

## My Teaching

Boyer's six principles of an effective learning community, educationally purposeful, open, just, disciplined, caring, and celebrative<sup>1</sup>, are foundational to my teaching. For my purposes, an educationally purposeful learning environment is guided by shared goals that are clearly stated from the beginning, with standards and expectations for reaching those goals stated just as clearly. Education is a meaning-making process, and, as such, it must be framed as a mutually engaging *activity*: human beings do not learn best in what Paulo Freire called the "banking model"<sup>2</sup> of education in which information is imparted by an expert to the passively receptive student. Instead, human beings learn best in an environment of reciprocity in which the course content is available to be actively constructed and manipulated by students with the clear guidance and cooperation of the teacher. Lecture is important, but giving students the power to solve problems and play with what they are encountering carries equal weight. In an educationally purposeful classroom, the responsibilities for making education happen must be clear. For the teacher, this means mastering the material beyond a lecture and creating learning environments that are relevant, interesting, and well-structured. For the student, this means engaging the material in very different ways from simply reading and listening. Students are expected to actively construct the meanings they will take away from the classroom on any given day. An open classroom is a democratic environment where student participation is powerfully enabled, protected, and affirmed. This kind of openness is partially a function of the freedom to ask questions and express opinions, but it is also about instructors making certain that this freedom is used in a growth-oriented way such that the conduct, ethos, and spirit of the classroom is itself pedagogical. In a similar way, the just classroom is a learning environment that respects individual freedom by recognizing the value of pluralism and diversity, and guaranteeing the dignity of every individual. This kind of pluralism is sometimes seen as a formality, a hurdle to be jumped, but a just learning environment will integrate pluralism into the culture of the classroom by making it an important pedagogical resource. Just as important, though, is a disciplined classroom. An effective learning environment focuses on accountability: obligations to the group are understood as part and parcel of one's obligations to oneself. Facilitating a disciplined classroom culture requires clarity of expectations, well-defined governance procedures, and consistency in the application of those procedures. The implementation of the four principles described above will not produce a productive classroom culture without the related principles of caring and celebrating. Purpose, openness, justice, and discipline strike a stronger chord with students if these foundations come from an attitude of care for the well-being of every student. This is one of the most challenging characteristics to bring to the classroom, and to maintain. Sensitively supporting students requires patience and creativity, especially when being supportive and caring involves constructive criticism, delivering bad news, or dealing with gross negligence such as plagiarism, cheating, chronic

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<sup>1</sup> Ernest L. Boyer, *frwd.Campus Life: In Search of Community* (Princeton, New Jersey: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1990).

<sup>2</sup> Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970).

absence, or disrespectful behaviors online or face-to-face. Similarly, celebrating accomplishments, successes, and milestones is part of making course content really come alive for students. It humanizes the learning environment by communicating to the class that their efforts are recognized. Expecting students to truly engage difficult material and accomplish challenging goals without appreciating or acknowledging that fact will alienate them from active involvement in their own life-long learning project.

**Areas of Specialization:** Adult learning; Philosophy of education; Individual, community, and organizational capacity building; Qualitative research; Online learning

### **Courses Taught**

#### University of Idaho

AOLL 573, Foundations of Adult Education (Fall 2018), *Online/Hybrid*

AOLL 575, Strategies for Facilitating Adult Learning (Fall 2016, 2017, 2018),  
*Online/Hybrid*

AOLL 528, Program Planning, Design, and Evaluation (Spring 2019), *Online/Hybrid*

AOLL 504, Doctoral Research Apprenticeship (Fall 2018, Spring 2019), *Online/Hybrid*

ED 680, Philosophical Foundations of Educational Research (Spring 2017, 2018, 2019),  
*Online/Hybrid*

#### Penn State University

Adult Education (ADTED) 562, Politics, Language, and Pedagogy: Applying Freire, *In-Residence/F2F*

ADTED 460, Introduction to Adult Education, *In-Residence/F2F & Online/Hybrid*

ADTED 510, Historical and Social Issues in Adult Education, *Online/Hybrid*

ADTED 588, Professional Seminar in Adult Education, *Online/Hybrid*

ADTED 542, Adult Learning Theory, *In-Residence/F2F & Online/Hybrid*

ADTED 581, Social Theory and Lifelong Learning, *In-Residence/F2F*

ADTED 597/521, Doctoral Proseminar, *In-Residence/F2F*

ADTED 551, Qualitative Data Analysis, *In-Residence/F2F*

Instructional Systems (INSYS) 101, Communication for Educators, *In-Residence/F2F & Online/Hybrid*

Educational Leadership (EDLDR) 551, Curriculum Development, *In-Residence/F2F*

EDLDR 575, Ethics in Educational Leadership, *In-Residence/F2F*

Philosophy (PHIL) 3, Ethics, *In-Residence/F2F*

PHIL 103W, Introduction to Ethics, Writing Intensive, *In-Residence/F2F*

Communication Arts and Sciences (CAS) 100A, Public Speaking, *In-Residence/F2F*

CAS 100B, Group Communication, *In-Residence/F2F*

CAS 260, Mediation, *In-Residence/F2F*

Liberal Arts (LA) 101H, Rhetoric and Citizenship, Honors, *In-Residence/F2F*

\*85 course sections taught overall

\*54 undergraduate course sections, 31 Graduate course sections

**Courses Developed**

University of Idaho

AOLL 504                      Research Apprenticeship

Penn State University

ADTED 542                      Adult Learning Theory  
ADTED 581                      Social Theory and Lifelong Learning  
ADTED 521                      Doctoral Proseminar in Adult Education  
LDT 101                         Communication for Educators  
LA 101                         Rhetoric and Citizenship