

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY
Rik Lemoncello – Speech & Hearing Sciences

How have others described my teaching?

| | | | |
|------------------|---------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Clear | APPLIED | <i>Systematic</i> | Meaningful |
| Organized | Thoughtful | Energizing | Passionate |
| <i>Inspiring</i> | <i>Well-Planned</i> | Useful | EXEMPLARY |

Why do I enjoy teaching?

Teaching about speech-language pathology is my **passion**. I love being a speech-language pathologist. I am grateful for every opportunity to share my knowledge and experiences with future or current colleagues. I also love inspiring. I am an enthusiastic, flexible mentor who provides scaffolds to help learners at all levels **succeed with confidence**. To me, there is no better feeling than to know that I have influenced not only a student's life, but also countless clients that this student will treat following graduation.

How do I think learning occurs?

I believe that learners require both emotional and content scaffolding to master new material. Learners need to feel **comfortable taking risks** and experimenting with course material until they “own” the content in their own words. Content must also be presented in a clear, organized, systematic fashion to allow learners to **assimilate** new knowledge with previous experiences. In addition, learners present with differing learning styles and benefit from **multi-sensory experiences**. I believe that offering learning experiences through class discussions and activities, lecture, readings, audio/video examples, hands-on in-class practice, and applied projects enhance the learning experience for all learners.

What is my role as an instructor?

My hybrid instructional style combines a variety of teaching philosophies. First, I **model** exemplary clinical decision-making and clinical skills from the perspective of a master clinician. I believe that beginning students learn from expert modeling. Second, I **nurture** social-emotional approaches to learning by establishing a comfortable classroom where students feel free to ask questions. I encourage students to work in small groups so that all students practice with the course material first in a safe environment. I provide supports with errorless learning techniques to allow students to take risks as I fade supports and encourage increasing independent problem-solving. Third, I **deliver** course material in an organized, systematic way that provides a clear understanding of the main concepts. I utilize systematic instructional techniques to introduce topics, allow for guided practice, and provide cumulative review of material. Finally, I aim to **inspire** students into social reform by questioning typical practices and incorporating rational clinical decision making into evidence-based practices.

What goals do I set for learners?

I train students to become critically thinking professionals who will develop into leaders of our field. To accomplish this, I believe that learners must acquire two important skills. First, learners must acknowledge the **need for lifelong learning**. I emphasize the need to ask critical questions and search for answers independently. I underscore evidence-based practice across content areas by teaching a systematic, evidence-based process. Second, I believe it is my responsibility to **integrate theory with practice** to help learners build a solid theoretical foundation for their future work. In my courses, I incorporate practice opportunities to allow students to experiment with assessment and treatment techniques. I emphasize how to modify specific therapy techniques based on theoretical underpinnings. The ultimate goal is for students to become confident, independent problem-solvers who can adapt to a variety of contexts and fads.

What does my classroom look and feel like?

If you were to walk into one of my courses, the first thing you would notice is that students feel **free to ask questions**. The class would consist of a variety of **multi-sensory activities** to help solidify student's learning. My general guideline is to not talk for more than 30 minutes at a time: after presenting each chunk of information, I provide students with an opportunity to **interact with the material**. For example, I incorporate various in-class activities (e.g., quick write, pair & share, role play) to allow students to condense lecture information and paraphrase key points into their own words. An observer would also notice that I **move around** within the classroom. I do not feel comfortable standing behind a podium or on a pedestal; I like to be on the same level as students to create a **relaxed** atmosphere where students are comfortable enough to take risks and learn from each other and me.

How do I incorporate technology into the classroom?

Technology provides useful tools to augment classroom instruction to reach a wide audience of learners. To begin, I create **dynamic presentation slides** that incorporate still images, key text, and animations in order to illustrate concepts and maintain student interest. Additionally, I provide multiple **audiovisual examples** from audio recordings, videotapes, and DVDs of clinically relevant materials. I always create a customized **BlackBoard** course site to provide access to my handouts and student-produced documents (e.g., evidence-based treatment summaries) electronically. I have also begun creating **Podcasts** and short online movies of key, foundational concepts for students to review outside of class time. For example, I created 5 short lecture videos to review five motor pathways as the first reading assignment in my Motor Speech Disorders class.

How do I grow as an instructor?

I am not content with the *status quo*. I am committed to continuously improving the quality of my teaching in much the same way as I want my students to continuously monitor and improve their own clinical skills. There are three ways I accomplish this. First, I genuinely value **student feedback** and constructive criticism by seeking their input throughout a course, not only at midterm and finals. I use this feedback to improve my teaching in terms of adjusting the pace, content, and delivery of material. Second, I actively pursue **conferences, workshops, and readings** that focus on effective instruction. I have attended more than a dozen seminars hosted by the Teaching Effectiveness Program at the University of Oregon to learn and adapt new teaching techniques, such as utilizing technology or leading with questions. I attended workshops on effective supervision and instruction at ASHA and CAPCSD national conferences. I also belong to ASHA's Special Interest Division #11 (Administration & Supervision) to keep up-to-date on current issues and challenges. Third, I **observe** features of effective or ineffective teaching in others. I incorporate techniques I find useful into my own teaching, and evaluate their effectiveness with my own classroom data.

What teaching goals have I set for myself?

I do not have all the answers. I would like to continue to improve in my teaching skills by developing a stronger intuition for *asking guiding questions* to lead students down a path of critical thinking. I would also enjoy continuing to explore ways to become *even more dynamic* as an instructor through varying my voice, rate, and movement. I would like to remain an *active learner* to explore and evaluate different teaching techniques. Finally, I would like to continue to explore *effective ways to use technology* to reach a wide variety of students, such as moderating online discussion forums or creating online workshops.

The more carefully skills are taught, the greater the possibility that the student will learn them (Engelmann & Carnine, 1982).

Teaching is rocket science (Moats, 1999).