

Dr. Monte J. Shaffer's Teaching Philosophy

I considered a Ph.D. in Instructional Psychology and Technology, before realizing that Marketing was my calling in life. I have taken graduate level courses in Principles of Learning, one general and the other specific to Mathematics. I have also taken graduate level courses in Instructional Design and Knowledge Management.

Teaching Philosophy

A teaching philosophy begins with a general philosophy of ontology and epistemology. Ontology refers to "what is" as in "what is truth." Epistemology refers to "what is to know." To understand teaching and learning, it is essential to understand these two elemental principles of philosophy. The final ingredient of the philosophy is the "who."

Ontology: Phenomenological Perspective

Phenomenology (Husserl 1913) is defined "as the reflective study of the essence of consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view." Generally, it describes the act of consciousness (noesis) toward an object (noema). Constrained rationality represents the "essence of consciousness" informed by experience. Truth is a unique experience of the observer. There are different ways to view the same truth. A phenomenological perspective allows for different views and the goal in teaching is to increase one's experience.

Epistemology: Situated Learning Perspective

Educators many times use the term of "social constructivism" to describe the knowing process. I agree with this term as it is consistent with phenomenology. More specifically, I believe knowing is about experience, both anticipations and replications. An individual constructs reality (Kelly 1963), and in a group setting, truth is socially constructed. That is the foundational of acquiring knowledge. I believe that experience, anticipation, and replications are the key ingredients of epistemology. With that belief, I believe that learners need to be acculturated to the language, symbols, and meaning of a particular social group, or community. Lave and Wenger (1991) describe this acculturation process in "communities of practice" as legitimate peripheral participation. As a marketing educator, it is my responsibility to prepare students to practice marketing in the real world. This requires apprenticeship, mentoring, and course development that give my students tools to succeed in marketplace.

Who: Learner/Teacher

The final aspect of my teaching philosophy is a perception of "who" is involved in the learning process. I believe every person on this earth has unlimited potential, and that potential is only constrained by personal belief. An unconstrained individual who "stands in the place of possibility" is both a learner and a teacher. Learner/Teacher is a coupled description of "who." This philosophy of "who" as the Learner/Teacher is the basis for "teaching for exponential growth" as defined by Walter Gong. This "3 person problem" means that everyone in my classroom is both a learner and a teacher. Their opportunities to do both will create the potential for exponential growth, constrained only by their own belief.