

Dr. Karen Peesker's Teaching Philosophy

As an Assistant Professor and the director and principal teacher in the Ted Rogers Sales Leadership Program, I embrace active learning to enhance student learning. My industry experience in global sales leadership led me to adopt active learning methods to teach salespeople to increase performance. After joining Ryerson and taking the University Teaching Development Program, I learned that my approach in the corporate environment is a proven teaching method supported by extensive research, which led me to embrace this teaching method fully as a professor. My overall teaching approach is the following:

Enthusiasm. The heart of my teaching style is my enthusiasm, passion, and respect for the students. I strive to be innovative, engaging, and respectful in the classroom. I use my enthusiasm to make the classroom feel upbeat, with high energy and active student engagement and participation. I achieve this by using non-verbal presentation techniques, including walking around, eye contact, and various body language techniques that allow me to connect to different personalities in the classroom and have resulted in me being described as very enthusiastic both by students and faculty members (see Table 1). This enthusiasm extends beyond my classroom as I welcome students to come in early, stay late in class, and attend my office hours to provide additional learning opportunities. When I notice students are lagging, I try to reach out to assist and provide the support they need. I do my best to create an environment that is caring and supportive of numerous learning styles. For example, some students speak better than they write, and for these students, I provide an opportunity for them to present and share their ideas verbally. I also enthusiastically advocate for students who require academic accommodation and have received positive feedback about my focus on supporting them to help facilitate academic success.

Learning Process. While I enjoy being creative and innovative in teaching, I use a process-oriented active learning method. Learning activities are inserted every 20-30 minutes during the class. These activities, such as a think pair share or group activity, provide students an opportunity to physically move and stay energized and engaged in the learning process. I incorporate business case studies into my classes to stimulate class discussion and dialogue, providing opportunities for students to share insights and debate ideas. I use flip charts while teaching (in addition to PowerPoint slides) as this allows the notes from the lecture to evolve based on the discussion in the classroom. I include handouts, extra reading, and dynamic corporate guest speakers to complement textbook learning to create an environment where students are encouraged to express themselves, be curious, and ask questions, as illustrated in the student feedback below:

"Dr. Peesker utilized research-based experiential learning methods, a unique approach in comparison to the traditional PowerPoint lecture-style of teaching. Rather than simply lecturing every class, Dr. Peesker went out of her way to develop interactive activities to encourage student participation, thus increasing the effectiveness of the course material. While I can honestly say that there are many classes that I have taken at Ryerson where I

have forgotten much of the material after finishing the final exam, the methods that Dr. Peesker used ensured that activities such as this will stick with me forever"

Coaching Students: I believe that individualized coaching can positively impact students and help them achieve goals. I strive to provide a supportive coaching environment where I listen carefully to my students' individual needs, get to know my students, and recognize their strengths. When possible, I provide opportunities for them to use these strengths and grow through the achievement of challenges. I repeatedly tell my students I believe in them and do my best to help increase their confidence. Often I push them out of their comfort zones to try new experiences (such as individual role plays, sales competitions, corporate presentations) while supporting them along the way. I also provide individualized coaching based on the student's needs. For example, I give positive verbal recognition to some students, and I give specific directives with a high degree of structure to other students. Outside of regular teaching hours, I offer extra tutorial classes to support my students in a smaller class setting (beyond regular class and office hours). I use coaching leadership to help my students achieve performance beyond expectations. For example, I have led student teams to international victory, with students winning back-to-back university sales team championships in America for four years running. Along with teaching, I help coach students on job opportunities, help students network, and engage with industry. Numerous comments in my faculty course evaluations (Table 1) and LinkedIn post evidence (Table 2) describe how this coaching leadership approach inspires and encourages my students.

Innovative Experiential Industry Relevant Projects. I aim to help students prepare for the business world with industry-relevant skills to hit the ground running and quickly add value. I use my years of professional experience at IBM and Lexmark to share stories to bring alive the course's content and create innovative learning opportunities similar to situations students will experience in the work environment. For example, I started an elevator pitch role-play assignment conducted in a moving elevator at TRSM to provide the students with a real-life learning experience to develop this skill. The following quotation illustrates this work.

"In Hospitality and Tourism Sales, Dr. Peesker organized a role-play activity relating to the development of a personal sixty-second elevator pitch. Rather than simply delivering the theory of the activity, Dr. Peesker spent hours of her own time outside of the classroom to physically ride an elevator with each student in the class, providing individual feedback for how we can improve in the future. This activity has been invaluable to my career, as since then I have found myself in many situations where I have been required to deliver a concise personal statement in a short period of time".

I also developed the Live Sales Assignment in conjunction with the Director of Advancement, Sean Ingram, to enable students to use the skills learned in the course to practice selling to real-life customers to benefit others. In this assignment, students have generated over \$10,000.00 YTD in revenue to help others with scholarships and international research travel funds while practicing essential sales skills. In addition, I built a foundation for future opportunities for my students when the Canadian Professional Sales Association accredited my curriculum to have them earn their CPSA sales association badge. As a result, students interested in a sales career

can now move along the accreditation process to become certified with the CPSA. Moreover, I proposed and created a new 6-week sales leadership course for the MBA program as a subject expert, which will run in 2022. Furthermore, I developed and delivered an executive education seminar based on her sales leadership research, for which I received exceptionally positive feedback from the Board of Trade members.

Finally my classroom learning environment is connected with relevant real-world industry experts. I host a wide range of industry professionals for guest lectures and work with the speakers to create innovative in-class assignments. For example, shark tank exercises, onsite hotel branding workshops, and in one class, students were tasked with creating a consulting recommendation, and then the top team presented the proposal to the executive team at Tourism Toronto.

Growth Mindset. As I progress in my teaching career, I take a growth mindset approach to learning. I solicit feedback from students on improving my courses and make changes to enhance their learning. I have received feedback from students saying she listens and embraces student feedback. I believe the students feel more involved in the class if we solicit their input and respect them in the process. I have also adopted the value of reflection to enhance my skills as a teacher.

Advancing Sales Education. My contributions to the development of our students is not limited to the students of the Hospitality and Tourism Management program. Outside of the traditional classroom, my passion for developing the next generation of sales professionals has led to several remarkable opportunities for Ryerson students through co-founding (with Brian Segal) the Ted Rogers Sales Leadership Program. This extracurricular program has 110 students across TRSM under the Ted Rogers Leadership Center to develop foundational sales leadership skills, which enable students to enhance their job placement opportunities. I helped generate over \$120K from the industry sponsors to enable this program to operate. Alternate learning opportunities are integrated through the Sales Leadership Program into various events such as breakfast panel sessions, boot camps, sales summits, and an integrated sales mentor program. This program has enabled Ryerson University to be recognized internationally as one of Canada's top universities providing sales education by the Sales Education Foundation. In addition, we were honored to be the first Canadian university accepted into the exclusive University Sales Center Alliance (USCA).

In summary, I am very proud to be making such a positive impact on the lives of my students through my teaching both in HTM, TRSM, and teaching as Director of the Ted Rogers Sales Leadership Program. Within the next three to five years, my goal is to develop new courses in sales education and further develop the sales leadership program, which has already demonstrated exceptional demand by students and industry. In addition, I was fortunate to secure SSHRC funding to advance sales education and research across Canada, and I look forward to helping inspire other Canadian professors to use similar teaching approaches to help fill the sales skill demand gap and help prepare the next generation of students.