

REFLECTIVE PORTFOLIO TEMPLATE

1. Define your teaching philosophy.

My teaching philosophy is to instruct students in such a way as to truly reach them and make them feel a part of the lesson plan. I say this so as to have them feel a certain type of “ownership” of the material. This is hard sometimes since when I teach fashion history a lot of the book information is coming from a very Western-viewpoint. I try and relay any and all information as having its roots all over the world and in many different cultures, not just the one that I grew up in and is most familiar to me and possibly them, too.

I also feel that what I teach should be relevant not just to their major and the class objectives, but to contribute to their being a well-rounded “woke”/cultured citizen of this world.

In the new Covid environment it is now imperative to keep student’s attention so that they can learn effectively. My philosophy has changed only to the extent that the traditional classroom is no longer the “norm” but a luxury whose engagement has to be somehow replicated in the online environment, so some creative variety must be implemented. Interactivity is key here so that students stay engaged.

1. Have you ever observed a master teacher? If the answer is yes, what do you recall most from the experience?

I think that I observed a master teacher while attending a Costume Pedagogy Workshop that was headed by former FIT instructor Chloe Chapin, via the Google-meet Platform at the beginning of this Summer of 2020. I say this because since the conference was to take place onsite/on the campus of Hunter College, and then was moved to remote because of the pandemic. I took this experience as a possible template for my own classes that were once onsite, but now had to be improvised in a synchronous environment. Luckily technology doesn’t intimidate me because I have been teaching online classes for over a decade elsewhere, the thought of heading a class “live” remotely left me a little stumped. The takeaway was to engage the students with activities that INVOLVE them, as opposed to my just lecturing TO THEM.

Chloe graciously opened the class sessions with some sort of words of wisdom for everyone to reflect on and used the breakout group feature in Google to have smaller groups “discuss among themselves” points taken from the lecture thus far. I found this method effective in forcing me to engage and reflect, as opposed to just gathering information to be used possibly in the near future in an exam or upcoming project. This also created a good “checkpoint” for questions that may arise.

Also, having the moderator select some randomly chosen attendees share their screen each session seems to keep them engaged with the moderator/lecturer and “on their toes” so to speak. This also is more interesting to the presenter/myself and keeps me interested in them as opposed to just “zoning out” with lecturing on the lesson plan.

1. Give examples of your most successful lesson. Why do you feel it was successful?

Honestly, I am going to answer this one based on this past semester’s attempt to keep classes as close to the onsite environment as possible. This involved lecturing the whole time, which I will be doing less of, this upcoming Fall semester. According to student feedback, the best lessons were those that included personal anecdotes that the students could relate to. Stories from the industry and real-life work and personal tidbits are what caused students to “wake up” and start engaging again with the information that was being given. I hate to say it, but sometimes I feel like a stand-up comedian in that I have to really “work the audience” at times. It is what makes the online experience more “human” so I am willing to allow myself to be vulnerable with fashion history jokes that may fall flat, but still may prick up their ears in the process.

1. Do you have an example of an unsuccessful lesson? How did you address the challenges?

An unsuccessful remote learning lesson is one where I zone-out and just keep lecturing. I assume that the students also “turn-off” and start becoming distracted. I will avoid this in the future by mixing it up with breakout groups, having a few volunteers every week turn on their video cams, and also give them lecture “homework” to review so that the whole class time doesn’t consist of my just doling out facts to them in a Powerpoint slide presentation. I am addressing this inclination to just keep lecturing by mixing-up the lectures with hands-on activities to compliment what was just lectured upon.

1. Why are you introducing and/or expanding the use of technology into your teaching?

Aside from because my lecture classes this semester will be all-remote and I am forced to mix things up a bit, I also do not want to become a dinosaur. I want to entertain the students to the point that they are engaged and enjoying listening to what I have to say and WANT to contribute back into the learning process. My former, onsite classes never required any in-class “critiques”, but I will incorporate some via weekly discussion boards where students will be forced to comment on their classmates’ work outside of our normal meeting times.

1. How do you feel these technology innovations will affect the student experience? How do you think it will it will affect your experience?

I think that it will not replace the face-to-face experience, but with the proper repetition of important points through various modules, I am hoping that it will be an appropriate “take away” for the students in terms of making learning a fun experience. On my end, I will have the convenience of having all of the student homework at my fingertips but will miss out on the tactile experience of grading artwork/journals in person. It will be a challenge on both of our parts, but I will stress our “getting through it” together.

1. Please describe new teaching ideas you plan to implement as a result of this technology certificate program.

I like how Jeffrey Riman started the session with music as an “icebreaker”. With my classes being the history of 20th century fashion, it will be easy to introduce the class with music from each era and even film footage as visuals early on in the semester. I will be using the Voicethread and screencast-o-matic programs to create some preliminary or “homework” videos so that our remote class time won’t just be me lecturing/giving notes and boring them to death. Instead, I will have breakout groups (through padlet or Bb collaborate) where students will be collaborating and reflecting/discussing materials given in the lectures that they watched before coming to class.

As for an overall “roadmap” of the course, I also plan on creating an asynchronous padlet presentation that has a “Start here” area so that students can be taken to the various assignments/readings for the week so that they do not miss out on any of the weekly information in their Bb course shell. Hopefully this will eliminate any confusion as to what needs to be done and in what order.

I will also implement asynchronous Discussion Boards where they can work at their own pace to reflect on the materials learned via the various modalities from our synchronous class-time.

I may play around with them drawing examples on the whiteboard or creating a voicethread assignment that they then can share with the class and tell us what they learned that week.

1. How will these new technology tools/approaches contribute to your classroom practice?

I honestly see technology completely REPLACING the onsite classroom this semester, as opposed to just being a contribution. This will be a trial by error and I will be learning along the way along with the students about what works and what doesn’t, quite honestly.

1. How will you evaluate the success of your activities?

I can have the students assess me with a good old-fashioned questionnaire after the first few weeks of class instead of waiting for the mid-term. I can also have them assess their progress in the course halfway through the semester and ask them what works or may not be working for them. I will also be asking them how I can better help them for some feedback and how they plan on improving for the remainder of the semester. Seeing their game plan will help me to help them!

As for student evaluation, I have always been using the gradebook that is embedded in Bb and have it linked to assignments, discussions, examinations, etc. along with rubrics that coincide with every assignment so that there is adequate feedback for students to reference along the way.

1. What do you consider to be the bigger picture items with regard to technology and learning?

I love technology, but really want to make sure that I am using it in the most appropriate way for learning what needs to be taught in the class. I do not want to use technology just for the sake of it being available, that seems like just another distraction . Instead, the class objectives need to compliment the platform being used to teach them.