

Teaching Portfolio

Donald Eugene Canfield
VILLUM Professor, Nordcee, Department of Biology
Campusvej 55, 5230 Odense M, Denmark
Email: dec@biology.sdu.dk
Mobile: 52885230
Phone: 65502751

1. Formal educational training

I began teaching 30 years ago and there was no formal training at that time. I have continued, however, to take a keen interest in my teaching, my approach to teaching, and my effectiveness as a teacher.

2. Administrative tasks related education

I was a member of the PhD study board for total of 11 years. During my teaching career I have taken the main responsibility of developing a total of 7 new courses, while I have been involved in teaching countless others.

3. Experience with teaching, supervision and examination

I have taken the lead role in supervising a total of 10 master students, seven PhD students, a number of bachelor students and student research projects. I have developed a number of courses typically of 5 ECTS in length. I've been the external advisor and examiner on numerous PhD and Master's projects outside of SDU.

The evaluations in my courses tend to be a combination of oral student reports and written examinations. The written examinations are rather standard in style, but they are all open book and open notes. Furthermore, each of my lectures concludes with a series of concept checks that present the most essential points from each lecture. The students are informed that the exam questions will be drawn from the concept checks.

Courses developed:

EAS 351- The Earth - 5 ECTS - Georgia Tech
EAS 431- Aquatic Chemistry 5 ECTS - Georgia Tech
BB67 - Evolution - 5 ECTS - SDU
BB810/811/812 - Student Projects - 5/10/15 ECTS - SDU
BB828 - Aquatic Chemistry - 5 ECTS - SDU
BB501 - History of Life - 5 ECTS - SDU
BB528 - Climate Change Biology - 5 ECTS - SDU

Courses participated in:

BB27 - Aquatic Ecology - 15 ECTS - SDU
BB201 - Aquatic Microbial and Molecular Ecology - 10 ECTS - SDU
BB537 - Biology from Molecule to Ecosystem - 10 ECTS - SDU
FF503 - Chemistry, Biology and Molecular Biology, The empiric experimental science - 20 ECTS - SDU
BB525 - Population Ecology - 10 ECTS - SDU
BB538 - Biogeochemical cycles - 10 ECTS - SDU

4. Methods-materials and tools

My general and most basic teaching tool revolves around lectures presented with PowerPoint. However, I'm not a big fan of PowerPoint as I feel it pacifies students and dulls the learning experience. Therefore, my PowerPoint presentations have minimal text and feature mainly display items that I wish to discuss. I encourage/request the students to take notes from my lectures. I believe that by taking notes the students increase their learning by cycling the knowledge at least once from the screen to their brain and through their pencil. I also frequently use the blackboard to develop concepts as well as to answer questions.

Having said that, I seek active student involvement and will frequently ask students to discuss topics 2 on 2, form small groups, or to do calculations and groups and to relay the results to the class in general. I'm a strong believer that is much better to present a relatively small number of things well than a large number of things poorly.

I also try to gauge continuously during my lectures the degree to which the students are able to follow and understand.

5. Educational development and educational research as well as educational awards

I have never been involved in any direct educational development programs, but I have sat in on numerous educational development seminars. I believe that it is important to develop and adapt one's teaching style to both new types of information that is available for students as well as the changing dynamic as to how students best learn.

6. Reflections on your own teaching practice and future development including student evaluations

I take teaching very seriously and feel that it is essential to offer students the best educational experience possible. This includes dynamic and informative lectures with enough repeat and student involvement to maximize learning. It is also critical in developing a dialogue with the class and to not focus solely on those students that are most discuss of an interactive. Through group discussions and other means it is possible to involve even the shy student in classroom participation and an active learning experience. It is very easy for students to be passive in the classroom, but this does not provide the best learning, and is essential to develop means by which students become activated in their learning.