

Teaching Philosophy

Tell me and I forget. Show me and I remember. Involve me and I understand.

- Chinese Proverb

The Teacher as Facilitator and Coordinator

(Note: This page is taken from my full Teaching Portfolio, which includes syllabi, evaluations, and sample assignments/exams. It is available for download at <http://jonwestfall.com/cv>)

The role of instructor or teacher holds special significance in any culture. To be asked to take that role requires one to have a clear view of their responsibilities and duty to those entrusted to his care. If those responsibilities and duties are upheld, the outcome is a student who becomes a source of pride not only to the instructor but also to the institution and society in general.

I firmly believe that an instructor is required to **facilitate and coordinate a learning process**, and should not view their practice as simply giving knowledge and testing students to see if learning has occurred. As I do not believe all students are capable of learning in the same style, at the same pace, or with the same materials, I believe it is my job to facilitate learning in a way that is tailored to a particular class or group of students. I also believe it is my job to coordinate the learning experience so that students know what they can expect from me, and what I expect from them.

In shaping a learning experience to the needs of my students, **I also seek to provide an open, inviting, and productive atmosphere**. The ideal atmosphere is one where the learner feels they can identify with the instructor, and vice-versa. To create this atmosphere I attempt to provide and continually remind students of an open line of communication that is available to them to contact me. I also endeavor to use humor to both make points and to put students at ease. I have a genuine passion for teaching, and feel that my teaching style should reflect this.

Lastly, I understand that, while my students may not always agree with me, **it is my job to ensure that they are prepared to use the knowledge and concepts that I provide**. I believe that setting goals and holding students up to a high standard provides them incentive to work their hardest and to master the material. While I may not gain popularity by failing to let a class out early or by administering exams that do not pose a challenge, I believe that students will benefit from these practices later, despite their current wishes.