

The most important figures of my academic experience have been teachers who demonstrated what it means to be a person who learns and leads with empathy, passion, and curiosity. They provided a space for me to **explore**, to **be critical**, to **collaborate**, and to **be tested in new and interesting ways**, which have become the main tenets of my teaching philosophy and what I hope to embody in my teaching. These collections of experiences helped me grow into someone who leads with compassion, creativity, and trusts their students' ability to be the drivers of their learning. Through my teaching experiences, I have developed strategies and methods that are connected to these values. Below, I will explain the tenets of my teaching philosophy and demonstrate how I have expressed these in my teaching experiences.

Deep exploration of material. I believe that students learn best when exposed to many different sources of information. This includes academic research and course texts, but also through meaningful learning modes often viewed as “unconventional” or “non-traditional” such listening to community voices in interviews and podcasts, reports from non-governmental organizations, and direct observation. “Non-traditional” material can be utilized to be inclusive of different perspectives and types of learning that provide a more enriched understanding of concepts and delivery and can be combined to create a dynamic understanding of the course material. When I was a teaching assistant (TA) in *Sport and Exercise Psychology*, which explored theoretical frameworks and real-world scenarios for athletes and exercisers, students were asked to read a peer-reviewed research article and an accompanying “non-traditional” source that touched on the same topic and to discuss their perspectives from the assignment in groups. I facilitated these discussions and was exposed to sources the students found on their own and observed how learning through diverse mediums changed the way they viewed the topic they were given. In future courses, I will be inclusive of all types of learning and will guide students how to connect different types of materials to form a cohesive understanding of a topic.

To be critical of existing knowledge. A dominant thought in academic teaching is that evidence-based, peer-reviewed papers are infallible, which has contributed to a lot of mistrust and disillusionment with traditional academic institutions for those that feel they aren't reflected in these systems. It is important to teach students about the precise and systematic nature of academic research, but also to envision how to be critical of this work and engage in meaningful discussions with those who may disagree. As instructor of *Research Methods in Kinesiology*, where course material focused on teaching students about study design, methodology, data analysis, and interpretation of findings, sought to create a space to see the rigor, conflicts, and flaws within research by having students read research articles and assess their strengths, weaknesses, and future research that builds off ideas presented in the current paper. I was a TA for *History and Philosophy of Sport and Exercise*, which covered the foundation of sport and exercise in previous centuries up to modern times and discussed recurring issues and themes that throughout history. In this course, I facilitated similar assignments for students who were able to choose a topic they felt drawn to and built an argument based on their research of the topic. Through these assignments for both courses, I enabled students to gauge the quality of evidence presented and to present their own ideas for future growth. I believe learning how to absorb knowledge, digest the context and methodology of the argument, then assess its quality, is essential for their future work as a professional. Additionally, it helps students learn how to work with different perspectives by peers who come from different frameworks of thought, which in turn, will make them better learners and team members.

To collaborate with peers and instructors. Almost every profession involves some component of engagement with your peers and supervisors, and I believe it takes practice to learn how to manage the creation and presentation of a final project, whatever form that may take.

Collaboration can also spark ideas and enhance knowledge that may be beyond what I as a teacher provide. This also speaks to an important aspect of learning: understanding how others' life circumstances, upbringings, and perspectives may lead them to a wealth of ideas about a subject. It is critical to be able to work with people who have differing outlooks and learn how to work together for something greater than the individual. To aid students in this practice, I have created assignments in *Undergraduate Research Methods* where students are grouped together by professional interests and are tasked with creating a research project, from brainstorming ideas through final data analyses. Here, students must learn how to collaborate and work through conflict, with my guidance when needed. Similarly, in *Sport and Exercise Psychology*, students were assigned to a scenario with a hypothetical person dealing with an issue related to sports or exercise and worked together to decide the best plan of action. Throughout these assignments, I have learned the value of creating opportunities for students to collaborate and problem-solve. It has also contributed to a broadening of ideas on how I can improve these experiences for future courses, such as creating a version of community agreement contracts for groups ahead of a project, where they outline their values and the guidelines they will have for each other in the collaboration process.

To be evaluated in new and interesting ways. As an academic, I have applied the knowledge I've learned from my courses to real-life situations and problems, which has pushed me to have a deeper understanding of the material. I also find great value in understanding that there are often many different routes one can take to get to a solution, so long as the thought process is clearly delineated. I aim to evaluate students in a way that necessitates using the course material to solve complex issues and topics such as creating open-ended exam questions that require the integration of multiple constructs into cohesive answers. I also value the ability of students to present and relay information to an audience who may be less familiar with the material. In *Undergraduate Research Methods* and *Sport and Exercise Psychology*, students presented their projects together and practiced how to field questions, comments, and critiques from their classmates. Additionally, I believe in frequent evaluations of myself as the instructor throughout the semester. Each group of students is different in their pre-existing knowledge and needs, so I find it helpful to do anonymous check-ins of my teaching and their understanding of the material as the semester progresses, such as a short survey asking about the strengths, weaknesses, and suggestions for better teaching the material. With that feedback, I can tailor how I deliver messages, assignments, and what I am doing well to create a more meaningful learning experience for my students. In Spring of 2022, I earned the Kinesiology Excellence in Teaching Award that I believe reflected my hard work and willingness to adjust my teaching style to match my students' learning needs.

In summary, students who are interested in health promotion are invested in learning about strategies that promote community change. To achieve this, students will learn the systems and theoretical models that provide structure for addressing these needs but will also require a deep understanding of how to listen to different voices, to be critical of existing knowledge, and to work together to achieve a common goal. The courses I will teach will emphasize these principles while also evolving with students' needs.