

Teaching Philosophy

Ayman Mohamed

Teaching has always been my passion. From the very first moment I step into a classroom, I start to build trust with my students. I believe students should first trust their teacher in order to have a healthy learning atmosphere. I have become aware that teaching is not really about teaching, it's about learning. It doesn't matter how excellent I think I am as a teacher if my students feel they do not learn anything. One basic principle in my teaching philosophy is that it needs to be tailored, as much as possible, to students' interests and current abilities. Teaching should be learner-centered starting from learner needs and objectives and not from what the teacher wants them to put in their heads.

Students should also be given the chance to be their own mentors, being given the autonomy for self-learning. I do this by stating rules and guidelines without acting as an inspector upon everyone. I am not for exerting too much pressure on the learner as I believe that it all starts with self-motivation which only needs to be combined with a reasonable pressure. For others who lack motivation and thereby lacking competence, a sort of empathy and understanding can help and even create an urge to compete. Students will choose to do the required work while they know they will be held accountable for what they skip. Because of my concern for learning, I have implemented mastery grading in my teaching. That means I give, to every extent possible, chances for students to redo work that does not show mastery of the material. With this practice, I try to take students out of the mindset that they work only for grades but for learning in the first place. And because they trust their teacher, they know they will get their deserved grades in the end.

Another tenet I have acquired over the years is that a teacher is mainly a facilitator for learning and not a knowledge-pouring instrument as we have been taught in our educational systems. What I do is that I guide students towards learning even beyond the scope of the course. In the field of language teaching, I believe in the importance of developing learner metalinguistic awareness in SLA. For adults in particular, there is always room for development if metalinguistic awareness is strategically activated. I indirectly bring students' attention to particular aspects of the target language that may click with them and be the trigger for further acquisition processes.

In the light of my graduate studies and years of experience, I developed a method of teaching in which I try to adapt ways of communicative approach and rely heavily on task-based philosophy. As a language teacher, I believe in contextualizing the language with a balanced integration of all modalities (listening, speaking, reading and writing) by focusing on providing sufficient input to facilitate the development of output. Centering language teaching on learner personal needs and real-life situations through authentic materials is an effective way for

integrating language teaching and achieving the objectives of the language class. In grammar and vocabulary, I believe in implicit learning and I barely do it explicitly. It is all about authentic exposure and learner production rather than mechanical drills and prescriptive rules. I have always looked at my teaching style as indirect instruction, or simply this is how I perceive it. I also give high value to teacher talk as a model and a source of incidental learning. So in my class I try to keep this balance between teacher talk and students' effort. It is important that students stay fully engaged in every moment of the class doing things while the teacher plays the role of the director rather than the script writer.

Looking at the improvement of my teaching over time, I usually approach teaching from a research perspective. My reflective practice as teacher-researcher revolves around learner vocabulary development, analyzing learner's errors and task-based acquisition process. Understanding the learning process as a researcher and relying on a linguistic background have both formed my teaching style so far in a way that I can say I have learnt more from my students than from any other source. This is my academic goal of having a mutual relationship between research and pedagogy in the sense that my practice is driven by research and my research is enriched through practice.

As first impressions matter, I think the final touches also make a difference. I tend to create a love and caring environment in the class over the semester. And just as students care about feedback, I anticipate feedback too and I love to see it in the eyes of my students in the last day of class. It is always a difficult time when I am closing the last class but the most precious reward I find in teaching is leaving good memories and the most precious moments in my life happen when former students greet me with a smile or stop to share a conversation or when one of them approaches me with respect and proudly introduces me: "he was my teacher!"

Link : [Teaching Portfolio](#)