

My Teaching Philosophy: Igniting the flame with Engagement and Passion

Do it with passion, or not at all -- Rosa Nochette Carey

As a passionate advocate for effective teaching, I have crafted a philosophy that draws from a collection of influences—from revered thinkers like Richard Feynman, Bertrand Russell, and Carl Sagan to the personal impact of my martial arts trainers and the educational legacy of my family. This eclectic mix has shaped what I call my "Frankenstein" approach to teaching, where I amalgamate diverse skills and principles into a cohesive teaching identity: *Alan in the classroom*.

Over the last decade, I've cultivated specific skills that have profoundly influenced my teaching style. These skills, derived from observing and emulating aspects of those I admire, range from the structured organization of content to the enthusiastic delivery of lectures. Each skill is not merely absorbed but adapted to fit the unique classroom scenarios I encounter, ensuring that my teaching remains both effective in maximizing learning and engaging to student needs.

My teaching is grounded in ten core *principles* that I strive to embody and practice:

- **Passion and Authenticity:** My teaching is fueled by a genuine passion for the subjects I teach, which deeply enables students' engagement. This enthusiasm acts as a catalyst for interest and motivation in the classroom. Authenticity in teaching means being true to oneself, which establishes a genuine connection with students, making the educational experience and our relationship more relatable and impactful.
- **Curiosity and Entertainment:** I encourage a climate of curiosity in my classroom, where every doubt leads to deeper exploration. Uncertainty is embraced and mistakes are incentivized. This natural inquisitiveness not only enhances learning but also keeps the classroom dynamic and engaging. I believe in making learning enjoyable, using a mix of humor and relevant anecdotes to maintain a lively and inclusive atmosphere.
- **Rapport and Discussion:** Building a strong rapport with students facilitates a supportive learning environment. By signaling that I am approachable and available, students feel comfortable enough to rely on myself for support during office hours. Open discussions enhance this rapport, inviting a variety of perspectives and fostering a classroom environment where every voice is valued.
- **Precision and Interleaving:** Accuracy in teaching is a commandment, as imprecise information can jeopardize and contaminate learning. I dedicate significant effort to ensure that my content is precise, drawing from multiple sources and perspectives plus my own critical design of the content organization. Interleaving different concepts and contexts in my teaching helps students see the practical applications of their knowledge, preparing them for real-world challenges.
- **Truthfulness and Ignorance:** Honesty in teaching is critical; I strive to be transparent about the limits of my knowledge and the evidence supporting my statements. Acknowledging our collective ignorance opens more opportunities for learning and discovery, encouraging students to question and explore beyond the classroom.

In conclusion, my teaching philosophy is a dynamic compound of proven strategies and personal innovation. It is designed to not only impart knowledge but to inspire and engage students, preparing them for both academic success and lifelong learning. If you can envision how these principles come to life in my classroom, then I invite you to experience one of my lectures and see the impact of these practices firsthand.