

Every student has a natural curiosity to learn new things. I pursued my education with the same conviction, allowing curiosity to drive my educational aspirations. Fostering inquisitiveness, the teacher's role is to become an instrument and a mentor for the students on their path of acquiring and applying knowledge. The philosophical teachings of Buddhism have a strong influence on my life, which also is reflected in my teaching. Buddha prominently used a question-answer method where he would converse with the inquisitor instead of providing sermons. Similarly, I like to engage in knowledge-seeking conversations with my students through my teaching. A blend of pedagogies guides my approach to teaching and learning.

Experiential Learning

I also believe in experiential learning. My teaching is pedagogically guided by John Dewey's experiential learning theory, closely aligned with Buddhist philosophy. My teaching methods are based on my observations and experiences from the communities I worked with in the past. It relates to my graduate training as an Ayurvedic physician, where I learned about diseases and treatments through patient observations. Furthering my career as a development professional, I had several opportunities to visit and experience different cultures. I was fortunate to observe and learn from the communities I worked with. Incorporating these experiences, I designed student activities for my graduate teaching course "Health Inequities - Theory and Current Methods of Measurement." For instance, while teaching the decomposition methods—a widely used econometric method in health equity research, I first introduced examples of racial/ethnic socioeconomic disparities and how they impact health outcomes. I encouraged students to think of health disparity examples they have observed in their surroundings and debate why these disparities existed. Later, I provide the theoretical background that could help understand health disparities and the usefulness of decomposition methods revealing them. Following this classroom workshop, the students worked on empirical data and employed Oaxaca-Blinder's decomposition approach to understand health disparities. As a follow-up, the students were encouraged to develop health disparities-related research questions where this technique can be applied.

Inclusive Teaching

Being from an underprivileged community in India, I also understand the importance of inclusivity and diversity in education. Therefore, I want to imbibe the principles of inclusive learning in my teaching. Every student learns differently based on their socioeconomic background and physical and mental condition, and I work to create a safe environment and opportunities for active learning in my classroom while addressing the diverse needs of my students. Along with the above-mentioned philosophical underpinnings, I utilize my professional experience and area expertise in public health policy and management in my teaching. I bring my experiences from both developed and developing worlds, adding a unique perspective on public health policy topics I teach in the class. I base my teaching materials and tools on universal design principles to ensure inclusion. I prefer to use different learning tools instead of just basing my lecture on PowerPoint presentations. For example, I integrated Google Slides into a group activity I designed while teaching the topic "Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) Techniques." I also included audio-video

material in my teaching and ensured that these were appropriate for all students, meeting different learning needs. For instance, I use captioned videos in my class activities and include more graphics and tables in lecture presentations. I facilitate discussions and encourage question-answers as a regular part of my class activities. My approach to including audio-video material and infographics appeared well received, as reflected in the students' teaching evaluation comments. My teaching approach thus encourages active learning and addresses the diverse learning needs of the students.

Backward Design

I inculcate backward design principles in my teaching. I encourage group activities in my classroom because most public health professionals have to work in teams in real-life scenarios. I use backward design in creating my lesson plans, starting with the intended outcome and designing my class activities accordingly. For example, for my guest lectures on writing policy briefs for the public health policy and management and strategic management classes, I set the learning objective of identifying critical aspects of analytical and persuasive writing by critically reviewing policy-brief examples. I designed a class activity that blended individual analysis and group discussion. First, I asked students to skim through a policy brief using guiding questions and then discuss it within their groups. Later in the activity, I also asked them to share their analysis of the brief succinctly with other class members. This progression from an individual in-class activity to a large group analysis strengthened their understanding of policy brief writing requirements.

Continual Development and Improvement

I continually seek professional development opportunities to strengthen my teaching and promote student success. I am currently participating in a year-long Future Faculty Learning Community in addition to the Certificate in College Teaching I completed along with my doctoral studies. My teaching also reflects my observations of others' teaching and learning, and I frequently participate in teaching and learning webinars such as *All about Rubrics* and *Tools for Tracking Student Progress*, organized by Augusta University's Center for Instructional Innovation.

To summarize, teaching is a knowledge seeking conversation. With this in a backdrop, my teaching is guided by a blend of pedagogical approaches such as experiential learning, inclusive teaching, and backward design. I base my teaching on my lived and professional experience and observance of others' teaching. I continue to develop my teaching skills and operationalize my teaching philosophy via education and teaching experiences.