

## Teaching Philosophy

Excerpted from the Nomination for Teaching in Online Environments Award  
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When asked to teach an online course for the first time in 2016, my initial instinct was to make the online version similar to one that I had already designed and taught in classrooms. I felt the essential qualities of the course had the best chance of remaining intact within a new medium if I could align them with a more established and understood mode of delivery. At that time, my teaching philosophy was student-centric and supported learner agency by deeply connecting students to the material. In my first online course, I did not change the assignments, quizzes, or the readings, but I replaced face-to-face lectures with video recordings and set up weekly topics on the discussion board to compensate for the lack of robust, in-class dialogues between students. To compensate for the absence of office hours, I added polls to gauge the extent to which students believed they were learning. In retrospect, I realize these changes were not the best approach and stemmed from my belief that face-to-face teaching was the touchstone of quality and authenticity, while online teaching was a deficit model. Since 2016, I have taught 10 online courses (to a total of approximately 200 students, who are mostly active K-12 teachers) at the Werklund School of Education. These experiences have reshaped my teaching, as I have learned that the move from face-to-face to online delivery is not one of replication but one of transformation. This understanding has profoundly influenced my current teaching philosophy, which I'll frame as: Teaching as coevolving.

From the perspective of teaching as coevolving, it is necessary to provide multiple entry points for learning so that students, with all their diversities, can adapt activities to fit their needs, emerging abilities, and interests. I've moved away from asking all students "to do the same thing," while realizing it's not good pedagogy to simply have students "do their own thing." What makes my online course designs outstanding is that students are able to engage with the material in a manner appropriate to their current situation. In other words, they can take personalized paths to achieving the course outcomes. To do this, I must be attuned to the movements of the class and adapt my design as the need arises. Thus, for me, teaching is coevolving. As giving students choices is paramount to their success in learning, my teaching practice draws insights from Principles of Universal Design, which, borrowing from my PhD supervisor, can be expressed in four sub-principles: 1) providing multiple means of representation, with spaces for unanticipated possibilities to emerge; 2) providing multiple means for students to express what they know and what they have learned; 3) offering ways into and explorations beyond planned experiences; and 4) permitting and nurturing specialized interests of individuals while enhancing possibilities for the collective.

Sub-principle 1: Strategies drawn from providing multiple means of representation: I use the Articulate 360 e-authoring tool to (a) post outcomes and content accessible to all students at the start of the term; (b) offer direct links to required readings (along with summaries on the digital content pages) and recommended readings; (c) use captioned videos to introduce weekly topics and videos in which I share my experiences and inspirations; (d) illustrate key concepts through pictures or graphics; (e) and use Articulate 360's native interactive knowledge checks to highlight critical noticings in the content, particularly when using videos.

Sub-principle 2: Strategies drawn from providing multiple means of expression: I offer a choice of medium to present; encourage and assist with multimodal modes of demonstrating skills; and use

student-created materials to generate discussion and inspiration which open paths for unanticipated possibilities to emerge.

Sub-principle 3: Strategies drawn from offering ways into and explorations beyond planned experiences: Instead of having one or two summative projects, I design several smaller individual and group problem-based "micro-projects" inspired by problems educators post on global forums. The response to each micro-project is posted on the discussion board rather than in Dropbox so that other students can view and comment on each other's work. I also offer video feedback in response to the projects.

Sub-principle 4: Strategies drawn from permitting and nurturing specialized interests of individuals while enhancing possibilities for the collective: I always offer multiple discussion topics which are embedded into the digital content. Students are asked to choose topics that most resonate with them. I also have a "non-disposable" assignment policy, i.e., students are encouraged to take the final version of completed assignments and implement them in their educational contexts. This design enhances engagement as students see their work as purposeful, motivating, and insightful, and welcome the opportunity to learn from each other.