

Teaching Statement

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Jacques Rancière's concept of "intellectual emancipation" guides my teaching methods. Rancière's model emphasizes intellectual equality as a beginning rather than an endpoint in the classroom. This strategy encourages students to facilitate their own intellectual growth. Within this model, the teacher acts as a guide, inducing students to travel on a specific route in order to attain information for themselves. In such an environment, perceived intellectual inequalities, such as the conception of the teacher as knowledgeable and the student as ignorant, disappear. Therefore, students aren't necessarily "told" what to learn, but instead follow their own path to knowledge guided by the teacher.

The principal task of an instructor is to impart skills which students can utilize in both their professional and personal lives. My teaching approach emphasizes analysis, interpretation, and the synthesizing of information alongside the essential professional skills of reading, writing, and communication. Students are expected use these skills to develop their own interpretations of historical events. Most textbooks and history classes have emphasized a master narrative as immutable truth. As historians, we know better and should impart that knowledge onto our students. Following this trajectory, history can be a great pathway to acquiring necessary skills and ways of thought that are desirable in many professions.

No one student is exactly alike and knowledge is acquired in various ways. In order to affect the largest number of students, multiple teaching approaches are essential. I employ a variety of methods in the classroom such as debates, case studies, simulations, and role-play. The application of multiple teaching techniques not only opens several avenues of acquiring knowledge, it also promotes a more personal, hands-on learning experience. I also believe in interdisciplinary forms of learning. At its core, history is a subject that traverses many disciplines. I incorporate science, poetry, art, music and more into the classroom. I believe that it is important to employ these methods rather than a strictly history lecture-based teaching methodology, as the more students are engaged, the more information they will ultimately retain. Teachers must also be aware of student perspectives and try to view learning from the viewpoints of the diverse array of students in a classroom. Allowing the student to explore multiple viewpoints, examine their own values and experiences, and seeing how these connect to the past, make for a much more exciting, cerebral, and personalized experience in the classroom.

As there is no such thing as a perfect instructor, I also firmly believe in self-assessment. As a teacher, it is imperative to assess your own efforts and make appropriate changes. Through student evaluations, peer observations, and teaching journals, instructors can better evaluate their own successes and failures, and react accordingly.

My professional and educational experiences have played a large part in determining my teaching philosophy. I believe history teachers are social servants who are tasked with the vital undertaking of directing students toward skills necessary to live up to their full potential as members of society. History teachers can play a critical role in the lives of many people, and the dignity of which he or she places on this profession can make a positive impact in the lives of many.