

## Teaching Philosophy

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I believe that students can best prepare themselves for college writing, workplace writing, and civic writing by developing critical reading and thinking skills and by building a writing process that considers the purpose and audience of their work. Further, I believe that students should use these critical thinking and writing skills to bring about positive change in their communities and in the world. I believe that students should work individually but also in teams to foster collaborative learning, and I think that students should use the latest technologies to plan, write, design, and present their work.

To achieve the goals I establish above, I integrate critical reading, thinking, and writing in my college composition courses as well as my technical writing courses. I begin my courses with a study of classical rhetoric; students learn about rhetorical situations, the elements of rhetoric, and they study—through rhetorical analysis—different forms of writing to discover and dissect the argumentative strategies authors use in various types of discourse. Students move on to practice these strategies in public communication such as letter writing and journalist writing. Students then practice inquiry-based research as they explore a problem facing their community and/or college. Lastly, students compose a problem-solution report based on empirical research.

I try to keep students focused on the positive change their work can inspire. This positive change begins with close, thorough research on a local, civic issue. After thorough investigation, students write about their exploration and the information they find. This examination forms the foundation of students' semester project, the problem-solution report. Students expand their exploratory research and begin using the empirical research method; they continually focus on the purpose of their work and on the audience for whom they write: their community. During this process, I encourage students to use paper-based sources, online databases, surveys, interviews, and observations. In addition, students use the latest design and presentation software to create visually dynamic brochures, websites, slides, and paper documents.

I integrate the latest technologies into my courses so that students gain experience working with programs they will use in other college courses and in the workplace. MS Word, MS Publisher, Adobe PageMaker, Adobe Photoshop, Macromedia Dreamweaver, and email programs are applications I help students use to expand the possibilities of composition and creativity. In addition, since oral presentations form such an important part of college and professional life, my students present their work in MS PowerPoint using the latest computer and projection hardware. I also encourage students to use the websites I develop to discuss class material online and to complete exercises I design to help them understand and practice course concepts.

I try to use my experience as a writing teacher and my experience in the workplace to help my students attain the problem solving skills needed to succeed during and after college. My hope is that through students' experience with critical reading, thinking, and writing, and through careful research of and practice with civic discourse, my students can move into their adult lives as insightful and responsible members of a democratic society who will work to bring about positive change in themselves, their community, and in the world.