

BRINA G. SEDAR
PHILOSOPHY OF TEACHING STATEMENT

I am and have always been a teacher and a helper and these two roles are interchangeable and complementary in my professional work. I have determined this to be true of myself from observations of my style in academic and clinical settings. Throughout my professional career I have noted consistencies in my beliefs and my practice that have formed a foundation for my professional approach.

As a professional counselor and clinical supervisor I incorporate teaching methods to help clients and professional staff to develop new skills. I have repeatedly focused my counseling work in areas involving education by introducing new instructional products and services. I designed and delivered comprehensive professional training programs to counseling staff and graduate students. I broadened the product lines for employee assistance and student assistance programs with the introduction of corporate, faculty and student training and development programs. In the classroom setting, my counseling skills serve to help students to develop the confidence they need to succeed both academically and professionally.

I began my professional teaching career in 1988 and have served as part-time faculty with Montgomery County Community College, Gwynedd Mercy College, Holy Family University and taught in the graduate program of Counseling and Human Relations at Villanova University. I also had the unique opportunity to teach at the Czech Technical University in the Czech Republic. My most rewarding opportunity, however, began in 2001 when I assumed responsibility for the design and development of the Associates of Applied Science in Human Services degree for Burlington County College. The challenges presented were an ideal match for my skill set and today I serve as both an Instructor and Program Coordinator.

I teach content, skills and attitudes. I attempt to challenge previously held beliefs and I enjoy the challenge from students in return. It is important for students to acquire a solid academic foundation and useful skills that are readily transferred to both professional and social environments. I especially enjoy teaching human services because of the many opportunities to help students acquire abilities that are practical and relevant. I assist students in understanding course content through application to their daily lives and professional aspirations. I am a believer in the andragogy concept of adult learning and teaching first introduced by Malcolm Shepherd Knowles. It is my goal for students to know how to access and critique information and to gain the confidence to teach themselves.

Through introspection and feedback from students and colleagues I recognize specific strengths in my teaching abilities. I make myself approachable to students through communication of liking, acceptance and respect for their struggles and strengths. I create a relaxed classroom environment and integrate experiential learning activities. Students tell me I make the course content easier to comprehend. I have an ability to explain complex concepts in simple terms with application to their existing knowledge and experiences. Because of the interrelated nature of my clinical work and teaching, I am able to provide a myriad of case examples to support

course content. I emphasize for students the importance of formulating their own opinions and while simultaneously respecting research results. .

The diverse student population often found in the community college classroom is my preferred audience. Human Services is best taught with the availability of varied experiences and world views. I enjoy those students who have the confidence to challenge and debate. I take pleasure in students who bring humor to the classroom. I also have the benefit of working with students of weaker academic abilities who profit from personalized attention and support. Mostly I like the student who enters college with a sense of uncertainty and later graduates a more confident and hopeful person.

I have the unique experience of meeting many students when they first enter as freshmen and later enter into professional positions as I welcome them as colleagues. The students demonstrate an enhanced ability to look outside of themselves. There is maturation in the students' thinking and self-confidence that is applied to professional and personal experiences.

Teaching is both an activity and a process. At the pinnacle of my career I experience an excitement in the classroom that is not duplicated elsewhere. How fortunate I am to spend my life learning and teaching and helping others to do the same.

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