

Purposeful Pedagogies: Teaching Philosophies of High Quality, Student-Centered Educators



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Research Question: *What are teaching philosophies of quality educators, & how are they enacted?*

Methodology:

- Qualitative interpretive study
- Six faculty participants chosen:
 - From 5 different institutions across the U.S. (large, small, public, private)
 - Who teach in the field of higher education/student affairs & hold varying ranks (clinical, assistant, associate)
 - Who represent diverse social identities & are recognized by other faculty in the field as exemplary
- Data collection process:
 - Interviews + observations of each faculty member during a 3-hour class session
 - Interviews/focus groups of students of each faculty member focused on experiences and perspectives
 - Analyzed course documents & teaching philosophy statements
- Interview transcription, member check with faculty participants, & thematic data analysis

FINDINGS

THEME 1: APPROACHING TEACHING PRACTICE WITH INTENTIONALITY

Participants approached their teaching purposefully & intentionally. They were thoughtful in constructing course syllabi; selecting & developing learning activities assignments; & employing teaching strategies. Additionally, participants had clearly articulated philosophies of teaching that guided their practice.

THEME 2: SUPPORTING STUDENTS

Supporting students, as individuals & as learners, was central to participants' pedagogical principles & approaches. They exhibited care & compassion for students, & they sought to validate students in their identities, experiences, and perspectives. Additionally, participants aimed to make themselves available & approachable to students.

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FINDINGS CONTINUED

THEME 3: CHALLENGING STUDENTS TO GROW

Student learning was a central focus & priority for participants, & they believed it was important to challenge students in order to facilitate students' learning & growth. Participants set high expectations for students' engagement in the course & believed that significant learning comes from pushing & challenging students as well as through creating dissonance & even discomfort in the classroom. This theme showed up in the classroom as well through designing course assignments & providing ample constructive feedback to students.

THEME 5: BEING ADAPTABLE AND TRYING NEW APPROACHES

Participants continuously adapted & modified their teaching approaches in response to student needs & group dynamics. Additionally, they tried new & often innovative strategies in the classroom & when designing course assignments. Participants also sought out feedback from students & used the feedback to make adjustments to the courses.

THEME 4: ENCOURAGING STUDENTS TO ENGAGE WITH AND CO-CONSTRUCT THE CURRICULUM

Participants believed it was important for students to meaningfully connect with & engage with the curriculum, & they employed pedagogical approaches that encouraged this engagement & that enabled students to co-construct the curriculum. Post-structural & constructivist approaches were evident in the participants' teaching philosophies and approaches.

THEME 6: ENGAGING IN THEIR OWN SELF-WORK

Demonstrating a keen sense of self-awareness, the participants were forthcoming about engaging in their own self-work. They were reflective & saw themselves as learners. By engaging in ongoing self-work they believed they could better serve & educate their students.