

My Teaching Philosophy

Most students recognize good teachers through their positive behaviors: optimism, confidence, and empathy, but for me teaching is at the core of my professional and intellectual identity. My learning values are conscientiously enacted in daily practice as an aspect of my role and responsibility as a teacher. I invite my students to be similarly committed, considering their own values and career objectives through academic writing in different genres and for a variety of audiences. My students make connections to meaningful aspects of their lives, development, and well-being as they establish themselves as writers, and think about their futures in writing.

My main purpose in teaching is improving the unified learning condition of my students. Guiding them in this endeavor is my life work. I teach by awakening potential through a syllabus based in personal and social epistemology. To begin, I prepare their pens and minds for learning. I cede power to student voices through respectful classroom discussion. I also focus on their credibility through assignments that promote identification with their own commitments. The ideas of identity and inquiry at the core of my curriculum take root at the intersection of pragmatic self-interest and communal positionality. Students bring their learning potential to fruition as they use their voices to establish connections with others.

Although my philosophy is primarily rhetorical and evocative in nature, my practice answers to strict standards of accountability. It is anchored in qualitative research methodology through rigorous, empirical, and transcript-based analysis. Similar studies by Wardle, on "Writing about Writing" show students developing definitions through rhetorical awareness. However, in case studies of my students' FYC essay assignments, writing was proven to be a change agent in their lives, enabling them to recognize issues holding them back, discover their own voices, envision a better self, and begin writing towards future obligations. To make student self-awareness possible, I utilize a variety of pedagogical practices in a comprehensive curriculum that has proven effective at the university as well as technical and community colleges.

In my classes, students work through a curriculum structure that engages them immediately and builds sequentially. They establish expertise with a personal analysis of a favorite song, and continue on to freewrite life experiences. We later craft these stories into a statement of intellectual and ethical commitments. Students thus personally define their values, and reflect on them as their own key terms throughout the course, correlating with Yancey's "Teaching for Transfer" methodology. Once students realize that the meanings of their own life story give them the power to take a stand, the rest follows. I focus on essay assignment expectations and paragraph organization, including the Swales moves and critical thinking processes. I utilize classroom discussion, in-class personal chats during labs, and office conferences. I use online CMS technology to disseminate resources, receive assignments, and coordinate revision.

This teaching philosophy defines my role as a teacher. My classroom is a zone of proximal development, an academically challenging workshop, and a personally safe environment. Students can discover the meanings of their own life experiences and those in the texts we read, influencing their school, families, and communities. I give them the tools and skills they need to succeed in the workforce, to write in their disciplines, and to face the world after graduation, having learned to use the written and spoken word as a resource for success.