

Statement on Teaching Activities

Dr. Rob Power
Assistant Professor of Education, Cape Breton University

Teaching Philosophy and Themes

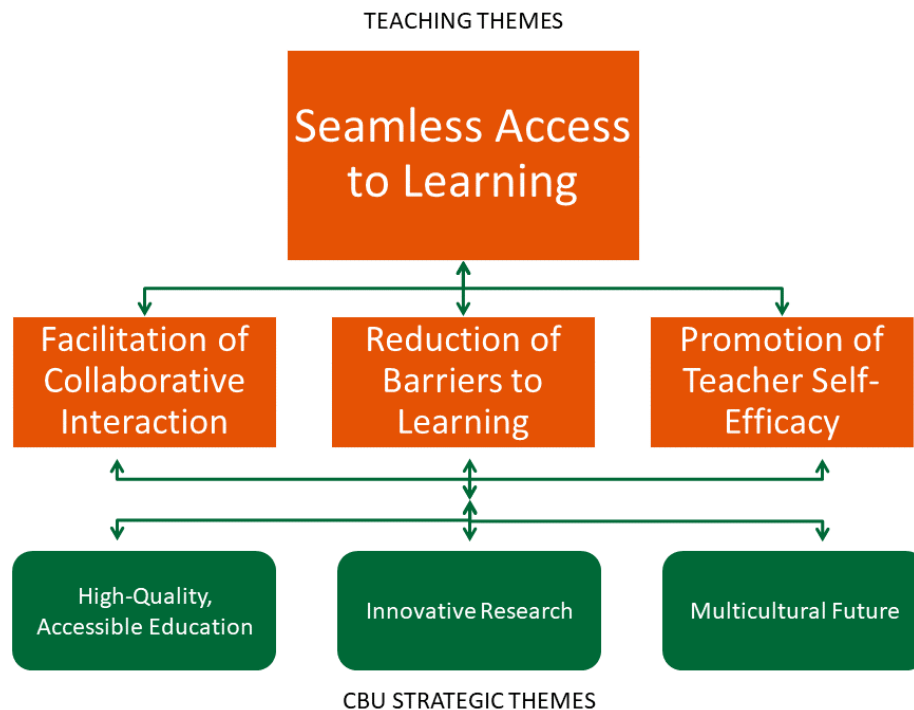
In preparation of this Teaching Philosophy Statement to support my second-year tenure-track review, I reflected upon how closely intertwined my teaching philosophy is with my research focuses. Like my research agenda, my teaching philosophy focuses on themes related to improving access to teaching and learning opportunities for all stakeholders. As an educational technology researcher and practitioner, I have grounded my both my teaching and research practice on three themes of seamless use of technology in education:

1. The facilitation of collaborative learning interactions.
2. Increasing teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy with the use of educational technologies.
3. Reduce barriers to learning opportunities (using assistive technologies and the adoption of Digital Accessibility standards).

Why Do I Teach?

Early in my teaching career I noticed that while many of my colleagues recognized the inherent value of appropriate use of technology, they experienced barriers to their professional practice resulting from a perceived lack of support and personal confidence. I have two decades of experience using technology to provide seamless teaching and learning experiences, and to promote access, engagement, and collaboration. My research (Hambrock, et al., in press; Power, 2018*b*, 2018*c*, in press *a*, *b*) has shown the power of understanding sound pedagogy in increasing teachers' confidence with technology and, as illustrated by the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989), their willingness to be innovative with technology in their teaching. I teach to share my knowledge and experience, to continue learning alongside new colleagues, and to promote these themes for the benefit of all teachers and students.

The CBU Strategic Plan 2019-2024 stresses that "Cape Breton University is committed to high-quality, accessible education; innovative research; and a vibrant, multicultural future for the Island" (Cape Breton University, 2019, p. 2). The connections between this, my teaching philosophy and reasons for teaching, and my current research agenda, are illustrated in Figure 1:

Figure 1*Relationship between teaching themes*

While the links between my three teaching and research themes and the CBU strategic themes of High-Quality, Accessible Education and Innovative Research may be fairly evident, the connection with the theme of promoting a Multicultural Future may be less so. However, innovative teaching and learning practices, the facilitation of collaboration, and addressing learning barriers and teacher confidence do have impacts in this area. I strive to reduce barriers for all educators and students, including with their ability to promote cultural diversity in their practice. I also aim to promote teaching and learning practices that reduce the potential barriers to both access and success resulting from differences in the cultural backgrounds and perspectives of students.

What Do I Teach?

I teach undergraduate and graduate-level courses focused on the selection and use of appropriate digital tools, matching digital technologies with pedagogical needs, and instructional design for technology-enhanced, blended, and online learning. Most of the courses that I teach for Cape Breton University and other institutions are delivered as online courses. EDUC4108: Leveraging Technology for Learning, a course in CBU's Bachelor of Education program, is traditionally taught as an in-person course. However, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, I delivered that course as an online course with

both synchronous and asynchronous learning activities during the Spring 2020 term. I delivered another section of that course on campus during the Fall 2021 term, as well as an on-campus section of EDUC4133: Teaching English as a Second Language in an Additive Model.

I teach my students to view technology as a means to overcoming barriers to effective learning, promoting collaboration, and opening new pedagogical possibilities. My courses focus on Problem-Based Learning, where participants use their own contexts to understand the rationale for pedagogical and instructional design decisions, and to make sound, well-informed decisions for themselves. See Appendix T1 for a list of courses that I have taught at the K12, undergraduate, and graduate level in recent years, and Appendix T10 for examples of problem-based learning activities that I have integrated into my teaching to contextualize learning for my students, and help promote their evidence-supported professional practice.

Graduate Student Supervision

In addition to teaching undergraduate and graduate courses, I am also actively engaged with graduate student supervision. I frequently serve as an external / second reader for capstone and thesis paper submissions for students completing the Master of Education in Educational Technology program offered jointly through Cape Breton University and Memorial University of Newfoundland. In addition, over in recent years I have served as a committee member / co-supervisor for graduate-level students from Athabasca University and Ontario Tech University. I am currently serving as a committee member for a doctoral candidate in the Doctor of Education in Distance Education program at Athabasca University.

How Do I Teach?

My personal approach to teaching can be summarized along three primary strands: leadership, learning design, and accessibility. I believe that we should be leaders in our classrooms (whether those classrooms are physical, virtual, or blended). We should not be dictators of the learning process. Rather, we should lead as fellow learners ourselves. We should lead by example, demonstrating our love of learning. And we should follow the principles of Leader-Member Exchange theory (LMX) when interacting with our students. We are leaders of a learning team, and we should show our students that we value them as participatory team members. LMX tells us that our team members are more likely to identify as part of a larger community – and to contribute over and above minimal required standards – if we value them as members of our trusted inner circles (Power, 2013b). Our team members (students) are also more likely to collaborate with each other – increased “co-worker exchange” – if they feel a

strong LMX connection with their team leaders. The following unsolicited quote shows the impact that my efforts to exemplify this approach has had on my students.

“Thank-you for being so supportive and understanding... You have been one of the most interesting profs I have the pleasure to learn with. You do Talk the Talk and Walk the Walk where i[t] concerns your philosophy and beliefs in adult education. You have applied almost every learning and teaching principle taught in my past 9 Master courses... I Wish I were 10 years younger for doing a PhD under your guidance” (M.Ed. student, Athabasca University).

My philosophy on learning design can be summed up in the work that I have done with the Collaborative Situated Active Mobile (CSAM) learning design framework (Power, 2013a, 2015; Power, Cristol & Gimbert, 2014). I believe in providing learners with the right tools, and enabling them to determine their own learning needs and what tools would be most effective in their individual contexts. CSAM reflects this philosophy, as the framework itself is not focused on any specific technology. Rather, it is focused on the contexts in which learners use technologies to facilitate collaboration, immersion in personally meaningful learning contexts, and engagement in active learning processes. While CSAM helps to focus on effective instructional design, it also helps to shift learning design towards more learner-centric, heutagogical approaches.

I believe that we should strive to make learning as accessible as possible. That does not mean making the learning process less challenging. It means making it easier to access learning opportunities and resources. The aspect of situated learning espoused by CSAM is one factor in increasing accessibility, because students are more likely to feel a personal connection to a learning experience if it is contextualized and personally relevant (Power, 2013a, 2015; Power et al., 2014). Another factor is leveraging appropriate technologies to mediate the learning experience. The right mix of technologies can permit participation by potential learners who might otherwise be excluded due to the limitations of time, geography, disability, or language barriers. Our decisions about technology integration should be grounded both in the needs of our target students, and in the actual enhancement of students' abilities to meet specified learning objectives. Of course, with the integration of technologies comes responsibilities for the teacher to make sure some potential learners are not inadvertently excluded. That means that we, as teachers, should constantly strive to ensure our learning materials meet accessibility standards such as those specified by the W3 Consortium (W3C, 2018).

Power (2020*b*) was published to provide support to educator colleagues at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, and provides a detailed illustration of some of the steps that I take, and skills that I strive to impart to my Education students, as I prepare to teach my own courses. Power (2021) illustrates a tool that I have developed, which I teach my students to use in their instructional design practice to make informed technology integration decisions. Power et al. (2020) and Power et al. (2022) are examples of how I have both contextualized the learning process, and engaged my graduate students from CBU in the process of creating high-quality peer-reviewed resources to help their teaching colleagues with the effective integration of technology in teaching and learning practice. Appendix T10 provides further examples of problem-based learning activities that I regularly use to contextualize technology integration and instructional design concepts and skills for undergraduate and graduate Education students. The following unsolicited student feedback illustrates the impact that these contextualized approaches have had:

"I really enjoyed this course... but mostly I have learned so much that is actually useful in my career! I really appreciate learning all the different technology tools that are available to us instructors, but I really liked how we were able to actually demonstrate how to use these tools through the assignment work... I can now use these skills and incorporate a lot more technology into my future courses at [xxxx College]! Thanks so much for a great semester!" (M.Ed. student, Athabasca University).

Power (2018*a*, 2020*a*) demonstrate how I leverage technology to provide my students with formative feedback for problem-based learning activities, and demonstrate how they can similarly leverage technology in their own professional practice. This approach has not gone unnoticed by my students, as illustrated by the following unsolicited feedback:

"I just wanted to send along a little note thanking you for the detailed and unique feedback... I have never received something of this nature before in terms of video feedback... I sometimes find myself thinking about that transactional distance which we have studied in this course. Your approach to this assignment was certainly welcomed. As a teacher, I strive to be timely with my students in terms of getting back to them... with the hopes that students will notice and see the benefits. Having a professor model this same approach is again a very nice touch" (M.Ed. student, Cape Breton University).

How Do I Measure My Effectiveness?

I measure my effectiveness as a teacher through the feedback that I receive from my students. Formal feedback from student evaluations of my courses has been consistently positive. Students have expressed enthusiasm for the content, appreciation for the course organization and resources, and excitement over how I lead by example by using technology both to deliver content and provide feedback on their learning progress. I have also received enthusiastic informal feedback through both email and social media from former students, who have commented about how much their experience in my courses has helped them in their professional practice (See Appendix T5). Multiple students have reached out to me directly to thank me for preparing them to teach online, and to manage the sudden unexpected shift to teaching through technology in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Long time...firstly all I have to say is that I'm now teaching at a major GTA college. Suddenly, my classes must be converted online until the rest of the semester. While faculty members (many I think) continue to panic, I honestly feel SO PREPARED. I've got this. This is in NO SMALL PART TO YOU for helping me understand how to align pedagogical goals to online environments. In a world filled with confusion, strife, upheaval and consistent uncertainty... I want to tell you THANK YOU for preparing me well. I will now APPLY this to help my students succeed during this difficult time. THANK YOU ROB!!” (M.Ed. student, Ontario Tech University).

One student who is now completing her graduate studies recently sent me the following expression of how much my teaching approach helped her to succeed in her studies:

“I felt like an imposter in this graduate program when I started in 2019 and I was riddled with anxiety. In my first graduate course with you, I immediately felt comfortable and at ease, which is what I needed at that time. In that course, I created a WBLT and you allowed me to choose a topic that I cared deeply about: Sun Salutation. You taught me the course content, but allowed me to grow and choose a topic that I love. I remember thinking, “Wow. Rob's kids are so lucky.” I have always felt such a fatherly presence from you - a father that cares deeply. A father that provides his children and students with the tools they need to succeed, and then allowing them to grow and explore independently, but always there if they fall or need help.

“This course is our last together, and my heart feels so full to have met you. It was never about the content you taught. It was the fact that you were always there when I needed you. I felt relief interacting with you. That's why I had the courage to send you such a bizarre email about wanting to “bypass” the last assignment. You gave me the courage to tell you how I really felt

with faith that you will always understand. That is a real teacher” (M.Ed. student, Ontario Tech University).

At the end of the Spring 2022 term, another student from CBU’s joint Master of Education in Educational Technology program with Memorial University sent me the following unsolicited feedback at the end of her course:

“I just want to let you know how much I enjoyed your course. I learned so much from you and I appreciated how interactive the whole course was. It pushed me out of my comfort zone. You were readily available and answered all my inquiries to make sure I was on the right track. It makes a huge difference when the instructor actually helps students to do better. Thank you SO MUCH for all the immediate feedback and constant reassurance. It was not easy taking 2 courses and working full time, but your course was so interesting, and it has been my favourite course in the M.Ed Education Technology program.”

For me, I see success as a teacher when I see my students succeeding in their practice, and when I see the impact of their changing practices on their own students.

Room for Growth

Even when my students are meeting both the hard (course and program learning outcomes) and soft (personal growth and professional practice) goals of my courses, I recognize that there is still room for improvement in how I design and deliver my courses. I continuously strive to find the best ways to engage my students with the learning content and with each other as part of a Community of Inquiry (Garrison et al., 2000). I also continuously reflect on the feedback that I receive through formal and informal channels to find places where my students may be struggling because of course design, content selection, and my interactions with them. For instance, one student from a graduate-level course at CBU during the Spring 2021 term discussed their perception of how "the course was structured. For starters, the course was not adapted from the 13-week version to the 8-week version, causing an unnecessary and often overwhelming amount of weekly requirements" (Appendix T8). While the course was further revised to suite a 6-week delivery model for the Spring 2022 term, I recognize that continued refinements may reduce the sense of overload for my students without compromising the goals of the course. Another student from a graduate-level online course emailed me at the beginning of the Spring 2022 term to say “This is kind of embarrassing, but I still can't find it... Am I in the right spot? I linked a screenshot just in case I'm totally in the wrong spot.” This exchange reminded me that that, even when

consciously incorporating instructional design best practices, it is never safe to assume that all students will have an easy time orienting themselves to an online learning environment.

Power (2017) illustrates how I solicit and use constant feedback from my students to improve my practice, and their experience and success in my courses. Power (2019) is an example of the advice that I provide to all of my students to help them improve their own experiences in any online course.

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APPENDIX R: TEACHING RELATED DOCUMENTATION

Appendix T1: Teaching Experience

Dr. Rob Power

Assistant Professor of Education, Cape Breton University

Educational Technology Courses

(Cape Breton University, 2018 - present)

- EDUC4108: Leveraging Technology for Learning (see Appendix T2 for sample course syllabus)
- EDUC4133: Teaching English as a Second Language in an Additive Model see Appendix T3 for sample course syllabus)
- EDUC 5103: Integration of Instructional Design and Information Technology (see Appendix T4 for sample course syllabus)
- EDUC 5107: Information Management in Education Environments (see Appendix T5 for sample course syllabus)
- EDUC 5131: Digital Citizenship in a Global Community (see Appendix T6 for sample course syllabus)

Educational Technology Courses

(Centre for Distance Education, Athabasca University)

- MDDE 604: Instructional Design in Distance Education
- MDDE 610: Survey of Current Educational Technology Applications
- MDDE 620: Technology in Education and Training

Educational Technology Courses

(Mount Royal University, 2016 - present)

- XCDA 10001: Principles of Instructional Design
- XCDA 10002: Designing Assessment Strategies
- XCDA 10003: Designing Instructional Strategies

Educational Technology Courses

(Ontario Tech University, 2015 - present)

- AEDT1160U: Digital Communications Technologies
- EDUC 5101G: Learning with Technology
- EDUC 5102G: Educational Technology & Communication
- EDUC 5103G: Online Technology in Education
- EDUC 5107G / 5199G: Teaching & Learning with Mobile Technologies
- EDUC 5199G: Teaching & Learning in an Online World
- EDUC 5205G: Learning and Educational Technology
- EDUC 5303G: Technology & the Curriculum
- EDUC 5405G: Digital Technologies in Adult Education

Educational Technology Courses

(University of Manitoba, 2016 - present)

- EDTC 0530: Instructional Design for eLearning
- EDTC 0540: Instructional Systems and Learning Technologies
- EDTC 0560: Using Technology for Teaching and Training
- EDTC 0592: Applied Project in Online Teaching

Information Technology Courses

(College of the North Atlantic-Qatar, 2005 - 2015)

- CP1280: Windows Client
- CP1310: Windows Server Administration
- CP1510: Windows Operating System
- CP1610: Introduction to Computer Components
- CP1910: Computer Hardware and Troubleshooting I
- CP2060: Operating System Fundamentals
- CP2190: Linux Operating System
- CR1260: Client Service for the Computer Industry
- CT1150: Introduction to Computers for Technology
- EP1140: Business Operations in Information Systems
- MC1050: Introduction to Computers
- MC1220: Productivity Tools I
- MC1221: Productivity Tools II
- MC1241: Computer Applications II
- MC1800: Software Applications I
- MC1801: Software Applications II
- MC1810: Fundamental Computer Applications
- MC1820: Computer Applications
- MC2220: Productivity Tools III
- SD1570: Effective Learning
- TPP-MC105: Introduction to Computers (Technical Preparatory Program – Qatar Petroleum)

Professional Development Courses

(British Columbia Institute of Technology (2018 – 2019)

- Blended Learning Seminar (10-week faculty professional development program)
- Instructional Skills Workshop (facilitator)

Professional Development Courses

(College of the North Atlantic-Qatar, 2005 - 2015)

- International Computer Driver's License (ICDL) Core Certificate
- Information Technology Skills for the Workplace
- Welcome to D2L
- Teaching with D2L
- Building Courses with D2L

Contract Training Courses

(College of the North Atlantic-Qatar, 2005 - 2015)

- International Computer Driver's License (ICDL) Core Certificate
 - Ministry of Finance, State of Qatar, Spring 2007
 - Served as instructional and testing coordinator

- International Computer Driver's License (ICDL) Core Certificate Testing
 - Qatar International School. State of Qatar, 2008-2009, 2009-2010
 - Served as testing coordinator for students and staff from Qatar International School

- CE-IT 1010: Using Interactive Whiteboards in the Curriculum
 - Supreme Education Council, State of Qatar, 2009-2010
 - Served as a program developer in collaboration with the Supreme Education Council of Information and Communication Technology, State of Qatar
 - Served as an instructor working with teachers and support staff from state-governed K-12 schools.

- Digital Inclusion for Women Trainer Skills Workshop
 - Supreme Education Council of Information and Communications Technology (ictQATAR), 2012
 - Served as a program developer in collaboration with the Supreme Education Council of Information and Communications Technology, State of Qatar
 - Served as a content developer for the Digital Inclusion for Women community development program in collaboration with the Supreme Education Council of Information and Communications Technology, State of Qatar
 - Served as the Learning Management System course interface and content developer for the Trainer Skills Workshop program
 - Served as a face-to-face and online instructor working with trainers employed by local training companies in preparation for their delivery of the Digital Inclusion for Women community development program.

Intermediate/Secondary Courses

(Eastern School District and Lewisporte-Gander School District, Province of Newfoundland and Labrador)

- Communications Technology 3400, John Burke High School, Grand Bank, NL (2003-2005)
- English 9, Jane Collins Academy, Hare Bay, NL (2001-2002)
- English 1202, Jane Collins Academy, Hare Bay, NL (2001-2002)
- English 2101: Research and Writing, Jane Collins Academy, Hare Bay, NL (2001-2002)
- English 2204: Canadian Literature, Jane Collins Academy, Hare Bay, NL (2001-2002)
- English 3102: Business English, Jane Collins Academy, Hare Bay, NL (2001-2002)
- Integrated Systems 1205, John Burke High School, Grand Bank, NL (2003-2005)
- Technology 8, John Burke High School, Grand Bank, NL (2003-2005)
- Technology 9, John Burke High School, Grand Bank, NL (2003-2005)
- Web Masters 3224, John Burke High School, Grand Bank, NL (2003-2005)

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)

(Offered as an independent subject matter expert and instructional developer)

- Creating Mobile Reusable Learning Objects Using Collaborative Situated Active Mobile (CSAM) Learning Strategies (May-June 2014)
 - Online professional development course hosted on the Canvas open learning management system.
 - Course designed as part of EdD dissertation research project at Athabasca University, AB, Canada.
 - Participants included professional educators from Canada, the United States, and Qatar.
 - Served as subject matter expert, instructional developer and course facilitator.

- Instructional Design for Mobile Learning (ID4ML) (May-June 2015)
 - Online professional development course hosted on the Canvas open learning management system.
 - Course designed for open enrollment with an international target audience of professional educators.
 - Served as subject matter expert, instructional developer, and course co-facilitator.