

Robert Strong – Teaching Philosophy

My objectives as an educator are to inspire, instruct and motivate students to learn the content presented during the course and apply that knowledge in practical settings. Of the five adult learning orientations identified by Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner (2007), my learning orientation is centered on behaviorism. Behaviorists believe the environment shapes behavior and view learning as a change to desired behavior. I will strive to foster a positive and comfortable learning environment for learners in order to foster successful behavior change.

I work to increase learner's knowledge in subject matter by utilizing experiential learning (Dewey, 1938; Kolb, 1984) along with the behaviorist's tradition. Also, I strive to learn the various learning orientations and motivational orientations (Houle, 1961) of adult students in my courses in order to best address participant needs.

When teaching adults, I hope to be constantly aware of six adult learning assumptions outlined by Knowles, Holton III, and Swanson (2005). Adults need to know why they need the information, learner's self-concept of being responsible for their own decisions, utilize learner's experiences to foster learning, learner's readiness to learn to address a real-life situation, adults are problem-centered, and adults are responsive to external motivations. I believe developing an understanding of these six concepts, having the ability to articulate them, and the aptitude to apply them when teaching adult audiences will cultivate more robust learning outcomes.

My mission is to make every effort to incorporate active learning strategies into my teaching based upon the objectives of the lesson for the session. I will identify when opportunities for cooperative learning exist and utilize those occasions to foster improved participant learning. With technology-assisted learning, I would utilize experiential learning regularly. Seaman Knapp said "What a man does he cannot doubt" in relation to demonstration plots. Demonstration plots are experiential learning techniques and examples of nonformal

Robert Strong – Teaching Philosophy

teaching methods. I feel nonformal teaching methods can be effectively incorporated into a formal learning environment including technology-assisted learning.

There are several examples of experiential learning techniques I have designed, delivered and administered in distance education courses at UF. Those approaches not only fostered positive learning outcomes but offered adults insight on diverse teaching methods to use on clientele within their own profession. I want to empower learners to believe they can make a difference in our world.

A personal objective of mine is to be known as an effective team member in my department and to promote the department across the land-grant's campus (the whole state). Also, I feel the best rewards from teaching are when I experience learners increasing learning capacity, problem solving under challenging circumstances, and putting knowledge to work. The mission of the land-grant system is to provide research based knowledge to the general public by “bringing the university to the people” (Rasmussen, 1989).

I strongly believe technology-assisted learning is well positioned to deliver formal and nonformal instruction to accomplish the land-grant institution's objectives. I want to make land-grant universities better by being committed to the mission, values and norms by making education available to all people. Making a positive difference in the lives of my students through instruction, advising, mentoring, and encouragement via teaching methods utilized with course material is my focal point. I feel blessed and honored to have the opportunity to teach, research, and extend the mission of land-grants to learners with diverse interests and backgrounds.

I am open to teaching distance courses in Second Life. This platform offers a variety of experiences for an educator to incorporate active, cooperative and experiential learning as the

Robert Strong – Teaching Philosophy

environment is interactive. The virtual condition Second Life provides enables the characterization of individuals involved in distance learning. Though not heavily utilized at this time, Second Life may provide my educators and learners another popular learning management system in five to ten years. I believe my teaching philosophy associated with technology-assisted learning will evolve due to innovative software platforms like Second Life.

I believe learning objectives are the foundation of a technology-assisted learning. Without **Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timely** learning objectives, I feel technology-assisted learning can not accomplish its full potential. My identity as an educator is defined by instructional delivery methods appropriate for the learning objectives in distance learning or face-to-face instruction.