Teaching Philosophy

I actually really prefer the terminology "Professional Philosophy" because my core beliefs are grounded universally across my professional practice, not just representative of my beliefs about the teaching and learning process. Nonetheless, I define teaching as a shared responsibility between educator and learner, where each participant is an active consumer of information that is thereafter translated to knowledge. The educator does not act as the bestower of information, and the student does not act as the passive recipient of information; rather, both are actively engaged in the process of learning discovery. This shared approach is demonstrated through four core constructs that define how I practice teaching: self-awareness, authenticity, strengths-based, and evidence-based.

The first core component of my philosophy is profound, as it assumes a much less traditional lens that focuses on the individual as a whole person prior to even thinking about their pedagogical context. We put so much emphasis and efforts into structured learning processes in an exclusive context that we sometimes forget that we are people first. I am a person first. You are a person first. And without adequate self-awareness, I think it is impossible to present my best and whole self to an audience that relies on me to lead the learning process. This awareness finds its origins through subjective, critical introspection, which extends to more concrete, objective measures related to the teaching and learning process. Such awareness allows me to create a space that is psychologically and physically supportive in facilitating students' learning process and in delivering content that is authentically, constructively aligned.

I represent my passion for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in teaching practice to create spaces in which learners can feel empowered to be authentic and share their experiences, again emphasizing the shared approach to teaching and learning. The research on active learning and andragogical principles that emphasize the learner-centricity of learning is endless. In my methods, I don't lecture or 'throw information' at students. Instead, I facilitate conversations around topic areas. For example, when covering content related to learning theory and content specific approaches, I use discussion questions for students to actively participate and contribute their ideas to the session. In so doing, students make the information truly, subjectively meaningful but more so help in creating a space that is psychologically safe for more students to share regardless of their perceived competence in the content area of discussion.

It is my belief that teaching should assume a strengths-based approach. I incorporate the principles of positive psychology theory, as it emphasizes the importance of character strengths, grit, and resilience, positive attributes that if capitalized upon can render the learning process so much more effective. For example, when delivering content on diagnoses and differentials I sometimes run a flipped classroom, where I assign groups of students various classes of disorders to present on. Through this method, students are (consciously or unconsciously) engaged in reflection on their strengths in distributing which members take charge of various components related to the assignment. An important element of my teaching practice is to ensure students make meaningful

connections with the content that they are learning, which can be established through a strengths-based approach.

The final component of my teaching resides with a strong focus on evidence-based approaches and commitment to continuous professional development. I ensure that my strategies are aligned with current best practices by staying abreast on most current research in my areas of expertise. Through reviewing existing literature, conducting my own primary research, writing my blogs, and attending/presenting at conferences, I operationalize this dedication to continuous professional development. These activities inform my incorporation of the cyclical nature of the teaching and learning process: research, design, teach, evaluate, assess outcomes.

In the words of Mark Von Doren, "The art of teaching is the art of assisting discovery." I am not the bestower of information. I am not the infallible deliverer of content. My students are not passive recipients of information. I strive to embody these core tenets in my practice by creating spaces that emphasize the shared approach to the teaching and learning process. It is through this approach that I fulfil my goal of empowering students to take charge of their learning and realize just how many rich and insightful experiences they bring to their places of learning.