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TEACHING PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE

As a faculty member of the Ruth S. Ammon School of Education, I consider my mission to be of twofold nature. On the first hand, to prepare and assist students in obtaining knowledge and skills necessary to become leaders and agents of change in the field of education and related areas of study in our ever changing society. On the other hand, which is the one most immediately related to the classroom, is communicating to my students that in all educational programs, at any level or in any specialty, the teacher is the key to effective learning. It is the teacher who sets the environment which inspires or destroys self-confidence, encourages or suppresses interests, develops or neglects abilities, fosters or banishes creativity, stimulates or discourages critical thinking, and facilitates or frustrates achievement. Both missions underlie my teaching practices. I model the following roles with the hope of fostering in my students their attainment in their own classrooms:

- **TEACHER.** As a teacher, I resist any effort to standardize in order to preserve the art of teaching and the complexities of powerful learning. Therefore, every group of students constitutes an assortment of individuals that pose new possibilities, new opportunities, and new challenges for training. My role is to provide students with an empowering and equitable education; with a curriculum that teaches for understanding and mastery of content and uses technology as a tool to enhance my teaching. Every teacher should have a solid knowledge of human development, an understanding of different thinking processes and behavior patterns, and sensitivity to cultural contexts. Respect for individuality in performance and achievement is a key element in my classroom. I train teachers to become socially and emotionally competent; to use their heart and spirit, their academic knowledge, and

collective life experience from their past and address the present and future with a sense of responsibility and hope.

- **PLANNER.** I plan my courses in a way that my students can experience rich contexts for learning; I offer them multiple pathways and entry points to learning that are appropriate for different strengths and styles of learning. I plan sessions with rich and varied materials, social interactions, activities, and experiences connected to the real world of teaching. I use technology (power point, videos, websites) in my classroom as a support tool, not as a substitution of good teaching. Good planning is a precursor of good teaching.
- **EVALUATOR.** Evaluating my students is an integral part of my teaching. I evaluate them on an on-going basis using multidimensional methods of assessment such as: class presentations, projects that involve creativity and design (see syllabi), class discussions, and written papers. We converse through the papers, they endorse through peer-assessments and I empower them through self-assessment practices.
- **PROFESSIONAL.** Becoming a professional practitioner entails interacting with other colleagues in order to expand and enrich our own research, policy and practice. Within the classroom, I put a lot of emphasis on creating a community of professionals so people look for each other to give advice and support. I also share with my students information about conferences, lectures and workshops; I encourage them to participate and get involve in associations, and to subscribe to relevant journals in their specific field of study.
- **COMMUNICATOR.** This is one of the most important role and responsibility I have as a teacher. I parallel this role to the Chinese ideography of the word CHANGE. Within this word there are 2 symbols: one for opportunity, the other for danger. We constantly communicate the idea that teaching and learning is about changing. Communicate successfully and your opportunity for change is great; communicate the wrong message and the danger for harm and destruction is great. Effective and clear communication of goals, messages, expectations, and knowledge is what defines a teacher as an artist.

- **FACILITATOR.** Teachers should facilitate learning, not dictate information. Teachers must create a warm, safe, and permissive atmosphere for constructive social interaction and share decision making. Teachers must facilitate students' self-directed learning, effort and progress by modeling, coaching, guiding, questioning, and supervising diverse learning experiences.

I love teaching. Good teaching is without equivocation my priority. As a teacher trainer and developer, good teaching, at every level and every context, is not only my responsibility but my obligation.

