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Teaching Philosophy Statement

Introduction to My Teaching Philosophy

My teaching philosophy is constructivist, immersive, and centred on the principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and Reconciliation. My primary responsibility is to inspire the next generation of professionals who will lead with integrity and purpose while adapting to the complexities of life. Effective leadership is best achieved by ascending the six stages of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) scaffold modelled by Cruz et al. (2019), starting with an initial spark and education, and leading to practice, study, collaboration, and finally becoming a change agent leader. I believe my experiences so far have been firmly influenced by each of these stages, from my early teaching days as a Sessional Lecturer at the University of Guelph, followed by my time as a Part-Time Professor at George Brown College, and in my current roles as a tenure-track Assistant Professor. I was also the Program Coordinator of the Master of Science in Management Studies program at FDU Vancouver from July 2024 to June 2025, which offered a more holistic perspective on the importance of strong leadership. Throughout each of these roles, I have embraced a learner-centred approach to engaging with, assessing, and supporting the career goals of a wide range of students.

Co-Created Learning Principles

I believe that effective teaching in the classroom begins by fostering a welcoming environment in which students are co-creators of knowledge rather than passive recipients of information. To help accomplish this, I bring relevant theories to life by leveraging real-world examples that students can relate to. For example, as part of my newly developed Entrepreneurship & You course, students create comprehensive business plans that require applying entrepreneurial theories to real-world challenges, from location selection to brand development, culminating in an end-of-semester poster symposium that is open to other faculty and students to interact with the students in the class. In my Destination Management and Marketing course, I implemented innovative assessment approaches like the "DM Bucks" participation system, which gamifies class engagement while simulating market dynamics. To ensure students are receiving the most up-to-date learning experiences, I have developed and taught several new courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels, including Social Media in Hospitality, Event Technologies, and

Entrepreneurship & You. In these courses, students learn not just from me but through peer interaction and self-reflection, such as through student reflection journaling, anonymous ‘start-stop-continue’ feedback entries, and peer evaluations to enrich their learning experiences.

Active Learning Tools and Techniques

I have been a strong proponent of active learning techniques since the beginning of my teaching career by incorporating case studies (many of which I’ve authored), field courses, guest visitors and lecturers, group-based projects, and simulation software. For instance, I used a hotel simulation software called HOTS in my Advanced Lodging Management course for the students to develop a simulated hotel business that would directly compete with other students’ hotels in the same fictitious city. The students ultimately brought their projects to life by adding unique hotel names, logos, and establishing executive-level roles within their fictitious hotels. It was always an exciting moment during class when I would launch the most recent cycle’s results, often leading to an auditory *gasp* of either elation or shock from the different groups as they saw in real-time how their business decisions impacted their hotel’s performance. This was a valuable way to teach students the importance of considering the holistic performance of a venture and its competitive position when measuring success.

Students’ Ethical and Effective Use of Generative AI

As modern digital technologies continue to grow more and more sophisticated, today’s students are faced with a rapidly evolving tool that can either help or hinder their educational journeys. I am referring specifically to Generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) in this case. As an educator, I have a moral obligation to become an advanced user of these tools to ensure my students are using them with utmost confidence and integrity. To work toward this, I have earned a certificate in AI Prompt Engineering from IBM. I am also currently enrolled in a self-guided training program using Anthropic API’s Claude and in Google’s AI Essentials Specialization course offered through Coursera. These experiences have allowed me to experiment with the latest GenAI and Agentic AI tools in my spare time. I have also connected my current research program on digital and emerging technologies to include GenAI and Agentic AI, which I have linked explicitly to my teaching pedagogy and approach (for more details on this, please see my accompanying research statement). For instance, new students to the MHMS program at FDU Vancouver must enroll in my newly developed Foundations of Academic Writing, Research, and Integrity course (previously known as the MHMS Writing Bootcamp) in their first semester. One of the requirements of this

course is an [interactive quiz](#) for students to demonstrate their understanding of the link between GenAI tools and academic misconduct. Students must earn a perfect score on the quiz (which can be repeated until they do) before they can pass the course or are allowed to use GenAI in any of their subsequent classes in the program. Another example of how I have integrated the use of GenAI with integrity as an educator is through an [AI skills workshop](#) offered to students who are interested in using GenAI as a collaborative study tool. This workshop has been very well received and has led to requests for additional workshops, which I am currently developing as part of a broader YouTube series to be launched in the fall of 2025.

Practical Assessments and Alternative Measures of “Success”

I make sure to always provide structured feedback at multiple learning stages, allowing students to refine their work iteratively, just as they would in a professional marketing environment. When I want to emphasize the importance of their learning over the pursuit of letter grades, I will create assessments that encourage experimentation and creativity by the students without fear of grade loss as a result. In my Event Technologies class, for instance, the students completed an ungraded oral midterm examination, in which I provided feedback that they were able to incorporate into their final projects. The more prepared the students were during the exam, the more feedback they received. While students were nervous, they knew they would not fail the midterm and that they could get a better grade in the course indirectly by doing a better job during the ungraded exam. This gamified the experience to a degree, while allowing me to determine who was doing well with the course materials and who might need extra support and guidance.

Considering my Positionality as it Relates to DEIA and Reconciliation

I am keenly aware of my positionality as an educator and use it to intentionally embed diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible worldviews across my courses whenever possible. In my Entrepreneurship & You course, I introduced students to several non-fiction books from non-Western perspectives in the hospitality industry, including "Vij: A Chef's One-Way Ticket to Canada with Indian Spices in His Suitcase" by Vikram Vij and "Indigenomics: Taking a Seat At The Economic Table" by Carol Ann Hilton. Students were initially resistant to reading the latter book in particular, citing its heavy subject matter and unclear link to the course material. To overcome their hesitancy and demonstrate its relevance to the course, I brought the students to a restaurant called Salmon n' Bannock, which is one of the few Indigenous-owned and operated restaurants in Vancouver. During their visit, the students sampled new foods, such as oven-baked bannock and Pemmican mousse,

and we discussed how several course concepts were connected to the restaurant's tangible indicators, including the décor, layout, dishes, and employees. This was followed by a tour of the kitchen and a conversation with the owner, Inez, to hear her stories of growing up as an Indigenous child during the Sixties Scoop and her perspective on the importance of honouring Truth and Reconciliation, or as she called it, *reconciliaction*. Through this direct and hands-on approach, students in my class ultimately recognized the importance of incorporating diverse viewpoints in their course deliverables and ultimately embraced the assigned readings. Situations like these demonstrate my commitment to creating an inclusive learning environment that acknowledges and integrates diverse perspectives, particularly recognizing the traditional territories in which we teach and learn.

Off-Campus Engagement and Collaboration

Beyond the classroom, I maintain strong connections with industry partners across various sectors, bringing guest speakers to provide diverse perspectives on marketing applications. I encourage students to become keen observers of marketing strategies in their daily lives, celebrating when they share insights about customer journey touchpoints or service blueprint innovations they encounter. The most rewarding moments come when students share how they have used concepts and theories from class to support other aspects of their lives outside of academia. A recent example of this is when my lesson on guest loyalty and satisfaction helped a student's family restaurant to enhance its approach to customer relationship management. These real-world applications demonstrate that students aren't just learning marketing and management theories – they're becoming industry professionals who understand how to create value through service experiences.

Conclusion

In summary, I will continue to leverage my research and teaching experience within the destination marketing and management discipline to respond to the rapidly changing educational landscape by incorporating modern digital tools like GenAI and Agentic AI into my courses in a way that emphasizes their ethical use among post-secondary students. I believe that doing so is effectively preparing my students to excel as both current students and future industry leaders, regardless of which industry they ultimately choose to work in.

References

Cruz, L., Cunningham, K., Smentkowski, B., & Steiner, H. (2019). The SoTL scaffold: Supporting evidence-based teaching practice in educational development. *To Improve the Academy*, 38(1), 50-66.