

Teaching Philosophy Statement: Cody J McDonald

For me teaching is like a recipe box full of hand-written cards. I believe for learning to take place we must understand and recognize the traditions of the past to be able to fully understand where we have come from and to develop where we need to go. The recipe box is passed down from generation to generation, favourite recipes are noted, changed and adapted for the “modern” world – modern world describing the time and place in which adaptation and change have taken place. Notes are made and changes are important. As the user of the recipes (ie the teacher) we can learn from each recipe we use by being open to dialogue and feedback to change and adapt the used recipe to make it palatable to the present world. I believe that this allows for the teacher to adapt to new methods, new technology, and new palates of the adult learner.

I believe that learning is a partnership - student and mentor learning from each other - “the teacher also becomes a learner, for the relationship between teach and learner is reciprocal” (Dewey 1906 as cited in Elias & Merriam, 2005, Basic principles of progressive education section, para. 24). Each adult brings with them life and experiences that can be adapted to learning. During a recent clinical rotation, a student was given the opportunity to remove a PEG drain – I had limited experience working this specific surgical drain. The student and I took a collaborative approach to find the policy and procedure, talk through the procedure, and finally arrive at the bedside ready to remove the drain. I believe that as an adult educator I need to have a solid base of knowledge and expertise, however, also be open to the idea that I may not know everything. I recognize that a gap in knowledge is acceptable and not to know is ok, learn together and be approachable. When I do not know an answer, I recognize that gap in knowledge and actively seek out an answer with students. To find new knowledge I look for credible information. I do this by look at Nursing policies, peer reviewed articles, or Lippincott’s depending on the situation. I can quickly access the information, disseminate the information, assess credibility and finally I am able to adapt and apply the information to the presenting nursing situation. I was trained under context-based learning in university – this gave me a skill set of being able to access information quickly to problem solve. I believe this is a skill that has developed over time and with experience and changes in technology have made information and knowledge more accessible.

I believe as a mentor - I should be a guide through the learning process. Challenge learners through questions and exploration of ideas and exchange of information. Allowing myself to be challenged and questioned by learners in exchange helps to foster an open and safe environment for learning and development. This style of teaching allows for students to always ask *why* they are doing something to be able to be challenged and understand the rational of the task they are trying to accomplish. Lindeman (1956, as cited in Elias & Merriam, 2005, Basic principles of progressive education section, para. 30) states “the teacher finds a new function. He is no longer the oracle who speaks from the platform of authority, but rather the guide, the pointer-out, who also participates in learning in proportion to the vitality and relevancy of his facts and experiences”.

I believe in lifelong learning - as an educator I should develop and grow with each learner. I believe taking opportunities to learn and follow my passion are key elements to maintaining interest and advancing education. As a nursing clinical educator there have been times when I have been asked to teach courses outside of my area of specialty. This is a challenge and I believe one that is achievable. During preparation I take time to learn the unit, gain experience understanding the unit routines, common medications used, and the unit’s culture. I believe as a nurse I have been trained at an entry level for any area and that it is my responsibility to learn and gain knowledge appropriate for the area

my students will be working in. I believe as a Registered Nurse we can learn any specialty area with support, guidance, and self-directed learning.

The Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) code of ethics for Registered Nurses. Many of those codes of ethics can be applied to teaching in the health sciences. I believe “Being Accountable; Nurses are accountable for their actions and answerable for their practice” (CNA, 2017) applies most to my teaching philosophy. Ethical responsibilities and how they apply to my beliefs;

Point 3. Nurses practice within the limits of their competence. When aspects of care are beyond their level of competence, they seek additional information or knowledge, report to their supervisor or a competent practitioner and/or request a different work assignment. In the meantime, nurses remain with the person receiving care until another nurse is available. (CNA, 2017)

Point 4. Nurses are accountable for their practice and work together as part of teams. When the acuity, complexity or variability of a person’s health condition increases, nurses assist each other. (CNA, 2017)

My teaching style is to take opportunities to learn, working in health sciences it is impossible to know *all* the answers *all* the time. I need to reflect on what I don’t know, find the answers, and apply that knowledge. I believe that this part of the code of ethics encourages me to be a lifelong learner and allows for me to openly seek assistance when needed. When teaching nursing students I can demonstrate to them the use of the code of ethics through my own actions. When teaching a clinical I now take this action and use it as a discussion for post conference debriefing. I believe we must be open and honest with our students about our abilities, as we are training health professionals to be accountable to their practice and need to demonstrate this daily. From personal experience I tell my students and new orientees there are no foolish questions, I prefer you ask then don’t ask, and most importantly that there is nothing scarier to me as an educator, than a student who does not ask questions, as no one knows everything.

References

Canadian Nurses Association (2017). *Code of ethics for registered nurses*. https://hl-prod-ca-oc-download.s3-ca-central-1.amazonaws.com/CNA/UploadedImages/05255e6e-9517-43bc-8bc1-f1768316d4e5/Documents/Code_of_Ethics_2017_Edition_Secure_Interactive.pdf

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