

My teaching philosophy is empowering students to become inquisitive learners by applying their new skills in community and industry partnerships. For over a decade, across diverse programs, from undergraduates at Georgia Tech and Columbia College Chicago to professionals at NYU and graduate students at Ball State University, I have sparked curiosity and trained students to actualize well-researched ideas into meaningful projects. My commitment to this experiential learning has deepened as the pandemic and AI have demanded new pedagogical approaches. My approach balances theory and praxis: a constructivist method within a Digital Humanist context, influenced by Paulo Freire and bell hooks. I aim to develop students' design and development skills, as well as the critical thinking and agency essential for future researchers and innovators.

I achieve this by weaving connections between subject matter, external opportunities, and students' lives. For instance, in my Usability course, students applied modified Think Aloud and Contextual Inquiry methods for VR to test the Indiana Historical Society's Chuck Taylor VR experience. Students contributed to the museum's public engagement goals by delivering actionable recommendations on interaction design and content, leading to a better experience for visitors. Two students subsequently undertook further projects for the curator. This work demonstrates my commitment to guiding students towards impactful social good using emerging media.

Reflecting Vygotsky's sociocultural theories, students leave my classes capable of teaching others. When partnering with Snap Inc. for rural AR workshops, my Nonlinear and Interactive Storytelling graduate students co-taught AR creation to library patrons. One graduate student continued this work post-graduation, exploring AR for rural placemaking. Their work embodies my conviction that education should flow between campus and community, a belief I instill through scaffolding, empowering students to direct their own learning and serve their communities.

The rise of AI prompted shifts in my teaching methodologies. While still employing lectures, student-led seminars, guided dialogues, critiques, and technical lessons, I have adapted how and when these are delivered. As a Digital Humanist, I maintain that technology must serve human well-being; overreliance on AI can undermine student agency and their future autonomy. I have shifted to in-person assessments to preserve academic integrity and elevate creative and intellectual agency, ensuring students build foundational judgment before using AI tools. These assessments build competence and confidence which can lead to better judgement, helping students develop a "provocateur" relationship with AI, where they are creators and thinkers using AI as a tool, not as a collaborator. I teach techniques like Chain-of-Thought prompt engineering, where students define their problem-solving and creative processes to maintain agency while understanding how an AI generates outputs. This approach to AI literacy, drawing from Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed and hooks' transgressive pedagogy, empowers students against algorithmic determination and prepares them to navigate an increasingly AI-influenced society.

I embed Universal Design for Learning principles in my course development to foster inclusive excellence. For example, I utilize AI to develop personalized scaffolding, making complex technical skills more accessible for students new to XR. I also offer materials in multiple modalities, such as audio of scholarly texts. When possible, I "lead from behind," encouraging student experimentation while providing support. Lastly, I actively solicit student feedback, including midterm evaluations, to refine course materials and cultivate a responsive environment.

My engagement with emerging technology is one of continuous learning and practice-led research; recently, this involved exploring the development of LLM tools for Generative AI. Supporting students' skills and creative developments with these same platforms, informed by my industry experience, is key to my educational stance. Witnessing them leverage these skills is rewarding, and I aspire to continue empowering students to materialize their ideas, as scholarship, digital works, businesses, or community organizations, while upholding their creative spirit and intellectual autonomy in our evolving technological landscape.