

Community Work and Learning

Fall 2021 Symposium



Qiana Dukek

AMP Teaching Assistant, *Enhancing Student Engagement in TRW* with Dr. Anne Weyandt

Impact of Work: This semester I introduced a new discussion board platform, VoiceThread, which allowed students to use multimedia forms to display their voice and perspectives instead of writing alone. This showed the department that while writing skills are important and need to be developed, these other skills need that same level of dedication as well; they can also portray voice and ideas if done in an effective way which Anne and I can teach students how to do. This idea of embracing multimedia work has also impacted the types of course material Anne wants to use in the future. If I'm hired next semester, I'll work with her to find multimedia materials that can be used alongside written ones. I also helped Anne unintentionally restructure the course for her online class. She wanted to change the community action report to a project where instead of students writing yet another paper, they would work together as a class to do a project instead. I suggested to Anne that we use VoiceThread for this and she agreed. I made a draft of what that would look like and instead of doing the community action project like she had planned on, I accidentally made materials for the case study that students were planning to do later in a couple of weeks. However, Anne liked this idea and found that it would be a great way to transition to the end of the semester and end it a new way: with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from Birmingham Jail" which would send students off with the question of how are they fighting for social justice and is it in a way that's effective and helpful to their dear neighbor (using Dr. King's work and philosophies as a guide). This inspired Anne to include more BIPOC perspectives into the course and if I'm hired on again, we'll work together (with Jeff Johnson potentially) to get Native American/Indigenous perspectives on spirituality and philosophy included along with more immigrant perspectives of the past and present.

Personal Growth: Through this work, I learned that I needed more self-discipline and I needed to advocate for my future self to myself. I had a lot of poor coping mechanisms for my stress, depression, and anxiety and it led to me getting severely behind in my class work and not working very many hours for my job. The only reason things turned around was because I was at a point where I felt like I had to quit my TA job in order to reduce my stress, and to me that just wasn't a realistic option. I couldn't abandon Anne and my students. I wanted to work this job and I wanted to keep going to school. I felt like everything was falling apart but this job inspired me to ask for help from my counselor and my medication dosing adjusted so that I would get the support I needed. I practiced self-discipline skills with the guidance of my counselor and I practiced thinking of my future self and what she wants and needs to get through stressful times and seemingly impossible tasks and assignments.

Career Impact: Anne has helped me see that I have the potential to be a teacher. The skills I've been using as a TA are the same skills I can use to teach. Anne has helped point out all these specific skills that make me a great teaching candidate and it's opened up a whole new career path I never thought was originally possible. Anne gave me an opportunity to guide a class discussion and introduce an assignment this semester to the students and it felt great; it helped

me see that teaching is something I enjoy. With more practice, teaching could be a real career possibility for me that I never would have known about had I not worked this job.