

Midland College Faculty Vitae

Name:

Michael Makowsky

Names of all higher education institutions attended, with degrees earned:

- Midland High School: Graduated 1983.
- Midland College: 1984-1985.
- Texas Tech University: B.A. Philosophy and English, 1988.
- Texas Tech University Graduate School: Linguistics, 1988-1991.
- Eastern Oregon University Graduate School: Geography, 2003-2004.
- University of Texas at the Permian Basin Graduate School: M.A. Geography and Education, 2004 (Summa Cum Laude).

Positions Held in Higher Education

- Graduate Teaching Assistant: Texas Tech University, 1988-1990.
- GED Faculty: Midland College, 1999-2001.
- Welfare to Work Coordinator: Midland College, 1999-2001.
- Assistant to Director of Cogdell Facility: Midland College, 2000-2001.
- WIA Summer Youth Coordinator: Midland College, 2001.
- Title V Basic Skills Specialist: Midland College, 2001-2007.
- Geography Faculty: 2004-Present.
- Travel Course Coordinator: 2006-Present
- Social & Behavioral Sciences Department Chair: 2013-Present

Teaching Service

- English Composition (ENGL 1301 & 1302): Texas Tech University, 1988-1990.
- GED Preparation (Adult Basic Education): Midland College, 1999-2001.
- Life and Job Skills Preparation (Welfare to Work): Midland College, 1999-2001.
- Developmental Reading (READ 0371): Midland College, 2003.
- College Level ESL (ESL 0395): Midland College, 2004.
- Geography (GEOG 1301 & 1303): Midland College, 2004-Present.
- Effective Learning (EDUC 1200 & PSYC 1200): Midland College, 2012-2013.

Awards

- Midland College Institutional Award of Excellence Recipient, 2007.
- Midland College Teaching Excellence Award Recipient, 2013.
- National Institute for Staff and Organization Development Excellence Award Recipient, 2013.

Select Presentations/Publications

- Educator's Exchange: Teaching in the Multi-National Classroom, 2003.
- Plato Ed Tech: Implementation Strategies in Post-Secondary Applications: 2003-2005.
- Educator's Exchange: Productivity Environmental Preference Survey: 2004.
- Educator's Exchange: Ethnic Diversity & Racial Segregation in Midland County - Demographic Trends for the New Millennia: 2004.
- Spade Ranch Crater Mystery: Colorado City Record, 2010.
- West Texas Drought: Tracking Rainfall and Reservoirs Levels: 2011-2015.

Midland College Committee Service

- Title V: 2001-2005.
- Student Advising: 2002-2004.
- Enrollment Management: 2004-2006.
- Education-Information Technology: 2006-2008.
- Curriculum Committee: 2008-2010.
- Developmental Studies: 2010-2012.
- Student Advising: 2012-2014.
- Davidson Distinguished Lecture Series: 2012-Present.
- Core Curriculum: Chair. 2013.
- Teaching Excellence Award: Co-Chair. 2013-Present.
- Core/Gen. Ed. Oversight: 2014-Present
- Student Success: 2014-2015
- At-Risk Indicator Data Team: 2014-2015
- Pathways AA Committee: Chair. 2015-Present

Community Service

- Welfare to Work Community Committee: Chair 1999-2001.
- Midland Housing Authority: MC Liaison, 2000-2002.
- Workforce Development: MC Liaison, 2000-2002.
- CASA De Amigos: MC Liaison, 2000-2003.
- Leadership Midland: Class of 2010.
- Midland High School Boys Basketball Booster Club: President, 2011-2013.

Other Highlights

- Developed and coordinated MC's first and largest multi-campus & cross-discipline computer-based instruction program (PLATO): 1999-2012. 5000+ students.
- Co-founded International Student Club in 2002. Sponsor 2002-Present.
- Co-developed and piloted first College Level ESL program at MC.
- Founded first Geography program at MC: 2004-Present.

Teaching Philosophy

I view teaching primarily as a process of exposing students to new concepts and information with the expressed intent of providing them the opportunity, encouragement, and guidance to develop and refine their perspectives and attitudes about the subject we are studying (be it geography, education, ESL, etc.). It is the teacher's role then, to help students apply what they have learned in ways that enhance their ability to live more effective, meaningful, and satisfying lives, both personally and professionally.

I believe deep learning takes place when students are challenged and engaged in the classroom. I take heart in the following Native American saying:

Tell me and I will forget, Show me and I will remember, Engage me and I will understand.

As a teacher, it is my job 1) to engage students in difficult tasks that confront their current level of understanding and sometimes their sensibilities, and 2) to challenge them to become intrinsically motivated learners who take intellectual risks and get their 'hands' dirty in the process. In other words, my role is to challenge them to think about complicated and controversial issues (e.g. resource allocation, wealth disparity, or how media portrays scientific and social principles) and to guide them towards a more learner-centered approach, where they must begin taking ownership of their own learning.

To achieve this, students need to actively participate in the process of learning. They must think, read, write, discuss and even argue about the concepts they are learning about and applying. For this reason, I believe participation, as much as exams, quizzes, papers, and homework, should be a significant part of each student's overall evaluation. I emphasize attendance, punctuality, coming to class prepared, and the rule that every class meeting is important.

To get students to buy in to the importance of their role in the learning process, I think it is essential that the teacher demonstrate a genuine passion for the subject and a deep commitment to each student's learning and success in the course. As a teacher I must convince my students of my knowledge, expertise, and commitment if they are going to commit themselves to the learning process. This process begins with the teacher-student relationship, which is based on mutual respect and the recognition of boundaries. Without an environment where students feel their role in the classroom is important, they are far less likely to engage in the learning process. Students must also have respect for the teacher if learning is to take place, and while a student's own behavior is ultimately his or her responsibility, it is my responsibility to initially establish this two-way relationship by creating an environment for learning and clearly defining boundaries.

It is the teacher's responsibility to ensure that the classroom environment is also appropriately stimulating to help focus the students' attention in the right direction. Seating arrangements, lighting, audio-visual equipment, white boards, wall maps and any other teaching aids must be available, functioning and 'tuned' to keep students engaged and to address a multitude of learning styles. Similarly, distractions, such as cell phones, intrusions from outside the classroom, and other disruptive behavior should not be tolerated. The classroom space is sacred.

I believe in an educational culture that is associated with enthusiasm, ethics, and active learning. My role is that of an enabler who guides students to develop their maximum human potential, to explore possibilities and seek opportunities for growth and development in their lives while doing it in an ethical manner. I want to be a mentor to my students, encourage them to set goals, and most importantly, help them be successful students.