

Teaching Statement

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Two phenomena have fundamentally transformed our lives over the course of the last three decades: the digitalization of everyday life and the deepening of globalization processes. Understanding their impact on society is at the core of my research agenda and they have also become defining elements of my teaching philosophy. As an educator, I feel my job is to equip students with competences that will make it easier for them to navigate their future work environments. Being globally aware and digitally literate are, to me, two of the most important.

Students today are digital natives. For them it is very difficult to imagine life without digital technologies and classrooms should be no exception to their ubiquity. That is why I embrace technologically enhanced teaching. In class, I regularly use QR codes and web-based survey platforms like Qualtrics to generate classroom response systems that can be accessed through mobile phones and provide more options for student interaction than commonly used “clickers.” Digital video also plays an important part in my classes. In introductory courses at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, where class size made it difficult for everybody to contribute to discussions, students recorded and edited one-minute video responses to weekly readings, which they later posted in a video blog. These uses of technology in class led to more engaging, participatory and dynamic learning processes, and increased students’ ability to retain course content.

Having taught online at Universitat Oberta de Catalunya for over a decade, I have come to understand the importance of training students not only to be competent users of technology but also to become digital creators and innovators. As a firm believer of active learning, I incorporate practical training in digital skills whenever possible, even in theory courses. For example, students in my Mass Media in East Asia course created Wikipedia articles as part of their final course project. By doing so, not only did they learn basic programming concepts, but also had their work reviewed by editors from the Wikipedia community, getting experience in blind peer reviewing.

Through teaching I also strive to help students become globally aware. Given my academic interest in international and intercultural communication, I like to bring global perspectives to my courses by selecting readings from authors outside the Global North and by linking the local and the global. This is also reflected in assignments and course projects for both theory and professional skills courses. Students in my Video Production course at City University of Hong Kong worked in groups to produce short documentaries about refugees in the city, while students in my Societies of East Asia class worked on micro-ethnographies of Chinese communities in Barcelona. By engaging in project-based assignments like these, students developed awareness towards diversity and got a better grasp of global phenomena affecting local communities.

In sum, whether in small classes or large, whether in theory or professional skills courses, all my pedagogical strategies are dedicated to aiding students in becoming more confident in their use of digital technologies and helping them develop global awareness as they make their way towards becoming media and/or communication professionals.