Teaching Statement

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My primary goal as an Assistant Professor of Emerging Technology for the School of Media and Journalism is to equip students with the necessary skills to be problem-solving, ethical storytellers who design and effectively use new and emerging technologies to share information that strengthens society.

I accomplish this goal through project-based learning in which students work on real-world projects to gain the skills necessary for their careers in the profession. In addition, each semester I tailor my teaching to incorporate lessons on current industry requirements. This method enables me to accomplish my mission to lead students that shape the industry's future through the development and use of emerging technologies, and to enable journalists to tell the stories that need to be told in unique, immersive ways.

Teaching Philosophy

I believe project-based learning with clear and actionable feedback is the best method for equipping journalism students with the necessary skills to thrive in today's media environment. It empowers students to learn how to use emerging technologies to tell stories, solve problems and provide a deep understanding of journalism concepts and ethics. In addition, encouraging students to identify a real-world problem they seek to solve engages the students more deeply than if the project were fictional or a common exercise.

Unique to my teaching style, I use a live, critique-oriented grading method for major projects. Students meet with me in person, I put their project on a wall-mounted screen and I provide a direct, specific and actionable critique of their project giving far more and higher-quality feedback than if it were written. It also gives them the chance to ask questions and initiate a dialogue to help them deductively.

In some of my more advanced problem-solving classes, I lead my students through a six-part, project-based learning process similar to the process entrepreneurs and technologists use to design innovations and new technologies. I use the process to teach my students how to ideate and design solutions to problems they encounter and troubleshoot the problems and challenges as they build their solution.

First, I charge the students with identifying and defining or redefining a problem. Second, I lead students through various brainstorming activities to solve the problem. Third, I teach the students human-centered design concepts and how to test their solutions with potential users or customers. Fourth, I teach the students to take the lessons learned from the third step to build and rebuild their products. Fifth, I teach the students how to test their products for success. If they find errors or the testing is not fruitful, they return to previous steps to identify

what to change. Finally, students execute and present their products to me, classmates or potential users and investors in the sixth and final step.

Each year, I tailor and update my curriculum based on meetings with and feedback from leading interactive and graphics editors to reflect the industry's evolving expectations and demands. Using their feedback, I incorporate lessons and examples to develop the knowledge and skills necessary for effectively using the most in-demand storytelling technologies. This practice, coupled with my project-based learning teaching method, has led to job offers from prominent news and technology companies like *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Vox Media*, *BuzzFeed*, Google, YouTube, Facebook, *The Texas Tribune*, and *The Atlanta Journal Constitution* for many of my students.

Teaching Experience

Throughout the year, I teach on a broad range of subjects and topics—from emerging technologies to advanced multimedia programming. Currently, I teach three of the four "Interactive Multimedia" courses required for students who specialize in the subject.

I teach Introduction to Multimedia Storytelling (JOMC 187) each Fall and Spring semester and have since Fall 2011. In the course, I expose students to the introductory concepts of interactive media including interactive development techniques, content presentation and effective use of multimedia authoring tools.

I also teach Intermediate Multimedia Journalism (JOMC 586) each Fall and Spring semester and have since Fall 2011. Students learn web programming, graphic design, and storytelling for the Web in the course. In addition, students learn how to use a variety of web publishing languages like JavaScript and HTML5.

In Fall 2014, I pioneered a Mobile Applications (JOMC 390) class to prepare UNC students for the emerging market and industry demands. The new course was popular and successful in teaching journalism students different skillsets. For example, two of the 12 students from the inaugural class turned their project into a startup business and raised over $100,000 (combined) in investment capital to support them. In 2016, I transitioned the course from its sole focus on mobile application development to its current form, "Storytelling with Emerging Technologies" (MJ 660) based on the recognition of the need to have a flexible course structure to be able to emphasize different technologies as needed. For the past few years, the class focuses on utilizing virtual and augmented reality technologies as storytelling mediums. I currently teach the class each Fall and Spring semester.

In the International Documentary Project class (JOMC 584) I co-teach with professor Patrick Davison, students travel to international locations like the Galapagos Islands, Panama and Malawi and learn how to tell stories with new technology in difficult situations. Projects from the class have garnered awards from the South by Southwest, Online News Association and the Horizon Interactive Awards.

In Spring 2012 and 2013, I taught the Advanced Multimedia Programming (JOMC 583) course, where students learned to develop database driven applications, how to think logically, and find and present data in visual ways. In the Spring 2018 semester, I am incorporating feedback

from editors and data journalists to update many of the concepts in this class to better prepare students for the industry.

In the Kenan Flagler Business School, I lead an effort to leverage virtual reality and artificial intelligence to change how the way higher education is taught. In time, the goal is for these efforts and newly developed educational concepts to transcend multiple schools and universities.

I also regularly teach summer courses and one-time workshops on campus and across the globe like the UNC Multimedia Bootcamp in 2011 and 2012 in which I taught students and professionals video storytelling techniques and best practices. I also taught a similar course at the Communications University of China in Beijing in 2013. While teaching in China I also taught UNC MATC students Information Visualization. Through online learning and video conference lectures, students learned data visualization, graphic design skills and how the seemingly disparate disciplines of cognitive science and graphic design overlap in information visualization.

Conclusion

Teaching my students to be problem-solving, ethical storytellers who design and effectively use new and emerging technologies to share information that strengthen society is the goal of all my teaching endeavors. Through my project-based teaching method, flexible and tailored curriculum, and commitment to teaching students how to innovate and develop their own solutions to challenges they encounter, I not only prepare them to enter the media industry, but to lead it.