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Teaching Portfolio - UNC Charlotte, 2016

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Teaching Philosophy

With an educational background in both the arts and sciences, I have been able to observe how professors of diverse fields differed in teaching their respective subjects. It is from these observations that I have noted the qualities that I and other students have best responded to and learned from. From these traits I have molded the style of teaching I hope to present in my classroom.

**Open discourse**

Students will be called upon to discuss questions, but mistakes are treated as opportunities to explore misconceptions, not as a reflection of a student's abilities.

**Real world references**

Relating curriculum to real-world situations can motivate students to tackle problems with an analytical and exploratory mind, putting into perspective why they are learning the subjects and increasing motivation.

**Team-based learning**

Team-based learning encourages collaboration and peer growth. It helps students assimilate to working and learning with others, increases critical thinking, and inspires leadership. It is an essential part of the new learning classroom.

**Emphasis on effort**

We are all raised with this unbelievable emphasis on grades. Holding knowledge gained to be reflected within a numbered system. While grades do hold value, I believe that a student should not just be analyzed by numbers on a sheet but by the effort and progress made by the student throughout their education.

**Respect**

Students work hard, earn their grades, and are entitled to their opinions. My task is to facilitate their learning process, not discourage open-discussion.
Teaching Experience
University of North Carolina at Charlotte

• Instructor: Intro. to Game Design and Development  Spring 2016
  • Created lectures; created course materials; graded course project content; updated and managed class page; created in-class activities; taught students class material.
  • Course size: 43 students.

• Teaching Assistant: Logic and Algorithms  Fall 2015
  • Assisted Professor with lectures; graded homework, class work and exams; updated and managed class grades; proctored and administered exams; tutored students on class material.
  • Course size: 50-60 students.

• Guest Lecturer: Adv. Game Design and Development  1/23/15
  • Guest lectured on Principles of Graphic design as it relates to games.
  • Class size: 30 students

• Teaching Assistant: Adv. Game Design and Development  Spring 2015
  • Assisted Professor with lectures; graded homework, class work and exams; updated and managed class grades; proctored and administered exams; tutored students on class material.
  • Course size: 30-40 students.

• Guest Lecturer: Intro. to Game Design and Development  11/6/14
  • Guest Lectured on Principles of Graphic Design as it related to game design for class of roughly 30 students.
  • Class size: 30 students

• Panel Critic: Introduction to Game Design and Development  10/23/14
  • Acted as an “expert” critic for students presenting their game projects to the class. Required looking at students work from
a critical, educators eye.

• Teaching Assistant: Logic and Algorithms Fall 2013-Spring 2014
  • Assisted Professor with lectures; graded homework, class work and exams; updated and managed class grades; proctored and administered exams; tutored students on class material.
  • Course size: 50-60 students.

• Grader: Logic and Algorithms Fall 2012-Spring 2013
  • Assisted Professor with lectures; graded homework, class work and exams; updated and managed class grades; proctored and administered exams; tutored students on class material. Course size: 50-60 students.

**University of the Cumberlands**

• Academic Resource Center Tutor Fall 2007-Spring 2011
  • Tutored students in Java, C++, C#, HTML with CSS, and Visual Basics. Helped students analyze code, fix logic and syntax errors, as well as help with basic understandings and principles.

• Study Hall Supervisor Fall 2009-Spring 2011
  • Tutored and assisted student-athletes with schoolwork. Subjects included English, Computer Science, History and Math.
Teaching and Learning Seminars

“The What, Why, and How of Integrating Service Learning Into your Course(s)”

Presenter: Dr. Kim Buch
In this seminar, Dr. Buch explained the importance of service learning and how best to incorporate service learning in the classroom. Service learning is a method of teaching that combines formal instruction with a related service in the community. Research has shown that service learning can have a positive impact on many student learning outcomes, including academic performance and retention. It also provides a valuable service to the larger community, thereby promoting the university’s community engagement mission and the broader social good.

“How Students Learn: Strategies for Teaching Based on the New Science of Learning” (10/30/15)

Presenter: Dr. Todd Zakrisek
In this seminar, Dr. Zakrisek brought to attention several enlightening details, we as educators overlook. The most important being the need to teach students HOW to study, not just for your class but for classes in general. This includes how to take notes, how to attempt a multiple choice quiz, etc. He mentioned the need to educate students on how to operate at their full cognitive capacity by staying hydrated, exercising and getting enough sleep. One facet of the lecture that I found particularly enlightening is how we should give students encouragement not based on performance, but based on effort. We are so grade-focused that we don't realize by giving students good feedback on improvements that we could facilitate further growth just by the motivation of words.

“The Active Learning Classroom: How to Get Student Buy-In” (4/6/15)

Presenter: Dr. Carol Wayland
This seminar focused on integrating Active-Learning into the classroom by first convincing the students that it is a beneficial idea. By getting student-buy-in into the structure of the course you can increase participation, attendance and critical thinking. The lecturer reviewed how when she first flipped her classroom, student test scores went up and her teaching reviews went down. She then went over the steps that she took to incentivize participation and that eventually led to her teaching evaluation scores to go back up to meet the rising test scores. These steps included: Changing the first
day of class structure (Teaching students about the benefits of active learning and the research that shows how it helps), revisit and remind students of these benefits throughout the semester, show evidence consistently of individual vs. team performance, incentivize participation (grades for individuals and teams) (take quizzes as both individual and team). This can also show what information might need to be gone over in a lecture to further emphasize a point. It was a very effective seminar that demonstrated how a successful active learning classroom has implemented the changes.

“Using Concept Maps to Promote Critical Thinking” (3/19/15)

Presenter: Dr. Carol Wayland
This seminar was all about using an exercise of creating Concept Maps to promote critical thinking on a subject among students. A Concept Map is defined as tools for graphically representing knowledge, usually in the form of maps or diagrams. The idea is for students to take a larger complex idea and break it down into smaller parts. I felt like this could very useful for group exercises breaking down a complex topic, for instance giving students a real-world situation in which to create a program for and then having them map out everything they can about that real-world situation. It would not be useful for easy straightforward solutions or topics, for instance – 1+x = 3. Obviously there would be no need for a concept map there, but in higher more abstract mathematic topics it could come in use. It would most likely be most beneficial as a group project to initiate out of the box thinking and discussion. Our instructor suggested several design software we could use to implement this including Google Drawing.

“Game Changers: Integrating Game Mechanics into Pedagogy” (11/14/14)

Presenter: Dr. Bob Appelman
“Game Changers...” focused on including visual and interactive learning into upper-level schooling. The lecturer referenced science museums for children as an example. Asking, if we went to a science museum today and interacted with the same equipment as the children, if we could still stand to learn something. Most of the audience admitted that yes they could. He used this as a stepping off point to explain his framework for designing experiments that professors could use in their classrooms. It was an interesting idea, but to fully understand and implement his theory I feel I would need to do additional research.
“Universal Design for Instructional Material” (10/09/14)

Presenters: Khaleel Eksheir and Katie Montie
This seminar brought into perspective how little preparing a classroom for students with disabilities is thought of. The idea that all classrooms should be designed from the get-go to service students with all disabilities is a facet I hadn’t really considered before. Additionally I learned of the different services offered here on campus that can help teachers and students prepare for such situations. For instance, there is a subtitle service available that will create subtitles for all videos and audio material that you might want to incorporate into the classroom. This would also be beneficial to our English as Second Language students who might have trouble understanding some of the videos.

Professional Development Seminars

“Preparing for Oral Defense - a faculty panel” (11/3/14)

Faculty Panel: Dr. Lisa Walker, Dr. Stan Schneider, Dr. Alan Rauch, and Dr. Elizabeth Delmelle
This seminar was all about how to prepare for your Oral Defense. Since this is still a couple of years away from me, I hadn’t given it too much consideration, but they set it up as more of a Q and A style seminar. Several of the other students had their Oral Defense’s closer to the horizon so they had prepared many questions to ask. The panel consisted of 4 men and women across different fields. In addition the mediator was also willing to offer helpful advice and tid-bits here and there. The panel was able to offer great insight and personal experience anecdotes.

“Identifying Your Communication Style & Improving Your Professional Network” (10/22/14)

Presenters: Ms. Shawn Smith
This seminar was all about figuring out your communication style and identifying the different kinds there are. Additionally, its aim was to teach you how to interact between the different communication groups. We took a small survey at the beginning and tallied up our answers to figure out our communication style. I was one who was close in score in many of the areas but ended up being a “People” style. This meant that I want to hear everyone’s opinions in my group before I commit to a direction; additionally I am able to communicate with people in the other communication styles successfully. I find this to be true, but I also identified with aspects of the other communication styles as well. It was an interesting seminar and would be good for a person who has trouble communicating with others.
Educational Paper Presentations


Master Teacher Observations

**Dr. Tony Kombol (4/1/15)**

I observed Dr. Tony Kombol in his ITIS 2110 Infrastructure: Design and Practice Class. Right off the bat, I noticed he was extremely relaxed, as were his students. He was sitting behind the podium with Orchestral Rock Music playing throughout the room, which was apparently common practice for the beginning of class. At 5:00 sharp, he had a one-question clicker quiz which the students had one minute to answer which also appeared to be a common class occurrence. The students were almost all on time, I’m sure the clicker quiz was an additional motivation for this. The students were also given the ability to discuss answers to the clicker quiz before submitting, which encouraged discussion among peers. The class all knew the routine
and settled into the class quickly. He ran a very outgoing and engaging classroom setting. Where discussion was encouraged and answers were given. The session was quick today, only 30 minutes to cover the material. He ended with a one-question clicker quiz as well, which students were also encouraged to discuss during. The ending question was tricky and its main motivation was encouraging discussion, which it did. He ended up taking all answers as acceptable. What I took away most from observing him was how comfortable the students and he were with report. They felt free to ask him things and knew he would give them a direct answer.

Dr. Richard Souvenir (11/10/14)
What I took away most from his class was how he engaged with his students. The students in attendance felt comfortable in their interactions with the professor, all seemed to know what was expected of them and were using the time to pay attention. None were using their laptops to surf the Internet or go to Social Media sites. They seemed to really enjoy learning from the professor. I attribute this to his very light-hearted personality and willingness to teach until the students truly understood the material. I hope to be able to have that kind of command over students when I teach my own class next year.

Community Service

Fall 2015 - Spring 2016

- **Game Design Apprenticeship at Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School**
  Through University of North Carolina at Charlotte STAR’s program; Participated in Community Outreach to a local middle school to educate youth on the prospects of an education in the field of Computer Science through Game Design and Development. Students utilized MIT’s Scratch program to build small 2d games and present them at the WOW fair in December 2015.

Spring 2015

- **ImaginOn Application Development**
  Assisting in building a mobile application for ImaginOn, a children’s combination theatre library, for android applications.

- **Student Tutoring**
Assisted a few first year transfer students with their beginners course work in Computer Science.

Fall 2014

- **ImaginOn Application Development**
  Assisting in building a mobile application for ImaginOn, a children’s combination theatre library, for android applications

- **Mobile Development Apprenticeship at Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School**
  Through University of North Carolina at Charlotte STAR’s program; Participated in Community Outreach to a local middle school to educate youth on the prospects of an education in the field of Computer Science through Mobile Application Development.

- **Geekfest (11/13/14)**
  Through University of North Carolina at Charlotte STAR’s program; Participated in Geekfest at CPCC Levine Campus by helping run a booth for UNCC outreach at the event. Showed Game and Robotics presentations while talking to youth and teens about the opportunities for education at UNCC

Contact

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