

## Big Themes

- Learning-Centered
- Transparent Alignment
- Growth vs. Fixed Mind-Set

**Learner Centered Teaching:** What do these students need me to do (or need me to ask them to do) in order for them to learn as most of them can?

Discipline Centered Teaching: You've been asked to teach modern and think, in order to teach modern they have to learn x, y and z

Teacher Centered Teaching: Oh cool! I've found this awesome multiple choice test that will make my life so much easier and take up all of class time, that way I don't need to lead discussion!

**Transparent Alignment:** The course is designed so that everything you give them grades for is set up so that it's linked up with and works to serve whatever it is you want the students to get out of the course.

The seminar is broken up into the following three components:

Learning Objectives – Where do you want students to go?

Pedagogy – Tools to get you where you want to go.

Assessment – How to assess and check to see if your students got to where you wanted to go.

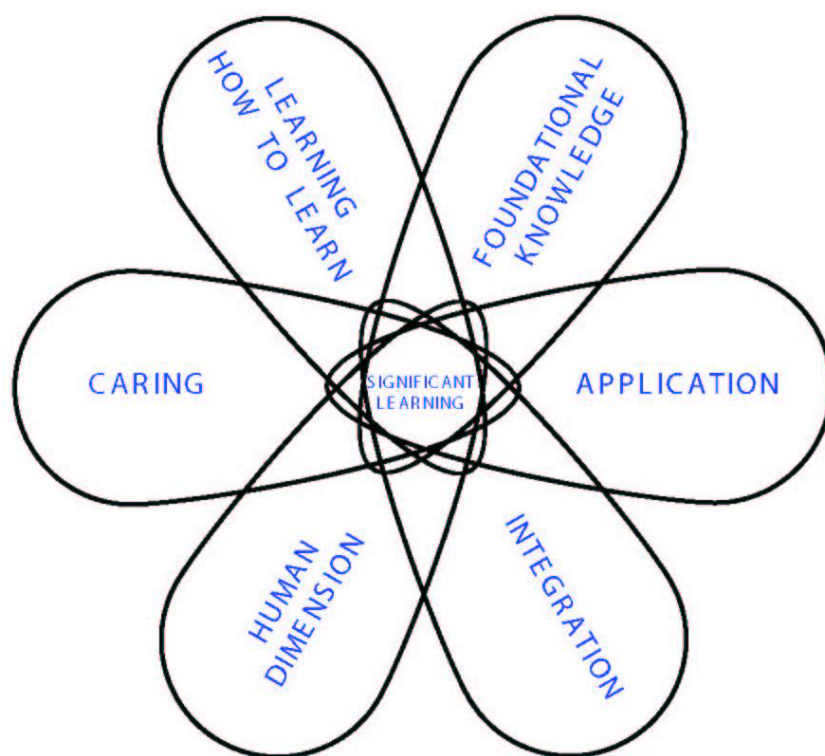
## Section 1: Learning Objectives

Learning Objective (as we're using it here): What is *your* learning objective for *your* students? (As opposed to the *department's* learning objectives, the *curriculum's*, etc.)

Imagine you're running into your student five years down the line, what do you hope students say about *themselves* because they took your course?

- Confidence and clarity (in whatever it is they're doing)
- More Self-reflective
- Intellectual curiosity (Critical thinking, question more, more dogma-resistant)
- More comfortable with ambiguity, humility, patience
- Better understanding (empathy)
- Applicability
- "Have you read x" (Indicates that they've continued to read/learn about the topic years down the line)
- More active engagement in community
- Improved attitude to misfortunes in life
- Intellectual empowerment

## AN INTERACTIVE TAXONOMY FOR GOALS



ACTIVITY: Two learning objectives for PHIL 345: Language & Mind

- To think critically about the relationships between theories of meaning and theories of mind and to become excited about what this might mean for the potential of future tech. developments (AI)
- Being able to explain the differences between semantic and pragmatic approaches to the philosophy of language

ACTIVITY: Think of a challenge you faced that you turned into a learning opportunity

ACTIVITY: What do you say to yourself when things go wrong? What do you say to yourself when you've been criticized? What do you say to yourself when your evaluations aren't as good as you'd like?

- Stupid, stupid, stupid (Not a growth mindset)

### **GROWTH MINDSET vs. FIXED MINDSET**

GROWTH MINDSET is an application of LEARNER-CENTEREDNESS. It fosters better relationships between students, between professors and students. It creates better in-class dynamics.

## **Growth Mindset**

“To briefly sum up the findings: Individuals who believe their talents can be developed (through hard work, good strategies, and input from others) have a growth mindset. They tend to achieve more than those with a more fixed mindset (those who believe their talents are innate gifts). This is because they worry less about looking smart and they put more energy into learning. When entire companies embrace a growth mindset, their employees report feeling far more empowered and committed; they also receive far greater organizational support for collaboration and innovation. In contrast, people at primarily fixed-mindset companies report more of only one thing: cheating and deception among employees, presumably to gain an advantage in the talent race.” (HBR, <https://hbr.org/2016/01/what-having-a-growth-mindset-actually-means>)

“It is critical that Teachers and Professors understand their students mindsets and how to improve them. How should we praise our students? How can we motivate them to be great? In the article “Messages that Motivate- and Boost achievement,” Carol S. Dweck explains to readers the important of a Growth mindset and how a Fixed mindset is a disadvantage. Dweck writes that students when the Growth Mindset are more willing to take risks and are comfortable with failure, as long as they are learning and improving their education; mistakes motivate them and they interpret criticism as a opportunity for learning. Someone with a fixed mindset is someone with a static mind, this type of student will blame the test for their failures, will not work hard as they believe that their own knowledge is enough to make it through school, mistakes scare them and they will do anything to keep their “smart” status. In the “stupidity in science” article, Martin A. Schwartz explains to us the importance of feeling stupid in science. He explains that no one knows all the information in this world, so people should be able to be stupid and feel comfortable with not knowing everything. Being stupid is productive, because you can confront your weaknesses and grow. Being comfortable with not having all the information is so important, students need to accept what they don’t know and question what they do. Dweck shows the importance of motivating students in the right way, to make them feel comfortable with their mistakes and make their goal to learn. It is key that we complement students work method, not their level of smartness.” (<https://bukowski.suffieldacademy.org/19rjb/2016/09/15/the-growth-mindset-and-feeling-stupid/>)

### **\*\*\*\*\*Tips for communicating growth-mindset modes of thinking to students\*\*\*\*\***

- Can you tell me more about that?
- Look for intersections of agreement
- Be intellectually curious without being nosy

### **What to say to someone that says “I don’t deserve this C-, I put tons of time into this paper”**

- What did you do during the time you spent on the paper? How might we better spend our time? (Use this as an opportunity for growth)
- “I was bummed too that it didn’t turn out well. Because in class you did x and y and z.” (Communicate that you’re on their side, that you’re rooting for them)
- Sympathize by saying something like (when applicable): “Maybe we’ve made this too complicated”
- Compliment them for coming to you and having the courage to come and try to fix it and themselves

- Encourage them to come talk to you earlier rather than after the fact
- Ubuntu: we live in a shared world. The things that I do affect you and the things that you do affect me. Your respect is my strength

ACTIVITY: How to respond to the following student questions/conflicts in a way that fosters Growth Mind-set rather than a Fixed Mind-set.

“I don’t know how to read this stuff. Philosophers are way too hard/seem to be speaking nonsense. I’ve always been a fine reader but now I find myself not being able to read.”

- I understand, sometimes I find myself having to read the same paragraph three times
- What are you doing while you’re reading? Are you reading right before you go to sleep? How much time are you affording yourself to read an article? Give them an idea of how much time they’re investing.
- Also, ask yourself honestly, are you assigning things that are too long? Too hard?
- It takes students 3x or 4x as long as it might take you. Are they actually reading it if it takes them 3 hrs.?
- Reading exercise: read in class and ask *what do you think that meant?* And then pausing until people speak up.
- Reading quizzes (?) Having them come up with their own reading quizzes (?)

“I have always written well and I get A’s on all my essays in my English literature assignments. [Implication: I should get an A on all the papers in this course.]”

- First English and Philosophy papers are rather different. Here you’re expected to write an argument, engage with objections, etc.
- It’s great that you feel comfortable writing an English paper! You’ve had lots of practice doing that (going all the way back to middle school), now you just have to work at writing philosophy. It is a skill you can master.
- In fact, you can use some of the skills you’ve learned in English (e.g., word selection) in your philosophical writing and some of the skills you learn in philosophical writing for your English writing (e.g., precision, rigor, charity)

“The grade on this exam is unfair.”

- First, perhaps, mediate and manage anger / make a safe space. Have a Kleenex box, show them you care, tell them it’s ok for them to feel shame or anger or fear, etc. and that you support them. Calming people down helps with their listening.
- What do you mean by fairness? What exactly do you think is unfair? What do you think would be fair criteria for the exam? For grading – taking into consideration the learning objectives?
- Check for actual unfairness in the classroom. Be willing to recognize that something might actually be unfair (especially if there is something structural – gender, racial, etc. that’s going on and impeding fairness)
- Let’s talk about ways you can grow from this.

“This course is stupid. All the readings are by dead white guys. Why should their views matter to me today.”

- Three different things going on here, so take them in turn.
- First, what’s frustrating you about the course?

- Second, you're right that all these readings by dead white guys. That frustrates me too. How should we extract the best things they say? How do we bolster their arguments? What exactly about the things they're saying are wrong? Incomplete? Frought?
- Thirdly, why their views should matter to us is a really hard question. In fact, I struggle with this too. I take your point: what if we are *overvaluing* views because of their privileged place in society? I'd like to look for some alternative readings, etc.

## **Section 2: Pedagogy**

ACTIVITY: Put together an origami crane (with nothing but a sample origami crane). This activity shows that *how* you are instructed influences your:

- |              |                              |
|--------------|------------------------------|
| - Creativity | - Expertise                  |
| - Interest   | - Ability to accomplish task |
| - Boredom    | - Desire to pursue further   |
| - Dedication |                              |

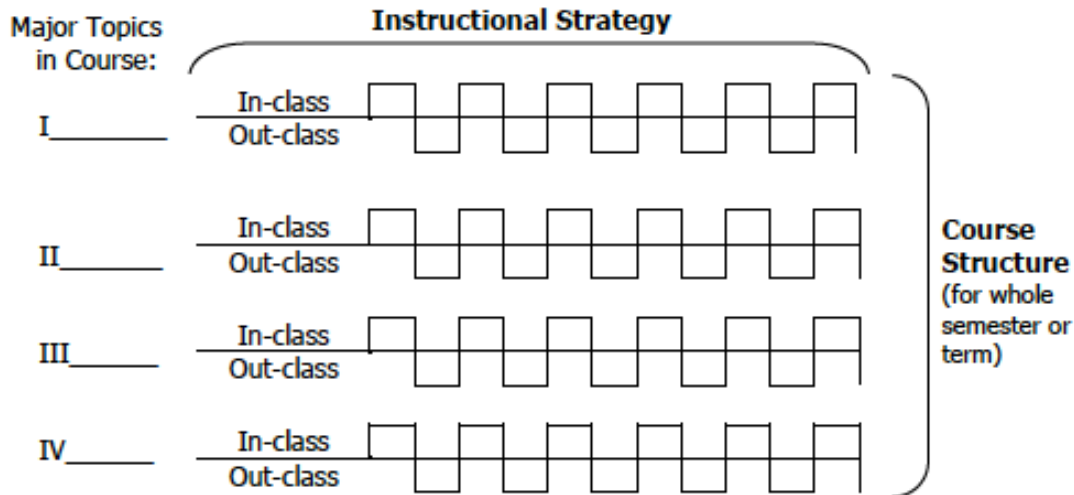
ACTIVITY: Jot down notes about a learning experience from high school or undergraduate that is most memorable to you (not in a philosophy class).

- |   |                                      |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| - History of Social Thought debate                          |                                      |
| - Resolved: Marx, in spite of himself, is a young Hegelian. |                                      |
| - Concrete, real world task                                 | - Connection to real world issues    |
| - Community/belonging                                       | - Super excited instructor           |
| - New environment   | - Quick, early successes             |
| - Multiple options for success                              | - Context provided                   |
| - Group cooperation   | - Agency (in choosing what to study) |
| - Moving up the learning curve                              | - Collaborative/integrative learning |
| - Reading <u>and</u> doing / experiencing                   |                                      |

Make a list of 30 gerunds (showing rather than telling, learning experiences)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| - Reading  | - Identifying the strongest/weakest point of an argument |
| - Writing a paper  | - (Re)constructing arguments                             |
| - Learning in groups   | - iClicking (or selecting from a set of MC answers)      |
| - Discussing key ideas   | - Paraphrasing a position                                |
| - Passing eyes over text   | - Writing quiz, hw, prompt                               |
| - Identifying conclusions & premises                               | - Acting out a position                                  |
| - Helping me help them   | - Journaling   |
| - Thinking, pairing, sharing                                       | - Creating a new theory                                  |
| - Muddiest point-ing   | - Adopting (living) a theory                             |
| - Joining together in groups                                       | - Gaming   |
| - Debating a particular issue                                      | - Competing  |
| - Deciding what to read/work on next                               | - Developing a counter example                           |
| - Finding relevant applied/real life examples                      | - Strengthening argument                                 |
| - Moving around a room to indicate strength of view (or agreement) | - Imagining  |

Now, how do we fit these gerunds into the following structure?



### **Section 3: Assessment**

Assessment =<sub>def</sub> The gathering of information that will inform decision about how to best reach a (learning) goal.

- What kinds of information can you gather in order to reach your goal? (See CATS and Types of Assessments below)
- When should you gather? (Answer: basically all the time)
- How should you gather to make sure it's good rather than biased information? (Answer: in whatever matter, if done, is the matter that will get learning done for the learner)

Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs)

1. Muddiest Point
2. Analytic Memos
3. Direct Paraphrasing
4. Application Cards
5. Process Analysis
6. RSQC2
7. Reading Rating Sheets

Taxonomy of Types of Assessments (Information for you about how the class is going):

- Student Self-Report (e.g., muddiest point, was today too fast/too slow/about right, midterm evaluations, end of term evaluations)
- Student Performance (e.g., “no one had the appropriate type of intro.”, “everyone did y”, “everyone should do z”)
- Student Behavior (e.g., what's their body behavior, can you tell if they're bored, are they grumpy, what's the attendance pattern, what % of students come to office hours)
- Faculty Self-Assessment (e.g., keeping a teaching journal you update after class)
- Faculty Peer Review (e.g., CRLT peer-review from someone inside and/or outside of philosophy, first year peer-review)

### **Section 4: Wrapping things up**

ACTIVITY: Respond to one of the following

How have I been learning today? Or... I could have learned better if...

I could have learned better if:

- I had been asked to move around more
- I had done more activities that required standing and moving
- The sorts of activities we did had required imagining real life scenarios (e.g., scenarios in which students ask difficult questions, etc.)
- We had spent a bit less time on the hokey origami activity
- We had discussed how to engage in inclusive class discussions – techniques for bringing in students who would otherwise remain quiet

**What's cool is that this activity would be really nice to use in class in order to get students to reflect on their own learning!**