



“True teachers are those who use themselves as bridges over which they invite their students to cross; then, having facilitated their crossing, joyfully collapse, encouraging them to create their own.” -- Nikos Kazantzakis, Greek writer and philosopher

My understanding of the community college philosophy is reflected in my teaching. The metaphor of bridges and building are particularly meaningful to me. As community college teachers, we build bridges for our students between high school or life “before” secondary education and a future in a career/vocation or a 4-year academic institution. We have a unique opportunity to help build an academic community for our students, allowing them to become better members of our greater society. And with experiential, hands-on learning in a dynamic, student-centered classroom, students build on their own self-esteem and skills. Self-efficacy is improved as skills are mastered.

In this way, I try to model Kazantzakis’ bridging metaphor. As a teacher, I often utilize a hands-on “think-pair-share” technique. Think: I model skills and allow students to think about the topic presented (often through journaling or independent notes). Pair: I guide student practice in small groups where peers can compare notes, reflect, and ask questions. Share: Finally, students are able to share their work with the larger group. When knowledge is shaped and built as a community, it gives students a vested interest in the outcome.

My teaching philosophy is built on a deeper foundation, inspired by Galileo Galilei, another philosopher and scientist: “You cannot teach a person anything; you can only help him find it within himself.” Being a base of knowledge-building, writing is a way to explore and formalize what we experience in the world around us. In the English writing classroom, the written word is the basis of expression. Providing students with the tools they need to become better readers, writers, and thinkers helps to empower, inspire, and inform a growing citizenry. To this end, my teaching philosophy is guided by the following core ideas: **1) I want to inspire lifelong learners; 2) Student-centered classrooms are a key aspect of my pedagogy; 3) Collaboration enhances learning opportunities; 4) I encourage risk-taking, experimentation, and student choice; 5) Empowerment is tied to motivation.** I look forward to the opportunity to discuss these ideas at our interview.