GRS f390J: First Summer Session, 2003

FROM DISSERTATION TO   THE PROFESSION:
TEACHING BY DESIGN

ASSIGNMENTS

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ASSIGNMENT 1:
What is my dissertation *really* about?
WHAT CAN I TEACH?

You have posted your dissertation abstract.

Task A: Now break down the intellectual skills and areas involved in it. "Skills" are tools and analysis strategies; "areas" are the materials and problems in it.
> EXAMPLES OF AREAS:
>> Astrophysics = astronomy + physics of large bodies
>> Musicology = musical analysis (rhythm, harmony, arrangements)
>> + cultural history (the context of the music, its writing, its performance)
>> History of Puritans = includes migration, religion, American colonies, etc.

> EXAMPLES OF SKILLS:
>> Astrophysics involves math, graphic processing, and large data arrays.
>> Intellectual history involves close reading of texts, ability to set texts (through
>>> themes, etc.) into historical contexts

Task B: Identify *who else* (i.e. what other fields, what other professionals)
> -uses your areas
> -uses your skills
> -works on the same kinds of problems, even if from another point of view

> EG: Astrophysics:
>> -shares star charts with astronomers and cultural historians, navigators
>> -shares graphic processing with geography, geophysics, map makers, artists
>> -Problem: "how to measure things you can't touch"
>>> - used by medical "radar" designers
>> -Problem: "how to join chemical data with radar data with visual data"
>>> -shared with meteorologists

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT: 100-250 words   **ON BLACKBOARD**
> What area do you think your profession needs to teach its students about? In other words, post your answers to Task A & B, being sure that you specify what about your area constitutes a pedagogical contribution, and for whom. In so doing, Identify a topic or topics for a seminar course or courses that relates directly or indirectly to your dissertation area -- one that you think would be useful for students and attractive, or one that satisfies your heart of hearts.

ASSIGNMENT 2:
WHERE CAN MY COURSE FIT?:
Identifying Publics and Spaces

PRELIMINARY: Read *The Carnegie Classification ofInstitutions of Higher Education*, esp. the "Background and Description" website for definitions of institution types in US higher education (posted on class website) and check out Texas (or another state) at http://chronicle.com/stats/carnegie/ to identify at least one institution of each type.
Be prepared to distinguish among:
- community colleges
- liberal arts colleges
- technical colleges
- arts colleges
- comprehensive/ land grant universities
- "research 1" institutions
- online degree or certification program
- continuing education (certificate, in-service education, etc.)

in terms of
- student type / missions served in their communities
- whom they hire
- curriculum offered
- infrastructure: equipment, library, space
- degrees / certificates / courses of study offered

CLASSROOM FOLLOWUP:

We will look at the posted college websites on the class website

What kinds of schools are these, and how do you know?

WRITING TASK A: 50-100 words on BLACKBOARD

Describe where, given the current job market in your field, your area(s) of expertise and skills are likely to land you professionally. What school types might employ you? Where? What level students will you teach? Where can you teach your seminar, and what would you teach in other types of institutions?

HINT: If you don't know what the job market in your field is, FIND OUT WHERE JOBS ARE ADVERTISED and read several dozen ads. For most fields the announcements will be made through the major professional organization and available on its website, through a subscription-only section; many other fields advertise in the *Chronicle for Higher Education*, as well.

WRITING TASK B: Refining Your Course Topic Proposal:

A.K.A. What context(s) can you *really* insert your material into? (50-100 words on BlackBoard)

From among those probabilities and hopes, pick an institution type (a likely job prospect) for which you will write your course proposal. Describe what is necessary in the context. Can your course project work in that context? That is, make a list of resources required to make your material teachable in that institutional locus.

Consider issues like:
-which slots in the curriculum
        -as a freshman seminar
        -as a remedial or special-audience course
        -as a senior/honors seminar
        -as a graduate seminar
-prerequisites (what do your students need to know before they get to you)
-typical minor and major sequences in the field(s), vis-à-vis this course
-other typical curricular and degree requirements to appeal to
-infrastructure requirements for delivering this course
        -which students--your audience and its institutional context(s)
-their prerequisites, or prior knowledge
        -which spaces
        -which equipment
        -which majors
        -which contexts
        -what the course should feed into (subsequent goals)
        -requirements you can tie into (licensing, distribution, in-service,
            mission statement, graduation . . .)
-if a non-traditional or public service module attached to one of these institutions might not be a better choice (e.g. adult education; non-traditional education; public service; distance education)

ASSIGNMENT 3:
WRITING A NEED ARGUMENT,
Targeting Your Space

Your goal in this two-part assignment is not only to write a first draft of part of a course description, but, more importantly, to justify your use of "real estate" (that is, the space in the curriculum that your course will "own," possibly at the expense of others) for the institution, not just for the students. Since, in the typical curriculum, one course goes out when another comes in, why does your course make a better use of real estate in the curriculum?

WRITTEN TASK A: up to 150 words on BlackBoard
Specify your course title and a rough course description of the content. This is approximately half of a course description, including overt statements about:
- for whom
- what level
- what prerequisites
- what focus (spin/ angle) and why
- what typical requirements it can fit
- what goals for participants (what will students learn)

Note that this is not a complete course description -- later phases of assignments will return to grading/outcomes and the like). And label the proposal as a course for a particular institutional type, too (follow-up from earlier assignment on choice).

WRITING TASK B: up to 150 words on BlackBoard
In Task A, you decided on a course/course unit content and audience.
Now make the pitch for your chosen institution's need. What problems does this course solve, according to your teaching experience, learning experience, and research? Specify problems and solutions, and/or benefits
- in the curriculum
- for students learning issues
- for institution
- for the professions [plural?]

As part of the class discussion of this two-part assignment, you will be asked to meditate on what variations you'd have to make in your plan if you changed institution type (e.g. liberal arts college versus community college versus Elder Hostel) or audience (e.g. demographic shifts; specific learning types; gender-specified groups; majors or minors; regions).

BLACKBOARD RESPONSE: Do your cohorts' descriptions sound plausible? Mass-market (i.e. large classes, spin offs) or miniscule (narrow appeal, one shot)? What haven't they thought about?

ASSIGNMENT 4:
What Your Field Wants to Teach,
and the Problems It Faces:
Specifying Outcomes

IN-CLASS PRELIMINARIES:
We will introduce how to find what teaching and curricular issues are topics of discussion, as an introduction to issues about teaching and learning.

For Monday: Week 3: Finding Education on Teaching, Journals, Syllabus collections, etc.

Discussion: Terminology and hot button items for curricular reform -- what to look for in the bibliographies
> Critical writing, critical thinking
> Articulation
> Multicultural, cross-cultural literacy
> Writing across the disciplines
> Interdisciplinarity
> Professionalization
> Assessment
> Standardized testing

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS: ISSUES IN TEACHING YOUR COURSE'S CONTENT
> Your mission is to identify the state of your field's discussions about teaching, including ways to find out about what resources and models are available. Use the class website from Monday as a starting point, starting with professional organizations and standard bibliographies.

Task: DON'T RECREATE THE WHEEL
Identify
> 1)main sources for orientation into teaching discussion in your field
>> (where do teaching discussions take place?)
> 2) sources for materials
> 3) models for class activities, syllabuses, assessment, etc.
> 4) possibility of readapting courses for various audiences (e,g. senior seminars that could be introductory graduate seminars)

Note, for your own professional development:
> -2 journals in which you could publish a report on this course
> -major conference where you could present on this course
> -agency that might fund development (grant for equipment, curricular reform, etc.)

POST ANSWERS ON BLACKBOARD -- key words, links, etc., are enough to note, if you specify why you chose each. Be prepared to give a short presentation in class.

ASSIGNMENT 5:

Specifying Outcomes

Written Task: DEFINING OUTCOMES

Within the course content you have decided is your focus, identify
1) known student learning style problems
2) known course organization (etc.) problems
3) reasonable expectations for outcomes -- what students should be able to do by the end of the course (defined as reading/writing/research/presentation skill types)
4) what kinds of activities foster those outcomes (writing assignments, class assignments, assessment tools)
5) things that you've noticed as issues that need to be accounted for, too.

That is, this is the time:
-to decide which factors must drive the students' learning: what they have to do actively to acquire the knowledge in appropriate steps, each of which build on the prior ones.
-How will reading move to writing exercises, and what kinds of writing will be used?
-What kinds of research activities (and preparation therefore) must be built into the syllabus?
-What kinds of computer and presentation skills, and in what forms and venues of professional communication?
-What other kinds of theory-practice links "belong" in this framework.
-What kinds of things can you borrow from other locations to make the course work, or how could the course work for a second audience with minimal retooling?

POST ON BLACKBOARD: Process notes (up to 500 words) about what issues you've turned up that you want to accommodate in your syllabus project.

ASSIGNMENT 6:
FINDING MATERIALS, FINDING HELP, GETTING SPECIFIC

CLASS DISCUSSION:
What kinds of materials are available? Necessary to your goals?
- textbooks
- websites
- tutorials

What materials are missing? Where does one get grants to develop them?
- tutorial on grants sources

WRITING TASK A: ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENT
Give an example of a class activity, test, etc. that fosters one specific learning goal within your context/content.

Do so by specifying:
- why you chose this activity type (as comment on skills development, etc)
- where it belongs in the class
- content/focus (i.e. on what materials)
- form of output
- what leads up to it, what out.

POST THE ASSIGNMENT DIRECTIONS AND APPROPRIATE COMMENTARY ON BLACKBOARD. Prepare to share it with the class.

WRITING TASK B: THE COMPLETE COURSE DESCRIPTION
In light of these samples, materials, and teaching decision, rewrite your course description to include assignments and grading.

POST ON BLACKBOARD AS FIRST ELEMENT IN YOUR POSTER PRESENTATION.

ASSIGNMENT 7:
DESIGNING A LEARNING SEQUENCE:
THE SYLLABUS

CLASS DISCUSSION: Sequencing learning
>   -move from comprehension to production
>   -move from modeling to replicating
>   -break down large assignments into small increments (learning-to-learn perspective)
>   -recycle and spiral
>   -less is more

TASK: YOUR SYLLABUS ROUGH
>   Block out the semester
>   -identify units
>   -order of materials read/viewed/ researched
>   -integration of assignments (timing, type roughed in)

Your goals is to create a developmental sequence that gets your students to the outcomes decided on. Since semester and quarter lengths vary, state how many weeks ideally you'd have in a unit, etc.

Post your rough on Blackboard!   This posting will be edit-able, so be sure to start early!

ASSIGNMENT 8:
WHY IS THIS WORTH DOING FOR AN ASSISTANT PROFESSOR?
WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

The argument is consistently made: assistant professors need to do their research to get tenure (less applicable for community college faculty, but they have to do service and outreach that is equivalent).
>   So beyond the obvious -- accountability -- why should I do this?

CLASS DISCUSSION:
>   Publishing on Teaching (data collection, waivers, etc.)
>   Integrating Teaching and Research
>   Grants
>   Program development (FIPSE, NSF)

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FINAL PUBLIC POSTER SESSION:
Presenting the Package

Include:
>   -statement of your innovation, or assignment samples, plus justification

-complete UT-style Course description
-complete syllabus rough (topic order)
-description of major assignments and weighting
-sample class task, assignment, day or days
-what you still need to design/ get grants for

Posting on BlackBoard of your documents to share encouraged, but not compulsory.