

Online Teaching Philosophy

Amber K. Worthington

As many university courses are now offered online, I believe that it is important to consider how online teaching influences the learning process. I have therefore adapted my teaching philosophy for online courses to meet the unique benefits and challenges associated with this new and exciting platform. My online courses are structured to achieve the same objectives as my in-person courses. These objectives include teaching students how to think by fostering critical thinking, research, and writing skills. Students should be able to reason logically and statistically and to differentiate causation from correlation. They should also be able to communicate complex ideas in clear speech and writing. Additionally, I aim to promote long-term retention of information. Students should be encouraged to repeatedly apply the material to promote real, rather than rote, learning. In order to achieve these goals online, I think it is important to consider effective ways to communicate online, to engage students in the learning process online, and to evaluate assignments online.

I think that in order to effectively teach an online course, it is important to establish an online presence and connection with students through active and frequent communication. I begin each semester by sending students a video that introduces both the course and myself. I also communicate with students not only through weekly emails to the entire class, but also by making myself available to meet with students online through phone calls or Skype meetings.

I believe that students in online courses deserve an active and stimulating learning environment. In order to achieve this goal and engage students in the online learning process, the online courses that I teach use a combination of textbook readings, video clips, online assignments, and recorded lectures. For example, my online Organizational Communication course includes activities that require students to watch and analyze a video about an organization using information from the course. Additionally, in my online Effective Speech: Group Communication course, I recorded a video lecture to help students create, write, and organize their individual speeches. I hope to continually adapt the online activities I use with new and exciting learning opportunities that are designed to engage students. For example, I think incorporating podcasts and simulations into online courses offers a potentially interesting way to engage students with the course material.

It is important to make students feel that, as an online teacher, I am committed to their success in effectively learning the course material. In order to do so, I provide students with personalized, detailed feedback on their assignments. I believe that this motivates them to engage with the material and perform well in the class. Additionally, if a student misses an online assignment, I feel that it is important to reach out to them to see if they are experiencing any technological or other issues.

I believe that learning to effectively teach online is an ongoing process, and I aim to further expand the pedagogical tools I currently employ. Doing so involves active participation in teaching courses and workshops, including, for example, the Foundations for Online Teaching Certificate that I completed in April 2018. I am also in the process of completing the Instructional Practice Certificate and the Learner and Learning Certificate, with the goal of expanding and developing my online teaching skills.

Online courses offer exciting opportunities for students in geographically diverse areas, and effective online teaching involves adapting to the unique benefits and challenges associated with this platform. I believe that students in online courses are entitled to high quality instruction in an active and stimulating learning environment, and I strive to provide that in each online course that I teach.