

1. TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

That perfect moment of realizing that my student can freely approach me with any kind of issue they are facing, trusting that I will be able to lend a helping hand or in some instances that I will search with them for a solution and that priceless moment when I realize that a student has finally mastered a difficult concept made it clear to me that I was finally in the right profession. I always tell my students, "I want to be the lecturer I wish I had when I was a student, not the lecturer I had."

My students learn in a variety of ways as human talent is diverse. I realize the way I teach at DUT is different from how I was taught, that the process of learning is not a one size fit all process, therefore one of my main objectives is to make sure that I cater for all types of learners, keeping their diverse backgrounds and other variables in mind as learning is a holistic process that should be student-centered. I believe that learning should be individualized because it is the student that is learning and they all need to be engaged and this can only be done by using different learning techniques.

I believe that I am not only there to facilitate learning but to educate my learners about tolerance, ethics, respect and how to become successful entrepreneurs in our current economy. I believe that learning can take place anytime and anywhere, therefore I try to create an environment conducive for this with the aid of technology. Technology also aids me in providing swift relevant feedback that is in line with the objectives set that are achievable with the designed learning activities. Students are therefore given an opportunity to apply and test their knowledge in creative ways, in a fun safe environment that engages them.

I believe that I can only improve in my teaching if I invest in my professional development and incorporate what I have learned into my teaching. My aim to create conditions for my students to thrive in and I can only do this by learning myself in order to create conditions that will give learners a broader range of opportunities to rise to the occasion.

My classroom is also a place where I am constantly learning from my students some of my best ideas come from the classroom, this drives me to constantly keep abreast with the relevant industry standards, try new teaching techniques as learning tools become stale or keep going when things do not work, what keeps me motivated is the drive to keep my students engaged.

I love teaching marketing and retail students and I want to be part of revolutionizing learning in South Africa and this cannot be done by simply teaching our students to recall information. It is my responsibility to prepare my students for the future that I may not even be a part of, therefore I drive to create graduates that have the 21st century attributes, professionals who will thrive in the industry and also scholars who will be locally and globally competitive. However, in the recent years, I have come to learn about decolonization and how I can aid my students in being confident Africans and how they can compete in the global arena while being true to their way of life.

I am required to wear different hats in my teaching and community engagement roles and the only way I manage to orderly execute these roles is first because of my love for imparting knowledge, understanding and in-depth knowledge of the marketing and retail

industry and my passion for community engagement, these things are critical in making a successful teacher and a conducive learning environment.

2. APPROACHES TO TEACHING THAT INFLUENCE, MOTIVATE AND INSPIRE STUDENTS TO LEARN

Teaching is both a blessing and a major responsibility. It is a blessing because I really enjoy witnessing my students grow and become professionals, and responsibility because I acknowledge that my pedagogical decisions may affect their learning environment and possibly their performance. I take my job very seriously, and after all my years of experience, I have understood that my role is to be a facilitator of knowledge, rather than a classroom environment that favours the lecturer's expertise, I believe in constructing a horizontal, fun, respectful, but mostly safe learning environment. In my classes, students know they have their own voice, and that I acknowledge it. Also, they can expect me to challenge them to promote their learning empowerment whilst providing the necessary care and support to succeed.

2.1 Fostering student development by stimulating curiosity and independence in learning.

Students are the drive of my lesson planning since all the activities have a clear objective and tackle their accountability and curiosity. The variety of pedagogical strategies and class preparation aims at promoting individual learning. These assignments are mandatory and promote students' accountability and ownership of their learning process because having the material ahead of time allows them to identify unclear ideas to explore in class and to think about other applicable examples. Besides, the selection of material brings students closer to their own realities, and this stimulates their curiosity, which later translates into analytical thinking and emerging research skills.

I also encourage curiosity and accountability by creating safe spaces (physically and virtually) for students to ask questions and receive significant feedback. Questions are always welcome in my classes and students know that it is alright to clarify concepts and if they feel a bit shy in class, they can use other channels of communication. Moreover, students know they can bring their own significant input to class such as relevant content relating to the Law of contract that they can relate to in their daily lives. These opportunities are frequent and highly appreciated since they value and reward student curiosity and become the path to unstructured learning.

However, a safe space also allows students to acknowledge their mistakes and to be honest, and honesty is key for independent learning. My students know exactly what work needs to be covered if they have missed class as they have a properly structured student guide that includes a planner that indicates how many lectures each unit will use up. Also, I have had students telling me the real reason why a task wasn't submitted on time and knowing that they will have consequences. This acknowledgment signals their emerging accountability for their own learning process. I value and teach honesty greatly because it is the foundation of great professionals, and witnessing my student's display of honest

behavior fills my soul with joy and hope as part of my responsibility is to contribute to producing ethical graduates.

2.2 Contributing to the development of students' critical thinking skills, analytical skills, and scholarly values.

I design my classes following Bloom's taxonomy which gradually pushes students to develop high-order thinking skills. In my classes, significant learning happens because students are engaged in the content, can relate to it, and are given the opportunity to find the knowledge themselves. Students learn legal rules and principles but provide effective questioning, and this allows them to apply the theoretical content to a set of facts. This helps them master the skill of thinking analytically and critically as they need to analyze the set of facts and then apply the current marketing and retail strategies, which result in students becoming creative and taking ownership of their learning.

However, the development of critical thinking and analytical skills does not emerge in isolation: group work is key. I constantly provide spaces for group discussions where selling and buying skills are encouraged and expected. My students understand that their sound opinions are not only welcomed but expected. Collaboration is fertile soil for understanding that the world requires joint efforts and that human beings do not achieve greatness in isolation; that is why on retail simulation, a virtual tool, which brings them closer to each other and allows them to rehearse a possible future work environment.

Working in groups is more than answering questions and sharing ideas because it implies respecting others even when they don't agree with you. Also, group work promotes collaborative learning, which aligns with my humanistic teaching philosophy.

Moreover, the selection of topics avoids censorship; on the contrary, it promotes controversial topics to visualize the contextual reality students will face in the future. A good example is when I directed students to engage in a debate on the decolonization versus the internationalization of the retail sector; this activity makes students question their own perceptions about the way in which retail is done in our country as opposed to other, more developed countries. Through this kind of activity, students have the opportunity to start developing high-order cognitive skills which are essential for their professional development.

Finally, the selected activities and the classroom environment reinforce scholarly values such as respect to others, integrity, work ethic, and professionalism. In my classes, such values are taught on a daily basis through activities and positive feedback. I strongly believe that values are developed through time and they are the result of constant effort, and there is nothing more rewarding than seeing traits of such values at the end of courses.

2.3 Encouraging student engagement through enthusiasm shown for learning and teaching.

As a teacher, I know I can become my students' role model, so I display a positive attitude towards the subject matter, the challenges it presents, and the diverse groups of students in my classroom. My focus is on building a safe fun positive learning environment, and I do this by starting off each week with a motivational speech emerging from any topic in the current affairs and coming up with fun marketing/retail-related scenarios/case studies that make the sector topics manageable to understand.

My bubbly personality, love for the industry, being prepared, keeping abreast with current changes in the industry and being open to learning from my students assures, tutors and supplemental instructors motivate and encourage student engagement. My students can easily relate the subject matter to everyday life because they see the relevance of the theoretical and applicable content through selected exercises I give them. As a result, they contribute and this encourages them to excel.

Students are celebrated and rewarded for outstanding work. My students know that even if they fail at their first attempt, they will be given ample opportunities to master what they need to learn. I make an effort to learn my students' names so that they realize that I acknowledge them as diverse individuals while they sit in a class of eighty plus students. This simple but significant practice makes them realize that they are not just a number to me, but individuals that are important to me. This recognition of their individuality together with the fact that I look at each student holistically ensures each of my students that I want them to succeed.

Also, my availability reinforces my commitment to teaching. Being accessible to my students, especially for the shy ones who do not want to speak in front of a large group, those that prefer learning on their own and for those who need further explanation makes a difference. I make myself available after class and during my consultation times, and students who prefer to remain anonymous can participate in WhatsApp/Email/Ms Teams platforms and comfortably. They understand that I will answer their questions as soon as I can if they try to reach me after business hours.

I have noted that relevant content and safe spaces result in engagement which in turn results in the likelihood of success. I see it as my responsibility to be a role model and a mentor to my students. I believe being an enthusiastic and passionate ambassador for my discipline and addressing student challenges helps me to motivate learners. My work ethic inspires my students to learn and allows me to ask for the same. My teaching is built on trust and students' engagement.

2.4 Inspiring and Motivating students through high-level communication, presentation, and interpersonal skills.

It is my responsibility as a teacher to cater to different learning styles by using verbal and nonverbal communication. Also, I must pay attention to my students' communication styles. Communication happens in and outside the classroom, through class presentations, audio and video recording, and group discussion in class, one on one

consultations in person or virtually. However, accessibility is just one required factor for effective communication.

Active listening makes a difference when a student seeks an understanding of either a concept or a personal situation. Good communication goes beyond providing clear instructions or explanations; active listening is critical so that students feel that they are being listened to. Paying attention to a student can change the perception that student has regarding the subject matter. For example, a simple nod and a smile reassure students that I am listening to them.

In my classroom, I encourage effective communication by asking questions that guide students to think critically and repeating, recapping what was learned previously so that students are able to make the required connections. Observing body language and listening to responses helps me determine if learning is taking place and in case of a negative outcome, I can change the teaching strategy to achieve my objective for the lesson. I also address incorrect or incomplete answers by highlighting the positive- points and outlining what was missing from the answer. Words matter when motivation is at risk, and students can learn from their mistakes if as a teacher I encourage their strengths and provide support for overcoming areas of improvement.

Being an empathetic, authentic and confident communicator helps my students understand the content and makes them feel comfortable enough to come to me with their school or personal problems and challenges. However, my interpersonal skills are just part of who I am. I believe in direct and effective communication, so I treat my students with kindness and respect. They know that I am open-minded and that they can trust me, so building rapport happens organically and it helps my students present other points as they are comfortable to voice their ideas or perspectives which results in them contributing to the body of knowledge. This contributes to my personal development as I also learn from my students.

3. DEVELOPMENT OF CURRICULA AND RESOURCES THAT REFLECT A COMMAND OF THE FIELD

I consider the development of the curriculum a student-centric task that must take into account the students' background and learning styles. Once I realized that I am teaching students from diverse backgrounds, I consciously construct an environment where students, tutors, and supplemental instructors contribute to the curriculum. I constantly contribute to the curriculum from my classroom because I am constantly making suggestions for my assigned course contents, providing updated materials and designing activities that aimed at the development of field-based soft skills.

Also, by providing updated material regarding the subject matter, students are encouraged to discuss the content in a real-life context. Also, the quality of the selected readings and cases serves as fertile ground to develop critical thinking skills that contribute to a long and pertinent transformation of society. The focus of the materials in my classes surpasses the mere theoretical content to the syllabus and continues on the application of the material they have learned. Also, students become active participants

in the enhancement of their own curriculum because they are encouraged to create content. Learning starts where the student is and not at the beginning of the content.

The importance of the content in a curriculum is undeniable; however, content by itself does not guarantee good professionals but teaching the content in a way that propels soft-skills does. I manage to guide students to the achievement of a lesson outcome by realigning the student learning and providing the appropriate instructional strategies. Thus, the curriculum sometimes varies depending on the groups I teach which translated into a plausible interaction between students, teachers, and knowledge. This interaction also brings the opportunity to develop soft skills such as empathy, discipline, dependability, integrity, persistence among others. Nowadays, the development of soft skills can make the difference when finding a job in the real world, and by promoting an integral curriculum, I am fulfilling my duty as a teacher.

I keep the learning needs of my students in my mind when I select resources for each class. Diversity in the classroom requires a variety of materials to enhance learning from different perspectives. In my classes, students identify with the materials because I try to address all types of learning styles by employing different learning strategies.

By asking students to conduct in the exercise of freewriting especially in terms of case studies and assignments, reflective learners are catered for. Sensor learners benefit from their engagement in real-life scenarios because they see the relation of the material with the real world. Likewise, such real-life scenarios cater to intuitive learners as they are able to apply what they have learned. Visual learners are supported by the videos and diagrams, while verbal learners enjoy face to face interactions in classes. Every student is encouraged to record the lectures, granted access to the carefully scripted presentations, and had access to the textbook and other reading material. Sequential learners thrive and gain understanding in linear steps, so they can draw connections and hold on to the logical structure provided by the student guide. This also assists the global learner to see how everything comes together and how to make connections instead of only getting the full picture in the end. In general, the wide variety of activities provided in my classes aims at respecting different learning styles and promoting the integration of students.

Research is crucial in conducting effective teaching and learning sessions because it provides the basis for a reflexive teaching methodology. My organization skills and time management play a main role in lesson success. Also, in order to succeed, I take risks, explore and experiment while knowing that not everything I attempt or new technique may work; that is why I cherish my student's feedback as a tool for improvement. Research-led approaches to enhance student experimentation and involvement. I promote the development of students' inquiry-skills through a teaching approach that benefits from intellectual curiosity and leads to collaboration as they contribute to the knowledge.

For example, constructive alignment entails stating the learning objectives in terms of the taxonomy and selecting learning activities that train these skills and competencies. This results in students using higher-level thinking skills in order to be successful. Students are therefore able to translate new information and offer solutions or arguments, resulting in the development of new information. Students adopt a critical approach to consuming

information this prepares them to engage in scholarly conversations and debates in our discipline, which prepares them for research in their professional lives.

My leading actions—making use of the most current and appropriate prescribed textbook and study material, using tools like Lexis Nexus, establishing good relationships with textbook publishers ensure not only my constant awareness of any changes in this field but also my students' access to the latest resources. This coupled with my marketing and retail knowledge and expertise and my relevant experience in teaching reflects my command for the field.

I have a Masters in Management Sciences: Marketing, in my dissertation, I dedicated my entire dissertation to researching on the influence of brand awareness and brand image in the selection of a University of Technology (UoT), in KwaZulu Natal (KZN) among first year students and this resulted in enriching my knowledge which leads to making changes in the design of the curriculum. I am currently working on my Ph.D. studies, and I am confident I will be able to plow the knowledge and skills I obtain back into my teaching practice.

4. APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK TO STUDENTS

I believe that assessment is a tool to measure development and to monitor my student's performance. I also understand that we teach to assess but also assess to teach, one cannot be effective without the other. I value assessment not only to discover my student progress areas of improvement (what they need to achieve and how I can assist them to achieve these goals) but also to identify areas of improvement in my teaching. I create various opportunities (in order to cater for the diverse students) for formative assessment (including student-centered and self-centered opportunities) as I believe ongoing assessments allow me to ascertain areas of improvement early enough to have remedial actions-instead of addressing them after the result of a final summative assessment. I find that assessment coupled with prompt feedback contributes to deep learning as feedback helps students gain a deeper understanding of the subject. I also provide additional opportunities for my students to learn from their mistakes- by letting them repeat a task until they have mastered it. Even though I teach large groups I make sure that students receive feedback from their summative assessment within a week, so that they can learn while the material is still vivid in their minds. If they get a bad grade, they get feedback for more improvement, which encourages them to work harder. In my planning, I attempt to align diverse appropriate instructional activities and assessment tasks that result in students achieving the intended outcomes/objectives, whilst keeping in mind their individual learning style. I encourage my students to synthesize the information and not simply regurgitate the memorandum, as this results in surface learning, whereas my goal is for them to acquire significant knowledge: to understand and apply the knowledge they have acquired. That is why I show information in different ways, provide different assessment activities for students to show what they have learned and offer options that engage students and keep their interest. Students are given continuous feedback on different platforms from me, their peers, tutors, and supplemental instruction leaders. Not only do the students acquire skills and knowledge that they must

apply beyond the classroom, but they are also presented with opportunities to practice those skills and get feedback. Students are rewarded (learners are announced and celebrated in class) for outstanding work, and this reward motivates them to work harder. This way of assessing has resulted in students collaborating, being creative, and enhancing their communication and critical thinking skills. And also organizing events like students' award ceremony where well performing students are rewarded but also to encourage those who did not perform well.

5. RESPECT AND SUPPORT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS AS INDIVIDUALS

My holistic approach to learning has prepared me to identify and cater to students from diverse historically disadvantaged backgrounds. At the beginning of the year, my team engages in proactive advising, so the prompt identification of at-risk students leads to timely and necessary intervention. I do my best to understand the emotional makeup of my students and try to cater to their emotional reactions. This coupled with my ability to establish a genuine and positive rapport, my willingness to be relatable and understanding, and strong interpersonal skills with current and passed students allows me to advise and mentor my students.

I assist my students with a variety of needs that range from academic advice for my course and other courses; advising on financial, social, relational and personal matters; sharing information of vacancies, scholarships, assisting them to drafting CV's; preparing them for interviews; drafting reference letters; directing them to the relevant centers on campus that can assist them with literacy, physiological, financial and housing needs to mention a few. I realize that a little time spent having motivational conversations goes a long way, as this encourages my students to keep working. Even after my students have left my class, I keep an eye on their progress and maintain a good relationship with them by continuing my advising and mentoring role to ensure their success.

My role as an Enactus (a community of students, academics and business leaders committed to using the power of entrepreneurial action to transform communities) Academic Advisor gave me the opportunity to influence my students' social and cultural experience while also enhancing their soft skills. This platform played a crucial part in educating my students to become future successful business leaders who will contribute to the economy. But also helped me to grow and understand students better.

6. SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES THAT ENHANCE LEARNING AND TEACHING

Reflecting on my teaching helps me evaluate my teaching. Continuously taking part in scholarly activities aids me to keep abreast of the innovative, well thought out ways, to enhance my teaching. The decisions I make regarding what and how I teach are informed by scholarly teachings provided for in numerous teaching and learning workshops, seminars and colloquiums. One particular workshop that directed my teaching was the HELTASA conference back in 2019, where so many topics were covered including teaching with technology. This has helped me create a better guide that outlines outcomes and gives clear objectives and direction on how to succeed in the course.

Being part of the second cohort of nGap at the DUT and attending seminars, workshops and retreats, initiating discussions about conducting research related to teaching, getting feedback from my peers as well as being part of the community of practice has given me the platform to contribute and learn from my peers. These platforms allow me to address structural and teaching concerns and identifying resources strategies that I can implement in my teaching. As a program manager in my department, this community gives me the opportunity to meet with other teachers in order to share ideas, provide guidance and solutions to a problem that we share, and identify the gaps in my teaching and leadership in order to determine where training is required. These platforms create an environment that encourages success in the classroom because my understanding of the teaching and learning process is improved and this, in turn, benefits my students. And being a participant in the FemDac group with scholars from Stellenbosch University, University of KwaZulu Natal, Durban University of Technology and University of Illinois has also helped with the research aspect of my journey and the understanding of self-care in order to remain sane in this challenging and sometimes difficult environment and this has been helpful in grounding me so that I keep delivering to the university, faculty, department and most importantly to my students.

7. REFERENCES

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