

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

GENERAL PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

Education at UCO involves the active and intentional participation of both students and faculty members. Learning is most meaningful when students take responsibility for their own education by committing the time, effort and thinking necessary to succeed, interact with faculty members inside and outside of class, engage with other students in the learning process, and pursue opportunities to apply their learning in communities outside the classroom. Faculty create meaningful learning environments when they provide intellectually challenging opportunities, interact with students inside and outside of class, provide timely evaluation of student performance, maintain and communicate high expectations for all students, demonstrate concern for the well-being of students, reflect upon their own practice, and participate in the design and continuous improvement of academic programs.

1. STUDENT-FACULTY CONTACT AND INTERACTION

Learning is enhanced by frequent student-faculty contact in and out of classes. This is an important factor in student motivation, involvement and success. Knowing a few faculty members well enhances students' intellectual commitment and encourages them to think about their own values and future plans. A faculty member's interest, availability and responsiveness are critical in fostering these changes in students.

2. COOPERATION AND COLLABORATION

Learning is enhanced when students are engaged in cooperative and collaborative activities. Good learning, like good work, is collaborative and social, not competitive and isolated. Working with others often increases involvement in learning. Sharing one's own ideas and responding to others' reaction improves critical thinking and deepens understanding. Learning to work well with peers of diverse background through team activities and projects develops in students the necessary set of skills required for success in life, the workplace, and in a global context.

3. ACTIVE LEARNING

Learning is enhanced when students are required to become mentally active participants in the learning process. Examples of active learning include requiring students to talk and write about what they are learning, what it means to them, how it relates to past experiences, and how they can apply it to their lives. The ability to reflect about learning and experiences enables students to make what they learn part of themselves.

4. FEEDBACK AND EVALUATION

Learning is enhanced by feedback that is prompt, specific and related to articulated learning outcomes. Students benefit from assistance with assessing existing knowledge and competence. Students need frequent opportunities to demonstrate what they know and how they can apply that knowledge. Feedback that includes suggestions for improvement at various points of the semester and throughout

their college experience enables them to further reflect on what they have learned, what they still need to learn, and how to become responsible for their own learning including self-assessment and peer evaluation.

5. TIME ON TASK

Learning is enhanced by maximizing the time that is available. Learning to budget one's time well is critical for students and professionals alike. Students need help in learning effective time management. Allocating realistic amounts of time means effective learning for students and effective teaching for faculty. How an institution defines time expectations for students, faculty, administrators, and other professional staff can establish the basis for high performance for all.

6. HIGH EXPECTATIONS

Academic excellence is ensured by having high expectations for students and faculty members. Students are expected to make a significant effort and to demonstrate their responsibility for their own learning. Faculty and staff are expected to model and support students' academic efforts and to demonstrate the importance of life-long learning.

7. DIVERSITY

Learning is enhanced by embracing the diverse talents and approaches students and faculty members bring to the process. Students need the opportunity to show their talents and learn in ways that work for them and be encouraged to develop a more robust array of approaches to learning. We should expect students to learn in multiple ways, as we expect faculty members to approach the art and science of teaching in multiple ways.

8. MODELING PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR

Learning is enhanced by faculty members modeling professional behavior for students. These behaviors include acting with integrity and being organized, well-pre-pared, respectful, collaborative, reflective and passionate about one's discipline and learning in general. Modeling the importance of life-long learning and being responsible for one's continued learning and professional and personal development is crucial.

9. INQUIRY, RESEARCH, CREATIVE AND CRITICAL THINKING

Learning is enhanced by engaged students in transformational activities related to understanding the existing theory and knowledge base of their discipline, learning and using tools of inquiry and research and further developing their ability to think creatively, abstractly, and critically.

10. LEARNING-CENTERED

In a learning-centered organization, students, faculty and staff are simultaneously challenged and supported by a community of colleagues who demonstrate care, respect, empathy and passion for learning.



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