowledge

Retention of knowledge is the goal all instructors aim for after learners complete their training. Without knowledge retention a learner will not be able to independently perform the learning. It is important to help learners see the purpose and meaning behind what they are learning to properly retain the information they acquire (Lieb, 1991). By incorporating prior knowledge into their learning, connections can be formed through what they are learning which leads to better competency and a positive attitude in the learner (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 2017). This also drives the learner to retain the information better since they see it as relevant and meaningful (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 2017). Sequence and reinforcement through Praxis is important because it too ensures knowledge retention since learning tasks build upon themselves

from simple to complex (Vella, 2002). This helps learners make connections along the way through each new process they learn, while the repetition of skill tells a learners brain what they are doing is important and should be stored for future long-term memory use (Vella, 2002). Teach backs are another way to drive knowledge retention in learners because it ensures a learner clearly understands the content enough to teach it to another learner, increasing their competency, and allowing another opportunity for their brain to realize the information is important (Stenger, 2016).

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