

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

Teaching, to me, means inspiring students to discover, understand, and express the assembly of information passed onto them in a coherent process of knowledge production. My teaching is informed by my multi-cultural pedagogical experience as an academic, an Indian classical dancer, and a professional writer. My approach towards education is similar to that proposed by Aya and Paul Kei Matsuda in the essay, "Globalizing Writing Studies: The Case of U.S. Technical Communication Textbooks", where they argue that writing teachers need to prepare students for a global audience and contexts through locally situated writing situations. Students need to understand and respond to the digitized, messy, networked, open, diverse, multicultural, and "globalized" nature of their writing space. In my courses, students are encouraged to see themselves as significant contributors of unique knowledges and expertise within and beyond their classrooms. My role as their teacher is to help them skillfully articulate these knowledges and experiences in an accessible and professional way.

In "Professing Multiculturalism: The Politics of Style in the Contact Zone", Min-Zhan Lu argues that an error-ridden student paper can be a productive discursive space for critical analysis. Lu's method shapes my practice of evaluation of student papers. I entuse students to have control and agency over the revision process and discuss (argue, debate, and protest) the errors with their peers. Whether English is their first language or second language, this method helps students negotiate with the cultural idiosyncrasies of their own language and the standard academic discourse.

One of the most effective ways of enacting this approach is through the application of tools and methods from usability studies and advertising. My course assignments contain heuristic evaluation, usability testing, audience profile design, task/goal analysis, and reporting. Writing becomes a collaborative and creative process where students learn and practice argument, invention, arrangement, style, revision, and expression in context of their own projects.

Negotiations with my own cultural identity has shaped my understanding of the struggles that first-year ESL students face. It has sometimes been challenging to make ESL students understand some basics of the English language, punctuations, and concepts of intellectual property and fair use. However, diversity in a classroom also makes it a fertile ground for production of multidimensional understanding of cultures and audiences.

Facilitating at the International Teaching Assistants Orientation Program at Michigan State University gave me the scope to share the unique, exciting, and sometimes frustrating cultural experiences as a teacher to incoming international Teaching Assistants. At the same time, serving in the Multi-Lingual Student Writers Committee at the nation's largest Writing Program at Arizona State University, has exposed me to the administrative aspects of teaching writing.

In my research and my teaching practices, I am keen to continue exploring the rhetorics of performing globalized pedagogy across spaces, across genres, and across cultures.

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