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Statement of Teaching Philosophy and Interests

Teaching Philosophy

My teaching philosophy has stemmed from three key experiences: my own experience as a university student; participation in faculty teaching programmes; and teaching students in academic settings who come from a wide range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. It can be briefly summarized as follows:

- Students need the tools to learn, and to be enthused by the subject. With the right tools and the right motivation, students will apply themselves to their studies more willingly and with greater enthusiasm.
- Teachers are learners too. While at a different stage in our academic careers, my students and I are still learning, and can learn from each other.
- Students bring both knowledge and preconceptions to the learning experience. It is important to recognize and expand upon their knowledge, and to challenge the preconceived notions that they bring. Not all students will learn in the same way. In any class there are typically students from a range of backgrounds.
- A department can teach better than any one individual. While colleagues within a department may disagree both in terms of theory and teaching practices, it is important that teaching is provided in concert within an academic programme.

Teaching Interests

The courses I am most interested in teaching center around the focus of my research programme. At the graduate level, I would like to teach Brain Plasticity & Sensory Experience. This class would examine brain plasticity within the context of altered sensory experience, including sensory loss (e.g. deafness, blindness); loss of body parts (e.g. amputation); and enhanced sensory experience (e.g. video game playing). The course would focus upon how neurological development is tightly coupled with sensory experience/input, and how the mature nervous system is still subject to change as a result of environmental influences.

At the undergraduate level, I have a wide range of teaching experience. I have taught elective courses on the Psychology of Deafness, and the Psychology of Interpreting. I also have extensive experience running undergraduate laboratory classes and teaching inferential statistics alongside computing (SPSS) skills. More recently I have taught graduate classes in Research Methods, supervised Masters level theses, and co-advised Ph.D. students pursuing a range of multi-disciplinary topics. Courses that I **would** am able to teach include: Psycholinguistics, Sensation & Perception, Cognition and Research Methods. In each case I feel I could provide an interesting and unusual approach to the topic, drawing upon my work with varied populations (deaf people, video gamers, sign language interpreters) and highlighting the real-world relevance of the material covered. I also have experience developing new classes, and would be happy to develop electives such as Reading Development in Deaf Children and Psycholinguistics of Signed Languages, which again provide a different and informative approach to common psychological themes.

I find teaching to be a challenging and rewarding enterprise. There is little to match the experience of enabling a student to grasp complex ideas and to become an efficient learner who is enthused by the material which they are studying.