

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

Teaching is an art. With different instructional tools and models, teachers craft useful learning styles that cater to the unique needs of individual learner. A good student needs an enabling learning environment to acquire and process the right form of information required to advance in their education. A good teacher creates that enabling environment. As teachers guide students to learn and tackle problems in the classroom, students' problem-solving skills are further developed. The importance of this transcends the immediate classroom because the critical and analytical skills that students are exposed to in the classroom, implicitly help them pick up the requisite knowledge they need to make informed decisions in life. In my classes, I have always ensured to inspire my students to not just commit facts to memory but to process those facts and information in such a way that they can perfectly relate to the ideas and make sense of them.

I take (1) communication, (2) diligence to duty and (3) enthusiasm as the tripod on which my teaching philosophy stands. Effective communication and interpersonal skills help teachers relate to their students better and get the message across seamlessly. By diligence to duty I mean hard work on the job and zero compromise on integrity and ethics. Enthusiasm has an electrifying effect on students; teachers who show high sense of passion in what they do elicit equal measure of interest in the subject from their students.

My role as a teacher can be summed up thus: I see myself as a Tour Guide, a Facilitator and a Guarded Enforcer of rules.

I consider myself as a Tour Guide who leads students on a tour of discovery. My main objective is to begin every tour by providing my students with an idea of the main purpose of the entire trip. This big picture that I have sketched in my minds is then accompanied with background information that puts both of us on the same page. As the journey gets underway, my role is to

point to the scenic attractions, providing the significant bullet points attached to the concept under discussion. When students stop me, like most tourists do, to ask questions based on a striking object that caught their attention as we walk down a path filled with interesting concepts, I graciously allow just as much time to address their concerns depending on the relevance of the question to our purpose of the trip and how far we still need to go. As we reach notable sites, I highlight the main subject matters providing detailed explanations and at the end of the tour, I emphasise important take-aways.

Apart from being a tour guide, I fulfil the role of a Facilitator. In my capacity as a facilitator, I simplify the learning process by organising a classroom environment that is conducive to effective learning. Cognisant of individual differences in learning needs, I adopt my flexibility skill to accommodate different instruction methodologies. Besides the textbooks, I provide handouts, slides, visual aids and make students brainstorm in groups. Recently, I conceived of the idea of creating an app that talks about the culture of the Yoruba people of Nigeria. My students now find it a fun way of learning. I often refer my students to relevant digital contents that I find useful for a classroom discussion. While facilitation entails walking students through the rough paths by providing learning tools that aid easy understanding, the teacher has the responsibility to first get the students tuned in to the right frequency especially when a totally new concept is to be introduced. One method I adopt is to identify relevant points that students are already familiar with and help them connect the dots as I introduce them to the new concept.

The Guarded Enforcer. Most times when people say teachers must clearly define the boundaries between themselves and students, they mean that teachers should exert their authority forcefully and by all punitive means possible. I constantly struggle to come to terms with this interpretation of the idea. My firm belief is that a teacher can be friendly and stern at the same time. In their capacity as the custodian of the learning environment, the teacher owns

the responsibility of ensuring that the class remains focused on the task at hand and not allow too much digression that could get the class deflected from the lesson goal.