

Instructional Philosophy

Adam Luck

An instructional philosophy is an ever changing state of mind. It must remain flexible to new events and changes in approach. A philosophy needs to be updated and reviewed constantly. Through my work experience, both as a professional and as a master's students, my instructional philosophy is built on three fundamental building blocks:

- The instructor acts as a guide
- The learners are the center for instruction
- To promote the development of 21st century citizens

The instructor's main goal is to teach learners how to access information. The instructor should stress the use of different resources available to assist with the development of problem solving skills. Once a learner is out of school, he or she should be able to continue to learn without the instructor. The advent of new technology and the internet puts a world of possibilities into the hands of learners. They should be able to decipher the best use of the tools at hand so that learners can be empowered to continue to learn throughout the rest of their lives. Simply being equipped with technology is not enough to succeed. Learners need to understand how to determine the positives and negatives of new technology to be able to decide the application of it. This stems from the idea that learners need to be able to understand that the potential, or parts of, a solution under one scenario can be used to solve another. If a learner can be successful, meaning that he or she can guide his or her own learning, without the instructor, then knowledge is gained, not just facts that can be forgotten or looked up on the internet.

A learning setting should not be centered on the instructor; rather, the class should be centered on the learner. In this scenario, the instructor should act as a facilitator of knowledge. Learners should be given the opportunity to explain information and interact with it, as opposed to just reciting information given to them by the instructor. The assessment of knowledge is then based on how students are able to articulate and apply learned thought processes. Using technology and differentiated instruction, with the use of clear rubrics and expectations, allows for a learner to connect to the information that stays with them longer as opposed to the end of a unit. Technology can be used to connect learning communities outside of just one particular setting. Allowing learners to experience, and learn from, their peers shifts the focus from the instructor to the learners to create more authentic and longer lasting experiences.

Using knowledge that will stay with learners longer will make it possible to create lifelong learners and promote a student who is connected to the world as opposed to oneself. Technology allows us to extend the connection of people and ideas never before possible. The 21st century mind should be able to realize the value in extending beyond oneself, think critically, and adapt new technologies to old thought process or skills to create potential that wasn't possible before. By staying current with the potential tools and strategies available, an instructor should be able to equip students with their own knowledge of how to connect with the wider world, construct their own knowledge, and live and work responsibly. 21st century learners can be responsible for change, acceptance, innovation and improvement of our position in creating a world society.

This philosophy allows for students to be renaissance learners; a well-rounded learner through all subject matters enabling for the logical problem solving skills in any situation. If an instructor acts as a guide to information, the learner will be able to shape his or her own views and opinions. The hope is that learners will find their place in the world and use the knowledge given to them to make a larger impact on change.