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Teaching Philosophy

In my teaching practices, I have incorporated diverse elements to foster a learning environment that not only delivers content to the students but also allows students to practice the concepts before they accept internships and jobs. As a teacher, I consider myself as a facilitator that provides my students the knowledge and resources needed to accomplish diverse in-class activities, graded assignments, and internships. I expect my students to be practitioners who take the course content and apply it to their interests and produce work that builds their portfolios and prepares them for their careers. My ultimate goal is to help these students become advocates for agriculture. They will mainly work in this industry, so they need to be able to use their experience in writing, broadcast, graphic design, web design, social media, marketing, public relations, and agriculture to educate consumers, producers, the media, and policy makers so that they make educated decisions that affect their food and clothing choices. As a teacher, there are two tenants that have guided by teaching practices: **students learn what they practice** and **students respond to a range of challenges**. Obviously, the subject matter in my classes must possess **meaning, organization, and structure** as the vehicle to make my students be practitioners.

Students learn what they practice.

I always try in my teaching to use the Chinese proverb, “**What I hear, I forget. What I see, I remember. What I do, I understand.**”, as a starting point for discussing my philosophy about **applying course content to relevant workplace situations**. For example, the technical and professional communication course (ASTE/JCOM 3050) focuses on the teaching and learning of the most frequently used documents such as e-mails, letters, memos, instructions, definitions, and technical descriptions in a global, professional workplace (see Appendix A for examples of student work). One of the biggest challenges in our society is writing, which is why I am responsible for teaching how to write technical instructions. One technique I use is looking at good and bad examples of instructions for using an iPod. Students can relate to using an iPod and compare those instructions to what I explain as required components for their in-class activity and graded assignment. We have fun by having groups of students write their own technical instructions for making peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and testing the usability of the instructions. Students would assist each other by making suggestions on how to improve the clarity and accuracy of their instructions.

Students respond to a range of challenges.

I try to help my students feel successful by creating a **supportive environment** where they can actively engage in their own learning. When teaching JCOM 3320 (Strategic Research Methods in Public Relations), I challenged my students by having them work in teams to apply what they learned in the classroom to conduct a research study that addresses a public relations or marketing problem for a real client. I believe students respond to the challenge of working through the research process and delivering a research report and presentation to the client. Since the research report is an ongoing process with diverse ways of expressing ideas, students submit a first and revised draft of the assignments. As a teacher, I understand that learning is a process

that takes time, so rather than correcting their problems, I provide **feedback** on the drafts to make improvements, looking for more information and clarifying ideas (See Appendix B for one team's drafts and the final research report). Students have connected what they learned in my course with other JCOM courses, such as Professor Cathy Bullock's JCOM 2020 (Communication Research Methods).

Subject matter must possess meaning, organization, and structure.

These two principles described earlier cannot be understood without talking about how my subject matter is relevant and my courses are organized and structured to aid my students in their learning and retention of information. My effort to foster learning begins when I share a clear vision of course outcomes, assignments, topic outline, and expectations for classes with my students on the first day of class (See Appendix C for a representative syllabus). By placing these items in writing and explaining the reasons behind them, a sense of uniformity and legitimacy are introduced at the first the class session. I also discuss the importance of respect in the classroom and establish the guidelines for how peer reviews are facilitated in a way that fosters respect, confidence, and support.