

# **Ann Kendall, M.A. Multicultural English Literature and Language**

*The number of ways to learn a subject is surely as vast as the stars; English language and literature provides us the vehicle to explore – endlessly, both the constellations we might discover as well as the constellations we will create.*

## **Statement of Teaching Philosophy**

Teaching is my second career. Because of this, my philosophy is rooted in the world outside academia and my approach to teaching reflects my own experience in interdisciplinary environments. Much of my teaching philosophy is built on over 20 years working in the nonprofit sector and as a writer working in the fields of human services, the arts and architecture. As a teacher, it is my mandate and mission to welcome and approach each student with humanity and to create a learning environment that honors each student's perspective, gifts, talents, life experiences and motivation.

Real-world, interdisciplinary approaches guide my interactions with students as each one must be prepared to tackle what lays before them. Each class I teach is based on students' own life experiences – I want them to understand themselves so that they more clearly understand the world. I want them to mine their own experiences to achieve their best understanding of our complex world by using English language and literature as their springboard for contemplation, analysis and production.

## **Goals for Students: Open the World**

To connect the learning of English language and literature to a student's own world so that lessons provide real-world meaning and impact. While traditional English assignments serve a purpose, these assignments such as standard essays, narratives and research reports provide greater meaning if readings and papers come from varied sources – the unfamiliar is often the route to understanding. I want my students to be able to write, and speak, succinctly and with confidence and passion.

Assignments as such as building blocks to take flight – and incorporate materials that reflect student interest along with methods to document, share and give voice to innovative ideas and interdisciplinary, experiential connections. Had I read the *Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* in high school, I would've perhaps not shied away from the biological sciences – had I read a Ruth Reichl memoir on cooking, perhaps I would've learned much earlier that culture is often transmitted through food and that the tastes from my grandma's kitchen I crave today would've been documented much more carefully.

## **Course Design**

Course design must incorporate varied resources that open material and English language and literature experiences to all students, as well as address differences in learning styles. In my current teaching, I work with students of widely varying backgrounds, all of whom may be in a class (asynchronous, synchronous or in-person) together:

- Adult learners (career changers, returning students)
- First-generation students
- Second-language learners (Gen 1 and Gen 1.5),
- Traditional post-high school students (young adults)
- Tribal members
- Migrant workers (or children of)
- Students with recent or ongoing trauma (including historical traumas)

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To accommodate the varied backgrounds of students, I believe it is most important to create pathways that generate relationships first: between students and myself and between students as peers.

Depending on the classroom type, I accomplish this in a variety of ways including conferences (long and short), regular check-ins, exit tickets (as students most often reveal struggle in this way versus speaking in class), interactive forums, breakout rooms (various technology) and in-class activities.

Course materials must also be flexible to accommodate a variety of time constraints, internet connectivity, best modes for individual learning and group learning as well as asynchronous options for synchronous students that must be away from class. Simple strategies include condensed lecture videos that can be watched via a smartphone for those with spotty connectivity, 'building' assignments that allow for longer work to be broken into chunks that fit into work breaks or children's naps (as someone that undertook my M.A. post motherhood, I value this highly for myself).

I hold 'family day' each semester for synchronous classes so that my students understand my courses incorporate the whole family, all are welcome. Lastly, regular and frequent communication is absolutely a must – I want students to know that I'm available to them, and in return I expect regular communication from them: I model what I want them to do, advocate for themselves, and practice a level of interaction that will be expected of them in the workplace.

### **Summary**

As a lifelong student and now teacher, I seek out opportunities for myself that bridge my own worlds – and I want my students to understand clearly that they can do this also. Learning is not just for the classroom; it is happening at nearly every moment of our days. In my classes, I incorporate time management, which may seem like an outlier in an English classroom – but it is the one thing my students struggle with the most (regardless of background), and I do as well. Talking about life's distractions builds commonality and it highlights our individual and collective struggles. It's a simple topic to add to class, it barely takes any time, but it lets them know I'm listening, I've been there (a first-generation student myself), and I get it.

### **Academic and Professional Interests:**

Developmental Writing, Poetry, Professional Writing, Creative Nonfiction Writing, Nonfiction Literature, Memoir, Interdisciplinary Studies, Social Science Writing, Grant Writing/Persuasive Writing, eLearning for youth and adult learners, American Literature (Multicultural), Service Learning (incorporating class design and curriculum with world issues and local organizations)

### **Classes Currently Taught:**

- English Composition I and II
- Writing for the Health Sciences
- Writing in the Social Sciences
- Grant Writing

### **Classes in Development**

- Literary Nonfiction: Reading and Writing
- Writing for the Social Good