**Teaching for Understanding Model Approach:**

My teaching philosophy coincides with the Teaching for Understanding model that has been officially adopted by The School of Education at University of Michigan-Dearborn. This framework, according to the School of Education at University of Michigan-Dearborn, “is a distinct method of teaching and learning, rooted in a specific way of looking at and explaining the world”. It can be found in its entirety on the University’s School of Education webpage; however, below are the applicable portions as it relates to my own teaching philosophy:

“Teaching for Understanding begins with the assertion that knowledge is constructed. This means that people shape, form, or "construct" their own worlds. People determine what is "real," what is "necessary," and what has meaning.

In Teaching for Understanding teachers and students change the ways in which they approach information, each other, and the learning experience. No longer "fountains of knowledge and information," teachers are called on to be learners in their own classrooms. No longer "empty vessels" of passive receiving, students are called on to be teachers of self and of others.

Cooperative relations among students and an interactive relationship between students and the instructor are a means for students and the instructor to construct knowledge.

Teaching for Understanding includes the following approaches to discourse and social interaction. Classrooms are places where:

- students and teachers acquire and construct knowledge collaboratively
- orthodoxies of pedagogy and "facts" are continually challenged
- conceptual understanding of subject matter is the goal
- teachers function as guides, coaches, and facilitators by posing questions, challenging thinking, and leading in the examination of ideas and of relationships between concepts and experience.

Based upon the Teaching for Understanding model, courses in the School of Education promote active student learning and the construction and development of knowledge through lectures, readings, small and large group discussions, small group activities, field based learning, and projects that require the application of knowledge.”
My coursework at University of Michigan-Dearborn has been concentrated mainly in Language Arts, Learning Disabilities, and English as a Second Language; therefore, my approaches to teaching will inevitably be taken from the perspective of teaching not just general education students, but also ESL students and students with Learning Disabilities. Presenting material in a meaningful context becomes that much more important when teaching learning disabled students and students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; so, whenever I can, I will be using some form of cooperative learning with an emphasis on contributing to our classroom community’s knowledge base.