

Teaching Philosophy

My teaching philosophy revolves around the idea that students should be given open classrooms in which they can learn in as many different ways as possible. There are three main aspects to doing so:

- I endeavour to create classrooms where all learning styles are welcome and where information is as accessible as possible
- I work to incorporate various types of activities and practice into the classroom in order to provide different avenues to work with concepts and understand how they apply to real-world situations
- I strive to cultivate critical self-reflexivity in my classes; this means that I want my students to become familiar with understanding their own learning processes and comfortable with critiquing their own work.

Combining all of these aspects into my classes creates classrooms that are generative and active spaces where learning can take place and where students can fully develop their skills and conceptual knowledge.

Different Learning Styles

In my classrooms, I provide as many different ways to access information as possible, and try to create different ways to engage with that material. This means combining things like example texts (both bad and good), discussions, videos, and lecture slides. Even when delivering a lecture, I provide space for students to see examples and work out as a class how the concepts I'm discussing apply to them. For instance, when teaching emails in a service course, I will diagram each part of the email, provide both good and bad samples as I go, stop to ask the students to critique these examples, and then give them a full example to critique. Then, I show a video discussing some of the intricacies of emails and how employers perceive them. Finally, students participate in a situation-based group activity that provides them with low-stakes practice working with the genre. Delivering information in these various modes is not only important for affording students different modes of engagement, but also addresses issues of access in order to reach the diverse students in the classroom, and is therefore an ethical necessity as well.

Situation-Based Learning

Situation- or problem-based learning is also vitally important to my pedagogy. Many of my assignments ask students to work through a real-world problem that they might be familiar with and that needs solved by creating the type of documents that they're working on in class. Students are often very excited about these types of projects, as they have a stake in it and can become more invested in it. For instance, in my New Media class, students create digital compositions (such as web pages, blogs, videos, or video games, to name a few examples) that are responsive to local problems, such as parking issues on campus or traffic in the Tampa Bay

area. These are issues that students are familiar with and interested in, and as such they are often eager to dive in to the work. This allows students to use writing as a process of discovery; as they work towards the deliverables, they're also working on solutions to a problem and how they can accomplish these solutions through their compositions. These types of situations allow students to understand the applicability of the concepts that we've been working on in class and how they can use the skills that they develop in class to respond to situations they will encounter in their careers or life.

Critical Self-Assessment

It's incredibly key to me that students develop an understanding of and ability to assess the skills and abilities that they have. I want my students to develop sustainable practices of self-assessment that will serve them throughout their writing career, not just in my classroom. It's important to me, then, to consistently examine student writing in the classroom and both model assessment practices and ask students to participate in these practices. I'll often use my own writing and walk students through my process of revision as a model, and then ask them to assess both their writing and to peer review others' writing. Also, for this purpose, I try to make my feedback on drafts non-prescriptive; I want students to critically assess their own writing, not respond to what they think I want. To that end, I provide major categories and broad conceptual issues that they can use to guide the revision process. I also provide student examples and suggested revisions under each category or concept to concretize the ideas. This way, students can look at the issues I've outlined and ask themselves if those issues are appearing in their writing. This method allows students to practice reading their own writing carefully and to fully commit to the process of revision.

Conclusion

In providing for various learning styles, setting up situation-based learning, and asking students to practice critical self-assessment, I see my role as that of a facilitator or guide. I provide the space for students to learn, facilitate different ways of engagement within that space, and then ask the students to think through how they use that space, how they can solve problems with writing, and how they can create and maintain sustainable writing habits. In doing so, I hope to open up a dynamic learning space that asks students to participate in their own learning and helps create opportunities for self-improvement and skill development.