

Educational Technology Philosophy Statement

I believe that all learners have valuable life experiences, skills, and goals that should be acknowledged and actively integrated into course curriculum. By integrating these aspects into my courses, I focus on acting as a guide as opposed to a classroom leader. Though I would be presenting learners with important information as part of the course, I would also be focusing on getting to know my students as individuals and assist them in exploring their own unique self-concepts, life experiences, skills, and goals. Helping students to connect these personal characteristics and motivations to the course material will aid them in experiencing transformative learning which is the type of learning I am most passionate about helping my students achieve. Transformative learning is a learning theory developed by sociologist Jack Mezirow that views the learner as a whole person who can learn new information while simultaneously reevaluating previous knowledge, beliefs, and understandings through reflection and critical thinking.

Though I currently have little professional teaching experience, I am interested in teaching adult learners in either professional development or higher education settings. In my personal experience as a learner, transformative learning often occurs when both experiential learning and self-directed learning are also experienced. For example, when I first became interested in pursuing a career in teaching, I engaged in months of self-directed learning by researching online with resources such as YouTube and Reddit. I also read many books and journals to develop a better understanding of the teaching profession and what different options were available to me. The time spent engaged in self-directed learning helped me to develop my own opinions and secure a foundation in my approach towards teaching. However, it was not until I began teaching children in a Montessori that I truly understood all that my research had

taught me. Having the hands-on experience of teaching and learning from veteran teachers allowed me to experience transformative learning. I was able to apply the knowledge I had learned on my own to the new skills and techniques I was being taught on the job. This experience was transformative in that it helped me to reassess my previous beliefs and assumptions and integrate the new knowledge I had learned into not only my teaching practices but into my personal worldview.

Though experiential learning and self-directed learning can be achieved in many ways, I think utilizing educational technology in my classes is a rewarding and efficient way for students to experience these types of learning. Experimenting with technology in the classroom will give students opportunities to complete assignments and create materials in nontraditional ways that may be new and exciting to many students. Even when students are proficient in technology in general, there are always new educational technology tools to explore or a strengthening of skill and understanding in tools that are already familiar to learners. Learning new programs and having the opportunity to work with these technologies in a hands-on way will personalize a student's learning experiences and encourage them to actively interact with the material. For example, having students introduce themselves using Book Creator to create an eBook will help me get to know my students and will help them to get clear on their experiences, goals, and intentions for taking my course. Actively engaging with their assignment by using a creativity tool such as Book Creator will give them practice in relating the upcoming course material to their own transformation both academically and personally.

By having students reflect on their interests, experiences, and goals and by giving them opportunities to use technology to express themselves, I believe they will be on their way to experiencing transformative learning. Encouraging students to identify these aspects of

themselves and apply what they discover to the material being taught in class will also increase the motivation and independence of learners so that they can succeed in self-directed learning assignments. I think it is important to integrate self-directed learning into class curriculum because this experience will show students that they can learn any material, subject, skill, or profession that they desire. Assigning self-directed learning projects will offer confidence in not only their proficiency of the material being taught and the educational technologies being used but will also offer a personal confidence to the learner. This confidence is extremely beneficial to the learner's well-being as well as their academic and professional pursuits.

Educational technology also encourages adaptability and vulnerability in the classroom which makes both learners and teachers more open to constructive criticism. Traditional course work that does not incorporate technology often leads to complacent students who become uncomfortable interacting with others or exploring new techniques, methods, and technologies. Incorporating educational technology will help both students and I be more open to change which creates further opportunities for learning. Engaging with technology allows for the teacher and learner to go through similar experiences as we explore new technologies. This will create opportunities for important relationship-building interactions between learners and teachers to occur. These experiences unify the classroom which assists learners in achieving transformative learning.