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Teaching is not just a vocation for me; it is a passion. I started teaching nearly twenty years ago. In that time, I have taught in a myriad of settings, from the traditional classroom to online learning and on through production kitchens to the neighborhoods of New Orleans. These multiple learning spaces have allowed me to develop an experientially based approach to teaching that seeks to engage students on various intellectual and sensory levels. This diversity of learning spaces and channels impacts students in multiple ways, challenging them to grapple with the technical material in real ways that affect their lives and those of their community.

The learning journey is a reciprocal process of communication balanced with risk and support for both student and teacher. In whatever form it takes, the classroom should be a safe space for students to make mistakes and engage ideas in ways they might not be free to in other areas of their lives. Failure is accepted and celebrated as a step further on the long road to mastery.

My teaching practice is deeply rooted in the teacher's responsibility to create a safe space for student exploration and growth, creating rigorous academic standards for students and engaging them in various learning paths that allow them to explore theoretical concepts through lived experience. It is my life goal to engage this pedagogical practice in a community of scholars who are committed to their students and their intellectual work and research.

Individuals have unique learning needs that require attention to the learner's specific goals. Traditional lecture and textbook delivery, the sage on the stage, does not work for all students and all tasks. It is the teacher's responsibility to bring a context to the subject matter at hand and give it meaning and life in the mind and experience of the student.

In my traditional on-the-ground teaching, I have worked with students of all ages and backgrounds. At New England Culinary Institute (NECI), I was a chef-instructor in charge of running a fully functional banquet kitchen that often served over 500 meals a day. In a four-diamond resort setting. This kitchen was also a classroom with seven first-year culinary students, many of whom had never stepped foot in a professional kitchen before. As a teacher and chef, standing between paying customers and learning students, I was required not only to cook but also to translate those practical skills, actions, and sequences into verbal instructions that guided students through the process themselves - or, as NECI likes to say; "learning by doing." In my experience, this is powerful for students; their muscle memory expands as

they reproduce the tasks they read about the night before in their textbook. They physically feel the lesson as they recreate a recipe.

I strive to integrate this learning into my curriculum in a traditional classroom setting. As a visiting scholar at Tulane University, I guest taught a course in disaster and food systems. In addition to classroom lectures, readings, and discussions, students went “into the field” to develop a map of food access points in the Treme neighborhood of New Orleans in 2010, five years after Hurricane Katrina. Using archival documents, the students overlaid historical data about food access in the neighborhood before 2005. They found a dramatic shift in the kinds of foods available and the quantity of food available. This kind of first-hand experience brought the students into the community and engaged the theoretical work of the classroom in a way that made the words and ideas real in their lives. The concept of a food desert went from a theoretical construct to a lived, interactive experience.

In an online learning environment, his kind of first-hand learning is even more challenging but critical for success. Teaching students online introduces the challenge of personalizing a technological ‘space’ aspect where a traditional classroom would be. When direct face-to-face contact with students is limited or non-existent, creating a bridge between the instructor and student is critical. One of the great benefits of online learning is that students can work and continue to lead their lives while attending classes. However, this also introduces additional stress that many traditional, on-the-ground students do not have. This is also where the magic is. When the online classroom turns into a place to analyze the daily work events of students, they learn how to apply the theory they are learning to their lives. The role of the professor is to create the learning space and then guide the student to make the connections between theory and what is happening in their lives, finally expressing that in written or verbal learning products.

As a former online student, I know firsthand how meaningful the relationship with your instructor can be when “life gets in the way.” As an online instructor, I am committed to facilitating learning for students who have chosen to add education to an already busy life.

In my experience as a student, I have been fortunate to learn from many gifted mentors who are working professionals and scholars. I have witnessed firsthand teachers who have taken countless hours of their time to instruct me, listen to me, and respond to deep questions that have no easy answers. These learning processes have been transformative for me.

As a culinary student, I watched myself evolve into a professional chef. As a doctoral student, I watched my mind sharpen and my eyes open to new

possibilities in the field and at the writing desk. These evolutions have only happened because of skilled and dedicated teachers who are also practitioners. I emulate the combination of practice and pedagogy in my teaching and scholarship. As a practitioner-scholar, I feel a sense of great debt to the people who have come before me., My desire to teach comes from the power of those transformations. I want to give the experience of transformative learning I have had to others.

Finally, rigorous scholarship does not occur in a vacuum but is achieved in a community of scholars. As a chef-instructor, I relied on other chefs to help me run my kitchen and learned new skills from them. At Tulane, I initiated the Scholar as Practitioner weekly luncheons, where faculty and staff met and discussed their own research joys and challenges. I desire to be in a community of scholars as a teacher and a colleague. Engaging in discussions about teaching and research helps foster a community of learning and a higher level of accountability and rigor. I desire to be in that community and lend my voice to that dialogue.