

Statement of Teaching Philosophy

“People don’t buy what you do, they buy why you do it” – Simon Sinek

Consumers respond more positively to messaging that explains the motivation and goals behind the development of a product, rather than an advertising campaign about the product itself.¹ The phrase “start with the why” indicates how conveying the purpose, cause, or belief driving the creation of the product needs to come first in presenting a new idea. After learning this principle, I applied it in my personal life, and I incorporate it in my teaching practices.

The main tenet of my teaching philosophy is explaining the “why” whenever I interact with students. The purpose for using this framework is not to “sell” the content I am presenting per se, but rather sell the idea of engagement in the learning process. I feel strongly in taking time at the beginning of class to go over the importance of the topic and verbalizing the “why do we care.” In doing so, I aim to explain the value added for any given new material. Rooted in the goal orientation theory, I have seen how this method has positively impacted class discussions by increasing active participation and motivating students to not simply demonstrate but more importantly develop competence.²

The goal of developing competence is of fundamental importance in the profession of pharmacy. One of the principles from the Code of Ethics for Pharmacists states that individuals in this field must maintain professional competence as they have a duty to keep up with knowledge on new advances in health. Hence, pharmacy students need to become lifelong learners and I believe these practices ought to be cultivated in the classroom. In teaching, I not only raise the issue of value, but I also aim at putting the material into an applicable and relevant context with direct implications to patient care. Just like optimizing pharmacotherapy for patients should not follow a cookie-cutter approach, students learning styles are not homogenous. I use different methods to transmit my message which appeal to different learning styles. I try to integrate graphic representations of complicated concepts and relevant audiovisual elements to reinforce important notions. I am a strong believer that audiences feed off the energy of the presenter. I strive to demonstrate a positive and caring attitude in the way I communicate and build rapport with my students in the classroom, which I believe is paramount.

References:

1. Sinek, S. (2009). *Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action*. New York, NY: Penquin Publishers.
2. Kaplan, A. & Maehr M. L. (2007). The Contributions and Prospects of Goal Orientation Theory. *Educ Psychol Rev*, 19, 141–184