

## Philosophy of Teaching

I think in any setting it is important to assess the needs of the learner first. I have been in teaching situations before where I've had to completely change my lesson plans because they did not address what the students needed at that moment. I also believe a facilitator has a responsibility to try to reach as many of the students as possible in a way that will be effective for them. This may mean stepping out of my comfort zone and trying new things. It seems arrogant to me to try to teach the way that I am most comfortable with and expect to be equally effective with every learner. This means that facilitators should always be seeking higher levels of awareness within themselves as well as in their environments. This awareness will also help foster a safe learning environment for the students. Students will tell you a lot about their learning styles just by which words they use and the ways they choose to express themselves. These subtle hints can help tailor the teaching style to the students learning style. I also think it is important to be progressing in my craft. I have been told that if you're not progressing your regressing, and I think this is especially true in teaching. Tools and techniques become outdated so fast because of the enhancements in technology that if an instructor is not keeping up with the times they will become obsolete. To me, facilitators have an obligation to their students to deliver material in the way that will be the most effective for the learner.

I also believe that students have an obligation to help themselves. For instance, if they tend to be a kinesthetic learner, then that does not give them an excuse to not try to learn something being delivered visually. It also means that they are responsible for expressing what they need so the facilitator can work with them to meet those needs. It is unfair for a learner to sit silently in the back of a room and then become upset that the facilitator did not cater to them. While facilitators need to be sensitive to the fact that adult learners are coming into the learning

environment with previous experiences that will shape their perceptions, learners also need to be aware of how their experiences might be affecting their ability to learn. I think learners need to allow themselves to be receptive to what is being taught. If they are not willing to be receptive to something new then they need to allow other students to feel safe in that learning environment.

I think assessment is an important part of the learning process. I don't necessarily mean some sort of test needs to be given. But, there should be something to give the facilitator feedback on their effectiveness and to measure learning transfer for the students. For many hard skills this can be a pretty simple process because students can either do the thing they were learning or they can't. A student's understanding and synthesis of a theory can be expressed in a variety of ways. However, in some cases, particularly when soft skills are being taught, showing that the learning transfer took place will only happen if or when the student feels comfortable to implement those skills on their own. Teaching these skills is the most challenging and rewarding to me because, no matter how well someone does in a simulation or role-play, if they are not utilizing the skills outside the classroom it is hard to know if the teaching was effective.