**Renita K. Holmes**

**Statement of Teaching Philosophy**

Preparing nursing students to grow as professionals has been a very rewarding experience. I believe that what students want most is a teacher who offers the opportunity to learn and integrate new material. I have taught several courses in the online classroom environment and understand the importance of being present for the student. I completed my graduate degree online and have benefited from firsthand knowledge of what is expected of the student and what the student looks for in return from the teacher. I believe that students value an atmosphere of enjoyment and excitement about learning and respond with engagement and creativity to the online classroom with rigor and individual expression.

My experience as an online instructor and teaching several different courses has emphasized to me the vital role of feedback and self assessment. I plan to continue to achieve my own goals by formulating strategies to improve my sensitivity to multiple learning styles, interpersonal mediation in classroom discussions and my provision of the structure and rigor essential to fostering an atmosphere of creativity and engagement. Structure that is content-specific, student-focused and flexible provides each student with the opportunity to realize concrete goals in a way that is challenging and satisfying. For example, alternating teamwork with individual activities, with clearly defined goals and time limits may allow students to explore alternative learning styles while avoiding the disengagement that sometimes results from their perception of particular techniques as incompatible with their own style.

To this end, I strive to get to know my students as individuals with unique life stories, motivations and goals. The online environment allows for a specific place where students and faculty can meet each other through asynchronous posting of autobiographies and responding to each other’s life stories. I encourage students to ask questions and ensure that each student has updated contact information whereby they might be inclined to reach me for consultations.

Central to my teaching philosophy is the belief that students attain mastery over subject materials when they engage with the material across different modalities and contexts. I believe that my teaching philosophy is one dedicated to student empowerment and growth. I want my students to develop problem-solving and critical thinking skills that are a necessary quality for professional nurses today. I expect students to read course materials and messages posted to the online classroom from their peers and instructor, participate in classroom dialogue and exercises and write reflectively about the material. This method of building layers of learning creates depth in students’ processing and understanding of course material.

Understanding student anxiety about grades, I ensure transparency in grading by distributing grading rubrics to students and promptly posting grades, grading policies and grade tabulation instructions. To me, teaching and learning is hard work—consisting of iterative and reciprocal processes that, at their best, never cease challenging and inspiring all those involved.

Further, I am mindful of my growth as a teacher as I consider the “big picture” of my own teaching. Through teaching several different courses, I have been able to reflect on what works and what doesn’t work from semester to semester.

My future goals as a teacher also reflect the importance I place on the big picture. Specifically, I hope to one day be a part of a team that develops online courses with the adult learner in mind where students are encouraged to interact with a variety of populations and directly apply learning to their workplace. This will make studying nursing more personal and meaningful for the students and will emphasize the role that nurses can play in the larger world.