

Teaching Philosophy

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It's one of the greatest privileges of my current role to support undergraduate learning. I take care to honor that role with intention and responsibility. My teaching philosophy is centered around a student-focused approach and informed by research in areas of writing studies, education, and applied linguistics. My approach to teaching first year composition is based on four main principles:

The connection between reading and writing

Academic literacy involves both the ability to read and write in academic contexts, so a composition course meant to improve students' academic literacy skills necessitates focus on both reading and writing. Fortunately, research has shown that teaching reading and writing together can work to strengthen both skills (Stotsky 1983). Jackson (2008) likewise provides evidence for the mutually beneficial practices of both "reading to write" and "writing to read". In the practice of "reading to write", I guide students through Bunn's Writing Spaces reading on "How to Read like a Writer" and we practice doing rhetorical analysis of texts so that students can learn to recognize purpose and audience and the ways in which structure and evidence work together to shape meaning and argumentation. In the practice of "writing to read", I utilize written reading responses to deepen reading comprehension and practice active reading. I also like utilizing argument mapping as a technique for building critical thinking skills (Cullen et al 2018) while reading academic articles to help visually deconstruct meaning and argumentation.

Writing is convention and context specific

As stated in Downs & Wardle (2007), writing studies research shows that academic writing is not a universal skill independent of content or context and writing abilities are not automatically transferable across disciplines. We know that to write is to participate in a conversation within a certain socio-historical context and for a specific discourse community with its own conventions and genres. In order to effectively teach writing in a first year composition course meant to prepare students for the variety of writing they may be doing over the course of their academic careers, we need to acknowledge these facts and limitations. In order to do so, I take the approach suggested by Downs & Wardle (2007) which puts the focus on instructing students to be adaptive to different writing contexts by teaching how to assess the writing conventions of different discourse communities and genres. In class we learn to read model texts from different disciplines rhetorically in order to determine how different disciplines incorporate information, structure texts, and cite sources. I scaffold these activities with class discussions on readings like Dirk's (2010) "Navigating Genres" and Devitt, Bawarshi, and Reiff's (2003) "Materiality and Genre in the Study of Discourse Communities." I also adopt and build on Downs & Wardle's extended research project on a discourse community of their choice in which students collect primary and secondary research data and practice writing with the conventions of their chosen discourse community.

Writing as an iterative and recursive process

Sommers's (1980) article on the differences in revision strategies between student and experienced writers makes clear that student writers often make the mistake of only making word level revisions to first drafts. On the other hand, experienced writers treat the writing process as both iterative and recursive; the stages of prewriting, drafting, revision, and editing are all steps that experienced writers repeat and circle back to as their thinking and vision for the text develops. I encourage my students to practice this approach to the writing process by breaking down their major research paper into sections to be drafted and revised over the course of the quarter while getting feedback from peer review and individual conferences with me. We read and discuss DePiero & Dippre's *Writing Spaces* reading "How Writing Happens" and Lamott's (2005) "Shitty First Drafts" so students can understand and appreciate this often messy, imperfect process that necessitates good writing. I also scaffold peer review by having students read and discuss Straub's (1999) "Really-Really Responding-to Other Students' Writing" and co-creating guidelines for productive feedback as a class. Students are also encouraged to visit the University Writing Center for further feedback. Furthermore, I utilize metacognitive reflection in between drafts so that students can reflect on how and why their thinking has changed, what feedback they found useful, and how their strategies as writers are evolving. This kind of reflection can help build metacognitive writing skills that aid in transferability across writing contexts.

Creating an inclusive and equitable classroom

For me, equity and inclusion in the classroom means not only acknowledging and supporting learning for a range of learning styles and neurodivergence, but also the various social identities (race, ethnicity, gender, sex, religion, socioeconomic status, etc.) and experiences that affect the ways students show up in the classroom and connect with the material. As a woman of color, I've found that showing up as my authentic self in the classroom can serve as a means to enable students to do the same. I mention my research with my own ethnic community and how my identity interacts with my academic work and encourage my students to likewise bring all aspects of their identity to their writing. We practice writing positionality statements as part of their research project to help them explore how their identity intersects with their academic work.

To build a more inclusive classroom, I give students multiple ways to participate and ask questions. I often use think-pair-share type methods that allow for students who aren't comfortable participating in a larger audience, a way to be heard in smaller groups first. I walk around and check for questions in these smaller groups, which shy students have noted as helpful in my student evaluations. I adopt a translanguaging approach (Horner et al 2024) in which students are allowed to access their full linguistic repertoire during the prewriting, reflection, and invention stages of writing or while doing primary and secondary research. For example, students can conduct interviews or read secondary sources in other languages and provide translations in English for their research article.

As a linguist, I know and appreciate that there are many varieties of English. With this in mind, I strive to create a classroom environment where standardized American English is treated as a useful access tool while still validating students' diverse linguistic backgrounds. Students read and discuss literacy narratives from diverse voices and literacy traditions and reflect on their own

literacy backgrounds. I teach a unit on linguistic justice, but also work to ensure that discussion of these issues are integrated throughout the course to challenge assumptions and foster sustained critical language awareness. Following the insights of scholars like Asao Inoue, I believe that composition courses should not reproduce unjust language power dynamics, but rather equip students to navigate, critique, and reshape them.

I continuously engage with new pedagogical research and resources to improve my teaching philosophy and practices. Informed by current research, my approach to teaching first year composition is grounded in the principles of writing being connected to reading, writing being an iterative and recursive process, and writing being both content and context specific. My highest level objective is to equip students with the academic literacy skills needed for them to be successful writers, readers, and thinkers and to do so in a way that promotes equity, inclusion, and justice.

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