Teaching Philosophy

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Author, William Arthur Ward was once quoted, *"The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires."* It was, 2005, during the junior year of my Interpreter Training Program (ITP) when I felt my heart's desires grow. My passion for language and communication, as a sign language interpreter, had shifted into a new path, one that would impact generations to come. As a direct result of the positive learning experiences I encountered throughout my undergraduate career as well as positive, successful teacher role models, an innate desire to teach, that had been dormant, began to stir in my soul. Therefore, after eight years as a full-time sign language interpreter, I returned to college in 2014, in pursuit of an earned Master's degree, in the study of the art and science of teaching. For the benefit of students and for the strategic and intentional purposes, I believe that to be an effective and inspirational Interpreter Educator, specialized training and instruction in Interpreter Education is vital. Inevitably, throughout my graduate studies, I continue to analyze my approach to teaching in an effort to maximize my teaching methods in order to mold and inspire my students and their learning. Through constant and careful consideration, my personal teaching philosophy surrounds three values: student-centered learning, an engaging learning environment, and respect.

Beliefs and Theories Concerning ASL/English Interpreter Education

What once was a "community apprenticeship and vetting process", as stated in Hale (2012, p. v), has been replaced with formal instructors and curriculum, in a higher education classroom setting, now termed ASL/English Interpreter Education. From the humble beginnings of the ASL/English Interpreting profession, in the 1960's, to current, the formal education of sign language interpreters has evolved. Now, the Commission on Collegiate Interpreter

Education (CCIE), established in 2006, provides accreditation for Interpreter Education

programs. I wholeheartedly believe that every Interpreter Training/Education Program (ITP/IEP)

should be accredited and the curriculum of the program should align with the 10 CCIE

Standards. Notably, the CCIE Standards state that the Standards "identifies the knowledge, skills,

and perspectives students need to gain in order to enter the field of professional interpreting". In

agreeance with the CCIE Standards, my style and approach to teaching, validates my objective to

close the widening gap of "school-to-work", to prepare my students to be successful practitioners

post-graduation.

As I reflect on some of my personal learning experiences, during the period of my ITP,

my program required program participants to pass the National Interpreter Certificate (NIC)

written exam in order to graduate from the program. From my perspective as a learner, my ITP

teachers collaborated with each other and ensured that the information and materials that were

presented, in addition to required reading materials, not only prepared us for the exam, but for

the real world of interpreting. Consequently, my teaching objectives coincide with my three

values of teaching.

Intentions for Future Teaching

Correspondingly, I feel that some of the most important skills and habits that are

imperative for me to develop and nurture in my students are: ethical-decision/problem-solving

strategies, working in collaboration with peers, and the importance of research-based

information. Now, to support student-centered learning, I incorporate the use of rubrics and

assessments into my teaching methods. As noted in Bain (2004), the purpose of assessing

students is twofold. Particularly, Bain (2004) states "the outstanding teachers used assessment to

help students learn (p. 151). Whereas "performance-based" assessments focus on the grades that the students will earn, "learning-based" assessments concentrate on how students learn. Through the "learning-based" approach, teachers can design assessments that enable their students to self-analyze and gain knowledge about themselves as a learner. Another purpose of me assessing my students, is for the purpose of analyzing the teaching that I present. Bain (2004) states that teachers should inquire within themselves, the "intellectual" and "personal developmental" goals that they hope their students will achieve (p. 151). Additionally, Bain (2004) mentions that teachers should also validate their students' growth and advancements through assessments. As a matter of fact, Bain's principles and research on assessment can be applied within an Interpreter Education program. When I analyze the results of the assessments, I can confirm if my students' learning is on the right path, or if I need to clarify some topics. Another way that I can assist my students to excel is to provide them with examplars along with each rubric for their assessments. Examplars allow the students even more information on my expectations for assessments and projects. .

For me, a naturally, engaging learning environment is imperative. At one point during my graduate studies, I took an on-site course in which the professor took the time to place posters on the classroom walls. Some of the posters had inspirational quotes related to success, while other posters were designed for students to write and share personal information that could be viewed by all. Within my classroom, my students see a wide variety of engagement opportunities. Engagement for me includes activities such as, at the start of the first day, students are given the option to choose between M & M's or Skittles, or some type of product there they are encouraged to take as much as they would like. Then depending on how many items the student chose, they would have to share an equal amount of facts about themselves to the class.

Additionally, I too take part in such engaging activities, to help build a mutual respect for each other. On the other hand, with the increase of interpreter education courses being offered online, there is still a need for engaging learning environments. According to Dixson (2010 in McCafferty 2014), "Educational researchers have demonstrated that effective online learning requires student engagement with the instructor, the content, and each other" (p. 28). So whether I am in a live classroom or an online course, my students can expect to learn through several avenues. I endeavor to give my students a challenging, yet rewarding experience, every time they encounter me.

Finally, the third value that I feel necessary to impart into my students is the importance of research in the field of Interpreter Education. In relation to the theory presented by Pochhacker (2010), research is a "reliable way of broadening our knowledge of interpreting beyond the professional expertise that individual interpreting instructors are expected to bring to their task. Research in this sense provides knowledge that is relevant *for* teaching and learning in the interpreting classroom (and beyond)" (p. 2). This statement summarizes and offers ample explanation for the importance of research. Through the use of illustrative demonstrations on how research in general, has impacted our society as a whole, I am able to portray just how research can and does have long-lasting effects on future interpreters to come.

Humbly, I see teaching as a great responsibility, with the knowledge that I am an asset and hopefully an inspiration to my community, my field, and future generations of interpreters, who have yet to emerge. Teaching is not an easy feat, as it requires much sacrifice. Yet the rewards of teaching are priceless.

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