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MY TEACHING PHILOSOPHY: VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

The statements below outline my teaching philosophy. I define it in terms of **values** and **principles**. For me, values are statements of ethical importance, or fundamental ethical assumptions: basic guidelines on which to base my goals and behavior. Principles are statements that specify my goals and behavior in relation to those values. I present three basic values I hold regarding **students**, **teaching**, and **institutions**, followed by some related principles I use to guide my behavior as a teacher.

STUDENTS

Value: Your Students Are Paramount

Principle: I care about and provide service to my students.

Principle: I respect my students' dignity as individuals.

Principle: I treat all my students fairly.

Principle: My students bear the primary responsibility for their own learning; I facilitate and support their efforts.

Principle: I have fun with my students.

Students are individuals with their own deep and complex personalities, values, histories, motivations and abilities. I want to learn about and from my students as much as they wish to allow me to. I support them in their learning objectives, insofar as these align with the goals of the institutional context (see below); I do this by enabling them to further develop their learning skills and knowledge. I treat them with respect and fairness; I expect them to reciprocate. I expect them to take responsibility for their own success. We have fun together.

TEACHING

Value: Be the Best Teacher You Can Be

Principle: I continuously develop my knowledge base of pedagogical theory and practice.

Principle: I am open to new ideas (and to revisiting old ideas) in teaching.

Principle: I participate fully in my professional community, sharing and collaborating with other teachers.

Principle: I have fun doing this.

My first principle of teaching is to continually grow my "portfolio of understanding." While I (mostly) subscribe to the currently dominant theoretical concepts of second language learning, namely, interactionist theory, communicative and intercultural competence, authenticity, learner autonomy, and task-based language teaching, I also believe that other concepts, now out of fashion, may still have value in the appropriate context. I continually balance theoretical research with research into practical experience, both my own and that of my colleagues, available now through a myriad of sources. I am an active member of my profession, sharing materials, techniques, technology, research and experience with my colleagues. We have fun together.

INSTITUTIONS

Value: Support and Comply with the Goals of Your Institution

Principle: I teach at an institution whose values and goals are generally aligned with mine.

Principle: I utilize materials, techniques and approaches that are appropriate for the institutional context.

Principle: I communicate and fairly enforce the policies of the institution.

Principle: I participate fully in the institutional community, doing my part to help the organization learn and grow.

Principle: I also have fun doing this.

Teaching does not happen in a vacuum, but in an institutional context. I align my teaching practices with what is appropriate, reasonable and practical in the institutional context. I choose to teach at an institution whose goals and policies I respect, and I support and enforce those goals and policies. I collaborate with my colleagues --teachers, administrators, support staff-- to continually improve the student experience, curriculum, materials, technology, and all other aspects of the institution. We have fun together.

SUMMARY

I believe teaching institutions, and the teachers they employ, exist to serve students. As a teacher, I believe in treating students with dignity, respect and fairness, and in continually developing the best ways, within the context of my institution, to enable my students to succeed, and I believe in having fun doing it.