Statement of Teaching Philosophy 2012
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Through many years of teaching I have come to recognize that my best teaching-learning occurs when this process is acknowledged as collaborative and communicative activity. My approaches to teaching-learning are informed by my educational grounding in developmental psychology and sociocultural theories of human development (Bruner, 1986; Piaget 1962; Vygotsky, 1963) and critical pedagogies (Dewey, 1938; Freire, 1970) along with a background in linguistics and digital literacies (Cope and Kalantzis, 2000; Halliday, 1989; New London Group, 1986). Together these theories and experiences shape how I conceive and seek to actively engage today's students. Therefore, I promote collaboration and equity in my classes and encourage students to work together toward the co-construction of knowledge. In this way, I strive to make teaching-learning an on-going dialectical process of analysis and reflection for students and myself alike. I conceptualize and practice teaching-learning as a transformative process that ultimately stimulates changes in individuals and alternate ways of thinking and being, including the kinds of social actions that we are able to assume in our worlds.

Effective teaching, for me, means that I situate students at the centre of this process by acknowledging each of them as unique individuals with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and identities from whom we all can learn but also as interdependent members of social groups and networks, as active learners and agents of change. I aim to teach content knowledge, practical skills and raise awareness sensitively and fairly by recognizing the resources that are inherent in the multilingual and multicultural diversity that my students bring to the classroom. Wherever possible I model and create spaces for my students to connect the language and learning theories with professional practices and with their own lived experiences. I have found this supports their appropriation of ideas and scaffolds learning since it enables me to teach to the whole person by integrating their culturally relevant backgrounds into the curriculum and knowledge construction process.

I have also learned the importance of valuing teaching-learning as a communicative process, which means I have to listen *to* and *with* my students in order to reflect critically and to facilitate the development of new knowledges. To this end, I intentionally encourage collaborative dialogue and group learning experiences by challenging and motivating students to accomplish personal and academic development, as well as promoting an interest in their own lifelong learning. Wherever possible, I conceive of the classroom as a community of learners (Lave and Wenger, 1991), of readers and writers with a range of literate practices and expertises, with its own emergent culture, and thus I value what each individual student brings to the class and tailor instruction accordingly. One example which I have found to be particularly effective is for students to develop their writing as a process of analysis and reflection over the duration of each course. By providing a series of shorter structured assignments, rubrics and on-going constructive feedback, students are able to build self-confidence and proficiency, gradually working toward a more extended and organized final paper. More recently, I have encouraged students to pursue alternative means for communicating their learning through visual posters, interactive presentations and short video documentaries.

Finally, but of no lesser significance, because I believe that education is ultimately related to social democratic change my responsibility as an educator is to promote opportunities that facilitate equity of access and meaningful learning to *all* my students and their future students. When students (and in particular pre-service and current teachers) can appreciate multicultural and multilingual diversity as significant funds of knowledge (Moll, 1992) for students, families and local communities, these resources can in turn be incorporated into the classroom and the teaching-learning process. A fundamental aspect of teaching-learning is its potential to enrich the scope and complexity of our diverse society so as to guarantee and sustain equitable access and positive educational experiences, where knowledge, empowerment and agency are attainable outcomes of academic success for all.