

My Philosophy of Teaching

By Cristina Popescu

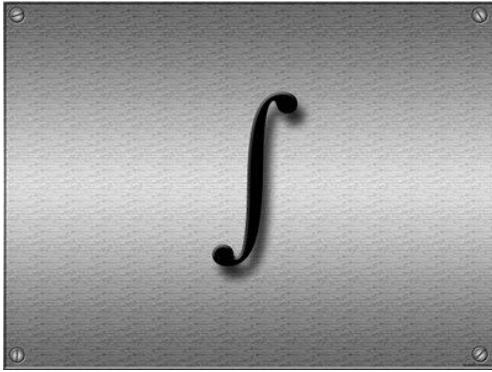
My philosophy of teaching is largely a reflection of my philosophy of living. I believe that each day we are all both teachers and learners. If we open our mind, our lives will truly become enriched by these experiences. I encourage my students to develop a lifelong commitment of personal growth through their own awareness, and to see the beauty in life that surrounds them and that is within - to inspire them.

I believe that the interaction between teaching and learning is an intricate process. As a teacher, I see myself as a facilitator of learning. I try to set the stage for learning to take place by creating an informal, stimulating and creative environment before the skills can be taught. I have found that where there is interest and motivation without fear of condemnation there is most often learning. This is especially true in mathematics classrooms, where I believe motivation is critical for success. Maintaining a balance of intrigue and success provides a nice structure for students to achieve mastery and appreciation. Above all an environment of respect is necessary. Nowadays, students request this even though they don't know sometimes how to show respect to an adult person. Therefore, my mission is to offer first a model and then to ask back for their respect. This does not mean I can answer every question of my students or I can do things right every single time, as I am a human being, but it does mean I can always try to show to my students that there are ways of doing and succeeding even though it can be "my" way, "their" way" or "our" way of doing.

I view each student as an individual and honor different learning styles, abilities and frustrations with sensitivity and respect. This is where patience and accommodation is an integral component of my teaching style. Indeed, I believe in support and encouragement for all of my students. However, there is no any recipe in how to do this but I always question myself and I always remember that my students' success is my success as well.

In order to implement my philosophy I try to be an example and share my own views and experiences and how I have changed as a person and continue to grow. I also prepare many different types of lessons and challenge commonly held beliefs about the nature of mathematics. I encourage my students to look for and appreciate the elegance of the mathematics in their everyday words.

When I first began teaching, I modeled my teaching style after a mixture of good teachers I have had and I still ask myself sometimes, "How would that teacher handle this or that situation?" Over the years, I have gained confidence, experience through teaching and professional development, and mostly I have learned from my students ways to improve my teaching. I continue to look for and develop innovative methods to reach my students and to provide insight into the utility and magnificence of mathematics.



METHAPHOR OF CRISTINA

T OGHETHER as a TEAM

A COMPLISHING

C REATIVITY

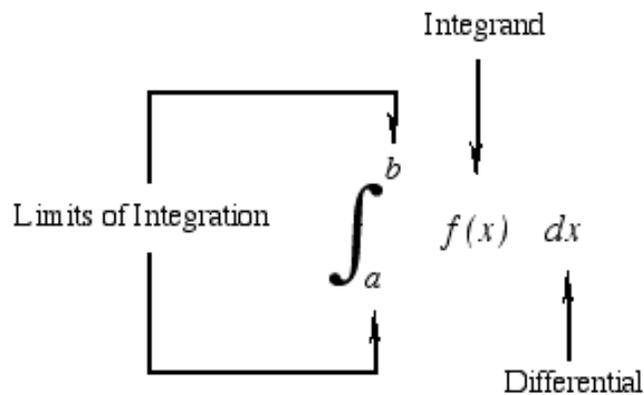
I always thought that to teach at a highest level you need to be creative as this is a major component of teaching.

Coming to Canada I've learned that there are others things to consider when it comes about teaching. A good reason for that is because of such diversity that we encounter here and we have to manage it properly trying at the same time to maximize our efficiency in teaching. Therefore new things came and I had to manage properly.

For my metaphor some vocabulary is necessary:

- INTEGRAL = Possessing everything essential; entire
- INTEGRAL = (Mathematics) the limit of an increasingly large number of increasingly smaller quantities, related to the function that is being integrated (the integrand). The independent variables may be confined within certain limits (**definite integral**) or in the absence of limits (**indefinite integral**).

Why I chose this symbol, because I had to “INTEGRATE “myself in a new system and I tried to push myself to no limits in order to be able to have a chance here.



The limits can be infinite, the function can be anything and dx is the variable that influence that function.

BACK HOME:

$$\int \text{teach } d(\text{rules})d(\text{knowledge})d(\text{work}) = \text{Teacher}$$

“Translation” – This formula illustrates how I saw myself as a teacher back home. I had to follow rules after rules to learn and teach lots of information in order that our students to have the maximum amount of knowledge and to put them to work till the excellence was achieved according with that curriculum. This type of integral has as an answer a function, me being a teacher, as well as a constant, creativity, which sometimes has been seen as “different”.

HERE IN CANADA:

$$\int_{-\infty}^{+\infty} \int_{-\infty}^{+\infty} \int_{-\infty}^{+\infty} \text{teach } d(\text{soft skills}) d(\text{class management}) d(\text{flexibility}) = \text{teacher} \int_{-\infty}^{+\infty}$$

“Translation” – This formula illustrates how I see myself as a teacher here in Canada. I learned that here there are other variables to consider and to use in order to accomplish the excellence as a teacher. Such a variable is soft skill which has to be combined with class management without rigid rules as well as with flexibility in any situation in order to reach the maximum potential of my students throughout their learning. So, to do all these things I have to integrate myself in this new system and this cannot be done without assimilating and believing in those variables that influence my way to success. And we all know if we are not using the appropriate formula to solve a math exercise than we’ll fail to get the right answer so do I have to use the correct formula which requires me to INTEGRATE into this system using the appropriate formulas and variables otherwise there is no solution to this equation.
