

Teaching Statement

We all grapple with questions related to effective teaching. How can instructors promote active learning in the classroom? How can instructors create environments that are both challenging and inclusive? And what can instructors do to equip their students with generalizable skill sets? I currently teach Negotiation to executive-MBA students in the Fuqua School of Business. Before that, I taught Stereotyping and Prejudice to undergraduate students in Northwestern's School of Professional Studies. Over time, I have developed my own answers to these questions. Instructors can promote active learning by using flipped classroom techniques, they can promote inclusive environments by using cooperative learning techniques, and they can promote the development of generalizable skill sets by using instructional scaffolding.

To foster active learning in the classroom, my teaching utilizes flipped classroom techniques. In flipped classrooms, students learn about course concepts *before* each class, rather than during each class. For example, students in my Stereotyping & Prejudice seminar read about aversive racism theory before we meet in person to discuss the topic of racism. The purpose of getting students to engage with course concepts before class is to ensure that class time can be reserved for active learning—for considering how aversive racism might influence one's own decision making, for example. According to meta-analyses, students in flipped classrooms outperform students in traditional classrooms on various assessments of course mastery (e.g., final grades, standardized test scores; Strelan, Osborn, & Palmer, 2020). Thus, flipped classrooms appear to be viable methods of increasing students' active learning during class time.

To create classroom environments that are challenging yet inclusive, I rely on cooperative learning techniques. Cooperative learning techniques are those that require students to work together if they wish to master course material. Students in my Negotiation class, for example, complete negotiation simulations in which they each role-play a particular character. Some students might play the part of Kim Taylor, a manager of an independent television station. Other students might play the part of Terry Schiller, a syndicated sales representative who's interested in selling a TV show to Kim Taylor. In simulations such as these, students who perform the best—and who in turn learn the most from the assignments—are those who share information with one another. According to meta-analyses, students in cooperative learning classrooms (vs. independent learning classrooms), tend to exhibit higher levels of classroom achievement, and they also tend to exhibit more positive intergroup attitudes (Roseth, Johnson, & Johnson, 2008). Thus, cooperative learning techniques serve to promote both achievement and inclusive attitudes among students.

Finally, to equip students with generalizable skill sets, I use instructional scaffolding. Instructional scaffolding is a technique in which instructors first teach the building blocks of course concepts before teaching higher-order applications of course concepts. For example, rather than teaching about statistical tests (*t*-tests, ANOVAs, correlations) as independent tools, I like to teach about these tests as variations on the *same* tool: the general linear model. Teaching statistics in this way paves the way for students to learn about more complex modeling techniques down the road, like mixed- or multi-level modeling. Generally, scaffolding (vs. topic-by-topic teaching) appears to have large effects on student learning, particularly in online classrooms (Doo, Bonk, & Heo, 2020). Thus, instructional scaffolding appears to be a reliable method of equipping students with generalizable knowledge.

In summary, my view is that teaching in higher education can be enhanced by use of various pedagogical techniques. Flipped classrooms provide a reliable means of enhancing

student comprehension of course material. Cooperative learning techniques have been consistently linked with more positive intergroup attitudes among students from differing backgrounds. And finally, instructional scaffolding has been associated with deepening students' understanding of complex topics. My teaching to date has leveraged these techniques to make my instruction as effective as possible—to turn students into active learners, empathic peers, and problem-solvers with generalizable skill sets.

Student Comments

Chris did a fantastic job in this class; he played a pivotal role in explaining the essence of negotiation to the class. The exercises were beneficial, as they helped to get practical experience in this class. Chris was very humble and patient. He gave students assistance when they needed it the most. I referred to him several times, and each time he listened carefully to understand the core issues and recommended the best strategies. I enjoyed him as my professor.

The professor was clearly a subject matter expert. He presented the ideas well and was enthusiastic and engaging. I also liked how he handled the lectures. His slides were very well prepared, easy to understand, and related to the discussion at hand. He also used examples very well to illustrate ideas. I really enjoyed this class and would recommend it to others.

I appreciated the level of detail provided in slides and interesting content provided. I also enjoyed the varying types of negotiations. Chris was very responsive and detailed, which I appreciated. I also applaud him for his flexibility in this unique term/environment.

Course Ratings

Term	Subject	Average Rating
2015 Winter	Social Psychology	5.24 / 6.00
2015 Spring	Social Psychology	5.49 / 6.00
2016 Winter	Statistical Methods in Psychology	4.44 / 6.00
2016 Spring	Social Psychology	5.21 / 6.00
2016 Fall	Linear Models: Correlation and Regression	4.71 / 6.00
2017 Winter	Cognitive Psychology	5.05 / 6.00
2017 Spring	Psychopathology	5.25 / 6.00
2017 Fall	Linear Models: Correlation and Regression	5.50 / 6.00
2017 Fall	Psychology of Attitudes	--
2018 Spring	Psychology of Gender	5.63 / 6.00
2019 Fall-Spring	Honors Thesis Seminar	5.95 / 6.00
2019 Summer	Negotiation Strategies	5.89 / 6.00
2020 Winter	Stereotyping & Prejudice	6.00 / 6.00
2020 Fall	Negotiation	5.28 / 7.00
2020 Fall	Negotiation	5.64 / 7.00

Note. Classes from 2020 are those for which I served as instructor of record; all other classes are those for which I served as a graduate teaching assistant.