

Philosophy of Teaching Statement

Dr. Rommel Miranda

As an educator, agent of change and public servant, I aspire to provide my students (our next generation of STEM leaders) with an education that will help to transform them into a better person. Additionally, I encourage my students to become reflective thinkers who examine their own values, attitudes and beliefs about science, teaching and learning. I also strive to enable my students to develop lifelong habits of curiosity, integrity, honesty, persistence, and passion for the pursuit of knowledge that will ultimately help them to become responsible STEM leaders, equipped with practical skills to create a more humane and just world. To accomplish these goals in my classes, I have actively involved and engaged students in the community through scholarly activity and service learning opportunities with the hope that they leave Towson University with rich life experiences. Moreover, I hope to provide my students with an opportunity to truly develop all the potential that lies within them, and to feel confident at graduation for the real-world, like I did when I was a student

More specifically, I believe that my role as a professor is to ensure that my students grasp the big picture of science, teaching, and learning. A picture that encompasses scientific connections to the natural world and unifies other disciplines. To attain this goal, I personally strive to promote authentic student inquiry and student experimentation that is realistic, relevant and scientifically rigorous so that my students may observe patterns in nature and construct a better understanding of our natural world and universe for themselves. Likewise, I encourage open student articulation so that my students can compare their scientific ideas and conceptions to scientists' ideas and conceptions. Ultimately, by having my students openly discuss initial beliefs, abstractions and formulations of scientific concepts allows me to more effectively gauge and address student preconceptions and misconceptions. Equally, I make every effort to foster scientific literacy in all of my courses so that students can make more informed decisions regarding scientific policies and issues currently affecting our society. As well, I encourage my students to generate research questions themselves, to become reflective thinkers who engage in active self-evaluation as it relates to science educational issues, pedagogy and classroom processes, and to consistently facilitate the development of critical thinking skills and acquisition of life-long learning skills. Additionally, I strive to help my students develop and demonstrate interpersonal qualities that can promote meaningful relationships that can positively contribute to the science education profession and society.

Additionally, I believe that my scholarly activity truly resonates with Towson University's goals and values that focus on "Academic Excellence and Student Success", and "Innovation in Teacher and Leader Preparation". I am committed to my research agenda that focuses on urban education, social justice, teacher

professional development, and effective science instruction. I also believe that my level of scholarly activity keeps me current and at the forefront in my field. Accordingly, my scholarly activity and service to the discipline strongly influences my pedagogical practice, which in turn has direct positive impacts on my own students. I truly enjoy modeling researched best practices in the field and sharing my passion of the discipline with my students, and I strive to inspire my students through my words and actions, and provide them with encouragement that will help to empower them.

I firmly believe that engaging and involving students with authentic service-learning experiences outside of the classroom is highly complementary to the mission of Towson University. I also believe that service is an opportunity to put research into action and practice (praxis), and to shape those around you in the community, including yourself. Thus, I believe that service is a way of dedicating yourself to the cause of social justice, and sharing your passion and expertise with students and the community. Additionally, I believe that only through service and shared governance can you build community, and work toward accomplishing goals of social justice. It is truly all about working collaboratively with others in your department, college, university and discipline to enhance, and to serve our learning community. Since I personally view the community as being the most authentic form of a classroom, I believe that it is vital to expose and engage students through service in the community and reflection to fashion a more just and equitable world.