

Lev Vygotsky maintained that learning is optimized within a dyadic relationship, rather than as an individual process. This theory provides the foundation for my teaching philosophy, as I strongly believe that the relationship between teacher and student is the fundamental determinant of student success. Although I may employ different pedagogical approaches to create that relationship based on class size and structure, the principle has proven to be consistently effective in facilitating students' progress.

The first step guided by my teaching philosophy is to establish a relationship with my students. I have found that the best way to do this is to express my own enthusiasm for the course material. This encourages students to participate in the learning process with me because they see that I think the material is worth not only their time, but my own as well. Conveying enthusiasm means not only coming to class with genuine excitement regarding the day's topic, but also designing activities that allow students to respond in kind. Accordingly, my goal in every class is to anchor what we do in the classroom to something both tangible and of interest to the students. One technique that has worked well in this regard is the "design an intervention" activity. For example, when I teach my undergraduates about the rising rates of childhood obesity and the lifelong consequences of being obese as a child, I have them evaluate current federal initiatives to reverse this dangerous trend. Students reflect not only on the contributors to childhood obesity, but must think critically about how these predictors could be more effectively targeted by programs aimed at promoting child health and well-being.

The second aspect of my teaching philosophy is that my presentation of the material in the classroom must be supplemented with interactions outside of the classroom. To develop relationships with students that foster learning, I try to make every student feel known as an individual scholar. When students feel that I have a vested interest in how they are doing, they strive harder. I believe the key to conveying this interest is providing effective feedback. Not only does it give students a sense of their progress, it provides them with the necessary support to achieve their goals. When a student fails to demonstrate mastery of a topic, I meet with them to facilitate a more successful approach to learning the material. I believe it is important to provide this feedback throughout the semester, as opposed to only contacting them when their chance of success in my class has already been determined. Many students who I have worked with in this manner have cited this additional assistance as being instrumental in their improved performance in my class.

Applying these principles to my work with graduate students involves many of the same elements, but the smaller class size offers the opportunity to develop more personal relationships with my students as well as to more directly advance their professional development. I believe that success in my course is best measured not by my students' ability to memorize the material, rather it is reflected in the development and refinement of skills necessary for new professionals as they enter our field. Students in my graduate courses, for example, are assigned an article to review to help them not only hone their critical eye, but also to develop the skills of delivering these critiques in a constructive and professional manner. Then, to demonstrate the value of these skills and to help build their resumes, I invite students to assist me in reviewing manuscripts for journals – a mutually beneficial process!

By taking on more of a mentoring role in the classroom and treating graduate students as emerging scholars in the field, my hope is to not only ground them in the relevant theories and research but to also help smooth their transition from student to new professional. For students interesting in continuing this mentoring relationship, I have established a successful writing group that has helped both former and current undergraduate and graduate students not only move their own scholarly work forward, but develop and hone their editing and mentoring skills. I would welcome the opportunity to continue mentoring graduate and undergraduate students in my areas of interest, as launching students has been one of the most rewarding parts of my career. In sum, I look forward to being able to continue building the kind of relationships with the students at Auburn that enable me to share my passion for the field and facilitate their successful entry into it.

Teaching Evaluations
Amy J. Rauer

The teaching evaluation process is standardized across all courses taught at Auburn University. Near the end of each semester, students are given access to anonymous online evaluation forms to assess instructor performance. Students complete these evaluations independent of the instructor's knowledge and these evaluations are sent to the Office of Undergraduate Studies at Auburn University. That office creates aggregate scores and emails them to the instructor once the final grades have been submitted.

Responses to the first set of question for each course ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). Responses to the final two questions for each course ranged from 1 (very poor) to 6 (excellent). My overall **teaching effectiveness** across all undergraduate and graduate courses for all semesters was rated as **excellent**. I have listed below the most recent evaluation of every course I have taught at Auburn.

Undergraduate Course: Lifespan Development (Spring, 2015)

Questions	Mean
The Instructor explained course material clearly.	5.8
The Instructor encouraged me to think critically.	5.8
The grading techniques were clear and fair.	5.8
The Instructor created a conducive atmosphere for learning.	5.8
The Instructor enhanced my interest in the subject.	5.8
The Instructor was available and approachable outside of class.	5.8
The Instructor provided timely feedback on graded material.	5.9

Questions	Mean
The instructor's overall teaching effectiveness was:	5.8
Overall, my learning in the class was:	5.7

Undergraduate Lab: Undergraduate Research and Study (Spring, 2015)

Questions	Mean
The Instructor explained course material clearly.	6.0
The Instructor encouraged me to think critically.	6.0
The grading techniques were clear and fair.	6.0
The Instructor created a conducive atmosphere for learning.	6.0
The Instructor enhanced my interest in the subject.	6.0
The Instructor was available and approachable outside of class.	6.0
The Instructor provided timely feedback on graded material.	6.0

Questions	Mean
The instructor's overall teaching effectiveness was:	6.0
Overall, my learning in the class was:	6.0

Graduate Course: Relationships in Adulthood (Spring, 2015)

Questions	Mean
The Instructor explained course material clearly.	6.0
The Instructor encouraged me to think critically.	5.8
The grading techniques were clear and fair.	6.0
The Instructor created a conducive atmosphere for learning.	5.8
The Instructor enhanced my interest in the subject.	5.5
The Instructor was available and approachable outside of class.	6.0
The Instructor provided timely feedback on graded material.	6.0

Questions	Mean
The instructor's overall teaching effectiveness was:	5.8
Overall, my learning in the class was:	5.8

Graduate Course: Adulthood and Aging (Fall, 2014)

Questions	Mean
The Instructor explained course material clearly.	6.0
The Instructor encouraged me to think critically.	6.0
The grading techniques were clear and fair.	5.8
The Instructor created a conducive atmosphere for learning.	6.0
The Instructor enhanced my interest in the subject.	6.0
The Instructor was available and approachable outside of class.	5.8
The Instructor provided timely feedback on graded material.	6.0

Questions	Mean
The instructor's overall teaching effectiveness was:	6.0
Overall, my learning in the class was:	6.0

Graduate Course: Teaching at the College Level (Summer, 2015)

Questions	Mean
The Instructor explained course material clearly.	5.8
The Instructor encouraged me to think critically.	5.6
The grading techniques were clear and fair.	5.8
The Instructor created a conducive atmosphere for learning.	5.6
The Instructor enhanced my interest in the subject.	5.8
The Instructor was available and approachable outside of class.	6.0
The Instructor provided timely feedback on graded material.	6.0

Questions	Mean
The instructor's overall teaching effectiveness was:	6.0
Overall, my learning in the class was:	5.8