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TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

My beliefs about teaching and learning have been shaped by my experiences as a learner, instructor, and first-generation college student. Being on both sides of the classroom has helped me understand how learning occurs. As a learner, I realized I learned best through consistent revision and by connecting course readings to lived experiences. During my undergraduate studies in Ghana, I often revisited course materials after class and organized study groups where we discussed how sociological concepts related to issues we observed in our communities. These moments shaped my belief that students understand concepts more deeply when they can connect ideas to their own experiences. These insights continue to guide my teaching and the learning environments I create.

I believe learning occurs most effectively when students are actively engaged rather than simply listening to lectures. Students learn by building on what they already know and relating new ideas to their everyday lives. For example, when introducing basic sociological concepts such as culture, and socialization, I ask students to share everyday examples from their families so they can recognize sociological patterns in their daily interactions. My approach to teaching emphasizes student-centered learning and recognizes students as whole individuals with diverse backgrounds and ways of knowing. My goal is for students to leave my class with skills and perspectives that remain valuable long after the course ends so rather than focusing primarily on what is taught or the methods of instruction.

In my classroom, students play an active role in the learning process. I view students as active participants who construct knowledge through discussion, reflection, and collaboration

rather than passive recipients of information. To support this, I design activities that require students to engage with course concepts and apply them to real-world contexts. For example, I incorporate think–pair–share discussions, critical thinking assignments, small-group discussions, and brief reflective writing activities that allow students to interpret sociological concepts using examples from their own communities and experiences. These activities allow students to develop analytical skills while actively constructing their understanding of sociological ideas.

My responsibility as an instructor is to guide discussions, clarify complex ideas, and create an environment where students feel comfortable asking questions and sharing their perspectives. I believe that students learn best when they feel supported, so I strive to ensure that all students can follow the learning process by adjusting my pace and explanations based on their needs. For example, I regularly check for understanding through brief discussions, questions, and short in-class activities that help identify areas where students may need additional clarification.

Assessment in my course is designed to measure how well students can apply concepts rather than simply recall information. For example, I incorporate low-stakes activities such as brief written responses or discussion prompts that allow me to check students' understanding during the semester. These assessments help students demonstrate their ability to analyze social issues critically while giving them opportunities to receive feedback and improve their work overtime. I also believe assessment should support learning rather than serve solely as a measure of grades. I provide regular feedback on assignments and offer opportunities for revision so that students can strengthen their understanding and develop skills that extend beyond individual assignments.

Beyond academics, I aim to provide guidance, encouragement, and access to resources that support students' overall development. I strive to model curiosity, commitment, and respect

in the classroom, while remaining open to feedback that allows me to continuously improve my teaching. I am also intentional about fostering a positive classroom climate, recognizing that while a negative environment can hinder learning and performance, a supportive and engaging atmosphere can energize and enhance student learning (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991).

In essence, I view teaching and learning as an ongoing, shared journey. My goal is to guide students to think critically, make ethical choices, and use sociological knowledge to better understand and positively engage with the world around them.

REFERENCE

Pascarella, E. T., & Terenzini, P. T. (2005). *How college affects students: A third decade of research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.