

Master's Capstone: A Teaching Experience

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## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

**Table of Contents**

|                         |    |
|-------------------------|----|
| Abstract                | 3  |
| The Project             | 4  |
| Pedagogy                | 4  |
| Reflection              | 14 |
| Weekly Summaries        | 15 |
| Student Feedback        | 46 |
| References              | 49 |
| Syllabus                | 54 |
| Course Outline          | 56 |
| Lesson Plans            | 58 |
| Teacher Evaluation Form | 82 |

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

### Abstract

Throughout Winter Semester 2015, I was able to teach a course in the Philosophy Department at Utah Valley University. This experience has allowed me to research best teaching practices, apply these theories, and reflect on the semester through student and personal evaluations. This experience has brought great insight on the best ways to communicate to students in a formal classroom environment.

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

### **The Project**

For my capstone experience, I have created a course curriculum and implemented that curriculum into a Philosophy 2050 Ethics and Values course at Utah Valley University. I am now able to reflect upon the material, teaching strategies, and communication methods used to see how effective I was with my delivery. I saw my capstone as an opportunity to branch out from my current career path to experience something that I have had an interest in pursuing as a vocation. Knowing the importance of completing my capstone and planning my graduation, I reached out to a professor I had while completing my undergraduate work to see if this venture was a possibility. I was surprised by the quick response and was offered a position as an adjunct teacher immediately. Not wanting to miss an opportunity, I gratefully accepted and started my experience.

### **Pedagogy**

Teaching gave me several opportunities to apply the communication skills that I learned throughout my graduate program at Southern Utah University. Verbal, non-verbal, and written communication have all been critical elements to the success of the class. I not only needed to convey ideas, theories, and inspire critical thinking and self-discovery, but I had to structure the course so that students understood what was expected of them in order for them to succeed in the class. To get the class started in the right direction, I provided a class syllabus to the students online through Canvas, as well as a hard copy delivered the first day of class.

According to the University of Illinois, “the quality of the syllabus is a fairly reliable indicator of the quality of teaching and learning that will take place in a course”. (Parks, Harris, 2009, para 6). A syllabus is required by Utah Valley University and must be reviewed and

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

approved by the department head prior to the beginning of the semester. More importantly, the syllabus is necessary for me, as the instructor, to have a road map for the course. By outlining timelines for lectures, expectations of the students, and solid deadlines for tests and assignments, I have a professional and personal document that started the course with solid expectations for all involved. In order for the students to be prepared for assignments and tests, I needed to follow the syllabus throughout the semester to stay focused on the course objectives. This also allowed students to have the information they needed to be well prepared to succeed with the requirements assigned.

A syllabus is a key communication tool for students because it functions as a binding contract between the teacher and the students. By elaborating on the components of the course, students will know exactly what effort is required to obtain a certain grade or score. Immediately, students know the prerequisites that will determine if they are prepared for the course, the schedule outline for the semester, and additional resources to help them succeed. “With direct communication about expectations from the start, students will be set up for success and can agree to complete what is required in order to fulfill the course ” (Parks & Harris, 2009, para 3-5).

One of the components of this course was assigned readings. While this form of learning was not direct communication from me, I needed to effectively communicate the importance of completing the reading assignments in order to obtain optimal knowledge, participate in class discussions, and succeed in the weekly course quizzes. “As instructors, we can promote critical reading habits in our students by giving them significant and realistic purposes for their out-of-class reading” (Tomasek, 2009, p. 132). With the out of class reading concept in mind, I needed

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

to preview sections of the chapter before the reading assignment is given. By better knowing the chapter myself, students had a purpose in their reading and know that this material will be used in discussions and quizzes. Students also knew they would be responsible for knowing and understanding specific concepts.

According to the National Education Association, in order to encourage students to complete their readings, instructors should stop lecturing the readings in class. Instead, instructors should preview reading activities in class (Nilson, 2002, para 3). By giving an objective, students had a purpose in their reading rather than simply getting through the assignment. Once the assignment was completed, instructors can provide additional information on the subject matter that was read. By addressing applicable and relatable information to reading content, information will be challenged even farther and new ideas will be introduced. Also, instructors can clarify content that the average student would be unable to grasp on their own. “But you can’t expect rational people to do the readings if the knowledge will be spoon-fed to them in class the next day” (Nilson, 2002, para 3). Instructors must find a way to help students understand what is being taught in the classroom, but not hinder the students in the process.

Maryellen Weimer, PhD (2012) states, “Recognize that teaching and teachers are central to engagement — Much research places teachers at the heart of engagement”(para 5). In 2006, the Department of Psychology at UCLA separated the concept of Engagement into three categories: behavioral engagement, emotional engagement, and cognitive engagement. Behavioral engagement involves participation in academics and is considered crucial by the department for achieving positive academic outcomes. Emotional engagement influences a student’s willingness to do the work. Emotional engagement is affected by positive and negative

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

feelings towards teachers, classmates, and academics. Cognitive engagement is the willingness to understand difficult ideas and master complex skills. (para 6) To be successful in fully engaging my students, I needed to be aware of all three of these aspects of engagement. By facilitating class discussions as opposed to constant lecturing, I was able to achieve this goal and challenge student's current opinions or beliefs, which resulted in self-discovery and topic mastery.

There is a lot of debate on what form of teaching is most beneficial in the classroom. Some people believe that lecture style teaching is the best way to teach because it keeps all of the students on the same level of learning with one person speaking in one direction. Others believe that discussion style teaching is much better because it gives the students an opportunity to contribute throughout the class, and it holds their attention better.

Tyler Mangrum, the News Editor for HackCollege.com based out of Seattle, Washington, wrote an article called, "Are Lectures Less Effective Than Discussions?". In the article, Mangrum (2012): states

Critics of these types of classes, in which traditional lectures are eschewed in favor of student-powered discussion, say that it's inevitable for alpha-type personalities to dominate these discussions, and those who seek to coast-by may simply sit back and listen, or that students who do wish to contribute but may be more introverted than those who talk the most may never be able to get a word in. But proponents counter with the idea that this could easily be curbed by teacher intervention, in which everyone must contribute in some form in order to pass, or discouraging those who talk the most from controlling the course of the conversation." (Para 7).

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

In 1976, there was a book written by A. H. Johnstone and F. Percival called, *Attention Breaks in Lectures*. Johnstone and Percival observed different students in 90 different lectures, with 12 different lecturers. In their book these observers wrote, “After three to five minutes of “settling down” at the start of class, one study found that “the next lapse of attention usually occurred some 10 to 18 minutes later, and as the lecture proceeded the attention span became shorter and often fell to three or four minutes towards the end of a standard lecture” (Johnstone, Percival, 1976, p. 49-50)

The Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington, has been doing a discussion type teaching style, which they call seminars. This is a focused collaborative group discussion from a lecture or textbook. Students are expected to complete assigned reading or homework before class begins along with notes or questions that could spark a debate. Many times the teacher will spark the discussion and then take a back seat while the students gain skills in working with peers and help each other through understanding texts. *What are seminars? (2015)*.

Barton, Heilker, and Rutkowski (1984) seem to agree when they state

We begin, then, with a simple premise: classroom discussion functions best when *students are talking to students*. Indeed, our goal is to get as many students involved in talking to one another as possible and for the teacher to fade into the background.

Students are well practiced in how to talk to and listen to teachers, in how to address and look to authority figures for answers. But they are not well versed in how to talk to and listen to each other, in how to navigate and negotiate and discuss issues of serious consequence and work toward answers among equals” (para.6).



## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

By setting this goal, I hoped to maximize class time with critical thinking. The National Education Association suggests three characteristics of an ideal critical thinker. The first is an excellent pattern of recognition skills. “The critical thinker sees that two arguments are both disjunctive syllogisms, in much the same way that most people in our culture can see, without thinking much about it, that two cars are both Toyotas” (Turner, 2002, para 1). The second characteristic is vocabulary. Students must have the terminology to express their feelings and ideas. And finally, the thinker must obtain a certain ethical stance (Turner, 2002, para 2-3). While engaging in discussions and debates, students must respect their own view as well as having a charitable attitude toward the opinions of others. By adopting this culture in the classroom, students will feel safe to offer their opinions and beliefs without feeling intimidated by their peers.

There are suggestions offered in an article from Virginia Tech to lead effective classroom discussions. The first is to set a clear expectation for students to participate in class discussions. It is suggested to implement a rule that you are not allowed to say, “I don’t know.” Students are not required to have a correct or perfect answer, but they are required to think. If the conversation is held much like they are at lunch with friends, they would be able to offer some thought, opinion, joke, or give an applicable personal example. If a clear expectation is executed correctly, it will lead to greater student involvement and create a culture for the classroom.

Informal talk with students outside of class can help to break the ice and may help many students open up during class subjects. If my students were comfortable speaking with me about informal topics, they were much more likely to offer comments during class discussions. If my students were relaxed in class there then there could be no room for anxiety associated with

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

speaking in front of or to classmates (Classrooms Discussions, n.d, p. 2). "...Learning more about your pupils as individuals is essential for situations where there may be conflict and for building positive pupil/teacher relationships that will see individuals coming to you if they're struggling with anything academically or are having any other difficulties" (The Inspired Classroom, 2014, para 8).

Using the classroom space strategically opened up dialogue and allowed students to feel more engaged in the conversation. When students feel the teacher is invested in what they have to say, the rest of the class pays closer attention as well. The proper use of classroom space can be accomplished by arranging students' desks or chairs in a circle or horseshoe shape. This allowed for easier physical access through proximity, the ability to make eye contact, and hear responses without straining. Also, positioning myself among students and speaking to them at eye level takes away much of the intimidation factor. It also shows an investment and interest in them rather than placing a physical boundary in front of me such as a desk (Classrooms Discussions, n.d., p. 2).

Eye contact is vital if used purposefully. While a student is speaking, it is beneficial to break eye contact from the speaking student and make eye contact with other students in the class. This does one of two things. First, the speaking student may follow the teacher's gaze and begin speaking directly to someone else. This consequently engaged others and led to follow-up topics. Second, by the instructor continuously scanning the room, it is a non-verbal reminder that the other students should be paying attention to what the speaker is saying (Classrooms Discussions, n.d., p. 2). "The general rule is that all audience members should think you are speaking directly to them. In groups we can divide our audience into different zones and deliver

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

a complete thought, idea or concept per zone per eye contact connection” (Guarino, J., 2012, para 3).

The final strategy to optimize classroom participation and increase critical thinking is to avoid open questions. It is more beneficial to call on individual students or direct questions to a specific student and then distribute turns around the room. Doing this will increase attentiveness and increase the number of participating students. Asking open questions allows some students to hide while the hyper-verbal students dominate the conversation (Classrooms Discussions, n.d, p. 2).

In my teaching experience, I had the opportunity to measure student involvement and attention span on both lecture days and discussion days. I kept track of student involvement in a journal that I would keep after class on how I felt the lesson went. I measured attention span by students dozing off, students who began texting, and students who were clearly engaged in thoughts that were not about the discussion or class. I noticed on the days that I lectured many students who fell asleep, zoned out, or began texting never actually became fully engaged in class that day.

On the days that I facilitated class discussions, I had a much higher student engagement rate. There were still students who would zone out, or begin to text, but I never had any students fall asleep. The students who did text or zone out would become engaged in the discussion shortly after. Even though I had lost student engagement for a short time in a discussion, these students would always become engaged again.

Along with student engagement and learning through class discussions, studies show that group presentations are another great way for students to become and stay involved. In a book

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

entitled , *Harnessing the Power of Emergent Interdependence to Promote Diverse Team Collaborate* Caruso and Woolley state, (2008) “Group projects can help students develop a host of skills that are increasingly important in the professional world” (p. 245-266).

According to instructional strategies at Carnegie Mellon University, there are many benefits from student group presentations. Some of the student benefits include refining understanding through discussions and explanations, developing stronger communication skills, and better planning associated with managing time. Other benefits include finding effective peers to emulate, sharing diverse perspectives, and holding one another, as well as yourself, more accountable.

Through group presentations and projects in class, students have a much better opportunity to really dive into the material being taught in the classroom. By preparing for presentations, students will usually go above and beyond with information just to make sure that all of their bases are covered.

In a book called *Tools for Teaching*, author Barbara Gross Davis writes, “Students working in small groups tend to learn more of what is taught and retain it longer than when the same content is presented in other instructional formats” (1993, p. 147).

One thing that I noticed with my class’ group presentations, was that students who were typically shy throughout the semester seemed to really speak up in the presentation and feel confident about what they were saying. I also noticed that students took their subject to another level by not only talking about what they had learned in class, but also providing the class with a much deeper insight on their subject because of all of the information they had gathered from their preparation. Presenter preparation and knowledge on their subject showed me that the

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

students really took the time to study and carefully plan out what their presentation would include. This also showed me that each member of the group was very educated on their specific topic and that they had a high understanding on the concept.

Having visuals in the classroom can be a great way to grab and hold the attention of students. Dr. Haig Kouyoumdjan, (2012) talked about using visuals in the classroom in an article that he published called, “Learning Through Visuals.” In the article, Kouyoumdjan relates that auditory words are abstract and rather difficult for the brain to retain. He then goes on to say that visuals are concrete and typically much easier for a student to remember.

Kouyoumdjan also talks about other studies that have confirmed just how powerful visual imagery is in learning. In one specific study, students were asked to remember many groups of three words each such as dog, bike, and street. The students who tried to remember the words by repeating them over and over again did poorly on recalling the words. Students who made visual connections and associations with the words like imagining a dog and riding a bike down the street were significantly better at recalling the words (Kouyoumdjan, 2012). Kouyoumdjan said, “So powerful is visual learning that I embrace it in my teaching and writing. Each page in the psychology textbooks I coauthor has been individually formatted to maximize visual learning. Each lecture slide I use in class is presented in a way to make the most of visual learning” (2012, para 5).

BCIT Learning and Teaching Centre created a job aid called, “Designing and Using Visuals in the Classroom.” In this job aid it talks about a study done in 1987, by Jim Strice of the University of Texas in Austin. Strice suggests that people retain 20% of what they hear, 30% of

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

what they see, and 50% of what they see and hear. Lane Community College in Eugene Oregon uses BCIT's job aid within their college in order to help teachers better prepare their lessons.

### **Reflection**

In order to measure my success at the conclusion of this project, I have gathered information through my own observations as well as my student's observations. It would be ineffective to simply rely on my own opinions of my performance because they will be skewed. I may have tendencies or habits that I am unaware of in teaching and presenting. By reaching out to my students I received an accurate account of the outcome of the class. I did this by providing one teacher evaluation at the mid-term point of the semester. The evaluation was anonymous and allowed me to take correctional action mid-semester.

Personally I was able to measure the success of the class by keeping a journal of my lesson plans. I was also able to measure my success at communicating by reviewing quizzes, tests, and assignments. If students consistently missed a certain question on a test or quiz then I knew I did not effectively explain the concept or stress the importance of completing assigned readings by giving goals and purposes. It also showed my inexperience in writing exams. Finally, I was able to assess if I had met my goals by observing the culture of the classroom. This was done by tracking how many students participated during discussions and the quality of answers that were given throughout the semester. This was also recorded in the journal through tally marks.

There were many days where I would leave class and sit in my car with my head on the steering wheel. I would do this when I felt like the class did not go as planned, or how I

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

had imagined it would go in my mind. I would reflect on how I wanted the class to go, and how the class actually turned out. I would also figure out what I could do in the future to either create that same success, or button up loose ends and weaknesses I had as a teacher. These self-reflections on my steering wheel actually gave me deeper clarity into how and why things went the way they did. It was quiet, everything was fresh on my mind, and I had my teaching journal right there to write down any new findings and or thoughts.

I also came up with many ideas that I could put into action for the next class. One of those ideas specifically was to offer extra credit, but tie it into the lesson on homo-economicus. It was a fantastic idea because it not only taught the students what a homo economicus was because they needed that understanding to actually be successful in the game, but it also gave them a first person experience into what category they personally fell into. Many students thought they were a non-homo economicus at the beginning of class but found out that they were very much a homo economicus when there was personal gain on the line.

### **Autoethnography**

An autoethnography is a method or writing style used by writers and researchers. An autoethnography typically involves self-observation and reflexive investigation with personal reflection or field study. Typically an autoethnography is used by a person who is looking to record data or experiences they encountered while observing a group that they themselves are somehow connected with.

I will formally reflect on my findings through an autoethnography. “When researchers do autoethnography, they retrospectively and selectively write about epiphanies that stem from,

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

or are made possible by, being part of a culture and/or by possessing a particular cultural identity. However, in addition to telling about experiences, autoethnographers often are required by social science publishing conventions to analyze these experiences (Ellis, Adams, Bochner, 2011, para 8).

### **Master's Capstone: A Teaching Experience**

#### **Weekly Summaries**

##### **Week 1**

This week's objective was to introduce the class to philosophers like Plato and Jiddu Krishnamurti. We started off talking about Plato and his passage of the Allegory of the Cave. I introduced the students to Plato as a philosopher and gave a brief background on him. I then went on to explain the Allegory of the Cave in great detail while using pictures and other art to help students visualize the story. These pictures were of Plato himself, a drawing of the cave, what the prisoners in the cave looked like, and finally what the outside world looked like to the freed prisoner. We then discussed what we as a class thought Plato meant by his passage of the Allegory of the Cave. We talked about what we thought he wanted society to take from the Allegory and also what we as individuals could take from his passage.

Next we talked about Jiddu Krishnamurti and some of his personal philosophies. I had pictures of the philosophers for the students to view so that they could put a face to the philosopher and call upon that image to help with future exams about the philosopher. We focused mainly on his philosophy about, "The Function of Education". We discussed why Krishnamurtis' message about not having fear or being fearful was important. We also discussed



## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

as a class what we personally thought Krishnamurti was truly trying to tell us as a society from his passage.

I thought the lesson on Plato and his Allegory of the Cave was very successful. I based success of the lesson off of how many students were engaged with asking questions and follow up questions about the lesson. Another way I seek success is allowing students to have self-discovery. When students pose a question, I strive to help them find their own conclusion. This practice solidifies information and creates an “Aha” moment. I helped students accomplish this by answering their question with another question that could help them think in a different direction. Some of the students immediately began to think outside the box and compare modern day struggles and issues with the Allegory of the Cave. Students used many of the visuals that I had provided for them to point out specifics of what they were seeing in order to justify their claims on what Plato truly meant.

The lesson on Jiddu Krishnamurti was not as successful as far as student participation and engagement. It seemed like the students were having a more difficult time understanding the philosophies of Krishnamurti. I felt like I had to call on people and continuously create discussion through taking on different views and assumptions of Krishnamurti’s teachings in order to get students to become involved.

I found that students were more engaged with the Allegory of the Cave over Krishnamurtis’ Function of Education because the students seemed to be able to relate to the Allegory of the Cave more through modern day examples and also personal examples they had experienced in their lives. Students also seemed to have an easier time imagining a cave and the

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

story more in their heads as I told the story. With Krishnamurtis' teachings there weren't any stories or analogies. There was only a single picture of the philosopher for the students to view.

Overall I feel that the most success and student engagement came this week from having an equal amount of visual learning, by displaying pictures, and text learning. Students were lost and uninterested when we got into more of a text heavy and lecture-learning environment.

### **Week 2**

This week's objective was to generate the same amount of participation and excitement that occurred last week. This week I introduced Immanuel Kant as a philosopher. We discussed the heading in our book tied to Kant called, *Transition from Ordinary Rational Knowledge of Morality to the Philosophical*. I brought in one single picture of Kant and nothing else because I could not think of other material to use for the philosopher. Since I was trying to stay as close to the textbook as possible we did not discuss many of Kant's other philosophies. I wanted the students to be able to gather the information needed for the quiz instead of having to research outside of their textbooks on such a broad subject and philosopher.

We also discussed the philosopher John Stuart Mills and his philosophy on Utilitarianism. With Mills, I brought in a picture of the philosopher and also pictures of large groups of people that seemed very happy. I also had a few pictures of small groups of people and even single persons who looked very distraught and unhappy.

With Mills many students thought of different scenarios and modern day decisions that could be made that could bring about Utilitarianism. We put together a few different scenarios and had the students describe which scenario went with Mills' teachings and which scenarios went with Kant. I also had a few scenarios that went with neither philosopher to see if the

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

students could catch the scenarios that had nothing to do with either philosopher's teachings. I thought the lesson on Kant could have gone a lot better if I had introduced Kant to the class, and then found some of his more popular philosophies to discuss. I could have told the students about each philosophy and had them research it on their own. I felt a bit worried about stepping away from the text since it was only my second week of teaching and was unsure on how the class would react about research outside of their textbook.

The lesson on Mills was fantastic. Students seemed to understand Utilitarianism very well and began thinking outside of the box immediately. Success was based off of student involvement through questions they had for me, and also peer-to-peer class discussions. This showed me that students had grasped the teaching of Mills and were putting their own thoughts and ideas together about Utilitarianism and what it meant to them. Even though I had several images for Utilitarianism I think that students were more engaged because it was something they could personally relate with in specific areas of their life over seeing a few pictures of happy and sad people. As I passed the pictures around students were quick to pass them along unlike the pictures of Plato's Allegory of the Cave. Students took much more time to look each picture over and spot specifics about each picture.

Overall I learned that it is not good enough to just bring pictures and visuals to class like I had assumed in the first week. I realized it has to do with how specific the pictures are to the lesson and that the pictures should be unique. I realized students didn't care for the pictures of happy and sad people because they were too common and there was not really any artistic flavor or anything unique about the pictures.

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

However, I do think it has been helpful to bring pictures of each philosopher. Even though there is not a lot to look at, students seemed interested to see what these men looked like. I even had a few students mention that Mills did not look like a philosopher. He looked more like a past president of the United States. Many students mentioned that they thought Kant looked more like a composer of music like Mozart or Pachelbel.

I distributed a quiz at the end of the week on chapter 2. The average score of the class was 8 out of 10 points. We went over the quiz as a class to clarify questions that were missed since I would be using some of the same questions on the midterm.

### **Week 3**

The objective for this week was to introduce the class to Aristotle and his teachings on Moral Goodness. Before we jumped into our lesson we talked about Aristotle and the relationship and links that he had to both Plato and Socrates. I had pictures of each philosopher in order to help the students better imagine who each philosopher was. We spoke about Aristotle and his life up until he enrolled into Plato's Academy and began tutoring Alexander the Great.

As we got into our lesson we talked about what Aristotle meant when he spoke about moral goodness and habit. I discussed with the students how Aristotle taught that we as people have to actually do something in order to really learn it. For example, builders learn how to build by building and instrumentalists learn by playing instruments. None of us are born naturally knowledgeable and great at building and playing instruments. After we have practiced and completed the action we become good at something. After we have completed the task of playing music or building something, their full development in us is due to habit.

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Aristotle taught that moral goodness is a result of habit. We had a discussion in class on whether or not we are born as good people naturally or if it took focus, practice, and maybe the help of a parent, friend, or religion to shape our moral goodness. One example of moral goodness that was discussed was when a good girl dates a bad boy. It is easy for the boy to act differently when he is around the girl, but he cannot truly be a good boy unless he makes an effort to make good decisions all of the time which in turn can become a habit. Making good decisions only when he is around the girl will not form a habit or change the bad boy into a good boy because he is not trying to mentally change his ways. I felt like the students really grasped the connection between Aristotle, Plato, and Socrates. I felt like they were very engaged throughout the entire class period. I felt like this happened because many students had different opinions at first on what they believed about being born a natural or having to practice and create habit in order to become a natural. At the end of class most students agreed that it takes practice and habit before we can actually transform ourselves into something different than we already are.

Overall I felt that the lesson was very successful. The reason I felt that it was successful was because many of the students could relate to either being a musician, or building something, or dating someone that acted like a different person than that person really was when they were around each other. Being able to relate personally to the lesson helped the students not only participate but stay engaged through in class discussions. I had one student who was the girl that changed anytime she was around the boy. She talked about feeling sad every time she was with her crush because he was everything that she wanted, but knew that she could never be everything that he wanted unless she could change. She mentioned that the change would not come because some people are just different and come from different families or backgrounds

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

and no amount of trying will ever truly change their personality, beliefs, or aspirations. Personal stories and situations seemed to engage everyone in class, even the sleepers. Students like to hear real stories that they can relate to over a lecture about the same material coming from a book is what I have observed in my students this week.

### **Week 4**

The objective for this week was to have a video in class and see how this helped with student engagement. I showed a video from YouTube on the Stanford Experiment. This video contained images, live recordings, and a narration of what the Stanford Experiment is. There was some vulgar language in the video as well. I did warn the class before we watched the video about the language and offered each student the opportunity to leave if they felt like they would be offended by the video. None of the students left, and the language used in the video did not seem to deter any student engagement or participation.

We also discussed Buddhism and Death, which was a discussion between a father and son. Jean-François Revel, who was a philosopher, is the father and Matthieu Ricard is his son who devoted himself to Tibetan Buddhism. The lesson was on how none of us ever know when it could be our time to die. We also talked about a Buddhist's view on death according to Matthieu Ricard and whether or not death is feared or welcomed by a Buddhist.

Overall I felt this week went very well because I achieved a positive outcome. I wanted each student to have a firm knowledge and grasp on what the Stanford experiment was. I wanted students to see how easily power and freedom can change a person in drastic ways. I had a few sleepers, which shocked me because I thought all students would love a video. The lights were off for the first half of the video. I left some of them on for the second half to see if that changed

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

anything and it did not. The students who slept the first time slept the second time regardless of the lighting. It was the same students that slept both times.

I paused the video twice to talk about what was happening and the students didn't really want to talk and I had to call on students to get their feedback. The feedback I got was typically short and to the point. After the second time of pausing I realized that students have a harder time getting into discussion in the middle of the video rather than at the end. Once the video ended many students had comments and concerns about the experiment. Some concerns were whether or not those who were prisoners in the video were able to overcome the mental abuse they received or if they held onto it throughout their lives. Students seemed very fascinated about the experiment and talked about why power can make people change so easily. The class talked about how they felt it was better that many people rule together rather than one individual have all of the power. My student's thoughts were that with many there will be corruption, but there will also be goodness to help balance those who are corrupt. Many students proposed that we should have a group of Presidents in America instead of just one. That way scandals and corruption within the government would happen less because too many people would be involved for one person to be dishonest.

The discussion on death kept students engaged but did not ignite a lot of discussion. Students kind of sat back and listened. It felt like they wanted to tell stories, but did not because of the emotion that could follow, or because they had different views on death according to their religion and did not want to make themselves a target for those who could disagree. I had a few students who talked about death and made it sound like it was their personal thoughts and

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

beliefs. It seemed like many of their thoughts and beliefs were the thoughts and beliefs of their religion, but they did not come out and say that their religion believed that way.

I did have one girl that emailed me after the class and thanked me for my lesson on death. She told me that her best friend just lost a child and that my lesson on death really helped her put things into perspective.

### **Week 5**

The objective for this week was to introduce the students to St. Augustine and George Mavrodes. I like my students to be able to put a face to the philosophers that I teach them about so I brought in a picture of both St. Augustine and George Mavrodes for them to see.

Upon discussing St. Augustine I introduced him as being one of the most influential Christian thinkers in history. We talked about his book, *The City of God* and some of the writings in there. More specifically we talked about free will and whether or not all things can happen according to fate if there is free will. We entertained the thought of whether or not all things are foreknown to God, or if upon making our own personal decisions a new opportunity unforeseen previously by God can open up to us. We also talked about how a man can worship false idols in order to stay away from fleshly pleasures. In the end the man is practicing damnable works of the flesh by worshipping false idols.

Talking about George Mavrodes we talked about whether or not humanity could exist without any type of religion. We discussed the thought of morality failing if religion failed. We also talked about everything being permitted if there truly was not a God. We discussed if that should be correct or if there should still be rules and laws even if God did not exist.



## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

The lesson went really well and there were great discussions in class. Many of the students seemed to focus their comments and energy on whether or not God truly did exist and why. I had a few students who explained that God did not exist yet we somehow still have laws and rules within humanity. Upon asking how they felt about these rules and laws with no God to truly judge if these laws were broken, one student in particular responded by saying that he thought rules and laws would apply no matter what happened. He agreed that humanity needs these things set in place in order for mankind to survive in a somewhat functional world. He also mentioned that even though he knows he will not have to answer to any god for fleshly pleasures, he could understand why there are rules in place against these things. The evidence of STD's and other diseases that come from promiscuity are prime examples of how rules and laws can help better mankind.

Overall I think the lesson went really well. My students seemed to be very engaged with most discussions by asking questions and commenting on other student's questions. I have done a lot of heavy lecturing without a lot of visuals. I try to lecture in a way that students know the floor is always open for comments and thoughts even when they are off topic, but we still get the lesson completed. I have had a few students tell me that my class is one that they look forward to going to because our discussions are always entertaining and they feel like I really care about what they have to say and not so much about cramming a bunch of information down their throat.

One of the biggest things that I am learning is that students like to discuss religion and God. Some do not like to talk about themselves personally with religion but like to hear about others and their beliefs. Students become very engaged and active when questions are brought up

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

that make them think and even confuse them at times. An example of something that students would like to discuss, or become more engaged in is the existence of God. Bringing up scenarios on how God can or cannot exist if this or that happens. Students really begin asking questions and making statements when scenarios like the existence of God are brought up.

### **Week 6**

The objective for this week was to introduce the students to William Ian Miller. We also had a debate on what was most beneficial: revenge, or forgiveness. I brought a picture of Miller and displayed it where the class could see his face and become acquainted with what he looked like. I have done this with every person that I have introduced to the class so far and it seems to work. Students seem to recall previous lectures by describing the philosopher they are talking about even when they do not remember the name. This has been very interesting to see because it shows that many of my students are visual learners and are able to describe who they are talking about on quizzes instead of leaving the question blank.

We started off by talking about William Ian Miller and his teachings on an Eye for an Eye. I used the example from the movie Troy, when Hector killed the cousin of Achilles, and Achilles showed up and killed Hector even though the murder of Achilles cousin was accidental. Many students agreed that they would do the same thing because family is important, and you do whatever it takes to protect your family. I then used an example of Jesus of Nazareth when he was hanging on the cross and asked his father to forgive those who crucified him. Many of the same students suddenly switched gears from wanting revenge and agreeing that forgiveness was better because less people get hurt in the end. I used these specific examples because everyone can relate to family and can imagine what it would feel like to lose a member of their family. I

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

used Jesus as an example because out of anyone in history, he would have a reason to put an eye for an eye to the test, but instead he showed love to his persecutors and it benefitted him and many others in the end for not taking revenge.

In the debate I split the class into equal numbers and created scenarios on whether revenge or forgiveness was best. The first scenario I talked about was the guy who stole the drug from an inventor in order to save his dying wife from cancer. There wasn't much of a debate because people on both sides agreed that the inventor should forgive the guy for stealing the drug because life is more important than money and fame. I then did a scenario of Batman when he is walking with his parents as a young boy and they are both murdered right in front of his eyes. This scenario struck a great debate. The students who were tasked to argue for forgiveness did a great job at bringing up examples of why forgiveness would be better. Examples were that Bruce Wayne was dark and sorrowful. Had he forgiven he could have done all the good he did and probably been happier personally with a family instead of keeping a dark secret. They also claimed that he put it upon himself to save others when it was not his job. This kind of obligation could destroy a person.

The other half claimed that justice had to be sought out because forgiving everyone all the time teaches no lessons to the offender and gives that person the right to continue to kill people in cold blood, or cause damage within society.

Overall I had a fantastic turn out with student participation. Many of the students had personal stories, which helped them relate those specific feelings they had to the lesson. I think the scenarios I used with the movie Troy and of Jesus Christ were stories that everyone was familiar with and understood. This made it easier for them to paint a picture in their heads of the

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

stark contrast. The debate was great because the students became very passionate and began making comments that were meaningful and heartfelt. I could tell that they truly believed what they were fighting for and were not just debating for the sake of a debate.

I believe success came from finding commonalities with the student's and my examples. I was able to hit on things that helped better explain the lesson but were not unknown by each student. Every person in the class had either seen the movie Troy or knew the story, and every single person in the class knew the story of Jesus.

### **Week 7**

The objective for this week was to introduce the students to Joseph Henrich a psychologist at the University of British Columbia. The reason for our conversation about Henrich was to have an activity about cooperative behavior.

The activity was based around the term Homo economicus. A Homo economicus person is the type of person who will do whatever it takes to come out on top. An example of this would be if two people were presented with a 100-dollar bill and told they could keep the money as long as they could work out a deal on how to split it, a Homo economicus person would split the money in two different ways. The way the Homo economicus would decide how the money was split would be by what kind of person they were dealing with personality wise. If the person that the Homo economicus was splitting the money with was not Homo economicus, the non homo economicus individual would most likely offer to split the money 50/50. If the other person was Homo economicus, they would most likely offer to keep 99 dollars and give the other person one dollar. The reason for this is because Homo economicus people will take anything extra they can,

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

so being offered one dollar and keeping it is better than turning the deal down and leaving with nothing.

The activity that I did in class was to split the class into three different teams. I offered them twenty-one extra credit points, so in the best-case scenario each person on each team could receive seven extra credit points. I did not tell the class how many points were offered letting them know it could be only 1 point or 50 points in hopes that everyone would be open minded about the negotiations. I chose one person from each team that would do the negotiating and communicate for their team so that we could keep composure in the class and it would not turn into a yelling match. I then had each representative choose straws in order to see which representative would get to do the negotiations with the other teams. Once I had a representative from each group selected I took them out into the hall and told them how many points were being offered. I let them choose how many points they would offer team two and team three. Once he had decided how many points he wanted to keep for his own team and how many he would offer to the other teams, I had him meet one-on-one with each representative in private and tell them how many points he was offering them. I had it set up to where if he met with team two, and they elected to keep the points they could both keep their points, but if he met with team three and they declined his offer they would both lose their points leaving team two as the only team to receive extra credit points.

It turned out that both teams decided to keep their offers. Team one ended up with 10 points, while team two ended up with 7 points, and team three ended up with just 4 points.

Overall I feel like the activity was a success because all teams were very involved and cooperative behavior took place in all situations of the activity. I believe that is success because I

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

got to see first-hand how my students negotiate and think through situations that affect others. I then had the opportunity to compare our lesson on Homo economicus to each student in class. At the end of class all students were able to give examples of who a Homo economicus was during the activity and why they received that label. Many students also determined if they were Homo economicus personally or if they were more of a person who would rather take nothing than not split something that should be split equal rather than split any other way.

Many students mentioned that they enjoyed the activity and wanted to do more activities like that as the semester progressed. Many of the students said that they especially enjoyed the activity because experiencing something is much more fulfilling than just talking about it.

### **Week 8**

The objective for this week was to prepare the students for the midterm exam. I helped prepare them by bringing in all of the pictures of the philosophers that we had previously spoken about. I did this to see if just the picture alone would help remind students of what we learned about that philosopher.

I provided the students with a study guide in order to better prepare for the exam as well. We went over the study guide together and talked about the questions the students were unsure of or did not understand. When students had questions about something that was going to be on the exam, I would have the class look the question up in the book and find it themselves. I did this because I felt like the students would remember the question and answer better by finding it themselves over me just giving them the answer.

Overall, I felt like the midterm preparation went well because the students seemed to be prepared with knowing correct answers and understanding the material. It seemed like many of

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

the students could answer most of the questions and had a firm grasp on what would be on the exam. After the students took the exam the scores that came back were not as good as I had hoped. Many students got 80 or less out of 100.

Looking back I think it was not the preparation and studying that hurt the students with their scores, I think it was the way I scored the exam. Many students did really well on the multiple-choice, which were worth two points each. There was a section where students had to match the philosopher to their teachings that was worth four points each, and then two long answer questions that were worth 15 points each.

Many students did really well on the multiple-choice section, but missed a few of the bigger point questions, which really brought their score down. Although the students got many of the big questions right in our preparation time, they should have done well on the exam too. Upon asking a few students why they thought they scored the way they did, I had most tell me it was because they did not spend as much time studying, as they should have. I had two others explain that they were confused by some of the questions, but understood it when I went over it again with them. None of the students blamed the test or the way it was prepared.

### **Week 9**

The objective for this week was to introduce the students to Mo Tzu and Carol Gilligan. I brought in pictures of both people because the students mentioned that it helps them remember the lessons better when they can put a face to the person who is being discussed.

When talking about Mo Tzu we talked about his teachings about Universal Love and I used an example out of the book that talked about when a ruler loves his people they in turn love him. When he loves himself and only those who are superior to the rest of the people he is hated

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

by his people. I then asked the students about examples in their life with family or friends who have shown them love and if they loved them back. I then asked about the people who treated them poorly and if they loved them back for after the poor treatment. One student said he tried to love everyone regardless of how they treat him, the rest of the class agreed that they love those who love them and do not have love toward people who have, or do treat them poorly.

With Carol Gilligan we discussed how she thought that women were less morally developed than men. Gilligan proposed that women in a situation of right or wrong would do the helpful, or pleasing thing to others. Before I discussed Gilligan's finding with the class I wanted to do a little activity so that I could compare unbiased results with the class at the end of the activity.

I split the class up into two groups the first group was all men, and the second group was all women. I then used the scenario of a drug that could cure cancer being developed by an inventor who would not give the drug to his or her dying spouse unless it was purchased. Many of the women in the class suggested that they would try to borrow or work for the money first. If that didn't work they would steal the drug in order to save their husband. Consequences for stealing were not even a consideration. It was more important for the women to save a life and especially the life of the person they loved rather than think about consequences that could affect them personally.

The men of the class said that they would not steal the drug because it would not make sense for them to do that and save their wife if they had to suffer consequences like prison that would keep them away from her anyway. One guy suggested that it was a waste to do that



## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

because he would save her life and go to jail while she went out and found another husband that was not in jail.

Overall it seemed like the students really enjoyed the lesson. Many of them seemed to almost take the lesson personally and get emotionally involved with their answers, instead of just considering what they would do hypothetically. The things that I found to be helpful were when students could relate to the lesson. When the students talked about loving those who loved them and not having love for those who didn't have love for them they were able to develop an emotional connection or relationship to the topic. Many of the students used specific examples of people in their lives and could relate to the examples Mo Tzu used in the book.

At the end of the activity where I split the men and women up in the class and got their solutions of what they would do the women were a bit offended by Gilligan's findings and proposals. They thought that it made women seem weak that they would try to find the helpful or people pleasing solution. I then asked them if their answers they gave me coincided with what Gilligan claimed. All of the women said no and that they were doing what was best for them in their life and not trying to please anyone else. They claimed it was more beneficial for them to have a husband than to be a widow.

### **Week 10**

The objective for this week was to introduce the students to Michael Minch who teaches philosophy at Utah Valley University. I did not bring a picture of him but wanted students to seek him out themselves. I felt that students seeking out Michael Minch was a good idea because they still get a chance to see what he looks like, but it also gave them a chance to ask him any questions they had about his part in the textbook.

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

I introduced his teachings of, “*When Soldiers Aren’t Heroes*” and asked each student before we got into the lesson what they felt toward men and women in uniform. It was unanimous across the classroom that each person had respect for anyone in uniform. I then asked about men and women dressed in uniform who were from other countries. Sixteen out of thirty students said they respected anyone wearing a uniform regardless of the country in which they live. I had a few video clips that I wanted to share with the class, but wanted to get their opinion on soldiers before I showed the clips.

I showed the scene in *Pearl Harbor* the movie when Japan was actually bombing Pearl Harbor. I wanted to show something that had Japanese soldiers who were dressed in uniform doing something that may not be heroic in the eyes of America, but could have been heroic in the eyes of Japan at the time.

I then showed a few clips from the movie *Lone Survivor*. I showed the scene where the soldiers were fighting for their life against the Taliban after the decision had been made by the soldiers to free the two young boys and old man that had originally discovered the soldiers hiding in the mountains. After the scene I asked the students how they felt toward the American soldiers and how they felt toward the Taliban soldiers. I then showed a clip of an Afghan man who was the same race as those who were trying to kill the American soldiers save one of them. I wanted to see if a change in perspective had any effect on how the students felt toward the Taliban soldiers, or if the Taliban soldiers affected their view of this man who was saving the American’s life, since they were after all the same race.

Finally I showed a clip of Adolf Hitler speaking to the SS and Nazi troops who were in uniform. These men were not committing any violence but simply listening to their leader who

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

was also dressed in uniform speak. I wanted to see if students respected these men since they were in uniform and not committing any violent act.

Overall I feel that the lesson went really well because of the video clips. Many of the students seem to really enjoy when I change it up with visuals and lecturing. I did not have any students actually seek out Michael Minch because they were all too busy or had some other reason that kept them from seeking him out.

Fourteen out of the sixteen students who said they respected all men and women in uniform from all different countries at the beginning of class said they no longer respected them. Asking them why no one could answer. They all kept saying, "I don't know, I just don't." I then asked if it was because I showed clips of people who were fighting against Americans. Many of them agreed that they felt angry to see American soldiers being attacked. I then asked about the Nazis and why they felt angry at them since they did not actually see them fighting against the Americans. No students were able to justify why they could not call the Nazi soldiers a hero. They kept saying that they knew history and their opinion stems from that. I then asked about American soldiers who commit terrible acts to other people in other countries. I asked if that changed their opinion on American soldiers. Many students agreed that it did. The students then suggested that men and women in uniform could be non-heroic no matter who they represent.

Finally I asked how the students felt now compared to how they felt at the first of class. Many of the students answered that they felt grateful for men and women in uniform, but could not view them all as heroes because there are acts committed by all soldiers all over the world that are disrespectful and non-heroic.

### **Week 11**

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

The objective for this week was to introduce the students to Jerome Segal who is a senior research scholar at the Center for International and Strategic Studies in Washington DC. I also gave the students a free day to spend time with their groups for the group presentations that will be coming up in a few weeks.

Jerome Segal is known for his study “Two Ways of Thinking About Money.” As I introduced the lesson to the students I had Pink Floyd’s song Money playing in the background to build energy.

For the lesson we talked about what the big deal was about money. Why money is what drives and motivates people over anything else, and why the people who have a lot of it continue to try and get more. We discussed whether or not money can change the way a person thinks and acts. We also discussed why those who have too much money tend to be unhappier than those who often times struggle financially, or have enough money to get by, but not enough to splurge whenever they want.

Overall I feel that the lesson went really well because we talked about a subject that was familiar to the students. Familiarity helps them make their thoughts and feelings about the lesson more realistic because they can relate on a personal level. The students had a lot of personal experiences with money and stories of other people involving money. Many of the students felt that money is not the happiness people make it out to be. Much of the class agreed that people make people happy, not money. Those who disagreed and thought money made people happy did not have any stories of people they knew who were rich or had a lot of money. Many of the people they knew did not have much money and didn’t seem very happy because they had to go to extreme lengths just to survive.

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

The free day that I gave to students seemed to have worked great. I had many students thank me for the free day and tell me that they had no idea when else they could have met since everyone is so busy with other classes, work, and life in general. In the class after the free day I got a progress report from each group. Each progress report showed that all students in each group were on time and participated. Students also came prepared with their portion of the presentation. Based off of the feedback that I had received from the progress reports, it seemed as if the free day was very successful with helping students better prepare for their presentations.

### **Week 12**

The objective for this week was to introduce the students to Jonathan Safran Foer and his study on Eating Animals. I also gave the students another free day this week to prepare for their group presentations.

In the lesson this week we talked about killing and eating animals. We discussed what we would do if there were humans bigger than us who wanted to eat us like we eat animals. We discussed what we would say or do in order to change their mind of eating us.

We continued on the lesson by talking about whether or not it is ok to kill an animal that we do not plan to eat. We discussed whether or not it was ok to even eat animals in the first place. Many students felt that eating animals was something that humans were meant to do in order to get the nutrients they need to survive. I did not have any students who thought it was ok to kill an animal that we weren't planning on eating. I had a guy who was an avid hunter in class. He mentioned that every time he killed an animal he would say a silent prayer, or give a silent thanks to the animal he just killed for giving its life so that he and his family could survive. One

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

person disagreed with that and started a debate that animals do not give their life to us to eat, but we steal their life because it is survival of the fittest.

We spent much of the class having a debate on whether animals would give their life for us to survive or would prefer to live even if that meant we as humans die. There were some really good points on both sides. The debate was not planned, but I let it go on because I thought it was a great way for the students to really think about what they believed and then stand up for their beliefs. It was great to see students really think through a possible dilemma and figure out for themselves what they believe and why.

Overall I think this class has been better than most of the others because the students seemed to really take the reins and as far as being vocal on their own and not waiting until I called on them. It was great to see the students take the class into their own hands and really think through what the lesson was about and why they believed what they did. I really enjoyed hearing specifics about what caused each student to be so passionate about what it was he or she were presenting. It was a great learning experience for everyone and it was fun to see a debate among students without me having to plan the debate and then choose a side. Each student pretty much chose his or her own side and began backing up the responses of their fellow believers or non-believers.

The free day went well again. Most of the groups are ready for their group projects and are just fine tuning a few things. They are getting excited about presenting and even letting other groups know that they will be presenting the best presentation in the class. There is a little bit of competition between the groups building up.

### **Week 13**

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

This week the class presentations started. I split the class into 5 different groups. Each group was supposed to choose to present on either a theory, or philosopher that we learned about during the semester.

The guidelines for the presentations were that each person in the group had to have a part so that no one could skate by on everyone else's work. There was also a 15-minute time limit on each presentation. Any group that was two minutes under or over 15 minutes would be docked 5 points. Each group assigned a member of the audience to give them some kind of signal when they were getting close to going over 15 minutes.

Each group also provided the class with a quiz before each presentation. Having a quiz assured that the class would have to pay attention in order to get points. I let the class know that I would be looking at each quiz and making sure that it was complete or I would dock points for not paying attention.

After the groups finished presenting, I would offer my feedback on their presentation and help them to know things they could work on for future presentations as far as body language, introduction of the next speaker, and speaking to the class and not to their PowerPoint. We then talked about the presentation as a class and elaborated on things we really liked and asked questions about things that were unclear.

This week, groups one and two presented. Group one presented on Jonathan Safran Foer and his teaching on hunting and eating animals. They talked about how over hunting can leave a footprint within the environment. They also covered how killing and eating animals conflicts or goes against certain religious views. Finally they talked about mistreating animals and poaching.

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Group two talked about Alan Durning and his teachings on consumption. This group focused on which countries consumed the most gas, oil, and food. They also talked about the consumption of electricity and how that could affect America as the need for more electricity grows. They talked about the consumption of fresh water and whether or not trees were a renewable resource. Their main focus was how many tons of food are thrown out each day here in America and how we rank with other countries around the world.

Overall both groups did great with presenting their material and doing it confidently. I was very pleased with the presentations and information that was provided. Both groups were prepared in every way and the class seemed to be very interested in what they were learning from each of the presentations. The groups did great at putting together PowerPoint slides and also showing video clips in order to back up their research. I felt like the students really took these presentations and made them their own. They did not just copy the information out of the book, and they even had their own opinions, which is what I have been trying to teach them to do all semester long. It is nice to see students think through issues and present a solution instead of trying to figure out what I as their teacher wanted to hear.

### **Week 14**

This is the second week of the group presentations. This week groups three, four and five will be presenting.

The guidelines for the presentations were that each person in the group had to have a part so that no one could skate by on everyone else's work. There was also a 15-minute time limit on each presentation. Any group that was two minutes under or over 15 minutes would be docked 5



## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

points. Each group assigned a member of the audience to give them some kind of signal when they were getting close to going over 15 minutes.

Each group also provided the class with a quiz before each presentation. These quizzes assured that the class would have to pay attention in order to get points. I let the class know that I would be looking at each quiz and making sure that it was completed or I would dock points for not paying attention.

After the groups finished presenting, I would offer my feedback on their presentation and help them to know things they could work on for future presentations as far as body language, introduction of the next speaker, and speaking to the class and not to their PowerPoint. We then talked about the presentation as a class and elaborated on things we really liked and asked questions about things that were unclear.

Group three presented on Immanuel Kant and his philosophy of Morality and Religion. The group talked about how Kant distinguishes between the supreme, complete, and highest good. They also talked about whether or not morals determined the personal and life decisions that we make. Finally they argued that religion always results in a positive outcome. They posed a debate by having a few members agree and a few members disagree with that statement. The end result was that religion does not always result in positive outcomes because even though a religion can be correct, people typically are not and it is the people who represent a religion since God is not here to do it himself.

Group four talked about Plato and his philosophy on the Allegory of the Cave. They talked about Plato and the school that he created. They also compared the cave to a culture that many people grow up in today. The group achieved the comparison by saying that we are stuck

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

in a cave because we only know our culture, but outside of our culture there is a giant world that is nothing like what we are used to seeing, or what we believe the world is. They then did statistics on how many people stay in the culture they were born in for their entire life. They ended with what they thought the Allegory of the Cave can teach us today. They had students raise their hands and give examples of what they thought. Students suggested education and women's rights in other countries, while others talked about personal stories on how they thought they had things figured out and then lived in another country for a few years and realized they had no idea what the world outside of their perspective town, city, and state was like.

Group five presented on racism and how it is a growing issue within America and also around the world. They talked about false statistics of certain races being picked on by the police or other authority figures. They talked about a racism case that happened recently here in Utah. Finally they talked about how innocent people are hurt or killed every single day because of the things they can't control like race, or bloodline.

Overall I was very impressed with groups three and four because of the way they introduced the next person to speak, and also how organized and prepared they were. I was not so much impressed with group five because they had a great topic and failed to really hit on any points that were not already common knowledge. It seemed like the group kind of threw something together practiced it one time and then presented it.

Overall I was happy with how the presentations turned out because I felt like the students really took their presentations seriously and used the free days that I gave them wisely. I also elected one team leader in each group to report back to me on how the group worked together

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

and if each individual put in a solid effort. I didn't have one team leader give me any negative feedback about any member in their groups and talked very highly of everyone's efforts.

### **Week 15**

This was the second to last week of class. This week students turned in their research papers and we worked on any other assignments that were missing throughout the semester. We also played a game in class for extra credit.

For the game I split the class into three groups. I then put together 9 different scenarios involving some type of moral dilemma. I attached a certain amount of points to each question depending on its level of intensity. I let the students know that questions could vary from 1 point, to several points, and even possibly negative points. Each scenario that was read would involve only two teams. After I read the scenario each person in one of the two teams answering the question would have one minute to deliberate with each other on what they would do in the situation. After the minute was up, I would call time and both teams had to stop talking. At that point a spokesperson from each team would then give their solution to the dilemma. The third group would then listen to both team's responses and tell me which team they felt answered the question most ethically. If they felt neither team answered the question ethically, they could choose to keep the points for themselves for that question. At the end of the game I had all of the points tallied up for each team. I then surprised the teams by calling up the spokesperson from each team. I then made it known that I would be asking three questions that only they could answer and not receive any help from the audience. I would be determining an order by which spokesperson got which question correct. After determining which team would go first, second,

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

and third I let the class and team leaders know the twist I put on the game and why I chose to do that. I told them that this game was set up to see if each team would be honest and ethical with their decisions on who received the points, or if they would see free points, and take the points because they wanted to help themselves get a better grade.

The twist was that the spokesperson who got to go first got to speak with his team for twenty seconds on whether they wanted to keep the points they had, or switch points with team two or team three. Team two then got to do the same thing while team three had to stick with whichever points team one and team two decided not to take. At this point the students still had no idea how many points they had earned or how many points the other groups had earned.

It was very interesting to see and hear each group complain at the end of the game about how the other groups stole points and weren't ethical with their decisions. Once they learned of the twist, they suddenly stopped caring about the other groups and started thinking of ways they could negotiate with the other groups to not steal their points.

Overall I thought the game was a success because the students were able to learn a personal lesson both in the game and possibly in life. Many of the students commented on how it is so easy to be selfish at first when you think you have something figured out, but then things can turn in an instance and the people you treated unfairly can hold your destiny in their hands and will remember how you did them wrong when you held their destiny in your hands. I felt like the students got the idea and lesson from the game and were able to make enough sense of it to apply it to their own life and dealings with other people.

### **Week 16**

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

This is finals week. I had each student log into canvas and view his or her current grade. I told them that I had graded and added all of their points throughout the semester and that was the grade they had earned. I then told each student they could receive a copy of the study guide for the final and take the final if they were not happy with their current grade and wanted to try and earn a better grade.

Students began to come up with pros and cons on whether or not they should take the final in order to boost their grade a little bit more. They then realized they could lower their current grade if they struggled on the final. At the end of class every single student in the class decided to take the grade they had instead of taking the final.

At the end of class I let all students know that they were still more than welcome to take the final up until the end of the semester and if they wanted to, they could reach out to me and I would give them the study guide and final for them to take. We then said our goodbyes and ended class for the semester. I never heard back from any students who decided to take the final.

Overall I felt this semester was a great success especially for my first time teaching. On the last day of class I had many students explain that this was one of best classes they had ever taken and gave me a standing ovation. The reason I mention this reaction is because I feel like I received very valuable and honest feedback from the students that will be priceless in any future teaching endeavors I have.

The students explained to me that it was nice to know they had the freedom to speak their mind and debate on something with which they disagreed. They said with other teachers they feel like the teacher says the floor is open for discussion, but the floor really isn't open and the teacher is constantly telling them to stay on track. They said with my class they felt like they

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

truly had an opportunity to learn because I let them gather their thoughts and work through their questions instead of cutting them off and keeping them on topic. They said they truly felt like they had the freedom to come into my classroom and talk about or debate anything they wanted in order to get a better understanding. They said they also enjoyed the fact that I would stop in the middle of my lecture to make sure that we were all on the same page and understood the concept instead of always trying to stay on topic and make staying on schedule a priority. They said they felt like most teachers didn't care about what they thought and just wanted to get through their lesson before class ended.

My students also mentioned that they liked that I found things to joke about with them because it made the mood of the classroom much more easy going instead of the typical come in and either zone out, or fear getting called out for something.

I personally think my students were always very respectful and were always engaged in the lesson for the most part. I did have a few issues with students and punctuality, but that was only an issue with a few students. For the most part students were always on time and always ready to jump into the lecture. I really looked forward to going to class because I had built a relationship with the students that created a fun atmosphere. The students were always very respectful toward me and knew when it was time to joke and when it was time to learn.

### **Student Feedback**

At the midpoint of the semester I handed out a feedback survey to the students on how they thought I was teaching. A copy of this survey will be included in the appendix of the paper. I told the students to be completely honest and to not put their name in hopes that, that would help with students feeling they could be honest with their feedback. Once I received the survey

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

back I read through each one to see what the students had thought of my teaching so far.

I got a lot of positive feedback from my students. Most of the students all commented on how much they enjoyed our in class discussions. The reasons they enjoyed the discussions were because it made them think outside the box and gave them an opportunity to really lay out their thoughts and work through them without fear of getting off topic, or being interrupted by the teacher.

Other positive feedback was that I made the class interesting with pictures and stories that could relate to the lesson. Students mentioned that visual aids helped them better imagine not only what the philosophers looked like, but really helped give them an exact idea of what the philosopher was trying to teach.

Other students mentioned that they thought I was funny and it helped lighten the mood of the class and make the classroom atmosphere not so intense and focused on getting through a lesson.

Some of the suggestions for improvement that I received were that some of the students would have liked to see more power points to go along with the discussions so that they could take more specific notes on the lesson. They mentioned that it has hard to determine what to write down from the discussion because there was not an emphasis on the specific things they should know.

Another suggestion for improvement that I received was to hand back homework more quickly so that the students could see how they did on the assignment.

For the most part I did not receive a lot of improvement suggestions from the students. Many of them just wrote the word nothing, or left it blank. I am not sure if that was because the

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

students really thought I was a great teacher, or if they just wanted to finish the survey and did not want to write anything.

For the second part of the semester I continued to teach how I had been for the first part of the semester, but added more PowerPoints to my lessons. If I did not have a PowerPoint, I would use the whiteboard in every lesson in order to write down specifics and main points of the lesson. This would help the students who requested more PowerPoints to be able to take more specific notes.

For the first part of the semester I was handing back assignments and quizzes at the end of the week. After I received the student feedback I started handing back quizzes and assignments by the next class period. That way we would have more time to go over the questions the students had on things they missed.

One day in class we had a lesson on Buddhist's belief on death and whether or not a Buddhist welcomes death. During the lesson we got into a discussion with the class on their beliefs about death and whether or not they welcomed death, or even thought about it. The discussion went really well and many students provided great insights. Later that day I received an email from a student in my class named Melissa. Melissa went on to write the following, "Your lecture on death today ended up being totally ironic and oddly comforting. I just found out my best friends baby died today, so your class has kinda been helpful in thinking about what is going too happen to that sweet child and my best friend as his mom." I thought that was a very nice email and great feedback. It opened up my eyes to the fact that I never know what someone in my class is experiencing in their personal life. Though these lessons come from the book and don't mean much to me personally, there could always be someone sitting in class that can really



## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

relate to the lesson. It gave me a better understanding on why the students really enjoyed the discussion parts of the class so much. It gives them an opportunity to relate to what is being talked about in their personal life, or could help prepare them for something they may experience later in life. Either way I was very touched by her email and was glad she shared her thoughts with me.

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SPRING 2015

### ETHICS AND VALUES

**INSTRUCTOR:** Cole Sanders

**PHONE #:** 801-884-7335

**EMAIL:** [hcolesanders@hotmail.com](mailto:hcolesanders@hotmail.com) (preferred contact)

**OFFICE HOURS:** By Appointment Only

**PREREQUISITES:** English 1010 or 1020

**REQUIRED TEXT:** Michael Minch, Christine Weigel:  
*Living Ethics an Introduction Second Edition*  
ISBN-13: 978-1-111-18651-7

### DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:

This class satisfies the Utah Valley University core General Education Ethics and Values requirement. For information on UVU General Education, please see:

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

<http://uvu.edu/gened/essential/index.html>

This class will meet Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 9:00 AM for lectures on the reading materials that are assigned each week. It will be the student's responsibility to complete the assigned readings outside of class. Students are to be prepared and able to participate in class discussions and debates. Class lectures will touch on the assigned readings but will mostly incorporate how the theories and philosophies can be applied to current events in politics, religion, and business to name a few.

Each Friday a quiz will be administered in class. These quizzes will be on class discussions with emphasis on assigned readings. These quizzes CANNOT be made up if the student is absent for any reason. At the end of the semester the lowest two quiz scores will be dropped from the students final grade. This portion of the class will be critical as it counts for 40% of your final grade. Participation and preparation are key to your success. Also, questions will be pulled from these quizzes that will appear on your midterm and final.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

1. There will be 15 quizzes administered each Friday in class (except for Wednesday, February 25). Your top 13 scores will be counted for a total of 40% of your final grade.
2. There will be a six to eight page research paper that will be due the final week classes are held, April 20-24. Students will be able to choose from a variety of topics on what they would like to focus their research on. More information on this assignment will be given in a separate document. This portion of the course will contribute to 15% of your final grade.
3. Students will be required to deliver a group presentation on an assigned topic. Groups will consist of 3-4 students. Peers will be required to assign a grade to each member of the group on their preparation and contribution as well as receiving a grade from the instructor. This portion of the course will contribute to 15% of your final grade.
4. There will be a midterm and final administered in class. Tests will be created from the assigned readings, lectures, and in class quizzes. The tests will also have an essay section. Each test will make up 15% of your final grade totaling 30% overall.

### **EXPECTATIONS:**

Students are expected to maintain high standards of academic honesty and integrity, as outlined in the UVSC Student Rights and Responsibilities Manual:

"Each student is expected to maintain academic ethics and honesty in all its forms, including but not limited to, cheating and plagiarism as defined hereafter:

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

1. Cheating is the act of using or attempting to use or providing others with unauthorized information, materials or study aids in academic work. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, passing examination answers to or taking examinations for someone else, or preparing or copying other's academic work.
2. Plagiarism is the act of appropriating any other person's or group's ideas or work (written, computerized, artistic, etc.) or portions thereof and passing them off as the product of one's own work in any academic exercise or study."[NB: THIS INCLUDES INFORMATION OR WORK ACCESSED VIA THE INTERNET!!!!--P.L.]

Students who cheat on any assignment, or who plagiarize from any source, including and especially internet sources, will be at the mercy of the instructor, and will be subject to penalization up to and including receiving no credit for their assignment. With current search engines, it is extremely quick and easy to identify plagiarized papers.

Student Disabilities: If you have any disability that may impair your ability to successfully complete this course, please contact the Accessibility Services Department (LC 312).

## COURSE OUTLINE

| WEEK   | DATES         | CONTENT   |
|--------|---------------|---|
| Week 1 | January 5-9   | Chapter 1 Learning<br>What is the function of education?  |
| Week 2 | January 12-16 | Chapter 2 Reasoning<br>What are the proper roles of reason and emotion in ethics?                   |
| Week 3 | January 19-23 | January 19 Martin Luther King Jr. Day – Holiday<br>Chapter 3 Flourishing<br>How might we best live? |

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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| Week 4  | January 26-30  | <b>Chapter 4 Existing</b><br>What is the meaning of existence?<br><b>** Term Paper Topic Due January 30</b>  |
| Week 5  | February 2-6   | <b>Chapter 5 Believing</b><br>How does religious belief help make sense of existence?  |
| Week 6  | February 9-13  | <b>February 13 No Class – Reading Day</b><br><b>Chapter 6 Relating</b><br>What is the significance of difference?  |
| Week 7  | February 16-20 | <b>February 16 Washington and Lincoln Day – Holiday</b><br><b>Chapter 7 Cooperating</b><br>How can people best live together?<br>The Social Contract (pages 215-226) |
| Week 8  | February 23-27 | <b>Chapter 7 Cooperating</b><br>Equality and Justice (pages 227-266)<br><b>** Quiz Wednesday 25</b><br><b>** Midterm Friday 27</b>                                   |
| Week 9  | March 2-6      | <b>Chapter 8 Confronting</b><br>What are the ethical dimensions of conflict?   |
| Week 10 | March 9-13     | <b>Chapter 9 Caring</b><br>How and why should we love and care for others?<br>What do the concepts of love, care, and compassion teach us about life?                |
| Week 11 | March 16-20    | <b>Chapter 10 Working</b><br>How might work form a human being?  |
| Week 12 | March 23-27    | <b>Chapter 11 Consuming</b><br>What are some ethical dimensions of   |



## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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|         |                    | consumption?  |
| Week 13 | March 30 - April 3 | Chapter 12 Creating<br>What can artworks reveal about the art of living?      |
| Week 14 | April 6-10         | Spring Break - Holiday  |
| Week 15 | April 13-17        | Chapter 13 Extending Ethics<br>How might ethics be extended beyond humankind? |
| Week 16 | April 20-24        | ** Term-paper due & presentations   |
| Week 17 | April 27-29        | ** Final<br>Final date and time will be disclosed at a future time.           |

**Lesson Plan Topic:** Allegory of the Cave. The Function of Education    **Week # 1**

**Overview and Purpose:** To help the students learn about Plato, Jiddu Krishnamurti, and their philosophies

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| <b>Objectives (Specify information that will be learned)</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Allegory of the Cave</li> <li>● The Function of Education</li> <li>● How these philosophies can be compared to modern day struggles</li> </ul> | <b>Materials Needed</b><br>Text- Living Ethics an introduction<br>Pictures of each philosopher<br>Pictures of Plato's Allegory of the Cave |
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## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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| <b>Information (Give and/or demonstrate necessary information)</b>           |   |   |
| <b>Verification (Steps to check for student understanding)</b>               | <p>Student participation</p> <p>Classroom excitement and energy</p> <p>Comments based on student personal thoughts and beliefs</p>  | <p><b>Other Resources</b> (e.g. Web, books, etc)</p> <p>None</p>  |
| <b>Activity (Describe the independent activity to reinforce this lesson)</b> | <p>Each student thought of a modern day issue or situation that could be compared to each philosophers teachings</p>  |   |
| <b>Summary</b>   | <p>Overall I felt the first week went well. It was my first in classroom experience at a college level. I felt like I had a pretty good grasp on how to keep my students engaged.</p> | <p><b>Additional Notes</b></p> <p>I had a lot of students bring up education for women in other countries and also women's rights in other countries as comparisons to the Allegory of the Cave. Several great thoughts and analogies of their own.</p> |

A TEACHING EXPERIENCE





## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

**Lesson Plan Topic:** Immanuel Kant, John Stuart Mills

**Week #** 2

**Overview and Purpose:** Introduce two of the most well known philosophers of all time

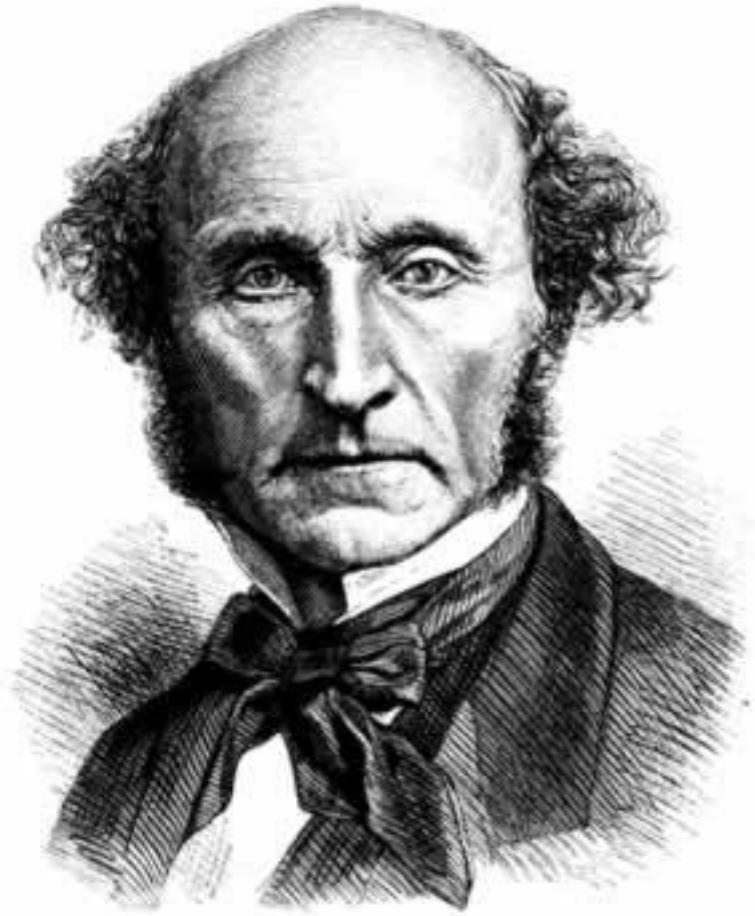
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| <b>Objectives (Specify information that will be learned)</b>                 | Duty<br>Utilitarianism<br>Which philosopher students agreed with more   | <b>Materials Needed</b><br>Text- Living Ethics an Introduction<br>Pictures of each philosopher<br>Pictures of people who could be compared to Utilitarianism |
| <b>Information (Give and/or demonstrate necessary information)</b>           |   |  |
| <b>Verification (Steps to check for student understanding)</b>               | Student involvement<br>Discussions that get off track from topic<br>Students asking questions to find further information<br>Quiz | <b>Other Resources (e.g. Web, books, etc)</b><br>Student pulled up pictures on their laptops of Mozart and Pachelbel to do a comparison of Mills and Kant    |
| <b>Activity (Describe the independent activity to reinforce this lesson)</b> |   |  |
| <b>Summary</b>   | Asking for personal stories and giving personal stories that could go along with the lesson                                       | <b>Additional Notes</b><br>Pictures help but do not keep students engaged as much as I thought. Students seem to be more engaged when they can compare a     |

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

philosophy to a real life situation.



## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE



**Lesson Plan Topic:** Aristotle

**Week #** 3

**Overview and Purpose:** Introduce Aristotle and connection he had with Plato and Socrates.  
Talk about Moral Goodness

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| <b>Objectives (Specify information that will be learned)</b>       | Connecting dots between Aristotle and other philosophers<br>Moral Goodness<br>Habit | <b>Materials Needed</b><br>Text- Living Ethics an Introduction<br>Pictures of each philosopher<br>Picture of instrumentalist and builder |
| <b>Information (Give and/or demonstrate necessary information)</b> |   |  |

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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| <b>Verification (Steps to check for student understanding)</b>               | Student involvement<br>Discussions that get off track from topic<br>Students asking questions to find further information | <b>Other Resources (e.g. Web, books, etc)</b>  |
| <b>Activity (Describe the independent activity to reinforce this lesson)</b> | Students shared personal stories to relate to the lesson  |  |
| <b>Summary</b>   | Asking for personal stories and giving personal stories that could go along with the lesson                               | <b>Additional Notes</b><br>Personal stories from students engage the entire class. They also help other students who typically do not participate make comments or share experiences |



A TEACHING EXPERIENCE



## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

**esLesson Plan Topic:** Stanford Experiment and Death

**Week #** 4

**Overview and Purpose:** See the response from students with a video. Talk about religious views on death. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L\\_LKzEqIPto](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L_LKzEqIPto)

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| <p><b>Objectives (Specify information that will be learned)</b></p>                 | <p>Observe student engagement with a video<br/>         Compared student discussion and participation during pause of video compared to at the end of the video<br/>         Talk about something that is a bit more personal to some people</p> | <p><b>Materials Needed</b><br/>         Text- Living Ethics an Introduction<br/>         YouTube video</p>   |
| <p><b>Information (Give and/or demonstrate necessary information)</b></p>           |  |  |
| <p><b>Verification (Steps to check for student understanding)</b></p>               | <p>Student involvement as far as sleeping compared to watching video<br/>         Students sleeping with lights on and lights off<br/>         Students asking questions to find further information</p>   | <p><b>Other Resources (e.g. Web, books, etc)</b></p>   |
| <p><b>Activity (Describe the independent activity to reinforce this lesson)</b></p> | <p>Students shared personal stories to relate to the lesson<br/>         Students came up with thoughts of their own on how to possibly limit corruption within authority figures</p>  |  |
| <p><b>Summary</b></p>   | <p>Students like to talk about their belief but do not like to connect their belief with that of their religion.<br/>         Students have a hard time talking about death even when it does not have to do</p>                                 | <p><b>Additional Notes</b><br/>         Videos seem to keep most students engaged. Students were able to give more specific examples of things they heard from the video over things they heard in a</p> |

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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|  | with them or someone they know | lecture. |
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**Lesson Plan Topic:** St. Augustine and George Mavrodes

**Week #** 5

**Overview and Purpose:** To introduce the students to new philosophers and talk more in depth about God

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| <b>Objectives (Specify information that will be learned)</b>                 | Observe student engagement through questions and comments<br>See how students react when I questioned the existence of God<br>Talk about something that is a bit more personal to some people   | <b>Materials Needed</b><br>Text- Living Ethics an Introduction   |
| <b>Information (Give and/or demonstrate necessary information)</b>           |   |  |
| <b>Verification (Steps to check for student understanding)</b>               | Student involvement as far as sleeping compared to watching video<br>Students sleeping with lights on and lights off<br>Students asking questions to find further information                   | <b>Other Resources (e.g. Web, books, etc)</b>  |
| <b>Activity (Describe the independent activity to reinforce this lesson)</b> | Students shared personal stories to relate to the lesson<br>Some students tried to prove the existence of God while others did the opposite   |  |
| <b>Summary</b>   | Students like to talk about their belief but do not like to connect their belief with that of their religion.<br>Students have a hard time talking about death even when it does not have to do | <b>Additional Notes</b><br>Students become extremely interested when questions that are hard to answer get brought up. Questions like how a person can have free agency if God already |

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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|  | with them or someone they know | knows the decisions that they will make. Doesn't that mean they are already predestined to make those decision? |
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## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE



**Lesson Plan Topic:** Introduce the students to William Ian Miller

**Week #** 6

**Overview and Purpose:** To teach them the law of an Eye for an Eye in a through examples and scenarios that they could understand

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| <p><b>Objectives (Specify information that will be learned)</b></p>       | <p>Observe student engagement through questions and comments<br/>See how students reacted to each different scenario given<br/>Questions that would be on the quiz</p> | <p><b>Materials Needed</b><br/>Text- Living Ethics an Introduction</p> |
| <p><b>Information (Give and/or demonstrate necessary information)</b></p> |  |  |

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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| <b>Verification (Steps to check for student understanding)</b>               | Examples students used to prove their point in the debate<br>How well students did on the quiz   | <b>Other Resources (e.g. Web, books, etc)</b>  |
| <b>Activity (Describe the independent activity to reinforce this lesson)</b> | We had a debate on revenge or forgiveness  |  |
| <b>Summary</b>   | Using examples of things that students are already familiar with help paint a better picture. There were many examples in the book that could have been used but they are not as well known by the younger students. | <b>Additional Notes</b><br>Even though we were talking about the lesson, we still had fun by talking about movies and our thoughts on those. Students learned the concept of an Eye for an Eye and were able to compare it to something they were familiar with. |

A TEACHING EXPERIENCE



## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

**Lesson Plan Topic:** Introduce the students to Joseph Henrich

**Week #** 7

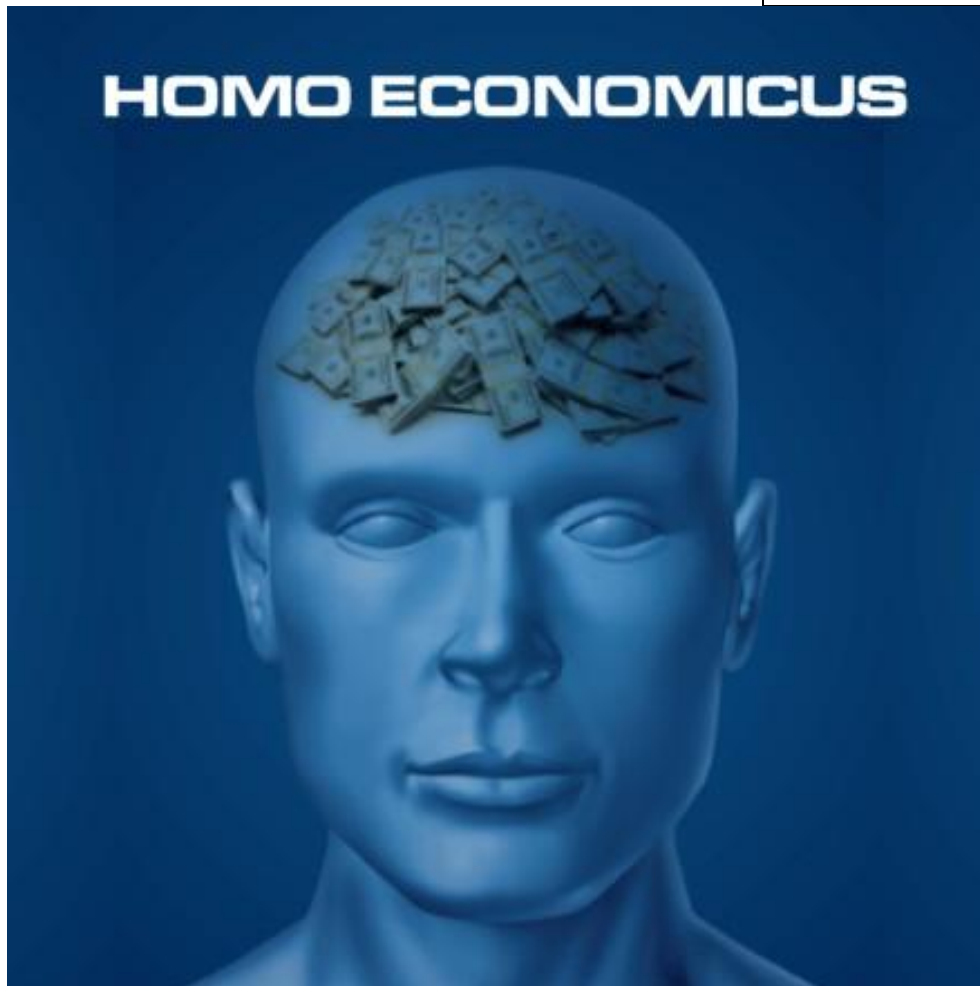
**Overview and Purpose:** To see how students learned and engaged with me as the teacher and each other from an activity over a lecture

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>Objectives (Specify information that will be learned)</b>                 | Observe student engagement through questions and comments<br>See how students used engaged with an activity<br>See how well students grasped the lesson at the end of the activity | <b>Materials Needed</b><br>Text- Living Ethics an Introduction  |
| <b>Information (Give and/or demonstrate necessary information)</b>           |  |   |
| <b>Verification (Steps to check for student understanding)</b>               | How and why students decided to accept or decline an offer<br>See if students could label themselves and give an example why   | <b>Other Resources (e.g. Web, books, etc)</b>   |
| <b>Activity (Describe the independent activity to reinforce this lesson)</b> | We had an activity on the lesson we were learning. Students actually got to play a game that would label them Homo economicus or non-Homo economicus                               |   |
| <b>Summary</b>   | Students seem to grasp a lesson that lets them experience what is being taught over just trying to explain what is being taught  | <b>Additional Notes</b><br>I think that my students learned this lesson by doing it better than they have learned any other lesson so |



## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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|  | to them.<br>Students all had a firm grasp of the lesson without any hesitation. | far. |
|--|---|------|



## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Lesson Plan Topic: Preparation for the midtermWeek # 8

**Overview and Purpose:** To see how well the students have grasped what they have learned so far in the semester

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| <b>Objectives (Specify information that will be learned)</b>                 | All of the information that we had learned up until this point in class<br>Going over the study guide and what will be on the midterm  | <b>Materials Needed</b><br>Text- Living Ethics an Introduction<br>Philosopher pictures |
| <b>Information (Give and/or demonstrate necessary information)</b>           |  |  |
| <b>Verification (Steps to check for student understanding)</b>               | Went over the study guide in class to see if students could answer those questions<br>Showed pictures of philosophers to see if students could tell what they taught and me who they were. | <b>Other Resources (e.g. Web, books, etc)</b>  |
| <b>Activity (Describe the independent activity to reinforce this lesson)</b> | Went over midterm together as a class  |  |
| <b>Summary</b>   | The class study seemed like  | <b>Additional Notes</b>  |

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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|  | it went really well. The students knew most of their stuff and answered many of the questions on the study guide | I need to look into scoring the exam better in the future so that students don't bomb an entire exam based on one or two sections |
|  |  |   |

**Lesson Plan Topic:** Introduce the students to Mo Tzu and Carol Gilligan **Week # 9**

**Overview and Purpose:** To see how accurate the students thought the studies in the books were.

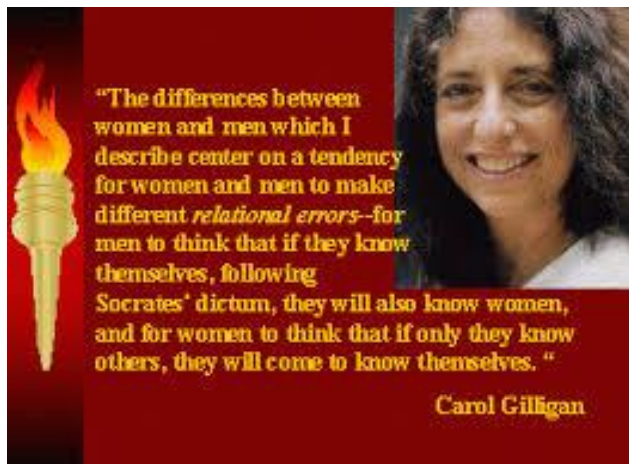
|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <b>Objectives (Specify information that will be learned)</b>                 | Observe student engagement through questions and comments<br>See how students accepted certain studies in the book that they may not have agreed with                | <b>Materials Needed</b><br>Text- Living Ethics an Introduction |
| <b>Information (Give and/or demonstrate necessary information)</b>           |  |  |
| <b>Verification (Steps to check for student understanding)</b>               | How the women reacted once I told them Gilligan's studies on men and women<br>Have students use personal scenarios in their life that could coincide with the lesson | <b>Other Resources (e.g. Web, books, etc)</b>                  |
| <b>Activity (Describe the independent activity to reinforce this lesson)</b> | Split the students into groups by male and female.<br>Discuss what decisions each group would do to see if we could compare to the findings of Carol Gilligan        |  |
| <b>Summary</b>   | I feel like most of the  | <b>Additional Notes</b>  |

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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|  | <p>answers that I got back were pretty accurate with what Carol Gilligan taught. The women did seem to find solutions that were people pleasing, or most helpful.</p> <p>The men seemed to think through the situation a bit more logically and thought of every outcome instead of what made others the most happy</p> | <p>The students do really well when they are put in groups and have the opportunity to work together. They have good discussions and girls who typically don't speak in class tend to speak up in their groups.</p> <p>The men in the class who do not typically speak up usually keep quiet in their group as well unless they are specifically asked a question by another group member.</p> |
|--|---|--|



## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE



**Lesson Plan Topic:** Introduce the students to Michael Minch

**Week #** 10

**Overview and Purpose:** To see if student's opinions could change on how they felt about soldiers before and after seeing video clips.

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| <p><b>Objectives (Specify information that will be learned)</b></p>   | <p>Observe student engagement through questions and comments<br/>See how students opinions changed from seeing video clips<br/>Grant students the opportunity to speak with an author in our textbook who taught at their own university</p> | <p><b>Materials Needed</b><br/>Text- Living Ethics an Introduction<br/>YouTube video clips</p> |
| <p><b>Verification (Steps to check for student understanding)</b></p> | <p>If opinions changed by the end of class<br/>Why opinions changed and if they were only changed in the moment</p>  | <p><b>Other Resources (e.g. Web, books, etc)</b></p>   |

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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| <b>Activity (Describe the independent activity to reinforce this lesson)</b> | Showed video clips of soldiers in certain situations to see how it affected students thoughts and feelings                      |   |
| <b>Summary</b>   | I felt like the lesson went really well. I wanted to see if I could change opinions of students with video clips and it worked. | <b>Additional Notes</b><br>I feel that the media and items of entertainment like movies can briefly change a person's entire outlook on something. I saw this with my students from before they saw the videos to after. Even though they only saw one actual event and that was Hitler speaking, they still felt differently toward soldiers of other countries. The media and entertainment sources can have heavy sway on peoples thoughts and feelings toward other countries and people. |

**Lesson Plan Topic:** Introduce the students to Jerome Segal and his study on money **Week #** 11

**Overview and Purpose:** To discuss whether or not money is true happiness

|  |  |  |
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| <b>Objectives (Specify information that will be learned)</b>       | How many changes people<br>Why people spend their entire life chasing money<br>Can money truly make a person happy or is it a myth | <b>Materials Needed</b><br>Text- Living Ethics an Introduction |
| <b>Information (Give and/or demonstrate necessary information)</b> |  |  |
| <b>Verification (Steps to</b>                                      | Students had many personal   | <b>Other Resources (e.g.</b>                                   |

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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| <b>check for student understanding)</b>                                      | stories<br>Many students were able to weigh the pros and cons of being rich   | <b>Web, books, etc)</b>   |
| <b>Activity (Describe the independent activity to reinforce this lesson)</b> |   |   |
| <b>Summary</b>   | This lesson went well because everyone is familiar with money. Many of us have felt rich at times and many of us have felt poor. Everyone was able to relate on some kind of level with the lesson. | <b>Additional Notes</b><br>Students do much better with staying engaged when they can share personal stories that go along with what is being taught. It also helps when everyone can relate to the lesson in one way or another. |

**Lesson Plan Topic:** Introduce the students to Jonathan Safran Foer and his thoughts on eating animals

**Week #** 12

**Overview and Purpose:** To discuss whether or not animals are here for us to eat

|  |  |  |
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| <b>Objectives (Specify information that will be learned)</b> | Why animals are here and if they are here to be food.<br>Do animals choose to let us eat them or do we choose to eat them<br>Could humans survive without eating animals | <b>Materials Needed</b><br>Text- Living Ethics an Introduction |
| <b>Information (Give and/or demonstrate necessary</b>        |  |  |

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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| <b>information)</b>  |  |  |
| <b>Verification (Steps to check for student understanding)</b>               | The students broke out into their own debate, which showed me they really grasped and felt strongly about what was being taught.<br>There were students who had experience hunting and those who didn't who added a lot of input | <b>Other Resources (e.g. Web, books, etc)</b>  |
| <b>Activity (Describe the independent activity to reinforce this lesson)</b> |  |  |
| <b>Summary</b>   | I was very excited about this lesson. It was awesome to see students think for themselves and not just talk about something because I was expecting them to.   | <b>Additional Notes</b><br>Students cannot contain themselves when they are passionate about a certain subject. Students will chime in and give their opinion whether they plan on it or not, especially when other students begin to give their opinions. |

**Lesson Plan Topic:** Group Presentations

**Week #** 13

**Overview and Purpose:** To help students work together and learn from each other

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>Objectives (Specify information that will be learned)</b> | Students will present their theory or philosopher to the class<br>Each group will provide the class with their own quiz in order to help the class learn from their presentation | <b>Materials Needed</b><br>Whatever the groups prepared to show the class |
|--|--|---|



## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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| <b>Information (Give and/or demonstrate necessary information)</b>           |  |  |
| <b>Verification (Steps to check for student understanding)</b>               | Each student in the audience filled out and answered all of the questions in the group quiz<br>Students offered feedback at the end of each presentation | <b>Other Resources (e.g. Web, books, etc)</b>  |
| <b>Activity (Describe the independent activity to reinforce this lesson)</b> | Students would present on a lesson all of the students were already familiar with and offer new insights   |  |
| <b>Summary</b>   | I was very impressed with both groups. Great effort was put into the presentations and it showed.  | <b>Additional Notes</b><br>Putting students in groups went really well. Students seem to work great with each other and can offer each other insights that sometimes a teacher cannot. |

**Lesson Plan Topic:** Group Presentations

**Week #** 14

**Overview and Purpose:** To help students work together and learn from each other

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>Objectives (Specify information that will be learned)</b> | Students will present their theory or philosopher to the class<br>Each group will provide the class with their own quiz in | <b>Materials Needed</b><br>Whatever the groups prepared to show the class |
|--|--|---|

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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|  | order to help the class learn from their presentation  |  |
| <b>Information (Give and/or demonstrate necessary information)</b>           |  |  |
| <b>Verification (Steps to check for student understanding)</b>               | Each student in the audience filled out and answered all of the questions in the group quiz<br>Students offered feedback at the end of each presentation | <b>Other Resources (e.g. Web, books, etc)</b>  |
| <b>Activity (Describe the independent activity to reinforce this lesson)</b> | Students would present on a lesson all of the students were already familiar with and offer new insights   |  |
| <b>Summary</b>   | I was very impressed with both groups. Great effort was put into the presentations and it showed.  | <b>Additional Notes</b><br>Putting students in groups went really well. Students seem to work great with each other and can offer each other insights that sometimes a teacher cannot. |

**Lesson Plan Topic:** Research Papers and Extra Credit Game \_\_

**Week #** 15

**Overview and Purpose:** To give students an insight on there are always consequences for the decisions we make

|                            |                               |                         |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Objectives (Specify</b> | Students will learn that they | <b>Materials Needed</b> |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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|--|---|---|
| <b>information that will be learned)</b>                                     | must remember the golden rule even when they think they cant go wrong<br>Students will experience a real life moral dilemma   |   |
| <b>Information (Give and/or demonstrate necessary information)</b>           |   |   |
| <b>Verification (Steps to check for student understanding)</b>               | Students negotiating with other students to not steal their points<br>Students making decisions on whether they will be fair or try and get an edge on their fellow students            | <b>Other Resources (e.g. Web, books, etc)</b>   |
| <b>Activity (Describe the independent activity to reinforce this lesson)</b> | Played a game where students had the opportunity to gain more points then they deserved through stealing from others  |   |
| <b>Summary</b>   | The game went really good. Students really grasped the idea and realized how easy they can go from being on top to being on the bottom with the help of a person they treated unfairly. |   |
|  |   | <b>Additional Notes</b><br>I wanted to teach these guys a lesson that happens everyday in real life. I wanted these students to see that it is beneficial to treat everyone fairly even if they think they will never see that person again. We never know who could hold our destiny for a great opportunity in life and don't want someone who we treated unfairly to make a decision affecting our life or career on a poor or unfair decision we made involving them. |

Lesson Plan Topic: Final Proposal and Semester Wrap UpWeek # 16

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

**Overview and Purpose:** To give students the choice to make their own decision with their grade

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <b>Objectives (Specify information that will be learned)</b>                 | Let students decide their own fate with their final grade<br>Wrap up semester and get feedback from students on what they liked and disliked  | <b>Materials Needed</b>  |
| <b>Information (Give and/or demonstrate necessary information)</b>           |   |  |
| <b>Verification (Steps to check for student understanding)</b>               | See what students decided to do for the final   | <b>Other Resources (e.g. Web, books, etc)</b>  |
| <b>Activity (Describe the independent activity to reinforce this lesson)</b> |   |  |
| <b>Summary</b>   | The semester was very successful in my opinion. I got great feedback from my students and could not have been happier for the opportunity to teach. From this experience I now know that I would like to eventually become a full time faculty member at a university one day | <b>Additional Notes</b><br>I learned a lot from my students on what they like and what they disliked about my teaching style. I also learned a lot about what works with students and what does not through personal observation. Students respond much better when they feel like they are respected and truly have the freedom to learn in a way that works best for them. Students do not like to be put into a one size fits all learning environment. It robs them from learning what they should be learning and it robs the teacher from getting to know the students and learning something from them. |

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

## Teacher Evaluation by Students

The number rating stands for the following: **1** = rarely **2** = once in a while **3** = sometimes **4** = most of the time **5** = almost always If it doesn't apply, leave it blank. Circle the answer that fits with your experience of this teacher for each item.

| <b>EXPLICIT CURRICULUM:</b>                       |   |   |   |   |   |   | <b>If you circled #1:</b>            |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| How well does the teacher teach the core subject? |   |   |   |   |   |   | Write why<br>Write the<br>core class |
| 1   | Teacher is prepared for class.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |                                      |
| 2   | Teacher knows his/her subject.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |                                      |
| 3   | Teacher is organized and neat.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |                                      |
| 4   | Teacher plans class time and assignments that help students to problem solve and think critically. Teacher provides activities that make subject matter meaningful. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |                                      |
| 5   | Teacher is flexible in accommodating for individual student needs.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |                                      |
| 6   | Teacher is clear in giving directions and on explaining what is expected on assignments and tests.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |                                      |
| 7   | Teacher allows you to be active in the classroom learning environment.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |                                      |
| 8   | Teacher manages the time well.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |                                      |
| 9   | Teacher returns homework in a timely manner.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |                                      |
| 10  | Teacher has clear classroom procedures so students don't waste time.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |                                      |
| 11  | Teacher grades fairly.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |                                      |
| 12  | I have learned a lot from this teacher about this subject.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |                                      |
| 13  | Teacher gives me good feedback on homework and projects so that I can improve.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |                                      |

## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

|    |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 14 | Teacher is creative in developing activities and lessons.           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15 | Teacher encourages students to speak up and be active in the class. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| <b>IMPLICIT CURRICULUM:</b>  |  | <b>If you circled #1:</b>         |   |   |   |   |
|--|--|-----------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| How well does the teacher model the core values through how he/she behaves with students and with other staff persons? |  | Write why<br>Write the core class |   |   |   |   |
| 16   | Teacher follows through on what he/she says. You can count on the teacher's word.                            | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17   | Teacher listens and understands students' point of view; he/she may not agree, but students feel understood. | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18   | Teacher respects the opinions and decisions of students.   | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19   | Teacher is willing to accept responsibility for his/her own mistakes.  | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20   | Teacher is willing to learn from students.   | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21   | Teacher is sensitive to the needs of students.   | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22   | Teacher's words and actions match.   | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 23   | Teacher is fun to be with.   | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 24   | Teacher likes and respects students.   | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 25   | Teacher helps you when you ask for help.   | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 26   | Teacher is consistent and fair in discipline.  | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 27   | I trust this teacher.  | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 28   | Teacher tries to model what teacher expects of students.   | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 29   | Teacher is fair and firm in discipline without being too strict.   | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

What is one thing that your teacher does well?

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## A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

What is one thing that you can suggest to help this teacher improve?

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Thank you for taking the time to think through the items carefully and write down your thoughts honestly.

**Source: 2005 National Schools of Character: Award Winning Practices. Published and distributed by the Character Education Partnership**