

Teaching Statement

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As a practitioner turned academic my goal in teaching is to provide students with information and guidance on how what they are learning in class can be applied to their work. My preferred teaching method is experiential learning and service-learning; therefore, I infuse opportunities for students to apply classroom knowledge through applied projects often through partnerships with local community-based agencies. In addition, I incorporate elements of critical pedagogy in order to invite students to examine the world from various perspectives and to help deconstruct power differentials that are often prevalent within the nonprofit sector and critical to thoughtful work in the sector.

Although I am interested in all modes of teaching, all of the college level courses that I have taught to date have been online and I have received specialized training in online education. The online courses I have designed and taught are multi-layered and rich in discussion with weekly assignments to ensure that students understand and apply the course material. My focus is to make the online environment as engaging as possible through various assignments and interaction with me and among students.

When I began teaching the Nonprofit Governance course at Arkansas Tech University, I inherited a course that was, according to the department chair, outdated and in need of a revival. I initially taught the course as it had been taught, and by the second time, I recreated the entire course to incorporate the content I knew students would engage students better. The course now includes TED Talks, opportunities for students to choose a topic they are passionate about (e.g., creating a nonprofit program about a community issue they identified and researched), and opportunities to bring the outside world into the online class through activities such as service-learning completed in their home communities or community projects with a nonprofit organization of their choosing.

Assessment is a very important component of my teaching philosophy so I implement both formative and summative assessment within my courses. Through skill building assignments, reflective activities, and class discussion, I am able to assess how students are progressing through my class as well as understanding the content. Often through midterms and finals I have student provide a project or paper that illustrates how they can apply the content with the current context of their organization or the world around them.

I provide my students with extensive and regular feedback to ensure that they are continuously improving. I include comments on where they can improve on their assignments as well as where they are excelling. I tend to use rubrics and checklists to help them understand expectations. I use exams sparingly since remembering and understanding information can only get students so far; therefore, I utilize create opportunities for students to apply, analyze, evaluate, and create from the course as well.

At the end of my courses I want students to be equipped with new knowledge, skills and tools that can help them be leaders in their current and future endeavors, whether it be in the public, private, or nonprofit sector.