

Teaching Philosophy Statement – Trisha M. Butler

I often say I found myself in academia. As a scholar of humanities and social sciences, I believe that these disciplines must be engaging and accessible to all learners. The keystone of my learning and teaching philosophy is that learning never ends. I strive to make learning something students *want* to do—not just a means to an end. Learning is an exchange between a teacher and a student, whether it occurs in a formal academic sphere or through life experiences.

The cornerstone of learning is critical thought and evaluation. I recognize that this exercise looks different for each student. My approach acknowledges the naturally occurring strengths and challenges unique to each learner. By identifying these individual traits, I can personalize learning experiences to amplify student engagement and success. It should be readily evident that a teacher loves to teach so that students are inspired to learn. Not only should the material be accessible, but the teacher should be as well.

Curiosity is the foundation of both learning and personal enrichment. Asking questions is just as important as answering them. I believe it is the teacher's role to nurture and cultivate curiosity as a tool of student empowerment. My philosophy holds that if a student is genuinely inquisitive of a given subject, they are more likely to independently seek information and enhance their understanding. Deeper understanding then develops strength and confidence in critical thought and problem solving.

Every student who aspires to higher education deserves support, patience, and guidance in that noble pursuit. I value people and intrinsically care that my students feel confident and capable to achieve their goals. Helping them along their journey is a profound honor and a responsibility I take seriously. It is vital to create a space where students can take intellectual risks, engage with diverse perspectives, and connect with academia. I aim to accomplish this through discussion-based learning and culturally responsive teaching.

The classroom is just one facet of an individual's story, but the lessons learned there—academically and interpersonally—serve to prepare and equip students to thrive. Humanities and social sciences are integral to growth and key to a well-rounded education. My purpose is to foster interdisciplinary access and understanding so that learners are confident, enriched, and fortified to navigate and shape the world they choose to build.