

STEPHEN C. JACKSON

Teaching Portfolio

Teaching Experience

University of Central Missouri

Courses Taught

Fall 2016

COMM1000 – Public Speaking

- *Number of sections:* 2
- *Class sizes:* 22 students & 23 students
- *Class responsibility:* Primary instructor in a face-to-face lecture class

Spring 2017

COMM1000 – Public Speaking

- *Number of sections:* 2
- *Class sizes:* 21 students & 22 students
- *Class responsibility:* Primary instructor in a face-to-face lecture class

Fall 2017

COMM1000 – Public Speaking

- *Number of sections:* 2
- *Class sizes:* 24 students & 24 students
- *Class responsibility:* Primary instructor in a face-to-face lecture class

Spring 2018

COMM1000 – Public Speaking

- *Number of sections:* 2
- *Class sizes:* 24 students & 24 students
- *Class responsibility:* Primary instructor in a face-to-face lecture class

Course Description

A study and practice of basic principles involved in discovering, arranging, delivering, and evaluating ideas in speech situations. This course is intended as a highly practical means of helping you to perform as effectively as possible in any situation demanding the ability to speak to an audience. Public speaking is to assist and enhance students in the development of their communication skills as related to their professional careers. Its purpose is to assist students in preparing and delivering effective presentations through exposing students to the basic principles of speech-making and providing opportunities for developing their own communicative skills in front of an audience, in dyads, and in groups.

Teaching Philosophy

Teaching and, by extension, learning is a privilege and joy to me. My teaching philosophy has been shaped by the minds of the many teachers, community leaders, and professors who inspired me. These lasting impressions leave me with a mix of ideas that center my teaching on a student-centered approach that understands teaching as a form of leadership. To better understand how this central tenet is actionable, I describe my beliefs about teaching and how those beliefs are actualized.

What I believe about teaching

I believe that teaching is a moral profession. I lead with this notion that the classroom is not always about the accurate measurement of course outcomes and assessments, nor is the profession just about the proper way to manage a classroom or applying the newest teaching methods. Instead, I start with a sense of responsibility or, better yet, the duty of a teacher should embrace. There are many times in the classroom where intangible moments happen that could influence a student's point of view for a lifetime. The teacher is a leader committed to their discipline, but also the dissemination of that knowledge in an ethical way. Meaning how I treat a student in front of the class is just as valuable, if not, more due to the consequence of my influence as an authority figure. I recognize that these responsibilities and duties might lie beyond pedagogy and, instead, operate as a commitment to helping students navigate the academy in a way true to their needs.

I believe an education should be claimed. Adrienne Rich stated that the students part in the classroom involves demanding to be taken seriously. Education is not a passive event you get instead you must claim it. This underlying concept of learning has changed as I have stepped into the classroom on the other side of the arena of knowledge. I now must offer my students the opportunity for them to be taken seriously by giving them all the resources needed to obtain intellectual freedom and to not let the classroom fall victim to older models of passive learning. Instead, active and applied scholarship through reasoning, active discussion and lots of opportunity to prove a student's capacity for comprehension. One of the most consistent conversations I have with my students is about how honesty with me and accepting responsibility for their learning will make sure we are operating as a cohesive learning community.

Students should be met as equal partners in the learning process. I mentioned earlier that there are intangible moments of influence teachers could have on students. This becomes more evident when considering that I learned best receiving validation as an equal partner in the process by my teachers. I believe that when a student shows the effort or communicates the desire to meet me more than half-way that I have an obligation to that student to meet them equally.

Methods of teaching

Teacher as an example. Teaching public speaking and oration has a meta-level obligation to teaching effectively. The persuasive strategies, ways to explain complex concepts, stressing of audience adaptation, and a commitment to strong organization are all skills a student of public

speaking needs to learn and apply. But, more importantly, the teacher of public speaking must communicate these messages while embodying them as an example of how to apply these concepts.

Students learn best when different methods of teaching are employed. The public speaking classroom oftentimes follows the methods laid out by my superiors as a lecture-style course. As a lecture-style course, this gives great latitude in the approaches of facilitating learning. Besides embodying my message, adapting to various student learning styles is a top priority of mine. From day one I set out to learn students preferred style of learning by simply asking them what they prefer. Audience adaptation, or in this case student adaptation, is the key. A combination of classical lecture, discussion, group activities, games, and dialogue are all parts of that strategy. I tend to not rely on just one strategy in each lesson either. This diverse teaching allows me to capture multiple styles while giving students plenty of opportunity to stake their claim in discussion and to contribute to the learning community through group activities. One example of this strategy in action is when I teach delivery I have the students perform good and bad delivery techniques as impromptu speeches rather than just telling them what to do.

Reciprocal learning is fundamental to the classroom. Teachers and students in dialogue provide the most opportunity for learning in the classroom. I believe firmly that the classroom should never become is not a one-way channel. Instead, for student's personal growth it should be imagined as a two-way street where sharp turns are not only frequent, but necessary. This method of approach is a crux of my student-centered approach. By leaving topic choices for assignments open I get to play the role of the student as they share their passions and explore new limits in their knowledge. Furthermore, I apply critical reflection as a consistent process throughout the course. Whether it is in the form of meta-cognition questions such as "Why do you think we begin with this topic first" or formal reflection papers. These processes allow me to learn from my students and inform my approaches to which methods are working in the classroom.

Creating a safe environment for learning. James McCroskey's approach to instructional communication always considered the environment or climate of the classroom as an important variable to facilitating the best learning, Therefore, I try to create a safe-space where ideas can be freely expressed, validated, and challenged when necessary. To accomplish this, I have a commitment to difference and making sure all voices are heard. My commitment to difference means that in order to generate intellectual development I challenge their assumptions with speeches they are not familiar with or are likely to disagree with. These challenges allow for a chance to observe their unique viewpoints as students and helps the discussion flow from one speech assignment to the next. One way this this is actualized is by leaving prompts for speeches open to any topic the student may want to explore. These two approaches allow for a classroom where students can develop confidence in their own abilities without the fear of reprisal.

To summarize teaching is a privilege, and with all privileges a set of responsibilities and duties must be considered. The influence I may have on the students as the de facto leader instills within me with a great sense of responsibility and duty. This is best actualized in my approach to different methods of teaching. Adapting to the students' needs and concerns is my priority because the message must be adapted to help students increase their abilities.

Evidence of Teaching Effectiveness

Student Evaluations

COMM1000 - Public Speaking, *University of Central Missouri*
Quantitative Assessment – *Ratings are based on a 5-point scale*

Semester	Overall	Expectations Clearly Communicated	Professor accessible	Communicated ideas and information clearly	Showed genuine interest, respect, and support for students	Demonstrated the importance and significance of the subject matter
Fall 2016	4.7/5	4.7/5	4.8/5	4.6/5	4.8/5	4.8/5
Spring 2017	4.9/5	4.9/5	4.9/5	4.9/5	4.9/5	4.9/5

Qualitative Comments

- *Mr. Jackson was a wonderful teacher. If I ever needed help, he was always punctual on responding to an email or his office hours. He is a fun teacher and made class interesting and always made me want to come to class with his positive attitude. I enjoyed having him as my teacher this semester and would tell other people to take his class.*
- *He made each and every person in the class better at presenting in front of people and overall better people.*
- *Mr. Jackson seemed to really care about his students, was willing to work with them, and showed an appreciation to those who put forth their best foot. I really liked having class with him.*
- *Mr. Jackson by far was my favorite instructor this semester. He had an infectious love for the course and communicated well with all of the students. If there was a higher option than strongly agree I would have certainly gave it.*
- *Things were well taught and explained, and the teacher was easy to talk to.*
- *Great Job! I learned a lot in your class!! Made a class that seemed boring, more fun!*
- *Just wanted to let you know that after being a guest presenter in a class yesterday and sharing my duties in the department, one of your public speaking students cornered me. She told me you are THE BEST instructor she has had in college and could not stop singing your praises.*

Instructor Observations

This section highlights comments made by professors in the department of communication at the University of Central Missouri from observing my classroom in action.

Delivery of Content

- *Stephen did an excellent job of not only discussing the definition the content, but also applying it. He took the information far further than the text addresses and clearly had a strong grasp on what he was addressing. He then linked the listening to the upcoming informative speech, which was very good. He did a great job linking the importance of listening and listening styles to audience analysis. He then explained how to use this information in preparation for their upcoming speech. It is clear he is comfortable with the content and he does an excellent job articulating it.*

Teaching Strategy

- *Excellent job in having students focus on content in a lecture style; get them to reflect on their own listening habits and listening habits of others (both informally and formally); and have them engage in an activity that will help them in their next speech. I thought the diversity was excellent.*
- *Stephen has always excelled in this area. He used writing prompts to begin the day's lecture (assisted with Power Point) on listening. He also used the listening profiles quiz. Stephen did a great job integrating in different strategies to keep the class engaged.*

Classroom Environment

- *Stephen does a great job playing off of his students' energy and creating an atmosphere where they continue to feel welcomed to engage and respond.*
- *It is very clear Stephen cares very much about his students and their success. He goes above and beyond to make sure they have the tools they need to succeed in this class. Stephen has a relaxed, yet still formal environment. His students respond to him well and readily participate in class. Stephen does an excellent job using students' names and validating their ideas. It is clear there is a positive classroom climate, which is exactly what a Public Speaking classroom should have. I was very impressed by how he handled a comment made by a student that potentially could have created conflict. He diffused the situation and redirected the class quickly and easily. This was excellent.*
- *Stephen has created a warm, comfortable environment in which students appeared comfortable to share ideas and open up about personal experiences. The students seemed genuinely engaged in the material, as they regularly asked questions and appeared attentive throughout the class.*

Evidence of Instructional Design

The public speaking classroom is largely a lecture and discussion-driven course. One of my goals when attempting to design an effective strategy for student learning was how I could establish a connection with my students. I know that if the student is comfortable with approaching and discussing their ideas, this can validate their experience and encourage them to improve. The problem was there were not enough times I could engage in a one-on-one interpersonal experience with the students to understand their thought processes as they grappled with creating their speeches. To rectify the problem, I began incorporating more reflection assignments as a way to encourage metacognition. Rather than just debriefing a speech with a class discussion, I employ a Start-Stop-Continue-Change reflection that allows them to identify what they did at various stages of the speech. They answer the prompt: “What would I start, stop, continue, and change about my behavior as it relates to my speech creation process, my speech practice process, and my speech performance.” The prompt allows the student to see what happened and learn from themselves. Also, the prompt, allows me to get personal feedback that I can use to adapt or conference with students as they begin their next speech.

Evidence of Effective Mentoring

Early in my graduate program one of my first teacher observations I received some feedback concerning the way I approached questions in the classroom, specifically the types of questions that I used to check for understanding. The professor gave me feedback in the form of a weblink to an article on Bloom’s Taxonomy and offered to meet about discussing it further. I embraced that opportunity as a chance to truly think through my lecture style. The lesson that proceeded about Bloom’s Taxonomy has been effectively integrated in my classroom, but also a mentoring relationship. Whenever, I have a pedagogical question that professor is the first person I reach out to. Our relationship has been a boon in helping me find myself as a teacher, but more importantly, has challenged me with concepts I would have been ignorant to otherwise.

Evidence of Teaching Scholarship

One of the challenges I found myself exploring as a teacher early on in my first semester was how to integrate my commitments to social justice when considering how it might influence my students. After all, one of the goals of public speaking is to teach students effective strategy, but also to speak with purpose and have something meaningful to say. Upon searching for an answer, I stumbled upon an article that discussed the critical pedagogy concept of **queering the classroom**. While this concept mostly applied to classes driven by the study of sexuality and gender the framework for the classroom was exactly what I needed to address this tension. There are three guiding principles to queering the classroom: (1) establish an environment of acceptance and openness (2) be the change (3) provide concrete examples. This has led to the framework that is my philosophy of teaching. When apply my commitment to social justice, this takes shape as (1) Encouraging a safe environment where all voices are heard (2) I model the behavior I expect of my students by embodying what it means to be an effective orator and (3) I provide examples of speeches using videos from a diverse range of authors that demonstrate how embracing difference can lead to great results.