

"Life is a journey in which we are constantly interacting with our fellow brothers and sisters. On this journey we are all teachers as well as students. My specific teaching philosophy is simple. The philosophy is embodied in an ancient proverb, which states:

If you tell me, I will forget.

If you show me, I will remember.

If you involve me, I will understand.

Being involved with the learning process is crucial not only for learning the material at hand, but also to develop critical thinking skills, which are necessary to be truly effective citizens in our complex world.

The method that I use to stimulate critical thinking is based on the pedagogical tool utilized by the Student Support Program (SSP) at California State University, Los Angeles. SSP is a federally funded program, which works to provide support for high needs students (i.e., first generation college student, low-income, and/or disabled). The main goal of SSP is to retain and graduate the students that they serve. I had the honor of working for SSP at various levels. First, I was a study group leader who facilitated study groups to meet SSP's goals. Next, I became a team leader, which basically is a supervisor of the study group leaders. Lastly, I achieved the position of Study Group Coordinator. In brief, the coordinator is in charge of the entire Study Group Program under SSP.

The specific technique, in a nutshell, that SSP study groups use is the Socratic method. The Socratic method is based on question and answer sessions to stimulate dialogue, which, in turn, stimulates critical thinking.

The advantage of the Socratic method is that it addresses the various types of learning styles-- that is, visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. In order to fully implement this tool, we, as educators, must realize the fact that our students come to class with rich experiences and a vast knowledge base that they can draw from and make connections to. Moreover, it is imperative that we connect lecture material with current events and students' life experiences to maximize student involvement.

Through my experiences with SSP, I also learned that there are many factors that go into a student's success. Because of this, I have become sensitive to various situations that may hinder a student from reaching her/his fullest potential. Thanks to this knowledge, I know that there is no one magic solution for the myriad of students we come into contact with; however, I am also a firm believer in time-management and self-discipline. This part of my thinking comes from my personal experiences.

Self-discipline was a major theme in my upbringing. As a child, my mother and father emphasized my samurai ancestry and expected me to follow *bushido* -the way of the warrior. This involves to a great degree what is called *bunbu* -the pen and the sword. In short, one must be both a scholar and a warrior. I am still working on both. I will continue to practice "the way" until the day my journey in this life ends. It is important here to mention time-management. If it was not for time-management skills, it would have been extremely difficult, if not impossible, to achieve anything of value. Therefore, I expect all of my students to become self-disciplined students who manage their time wisely. After all, how else can we study three hours for every one hour of lecture?

In summary, my teaching philosophy is intricately related to my philosophy on life. The key elements are being proactive and getting involved in life, self-discipline and time-management. I believe that each individual is on a journey to constantly better her/himself and contribute

positively to our world. All of us are given guides to help us along on our journey. I am grateful that I have been given an opportunity to be both a guide and be guided by the many students that I have, and will, come into contact with."

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July 10, 2001

*(All views expressed on this web page are the views of Professor Kamei and not Glendale Community College)*