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Statement of Teaching

I approach teaching composition as an integrative, active, reflective process, using a range of themes (such as pedagogy, justice, human rights, tourism, globalization, and international organization) as a way for students to practice and grow as communicators. While on the surface these courses may seem an eclectic mix, my teaching is united by my approach to teaching communication, which asks students to read texts carefully, analyze material effectively, draw their own conclusions, reflect on alternative perspectives, respond with their own considered view, and adapt to differing audiences and genres. This method allows students to develop as writers and speakers regardless of their prior experience.

I often begin courses with several short, accessible readings on a particular topic, asking teams of students randomly to take on the different perspectives and engage in an in-class debate. During the debate, as students articulate their assigned position and support it, it becomes clear that there are multiple, reasonable perspectives on the given issue. In the debrief, I ask students to respond with their own views, which often differs from the ideas they forwarded in the debate. We then discuss why they are convinced by one writer's view compared to others– allowing students to see that the writers who are most convincing are usually the ones with the clearest arguments using reliable evidence and thoughtfully engaging with multiple perspectives, rather than the writers who posit unsupported claims and take on one-sided view or present a straw-man argument.

This in-class speaking exercise leads into what is often the first formal writing assignment: a one-page response to one or two single scholarly texts, in which students summarize and reflect on the text and target a broad audience. Before students begin writing, I share my expectations clearly with a qualitative rubric that focuses on argument, evidence, analysis, structure, audience, and form, along with a range of past submissions; we also dissect the scholarly text using these categories. Students read and reflect on the rubric and examples, first on their own and then in small groups. As a class, we then discuss these examples in light of the rubric, reflecting both on what the writers did well and how they could improve. Using real student work allows students to see a range of approaches and levels and helps them feel more confident about producing their own responses.

For each assignment, I provide individualized written feedback so that students know not only what is working but also how they can grow. I also use class time to point out common issues I noticed across the submissions, such as misunderstandings of the text, posited arguments that are actually statements of fact, or great ideas that lack sufficient support, and discuss how these can be addressed in this and future assignments. I use this approach – sharing a transparent rubric, reflecting on sample student work, providing written and oral feedback, and reflecting on strategies to promote transfer of learning – in all my courses. Scaffolding writing across the course and within individual assignments enables students to understand that writing is an iterative process, with approaches and strategies that, with some adaptation, can be used across courses and disciplines.

Scaffolding assignments and providing and discussing a range of examples of student writing are important ways to engage writers regardless of their backgrounds, as students can find multiple points of entry into the conversation. Two other strategies I use in my teaching to engage all students are active learning and reflection. For example, in a recent course focused on tourism, in preparation for their first argument-driven paper, students visited special collections to engage with primary sources used and created by tourists, including maps, guidebooks, and memoirs. Students selected one primary source that intrigued them – for example, a postcard of an idyllic citrus grove that showcases none of the hardships involved – and then selected a course reading that helped them see that primary source in a new way. Students began this assignment by submitting a single paragraph, presenting both sources and some potential arguments that might arise from putting these sources in conversation with one another. Students then wrote a draft, followed by in-class peer review in small groups; before peer review began, I guided students in how to provide feedback effectively in person and in writing, drawing on students' own

experiences (good or bad) with peer review to arrive at effective feedback strategies. The goal of the final paper was for students to arrive at their own well-supported, well-organized argument, a paper that, through the intermediary assignments, received individualized feedback from multiple readers in at least two stages.

Reflection provides another opportunity for students to capitalize on their diverse experiences and see them in a wider context. In most classes, I ask students to reflect on their own experiences with the course topic whether as a global citizen or as someone who is personally impacted. After sharing strategies for writing an effective reflection and dissecting several examples, students write their own reflections and give mini-presentations in class. Because of the diversity of students in my courses, reflections are wide-ranging, encapsulating how students from different backgrounds, countries, and languages are impacted by the course theme. Learning how their wide range of classmates have experienced a topic helps students learn to see their own experience as one window into this much broader phenomena, as well as recognize that seeing this topic from diverse perspectives provides a much more holistic understanding than any one individual's experience could ever allow.

An essential goal in any writing course is showcasing how students can transfer what they are learning to writing assignments and oral presentations across disciplines. In feedback throughout the term, I highlight how what students are doing can be applied to new contexts, for example, how supporting ideas with reliable evidence and analyzing that evidence effectively is common in assignments in the humanities, social sciences, and sciences. My feedback is holistic, focusing first on students' ideas, argument, structure, and support while also recognizing the importance of citation, mechanics, and style for readers. Reflection is another strategy that enables students to see how they can apply what they are learning to other contexts. At the end of the course, students reflect on their own growth as writers and thinkers, using their own course work, feedback, and reflections to step back from their formal papers and presentations to consider what they have learned, what they are still working on, and how they can apply what they have learned in this classes to other courses – engaging in the kind of metacognition that has been demonstrated to facilitate transfer. Finally, in-class presentations of written work compel students to adapt to a real-life audience in a new form. Students often find that presenting their work orally forces them to state their arguments and support more clearly. Speaking – like writing – requires scaffolding and practice. Thus, students conduct mini-presentations before formal presentations and receive feedback. Most students come in with stronger skill sets in either speaking or in writing, and presentations often allows students who do not feel confident as writers the opportunity to shine and develop confidence as communicators. Promoting confidence in students' ability to communicate effectively, which is strongly connected with positive learning outcomes, helps students develop as they move through their undergraduate educations and enter the workplace where writing and speaking skills are essential for success.

Having taught undergraduate writing courses for over a decade, I have experience creating well-scaffolded syllabi and speaking and writing assignments that are accessible to a wide range of students, helping them grow as communicators and transfer their learning across courses.