

Matthew DiMatteo: Scholarship and Teaching

Thursday, April 14, 2022
11:30am - 12:15pm

Rider University
Anne Brossman Sweigart Hall 110

Matthew DiMatteo

(Matt), he/him/his

Adjunct Assistant Professor of Interactive
Multimedia, The College of New Jersey

2014-Present



My Courses - Spring 2022

- [Games II - Implementation](#) (TCNJ)
- [Web I](#) (TCNJ)
- [Internet Tools and Techniques](#) (MCCC)

My Previous Courses (TCNJ)

- [Game Studies and Design](#) (Fall 2020, 2021)
- [*The Legend of Zelda* as a Case Study in Game Design](#) (Self-Proposed Mini Course, Spring 2020)
- [Introduction to Digital Media](#) (Fall 2015-2021)
- [Games I - Design and Architecture](#) (Fall 2014)

My Responsibilities

- Creation of **syllabus, schedule, lessons**, supporting **materials** for each course
- Leading class **discussions; lectures and demos**
- Construction of **annotated slideshows, coding examples**, other resources
- Regular **communication** with students outside of class
- Maintaining **grades, attendance**, other records

My Courses

My Courses

Fall 2014 - [Games I: Design and Architecture](#) (TCNJ)

- My first teaching experience
- Led group of **19** students
- Lectures and discussions on **formal elements, ideation, physical and digital prototyping and playtesting, cultural impact and broader meaning** of games



My Courses

Fall 2014 - [Games I: Design and Architecture](#) (TCNJ)

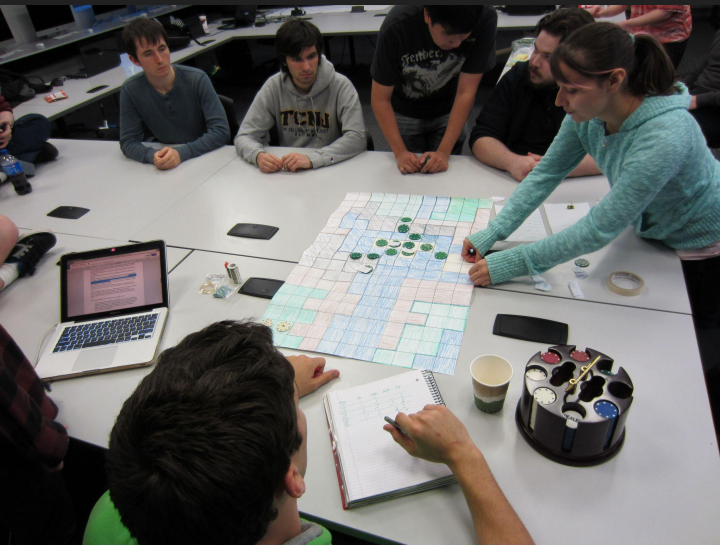
- Students were divided into **four small teams** and worked toward creating a digital game prototype



My Courses

Fall 2014 - [Games I: Design and Architecture](#) (TCNJ)

- Emphasis on **physical prototyping**, playtesting



My Courses

Spring 2015 - Games II: Implementation (TCNJ)

- Students built upon their digital prototypes from the fall to create a complete digital game
- Emphasis on **team dynamics, conflict resolution, project management**

Deliverables & Schedule:

CONCEPT PHASE

- Concept Document
- Producer: Matt
 - Status Reports: Mostly Matt's responsibility, but he may ask occasionally for some help on that front during research paper

PRE-PRODUCTION PHASE

- Project Plan
 - For Week 3 (2/12)
 - Dustin
 - Start thinking about the sound effects that are due next
 - Mindy
 - Have some progress on the character model
 - Ben and Lindsay
 - Review/Edit Project Plan, go over map coding
 - Matt
 - Have roughly completed Project Plan, go over map coding

PRODUCTION PHASE

- For Week 4 (2/19)
 - All: Final Project Plan due
 - Mindy
 - Continue to work on character models for humans and the player
 - Dustin
 - Could you have the following done for this date? We need a few options for each effect to see what we can work with. It would be nice to have varying lengths as well [2-3seconds,

My Courses

Fall 2015-2021: [Introduction to Digital Media](#) (TCNJ)

- Introduces students to a wide array of software for **graphic design**, **audio** and **video** production



My Courses

Fall 2015-2021: [Introduction to Digital Media](#) (TCNJ)

- I take a **project-based** approach to this course
- Students complete small creative projects in each area and compile a personal **portfolio**



My Courses

Fall 2015-2021: [Introduction to Digital Media](#) (TCNJ)

- Many students have passed their [Sophomore Review](#) on the strength of the portfolios they created in this class



My Courses



Spring 2020 - [The Legend of Zelda as a Case Study in Game Design](#) (Self-Proposed Mini Course)

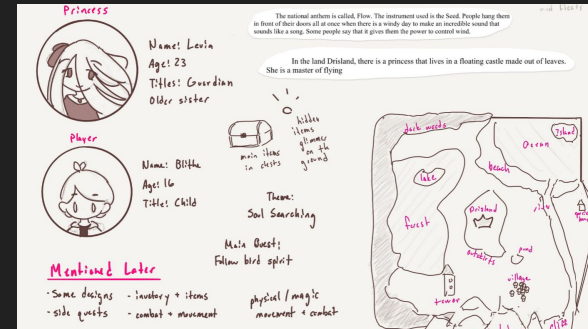
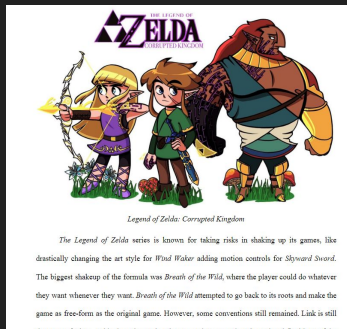
- Focused on a widely renowned franchise to understand the **ingredients** of successful (and unsuccessful) installments in the series

My Courses



Spring 2020 - The Legend of Zelda as a Case Study in Game Design (Self-Proposed Mini Course)

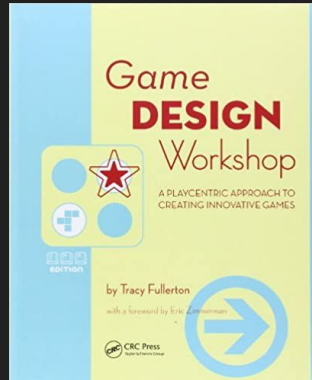
- Students generated **original game concepts** based on the techniques discussed in class



My Courses

Fall 2020, 2021: [Game Studies and Design](#)

- Students study **formal elements**, **ideation**, and **physical and digital prototyping** and **playtesting**



My Courses

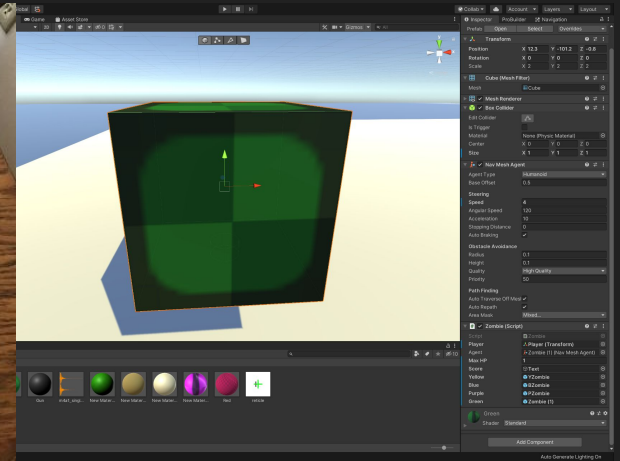
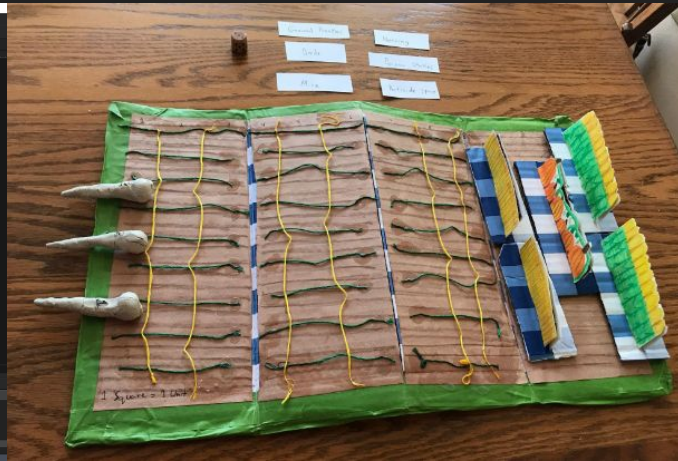
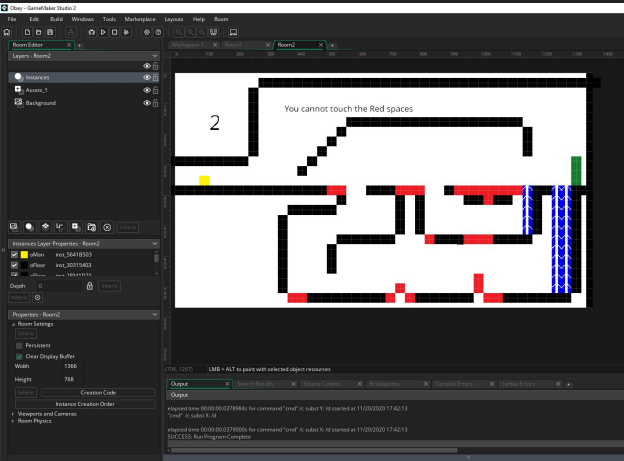
Fall 2020, 2021: [Game Studies and Design](#) (TCNJ)

- Course work consists of four “**design challenges**” (small prototyping projects based on a prompt) and [written work](#) including **reviews** of games and students’ **reflections** on their own projects

My Courses

Fall 2020, 2021: [Game Studies and Design](#) (TCNJ)

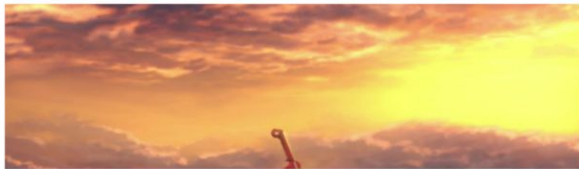
- Students spend approx. **3 weeks** each devising **4 small prototypes** (physical or digital) on a prompt



My Courses

Fall 2020, 2021: [Game Studies and Design](#) (TCNJ)

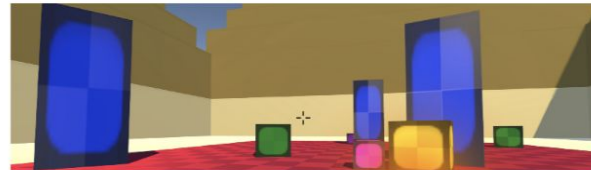
- Students write brief [reviews](#) of **games they've played** and [reflections](#) on **design challenges they've completed**, posting to [medium.com](#)



Xenoblade Chronicles: A Definitive RPG

A game that masterfully balances its environment with gameplay...

[Read more...](#)



SQUARES— Another Review

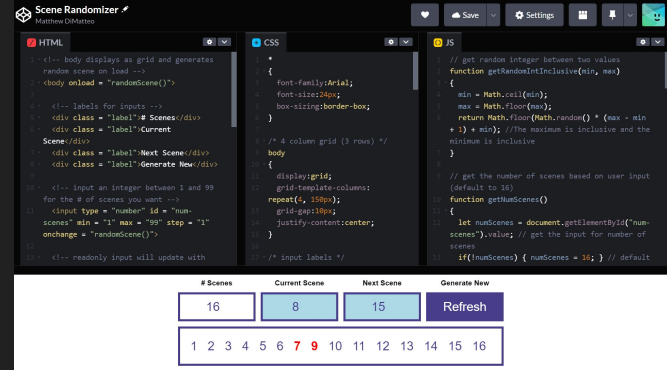
This is the second version of my digital survival game. The core mechanics are still the same, but this time I...

[Read more...](#)

My Courses

Spring 2022 - [Web I](#) (TCNJ)

- I've worked as a part-time [web developer](#) since 2014 and am teaching a class this semester introducing students to **HTML**, **CSS**, **JavaScript**, and concepts related to **domains** and **web hosting**



My Courses

Spring 2022 - [Internet Tools & Techniques \(MCCC\)](#)

- This spring, I've been teaching a class through [Mercer County Community College](#) in addition to my work at [TCNJ](#)
- This course introduces students to **digital media** and **programming** skills for **analyzing** and **creating websites**

My Courses

Spring 2022 - [Internet Tools & Techniques \(MCCC\)](#)

- Teaching at a community college has given me an **expanded perspective** on engaging students
- Everyone has a **different background** - some have worked professionally in design, others are working to pay for classes - **everyone is unique and requires a unique approach to working with them**

My Courses

Spring 2022 - [Games II: Implementation](#) (TCNJ)

- I'm teaching this course again this semester, but with a few differences from the [Spring 2015](#) course
- I created **4 interdisciplinary teams** of 5 students each, **balancing [roles](#)** such as art, programming, and sound
- Students are being graded based on [self-assessments](#), which are discussed in **1-on-1 meetings with me** 4 times during the semester

My Courses

Spring 2022 - [Games II: Implementation](#) (TCNJ)

- In teams, students generated ideas and chose one concept to develop this semester
- Weekly classes consist of **meetings and discussions with each team, playtesting, and workshops**

My Courses

Spring 2022 - [Games II: Implementation](#) (TCNJ)

- The semester is [structured](#) with **four milestones** reflecting the stages of development: **conceptualization, pre-production, production, and quality assurance**
- Each milestone culminates in a **formal playtest**

My Courses

Spring 2022 - [Games II: Implementation](#) (TCNJ)

- Following milestone playtests, I meet with each student 1-on-1 to discuss their self-assessment
- Anonymous peer feedback is also collected
- These meetings are a chance for me to gauge each student's progress through learning and contributions - I also discuss and resolve conflicts or concerns that arise

My Scholarly Work

My Scholarly Work

- I'm overseeing the production of four student game projects
- My role is analogous to producer or project manager
- I meet with each team regularly to:
 - Discuss progress
 - Facilitate discussion between team members
 - Resolve conflicts
 - Prioritize the most essential tasks
 - Offer suggestions
 - Playtest I also monitor Discord and Google Drive regularly to see how
 - Debug students are communicating and organizing their projects

My Scholarly Work

- Unfortunately, my role as **adjunct** has not provided me with the **staff** and **resources** to pursue many projects outside of class
- Having the **resources to work with students toward creative projects** is one of the things I would **look forward to most** as part of a full-time station

My Scholarly Work

- Currently, my creative energies are being directed toward a [series of fantasy novels](#)

Home	About the Author	Previews	Characters	World	Glossary	Media	Hiring	Contact
Arisen, Volume 1: Embers Awakening (Full manuscript available)		180,649 words / 250 words per page = 722.596 standard pages						
In a desolate kingdom shattered by civil war, sixteen-year-old Aris Flamekeeper discovers he is the victim of a curse that will soon claim his life; his quest for vengeance leads him to a dangerous weapon capable of transforming anguish into power, but at a terrible cost.		658 page manuscript (Times New Roman, 12 pt, double-spaced, 1" margins)						
Arisen, Volume 2: Swords of Ruin (Full manuscript available)		122,589 words / 250 words per page = 490.356 standard pages						
Aris, now in the late stages of a curse that will end his life, works with the queen of the Fallen Kingdom to overthrow the evil Lord Ravenfire, but their weapons, the legendary Swords of Ruin, threaten to lead them to a fate worse than death.		458 page manuscript (Times New Roman, 12 pt, double-spaced, 1" margins)						
Arisen, Volume 3: Dawn of the Morningstar (In progress)		111,982 words / 250 words per page = 447.928 standard pages						
Aris follows the enigmatic Lyren Morningstar on her search for "the rift"—a flaw in the fabric of reality emanating from a dead kingdom in the distant west—but a magician called the Stormchild wishes madly to exacerbate this conflict, believing he can revive his lost love from one of infinite alternate worlds.		416 page manuscript (Times New Roman, 12 pt, double-spaced, 1" margins)						

My Scholarly Work

- I've completed and edited manuscripts for the first two entries in the series, with the third in progress

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My Scholarly Work

- The **narrative** aspect of games is one of the things that compelled me to study them
- **Level design**, being able to **create worlds**, and the power to **tell interactive stories** are my **passions** and key areas of interest

My Scholarly Work

- I do have many ideas for projects I would like to pursue with the resources available to a full-time faculty member
- At the top of that list is an expansion of my [medium.com](#) experiment for the [Game Studies and Design](#) course



Cyberpunk 2077: Bug Ridden Masterpiece

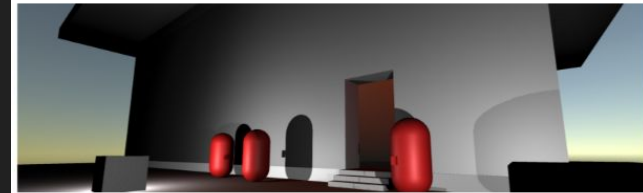
Cyberpunk 2077 is an open-world first-person role-playing game developed by CD Projekt Red...

[Read more...](#)



Terell Powell

Dec 14, 2020 · 2 min read



Reflection #3: House Party

Let's start by stating this was a digital game and that I showed my friends the game through discord. Most of...

My Scholarly Work

- I've used medium.com as a platform for students to publish their [game reviews](#) and [reflections on their own prototype projects](#)
- However, the **scope** of this project was **limited**, as **only members of the class had access** to the publication

Dragon Quest XI — Everything I'd Been Looking For

play it :)

Jason Sekora · Published on Dec 10, 2020 · 3 min read



Final Fantasy VII Remake Review

I had a goal to finish every single game that I had started this year over the past couple of month and the last one out of the six or...

Kyle Ackerman · Published on Dec 10, 2020 · 3 min read



Game Design Reflection "Obey" (Playable Prototype Version)

The game prototype I had finished was based around a previous documentation that I had turned into a legitimate playable version of the...

Ryan McCurdy · Published on Dec 9, 2020 · 4 min read



An Old Gem Made New Again - Sam and Max Save the World Remastered Review

Sam and Max Save the World Remastered is an adventure game released in 2020 by Skunkape Games, this game is a remaster and modern upgrade...

Ryan McCurdy · Published on Dec 9, 2020 · 6 min read



Reflection #3: The Lesser of Two Evils

The game that I created for the third design challenge is a physical card party game titled, The Lesser of Two Evils. Inspired by my...

Anthony Barreto · Published on Dec 9, 2020 · 2 min read



Mafia: Definitive Edition — The Drama, Crime, and Omertà are Terrifically Reimagined

On September 25, 2020, old school plyers and newcomers were able to have the chance to experience the

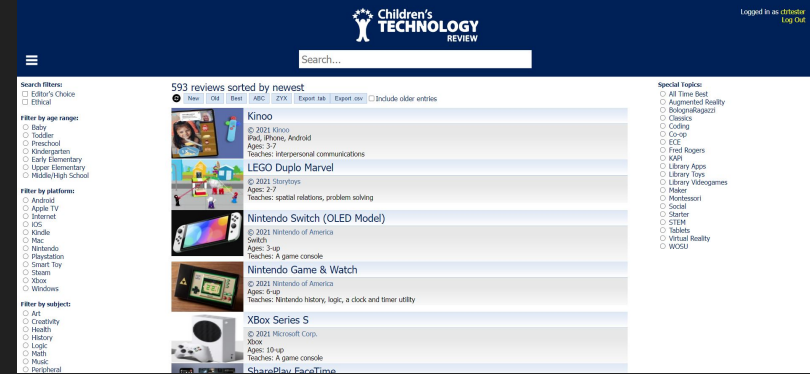


My Scholarly Work

- I'd like to explore the construction of a student-powered platform for academic game reviews
- In my work as a web developer, I've built an [online database](#) to catalog and publish reviews of children's media for [Children's Technology Review](#), a small publication in Flemington, NJ

My Scholarly Work

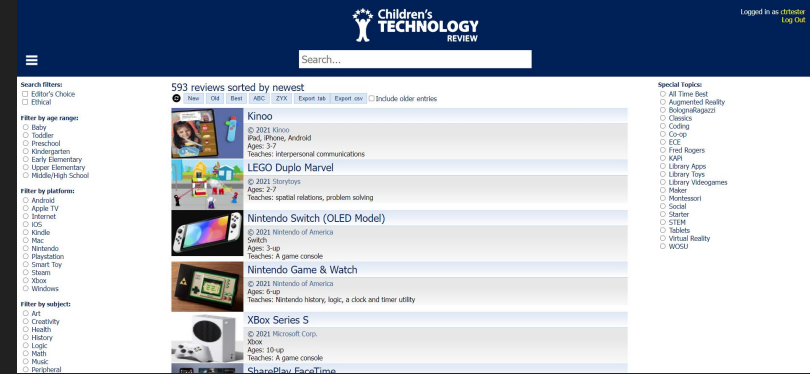
- I would like to build a large-scale database of academic reviews of current releases in gaming, powered by student insights



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My Scholarly Work

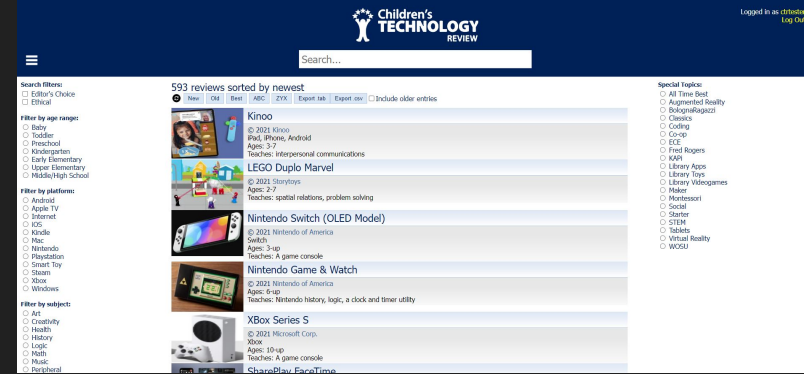
- This content would transcend consumer sites like Polygon, IGN, Kotaku, etc.
- Games would be deconstructed from a formal elements perspective, with students analyzing what makes them successful or unsuccessful



In my work as a web developer, I've built an [online database](#) to catalog and publish reviews of children's media for [Children's Technology Review](#), a small publication in Flemington, NJ

My Scholarly Work

- Students could receive **course credit, authorship** for their published reviews



In my work as a web developer, I've built an [online database](#) to **catalog** and **publish** reviews of children's media for [Children's Technology Review](#), a small publication in Flemington, NJ

My Scholarly Work

Other goals:

- Explore **multiplayer cooperative** (and other untapped areas)
- Tying **music (mood)** to **gameplay**
- Expand on the mini-course concept—**focus on particular games as case studies**
- Explore the potential of games as **art**

My Teaching Philosophy

My Teaching Philosophy

My teaching philosophy is twofold:

- Regarding **course work and goals**
- Regarding **interaction with students**

My Teaching Philosophy

Regarding interaction with students

- I **communicate regularly** with students outside of class, providing timely **email reminders** with **slides** and **relevant materials** for each lesson

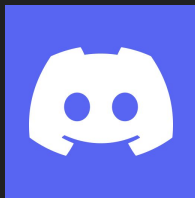


- Particularly since the pandemic began, this has been instrumental in keeping students on task

My Teaching Philosophy

Regarding **interaction with students**

- I monitor my **email** and **Discord** constantly so as to remain **available to answer student questions** and **help with assignments** where necessary
- Students have expressed their **appreciation** for this type of support



My Teaching Philosophy

Regarding interaction with students

- My contact information is always available at the beginning of my course syllabi, and I'll meet with students remotely or in person to address questions or concerns outside of class

[IMM 460-01: Games II: Implementation—Spring 2022](#)

1 of 10

Course Syllabus

Meeting Time: Fridays, 1:30-5:20 PM, AIMM 202

Instructor: Matthew DiMatteo

Email: dimatte4@cnj.edu

Discord: Matthew DiMatteo#3880

Office Hours: By Appointment

Best Availability: Thursdays, after class on Fridays

Please email me or send me a message on Discord if you have any questions or concerns. I'm happy to meet before or after class, and if you'd like to arrange a Zoom meeting during the week, let me know and I'll find a time that works for both of us.

Page 1 of 7

MERCER COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

DMA 144-040: Internet Tools and Techniques—Spring 2022 Course Syllabus

Meeting Time: Mondays and Wednesdays, 12:00-2:30 PM [remotely via Microsoft Teams](#)

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 2:30-3:30 PM [remotely via Microsoft Teams](#)

Instructor: Matthew DiMatteo

Email: dimmattem@mccc.edu

Phone: 908-797-3386

My Teaching Philosophy

Regarding interaction with students

- I'll communicate with individual students via email to remind them about late/missing work
- I'll provide multiple reminders throughout the semester, giving the students every opportunity to complete assignments



My Teaching Philosophy

Regarding **interaction with students**

- Finally, I generally just try to be a **friend** to my students, someone they can feel is **on their side** and **wants them to succeed**
- I aim to be part of my students' **support network**, and am sensitive to issues such as **stress** and **mental health**

Regarding Course Work and Goals

My Teaching Philosophy

Regarding **course work and goals**

- The courses I teach are mainly **project-oriented**
- These projects are often **creative endeavors** that students can feel **proud** of when complete
- Students gain valuable **knowledge** and **skills** through this type of work, have **fun** expressing themselves creatively, and bolster their **portfolio**

My Teaching Philosophy

Regarding course work and goals

- Since the process of completing these projects is so valuable in multiple ways, I try to emphasize the value of the work itself over the importance of the grade
- What does this mean?

My Teaching Philosophy

Emphasizing the **value of the work itself** over the importance of the grade

- Assignments are **constructed to allow students to have fun creating something** in addition to learning the necessary skills

My Teaching Philosophy

Emphasizing the **value of the work itself** over the importance of the grade

- **Grading criteria** reflect the **thoroughness** of the work in addition to demonstration of the material covered

My Teaching Philosophy

Emphasizing the **value of the work itself** over the importance of the grade

- I'll allow **flexibility on deadlines** (within reason) so that students can **give their work the attention it deserves**
- Many students have expressed appreciation for this, as they've been able to **create projects they are truly proud of**

Questions?

Thank you for
your time and attention!