Framing & Reflection
Syllabus
ENGL 131 Winter 2021

Social-expressivism.

I've tried to organize the course this quarter to reflect strategies that better support my pedagogical philosophies: small group pods, student-driven writing topics, dialogue-based class meetings, personal writing such as autoethnographies and literacy narrative discussions to "un grading" agreements, survey and criticism of scholarly discourse, deconstructing and responding to difficult socially aware content, and final portfolio projects.

Antiracism.

The growing pains I felt in my first experience with a qualitative distributed curriculum was just the centering of curriculum around DAD (Dominant Academic Discourse), as Inoue coins it. We were teaching students how to pass as professionals. That anything "less than" was "not excellent writing"; we were setting up students of color and multilingual students for lower grades despite harder work simply by design of scoring, grading, and need for more philosophy on navigating HOCs and LOCs. We were, against the good intentions of the new curriculum, reinforcing the hierarchy of legitimacy built into White DAD. This isn't a remark on the program. This is just a symptom of whiteness and classism in the very design of the institution. The way I try to combat that is to focus on linguistic code. In redesigning this syllabus, I thought deeply about the core values of my course as I've taught it three times now, hashed and rehashed and finally realized that as much as I wanted to "theme" the class creatively, the heart of the Comp classes I lead is identity, investigation, and interrogating inequities in language at its coded level, especially by employing the 5 Questions. By opening the quarter with a syllabus emphasizing the decentering of White DAD, and establishing a process for students to emphasize where they want to improve via Writing Feedforward and understanding that each assignment operates in a genre code, not based on expectations of standards and excellence, I hope it also opens students up to feeling more legitimate in ALL their language varieties, and especially translanguaging assessment.

Google Docs for Antiracism and Translanguaging.

I'm requiring Google Docs for any assignments composed off Canvas. I've observed multilingual students struggling with grammar and LOCs such as proofreading and editing, and when I loaded their assignments into Google Docs as a central/more accessible way to leave comments and margin notes, I noticed the blue underlining suggestions and had a lightbulb moment. Requiring Google Docs for off Canvas assignments, I hope, will be a great way to translanguage both students' process AND subsequent assessment. If students of any language variety can *actively* and *productively* engage with and practice grammar and other LOCs of the codes in which they're writing, they can LEARN more actively and productively rather than retroactively and punitively when going back to an assignment marked up in red. Not only do I hope this creates a more supportive and encouraging environment to continue growing in language, but helps prepare them for a translanguaged assessment process, too.

Sequencing.

I put a lot of emphasis on code, code switching, and discourse communities to lay the foundation for the concepts of rhetorical moves through rhetorical spaces, specifically research/academic or scholarly spaces. The course ends up overall scaffolded and cumulative by referring backward and forward all throughout. Sequence 1 starts here in a serial pattern, moving from micro to macro: the first few weeks focus on how semantics lead to connotation and connotation leads to code, how politics and history impact connotation and code, how we ourselves are "coded" by *our* "context." After culminating in an A&I Statement, Sequence 2 swerves to a developmental pattern, scaffolding up from practice research paper to genre translation (focusing on the genre and code awareness) to annotated bibliography, which is then developed into a digital research portfolio on Story Maps to experience hands-on how language varieties operate via rhetorical devices.

I think the revised course design has a stronger thread, and a clearer vision than the last, especially when it comes to my pedagogical theories: that "affirmation of individuality found in expressivism" that blends with "the social awareness of epistemic rhetoric" (Schell, "Blending Rhetorics: An Examination of Expressivist and Epistemic Rhetoric"). The artifact right now has a draft of the Weeks and their content. I'm nervous, but very excited to roll it out.