

Text Elements of Talking Heads Feature on Website

Caption

Assistant Professor David A. Zera, Ph. D. of Fairfield University responds to the question, " What advice would you give to new faculty?"

Mouseover for picture

Choose what fits best in the mouseover space from these facts that identify Professor Zera:

Assistant Professor of Psychology and Special Education David A. Zera, PH. D., The Graduate School of Education and Allied Professions, Fairfield University, Fairfield, Connecticut.

Text of Clip

Interviewer: What advice would you give new faculty wanting to teach all students better, something like " I wish I had known when I started" or maybe someone outside the education field who wants to teach all students better?"

Professor Zera: That's a good question. I have an answer to that, and it's something that I'm still working on myself, daily. And I think it's the notion that all students are doing the best that they can do at any given moment in time, and to recognize that when you're working in a classroom. Sometimes our expectations maybe exceed what we should, maybe sometimes they're lower than what they should be. But the point of the matter is that every student, truly, is doing the best that they can do at that point in time. And our job, I think, is to recognize that fact and see how is it that we can now bring this person to a different level of thinking. That's tough, when you're sitting in your classroom and you're thinking that I want everyone to master this material or to write this dynamite paper and to have fourteen references and citations or whatever throughout. And then when you don't get it, it's almost disappointing. I think that's constant guidance for me, to reframe my own thinking, to realize that for whatever reason, this is what I have, this is what I have been given, and this is the best place that person is at, at the moment. Now what can I do to facilitate their development to a better, bigger, and brighter place? That's tough. I think it's not something that you ever master. I think it's something that you're constantly learning every day.