

ENGL 7040 Composition Issues and Approaches

Dr. Diana Eidson

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## **Statement of Teaching Philosophy and Practice**

Keywords - Theory: approaches, ethics: ethics, theory/research: multicultural

This course provided an overview of the issues prevalent in current composition/writing studies history, theory, and pedagogy. The course helped me see how students felt about a writing class and aided me in inventing new approaches to teaching literature as well as composition. Thus, this writing sample demonstrates my philosophy of composition instruction and describes the methods I devised for integrating current theory and practice in classroom instruction. Initially, my philosophy was confined to teaching literature, but as my teaching experience grew I was able to expatiate on my theory of teaching composition. This teaching statement also describes the various activities I devised for teaching writing to my students.

As a writing instructor, I do not lead the class in any authoritarian way; instead, I guide the discussion through various activities so that everyone has a chance to contribute. An old standby of classroom routines, one with which most new teachers are familiar, is the lecture (Glenn and Goldthwaite, 2007, p. 61). According to Glenn and Goldthwaite, many of us admire teachers who deliver brilliant lectures in literature courses. Lectures in writing classes, however, tend to be less helpful to students. They must consist of the application of abstract rhetorical principles because students simply do not learn to write by studying abstract principles (p. 61). I believe that practical knowledge of writing cannot be obtained by listening to lectures on the rules and protocols of writing, it can be achieved only by actually writing and performing writing-based activities. Classroom discussion is probably the teaching method most congenial to writing teachers. The discussion activities I devise reflect my teaching philosophy and include, for example, collaborative learning techniques, ludic activities to improve class interaction, using technology to critically examine social media, and employing discussion forums to investigate rhetoric and public spaces of writing.

Collaborative learning is a widely used concept and teaching strategy in college classrooms today (Lei et al, 2010). According to the Lei et al, it not only prepares college students for the workforce due to the importance of teamwork in the workplace, but also provides opportunities to increase student learning and social-emotional outcomes such as social skills, self-esteem, and attitudes toward others (p. 317). I believe that my duty as a teacher is not just to teach writing but also to teach students how to communicate in professional settings, and I achieve this by arranging various discussions activities. Finally, through my teaching experience, I have observed that some

international students face difficulties in writing essays and comprehending writing instruction, and so I also explain how I plan to develop my practice of teaching international students. As an international graduate student myself, I can sense the problems of my international undergraduate students. Thus, I am able to relate with their issues and so I try to modify my instruction to suit their level of understanding. As I move ahead with my PhD and research on the approaches of teaching English composition to non-native speakers, I will be able to develop my teaching statement further.

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## References

Glenn, C., & Goldthwaite, M. A. (2007). *The St. Martin's guide to teaching writing*. Macmillan.

Lei, S. A., Kuestermeyer, B. N., & Westmeyer, K. A. (2010). Group composition affecting student interaction and achievement: instructors' perspectives. *Journal of instructional psychology*, 37(4), 317-326.