

# Excellence in Teaching

## Warren Allen

### Health & Physical Education

#### Wondering and Reflections

It has been said that life is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you're getting until you eat one. I'm a firm believer in 'Karma', the concept of consequence and lately my Karma has been interesting. I write these musings as a regular exercise in daily life and in my teaching. I find it a beneficial mental purging and assessment of where I have been and where I am headed. Often I'm amazed at the way my life's links, twists and convolutions all seem so complicated in their intricacies and connections and yet so eloquent in their design and outcome.

I came to Western Oregon University to explore the possibilities of providing some exposure and diversity through teaching the time honored Chinese art of Tai Chi Chuan. I have realized much more in the 6 years I have been here with the development of a Mind/Body tract in the Health major, designing and implementing several original upper division courses and completing a Masters in Education, all while working full time as an adjunct. Although I routinely echo a philosophy of moderation and mindfulness, looking to gain perspective by prioritizing and practice on the journey, it is often challenging to keep true to what I promote in others.

There are days when nothing goes right and the trappings and seeming complications of the transition we call life are a bit too much for my simple Taoist preferences. Then other days I am so happy and grateful to have all of the creature comforts I have accumulated and I struggle with having so much in the realm of possession and opportunity in a world where so many suffer with so little chance of either or both.

I have been blessed throughout my life with wonderful teachers and mentors to help challenge the person I am. I feel highly privileged to be able to influence and often contaminate so many minds and personalities with the work my life has developed into. As the song goes, "Regrets, I've had a few, .... I've chewed them up and spit them out. I took the blows and so it goes, I did it My Way." I am the culmination of my past, and the impetus of my future. I have learned from all that was good and bad along the way and continue in an attempt to guide and influence my path knowing I must accept and embrace this wondrous moment to moment experience we call 'Life.'

#### About Warren

Warren is in his seventh year teaching here at Western University.

He has taught and developed a number of courses including:

HE 211 Techniques of Relaxation, HE 407 Seminar, PE 310 Motor Learning

HE 424/524 Psychosocial Health, HE 466/566 Study of Drugs and Alcohol,

HE 480/580 Eastern Mind/Western Ways, Alternatives for Health & Wellness,

HE 481/581 Mind/Body Health, HE 485/585 Bioethics for Public Health.

He also teaches activity courses including PE 143 Yoga, PE 144 Energy Yoga,

PE 145 Tai Chi Chuan, PE 146 Intermediate Tai Chi Chuan, and PE 147 Karate.



Warren received an M.S. in Health Education from Western Oregon University in 2005. He earned a B.S. from the University of Minnesota and from 1978 -1994 taught and worked in interventional cardiology, cardiac rehabilitation, and wellness education, in Minnesota, Arizona and Oregon. He later spent time teaching English in Korea where he also pursued advanced training in his martial arts development.

Warren has been involved in the martial arts since he was in his teens. He is a 5th degree black belt under the Legendary Chuck Norris and a member of the United Fighting Arts Federation. He is the owner of Pacific Martial Arts Academy in Salem, which offers Tai Chi Chuan, Taoist Qigong, Korean Karate, Daito Ryu Aikijitsu, Hatha Yoga, and Zen Buddhist Meditation.

#### Philosophy of Education

Students learn best when instruction is individualized to meet their needs. Confucius, one of our oldest and most highly regarded teachers, recognized that people learn in different ways with varying abilities. He wrote: "Highest are those who are born wise. Next are those who become wise by learning. After them are those who have to work hard in order to acquire learning. Finally there are those that work hard without ever managing to learn." Confucius attempted to observe each of his students to understand their unique strengths and weaknesses. He observed with regard to learning that "To go too far is as bad as to not go far enough." Balance is essential in all things.

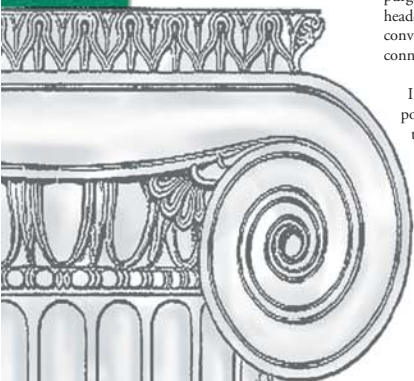
The primary role of the teacher and mentor is to assist learners in gaining skills and abilities that will help them make sound choices. As an educator, I hope that I can offer guidance which will help students learn to trust their own judgement, be mindful when making decisions and develop their critical thinking by engaging intentionally.

#### About Warren's Teaching

Warren integrates his interests in mind and body wellness in all of the courses he teaches. His courses are informed by his professional experiences in health and wellness education. Warren knows first hand what can happen when people don't take care of their physical health.

Warren strives in his own life to embody the principles he teaches, striving to learn more and to continually improve. He is committed to teaching and learning and student success.

Warren is a warm and caring instructor to whom students respond positively. Students often drop by during his office hours to discuss their classes with him. He has helped many of WOU's international students make the transition from their country and educational system to ours. Warren's experiences working in Korea teaching English have helped him develop a greater awareness of the challenges our international students face.



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