

Hawk, Nathan

Philosophy of Teaching Statement

From early on, caring, passionate educators have instilled and influenced my interest in teaching. For instance, my elementary and middle school art teacher, despite my less than stellar talent in art, showed the care, concern, and respect for me as a student. That experience taught me the immense influence quality educators can have on all students. Additionally, both my father and one of my brothers have served as college and university faculty members. Their commitment has served as a role model for my own career goals. As a result, the teaching profession has been a foundational part of my personal identity over the past 19 years.

For two core reasons, I have entered the teaching profession. One, our education system needs quality, dynamic and evolving teacher education programs that match the educational systems available today. I have experience in both teaching college and high school in traditional, blended and online methods, with both traditional and underserved student populations. Two, I enjoy facilitating learning experiences that support intellectual growth, enhance critical thinking, and promote personal change among emerging scholars and students.

In my personal view, learning incurs when we are intellectually challenged, incrementally improve over time, and transfer new knowledge. To reflect that belief, in my classrooms learning tasks consist of students being exposed to multiple viewpoints, specific declarative knowledge, and discussion-based activities to enhance collaborative learning. My past teaching assignments have normally relied on a combination of direct instruction followed by opportunities to practice skills as well as encourage open discussion. Accordingly, students are provided the opportunity to consider, critique and

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explore multiple modes of inquiry among their peers. To best support personal growth, a safe, productive and intellectually challenging learning environment requires that opinions be respected, viewpoints supported, and ideas and theories be challenged when necessary.

In my teaching, I seek to provide a comfortable, cordial and equitable learning experience that appropriately scaffolds students' academic development. That is, in prior teaching assignments, typically I first model appropriate behavior or techniques, ask students to practice skills, and then leave an opportunity for them to practice the new skill in a facilitated setting. Although I facilitate students' construction of knowledge, my job as a teacher and facilitator is to provide the guidance, when needed, for all students to personally grow within their zone of development. Finally, student growth and their course outcomes are best measured formatively. Throughout the semester, I emphasize how students grow over time in their intellectual capabilities and mastery of content rather than relying on summative measures. In other words, I am more interested in how students evolve over time rather than whether they meet a summative course measure. For instance, final course grades are not contingent upon two or three major assessments, but rather a combination of different assessments including practice assignments, occasional tests, and opportunities to apply knowledge in developing some larger project.

Professionally, I develop my craft in different ways. I prioritize professional development opportunities that enhance my instructional strategies, delivery and methods. As I develop professionally, I envision a close relationship between teaching, research and service. For instance, conducting research can help me to adapt my own teaching methods and procedures while service to the university and broader community

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helps to build strong connections and support from others towards my professional growth. In the foreseeable future, I hope to continue to increase student engagement and seek professional development that helps me become a better teacher, researcher, mentor and advisor. Additionally, I plan to seek out teaching mentors in an effort to develop professional relationships to grow in my craft. Finally, from the commitment that others close to me have shown to teaching adult learners, I seek to emulate their professionalism and passion. Consequently, I hope that these skills are passed on to my students to improve learning, engagement and interest in my content area.