

Teaching For Success Faculty Success Center

Success Insights

Convergence

The personal power to influence, lead, and teach comes from your center, your personal focal point. What is a focal point? it's the point in optics where light converges to concentrate on a very small point. It's the point of maximum sharpness of a camera lens or your eye's lens at it focuses light on the receptor cells in the back of your eye.

What is a personal focal point? For you, it could be a task, job, responsibility, interest, relationship, or goal, that generates the white heat and intense energy to accomplish. It's similar to the temperature rise that occurs at the focal point of the sun's rays through as they pass through a magnifying lens. Your focal point is the point in your life where your talents, gifts, dedication, beliefs, values, passion, determination, and persistence all come together to produce extraordinarily positive and unique results for you. In essence, these are attributes, special talents, and view points that make you, well, you.

In other words, it's what you, and only you, can do that contributes a special dimension to the achieving the results and outcomes you desire. It's operating in this "bliss" zone that is so crucial to living fully as Joseph Campbell described it in his lectures and books.

Most of us can identify our teaching focal point by asking, "Why am I in the classroom or in charge of this online course?" Or you might ask, "What needs to be accomplished and what can I uniquely contribute to the achievement of the learning outcomes that I desire?"

Determining your teaching convergence point is to reveal to yourself your special approach to teaching. It's about identifying your strengths and using those strengths to teach your way—to teach authentically. Trying to teach like, or for that matter, attempting to be like, someone else usually results in less than optimum personal performance. Of course, it's important to learn good practices from those with more experience, but such learning should be subducted and integrated into one's own unique understanding and approach to teaching.

Students and colleagues respect and follow those who know their focal points and act from their center with authenticity and personal power. Besides when convergence happens and things fall into place or come together like the pieces of a puzzle, the feeling is fantastic. The convergence of focus and outcome is a guiding principle when teaching for success.

~John H. (Jack) Shrawder, Exec. Director,
Teaching For Success, Faculty Success Center.