Teaching Philosophy
Stephanie Baumann

I believe that in order for students to be effective learners, they must first have effective teachers. A student may have all the qualifications for success, but without a teacher that not only provides informational content, but also helps students connect with and reflect on the material, that student is less likely to grow both academically and personally. As an instructor, it is my role to create a classroom that fosters both growth and learning in an engaging way. Thus I strive to express my passion and enthusiasm for the subject matter in every lesson I teach and emphasize the practical applications of psychological principles in order to help students recognize the value of the course material to their lives. I accomplish these goal in three ways: 1) I make students an active part of their learning process and foster critical thinking skills though reflections on the role of psychology in their lives, 2) I encourage students to explore the ways in which psychology fits into their personal and professional goals with frequent connections to outside learning, and 3) I strive to make my instruction accessible to all types of learners through multi-modal presentation of course material and assignments.

Fostering Student Growth through Self-Reflection

My focus on fostering individual student growth has been developed through my own educational experience with teachers that have reinforced my academic confidence by challenging me to reflect on my own processes and passions. I believe that teaching should go beyond just the factual course content, and extend to helping students grow in both their understanding of their own learning styles, as well as encouraging students to
discover and cultivate their passions. One way that I do this is through encouraging frequent self-reflection writing assignments, which allow students to think critically about their own learning processes and fine-tune the way in which they approach new information. I gather this information prior to exams in order to inform a lesson on study techniques, and then have students reflect again after the exam about their exam preparation process. These reflections also allow me to examine my own instructional techniques and make sure that I’m providing appropriate content depth and explanation in all of my lectures.

Similarly, I have students take time to explore how certain topics or skills taught in my class may apply to their personal or career goals, and allow them opportunities to focus assignments, such as research papers or short essays, on areas that are particularly interesting to them. Not only does this make the material more salient to the students, but allows students to think critically about their own passions. It also allows me to ensure that I’m focusing on material that is both interesting and applicable to students, particularly in courses with a large amount of course material such as Developmental Psychology. I hope that my students will apply these self-reflection and critical thinking skills not only in my classroom, but in their future learning and career endeavors.

**Learning Outside of Class**

Similar to many of my students, I did not take a traditional route into my current career field, and as a result I recognize that learning outside of the classroom is equally as applicable as content learned in class. Thus, I strongly encourage students to get involved with additional opportunities within the department or community that continue to
advance the science or application of psychology. I do so by frequently connecting students to opportunities for research, service, and community involvement, as well as discussing ways in which course content can relate to their daily lives. It is my goal that all students leave my courses with an understanding of how and why material from each course fits into their lives, and what opportunities may be available to them to explore these areas further.

**Multi-modal Presentation of Content**

As my research and professional experience primarily focus on individuals with neurodevelopmental and intellectual disabilities, I understand that some informational formats are more difficult for certain learners, and strive to make sure that the presentation of materials is not a barrier to learning in my classroom. One way that I do this is through utilizing a variety of presentation techniques and technological supports that introduce the same information in a variety of ways. For example, I strive to present every concept in my class in at least 2-3 different formats, such as video examples, infographics, visual handouts, and verbal discussion, and make all of these types of examples accessible to students after class, so that students who have difficulty processing information from one format have additional resources that reinforce the same content. I also require periodic feedback from my students to assess whether there are particular modes of conveying content that are being under or overrepresented in my presentations. This not only allows me to ensure that I am providing content in an appropriate way for each individual class, but also encourages students to reflect on their own learning styles and preferences for processing material.
Courses I Am Qualified to Teach

PSYC 1101: Introduction to General Psychology

PSYC 2030: Careers in Psychology

PSYC 2103: Introduction to Human Development

PSYC 3510: Introduction to Research Design and Analysis

PSYC 4040: Developmental Psychology