**What is your online teaching philosophy?**

In the last discussion for the course, we're going to synthesize all concepts from Modules 1-5 and formalize our teaching philosophy as it relates specifically to the online environment. Please consider each of the questions below in a well-developed post that demonstrates your understanding of the course materials as they relate to *your online teaching philosophy*:

* What impact do the environment, motivation, learning styles and self-directedness have on learning?
* What are the roles and responsibilities of learners? In what ways can you facilitate learners' obtaining the skills needed to learn online?
* What personal characteristics in yourself or your learners influence the way in which you approach online teaching?
* What goals have you set for yourself as an online instructor?

The online learning environment is a relatively new phenomenon and one in which many kinds of students can thrive. When thinking about the online learning environment, students' entire educational experience will benefit from a strong teacher presence, an active cognitive presence, and well facilitated social presence. Student motivation may depend in part on teacher effort, especially for those students who are extrinsically motivated. Taking time to build rapport with students and creating a fun and engaging learning environment will ensure that students are comfortable working with the teacher and will encourage their drive to succeed in the class.

Each learner is unique, and their specific learning style will impact their learning. Grasha (1996) describes several types of leaning styles, and evaluating students early on to determine their learning style can be helpful in crafting a classroom environment that is comfortable for all and that best facilitates learning. The degree of self-directedness a student has will be specific to each individual learner and can be an informative tool for educators to help guide their learning. Dependent learners will need more direction and lots of feedback; interested learners will need more positive feedback to stay on track; involved learners will utilize the tools at their disposal to navigate coursework; and self-directed learners will need less support than others but will benefit from more challenging tasks.

The online learning environment is an exciting space for students. It provides them with more flexibility and opportunities for self-directed learning. However, this does entail greater responsibility on the part of the learner. In addition to the usual responsibilities of being a student (completing homework assignments, being an active reader and listener), students in this space must take on a more active role, staying on top of their assignments and communicate with their teacher when they need additional assistance.

As a teacher in an online course, I can facilitate students becoming more responsible by using a variety of tools in the learning management system. For example, discussion board posting can help students become more actively engaged with their classmates and gain a sense of identity in an online community. The calendar and announcement tools can help students learn time management skills and keep up to date on the latest information from the course.

One of my goals as an online instructor is to better feedback faster. As a face to face teacher it is easy to give steady formative feedback during class time. I want to use the tools in Speedgrader, like document annotation and video/audio feedback, to emulate personalized feedback in the online environment. In my experience so far, contact with students is mostly made in class and sometimes through email. In taking this course I learned that as online instructors we are required to make at least one phone call each quarter. Since I will not have daily contact with my students, I would like to make at least one additional phone call (two or more) per quarter to every student.

Although we do not have a physical classroom that we can call our own, I think that a teacher's personality still comes through in the online teaching space that they create. Personally, I see myself as an empathetic teacher who uses metacognition and cultural sensitivity to drive my teaching, lesson creation, and interactions with learners. It will be an exciting new challenge to translate those characteristics into online teaching, but I think I now have the tools necessary to make this happen.