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Teaching Portfolio

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"Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid."

- Albert Einstein -

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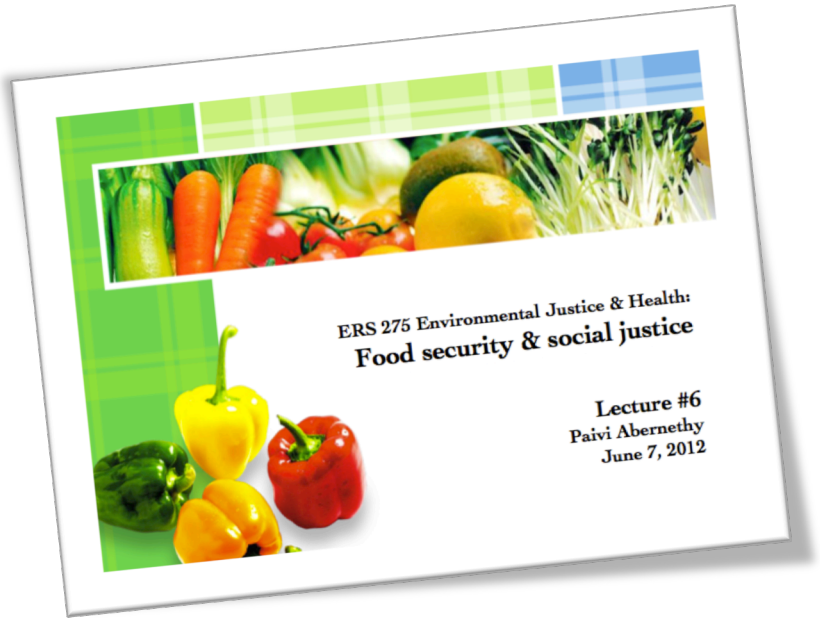


Teaching Philosophy

I believe that the knowledge taught at universities should be based on Aristotle's three intellectual virtues: *epistemé*, *techné*, and *phronesis*. *Epistemé* refers to broadly applicable context-independent knowledge; *techné* to practical, applied and context-specific knowledge; and *phronesis* to pragmatic, action oriented and context-dependent knowledge, based on value-rationality, such as ethics (Flyvbjerg 2005). In my teaching, I aim to help students to gain *epistemé* by learning academic theories; *techné* by applying the things they have learnt in practice; and *phronesis* by challenging them to think critically and ethically.

I think the following characteristics are vital components in a good teaching and learning process:

1. **Respect:** I believe that true learning only takes place when there is mutual respect.
2. **Caring:** I think it is vital that my students know that I care about them, their learning, and their future, as well as about the topics that I teach.
3. **Fairness:** I know that the sense of fairness is a vital piece of the learning process. It is important for human beings to feel that they are treated fairly.
4. **Empowerment:** I want my students to feel that they have the power to make a difference in their own learning process, in the classroom, and in the society.
5. **Critical and analytical thinking:** I believe it is vital that we people become better at asking the right questions. I challenge and encourage my students to question what they hear (including my teachings) and to situate their knowledge, so they can own the knowledge they acquire.
6. **Acceptance of differences:** I want to help my students see and appreciate differences. This includes different personalities, cultures, values, perspectives, and worldviews.

Flyvbjerg, B. (2001). *Making Social Science Matter : Why Social Inquiry Fails and How It Can Succeed Again*. Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Pedagogical approach

My pedagogical approach has a strong emphasis on experiental learning, case studies and collaborative project work. While I also enjoy the traditional academic seminar style lecturing, my teaching has been influenced by Habermas' communicative action, Foucault's thoughts on power & knowledge, and particularly the Freirean empowerment pedagogy.

Following on Paulo Freire's footsteps, I aim to foster

- the human beings' capacity to educate themselves;
- the idea that a progressive education builds on but is not limited to the students' *'practical experience knowledge*'; and
- the principle that I, as an educator, must talk *with* the students and not *to* them, emphasising the collective, multi-directional, reflective, co-learning processes.

I believe in the power of story telling, because that has been the way human cultures have shared intra- and intergenerational knowledge over thousands of years. While I agree that modern technological tools are useful and necessary in the contemporary classroom, I also believe that focused listening and human interaction is a vital piece of our learning processes.

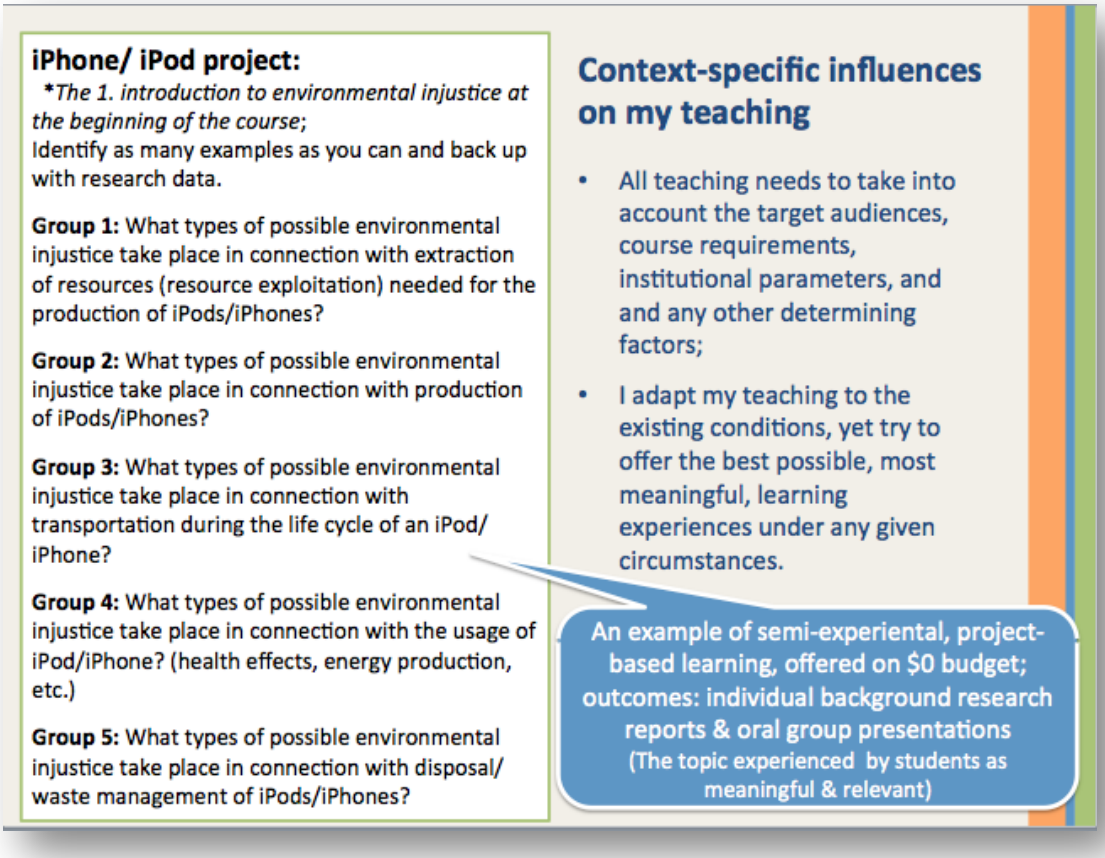
Teaching students qualitative research methods & presentations skills through experiental learning (Examples of final products)

Experiental learning

I firmly believe that people learn best by doing things, through empirical, hands-on experience. For instance, teaching research methods can be enhanced with first hand experiences on the field, interacting with practical challenges of the real world.

Experiental learning was defined by Kolb (1984:41) as "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience". In an academic context, I interpret experiental learning as being field research, a field trip, or working in groups - be it a 15-minute covert participant observation exercise on campus or small research projects that complement the theoretical input from traditional lectures and readings.

Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.



Case studies, individual performance, group work, and communication

I like using small field trips, case studies, or other practical, preferably interactive, exercises to complement the seminar-style academic lectures. Furthermore, I believe that interactive collaboration with other students is good training for teamwork required at most work places, where graduates will have to be able to cooperate with a wide range of different colleagues.

To overcome the classic frustration of 'freeloaders' in project work, I have developed a small case study concept that involves both individual and group performance:

- Students sign up for a case study relevant to the topic that needs to be learnt (chosen by me), usually 3-4 students/group; each case is a research question (Please, see the example above).
- They are each required to submit a brief background research paper on the topic (with academic references), which get individually graded.
- After the individual submission, each working group prepares a class presentation of 5-10 minutes duration; the presentation needs to contain components from each individual submission with each individual performing equally in the class presentation; the group is judged based on the level of their collaboration and also the quality of the group's presentation, yet individual performance influences the individual's grade.
- The presentation is followed by a class discussion based on the presentation.

This approach encourages students to both thrive individually as well as collaboratively. I have seen less disciplined students excel while learning from the stronger students, and stronger students excel in their own performance through the collaborative process.

Teaching goals

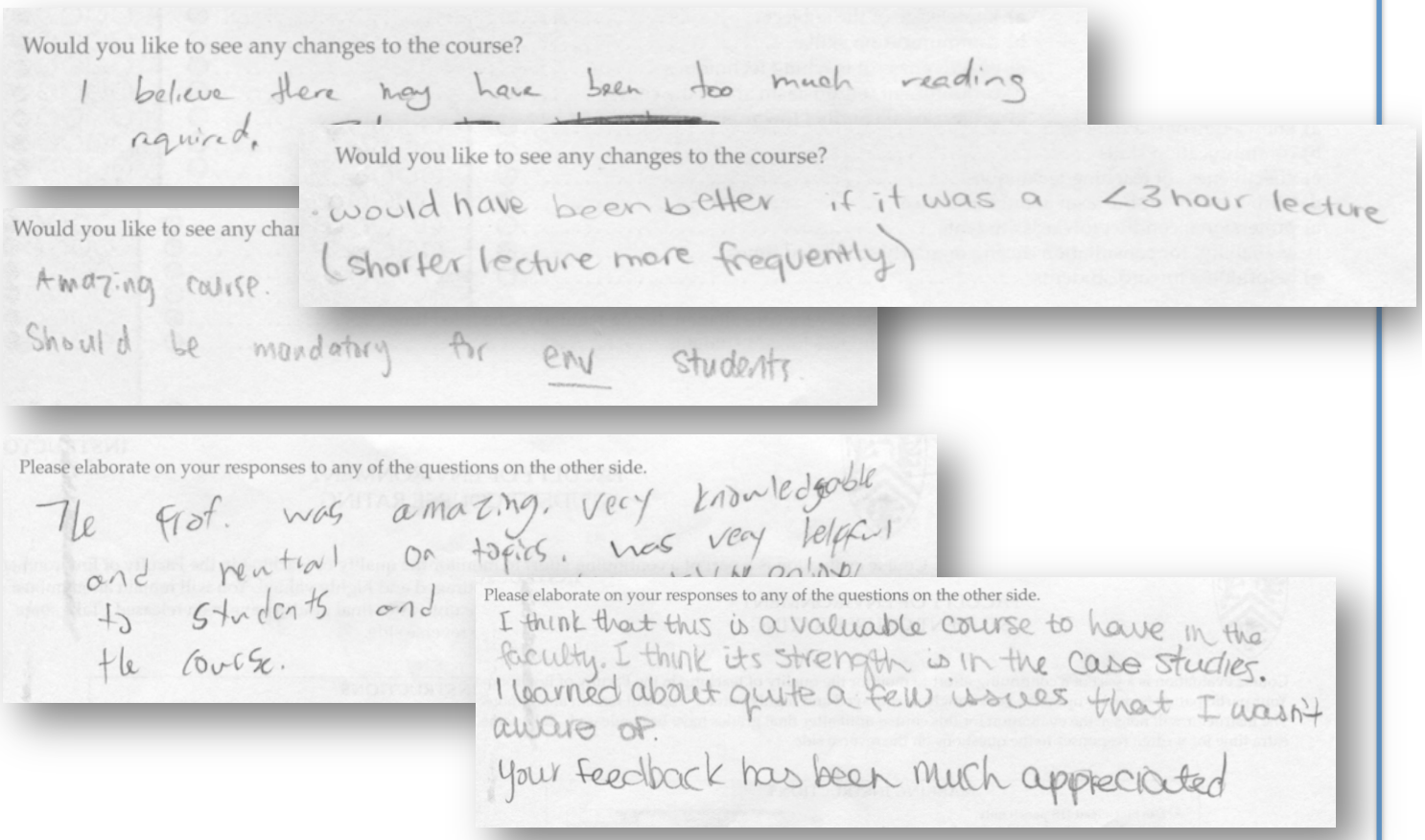
As a transdisciplinary scholar, I would like to develop methods and approaches to effectively teach interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary academic context to students of different backgrounds, such as:

- Social justice and environmental justice to various disciplines, from sociologists and urban planners to engineers and economists.
- Qualitative methods to natural scientists and positivists; quantitative methods to constructivists and people afraid of numbers.
- Sociology of knowledge to both sociologists and non-sociologists.
- Children's environmental health as a bridging concept to a range of audiences, highlighting the relevance of the topic to each disciplinary discourse.

I will continue to develop new interactive teaching methods to engage students in critical and analytical thinking. That said, I want also to improve the academic rigor of my students, and ensure that their theoretical disciplinary foundations remain strong and academically up-to-date.

I will continue to be the 'bridge builder', training students in skills that will help them work productively both within their own discipline as well as together with others across disciplinary borders. It is vital for me that in addition to solid academic knowledge, my students will have both practical know-how and people skills that will help them excel in the working world.

Furthermore, I will remain as a life long learner, learning better teaching skills from evolving academic literature, workshops, my colleagues, and my students. I aim to keep my students feeling that they learnt something meaningful and useful.



Teaching Evaluations

How I evaluate students (=assess my own teaching)

I have solid experience developing exam questions, project requirements, and tests; proctoring exams; grading; as well as training Teaching Assistants in proctoring and grading;

Given a choice, there are a few specific types of examinations I particularly like:

a) Group projects with an independently graded component prior to group exercise (the project preferably containing some form of experiental learning); reporting usually includes a written or visual (video) component and an oral presentation (See p.5).

b) A set of 10 comprehensive exam questions (each with a concrete example case), covering all main components of the course; questions are provided a week in advance, so that students can prepare for the essays; the actual exam consists of only 2 of the questions on the list they have been given, and each student chooses one. No additional aids or notes are allowed in the exam.

These two approaches are good because:

1. They require and promote independent critical and analytical thinking.
2. They force students to apply the learnt theories and other materials to 'real life' examples .
3. They teach collaboration in a constructive manner without allowing 'freeloaders'. (For the option b, I have discovered that students are often studying for the final exam in large study groups, exploring the provided exam questions in a collaborative manner) .
4. They teach public speaking and knowledge transation (only *Case a*)
5. Cheating is practically impossible.

Sample question:

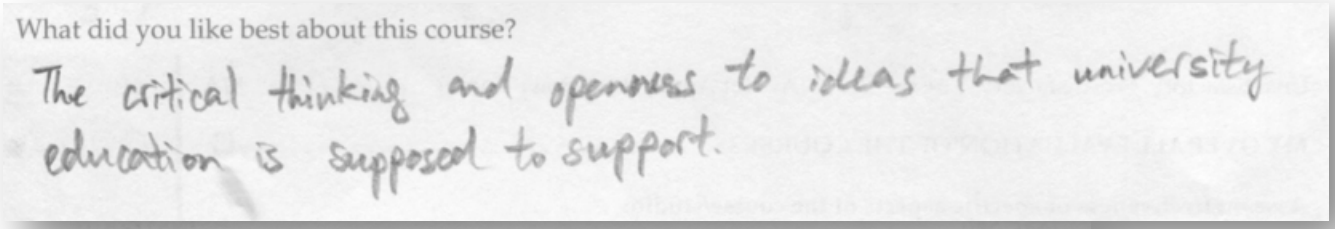
"*First class answers need to be well supported by references to a diversity of sources and readings. Identifying potential key stakeholders, their needs and interests, possible ethical arguments, conflict(-s) caused by the differing interests, the complexity of issues, types of injustice, health impacts, potential solutions, as well as the greater socio-cultural, historical and political context should be considered in each question. Support your answers by references from the course readings and concrete cases we have studied.*

How is food security connected to environmental justice? What types of different factors influence food insecurity? How could the situation be improved a) by government policies and b) by the civil society at the community level? "

NOTE: An example rubric for assessment can be found in Appendix 1.

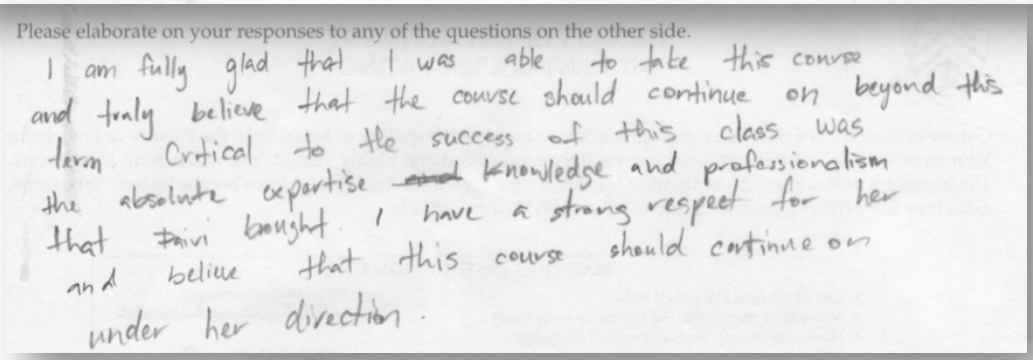
How students experienced my teaching

- Anonymous evaluation forms, distributed & collected by students on the last day of class, to which I have access after all grades have been submitted.



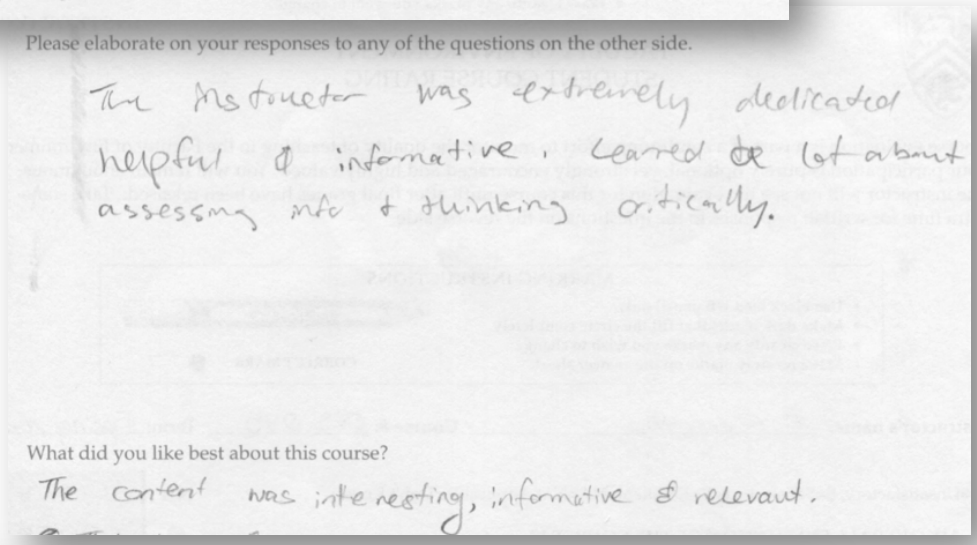
What did you like best about this course?

The critical thinking and openness to ideas that university education is supposed to support.



Please elaborate on your responses to any of the questions on the other side.

I am fully glad that I was able to take this course and truly believe that the course should continue on beyond this term. Critical to the success of this class was the absolute expertise ~~and~~ knowledge and professionalism that Dawn brought. I have a strong respect for her and believe that this course should continue on under her direction.

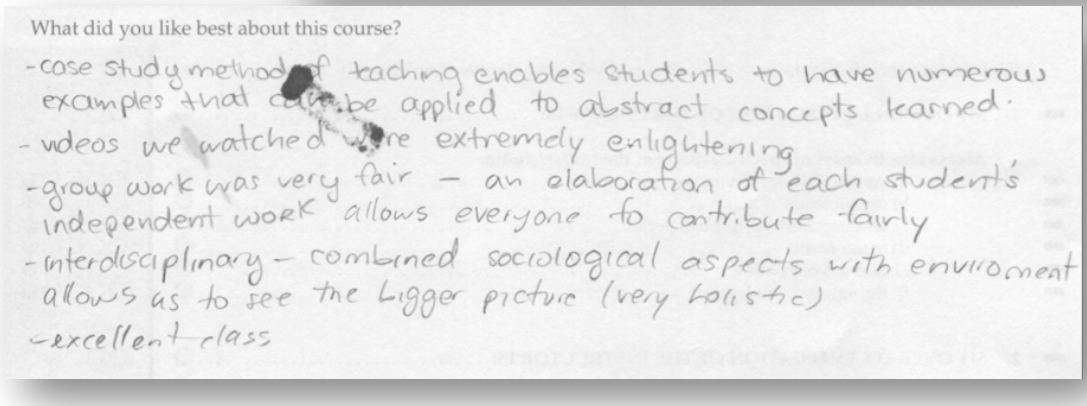


Please elaborate on your responses to any of the questions on the other side.

The instructor was extremely dedicated helpful & informative. Learned a lot about assessing info & thinking critically.

What did you like best about this course?

The content was interesting, informative & relevant.



What did you like best about this course?

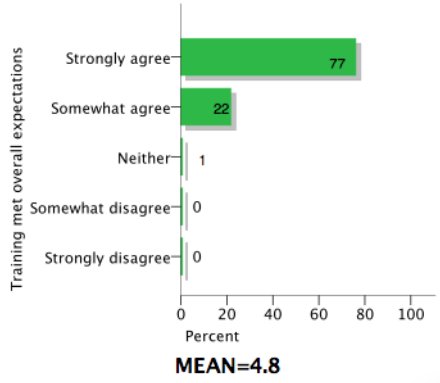
- case study method of teaching enables students to have numerous examples that can be applied to abstract concepts learned.
- videos we watched were extremely enlightening
- group work was very fair – an elaboration of each student's independent work allows everyone to contribute fairly
- interdisciplinary – combined sociological aspects with environment allows us to see the bigger picture (very holistic)
- excellent class

How Aboriginal health professionals assessed my training

- Project evaluation by external consultant; Cancer Care Ontario, "Let's Take a Stand Against...Colorectal Cancer!": Evaluation Report, p. 27-28 (by Academica Group Inc.) https://www.cancercare.on.ca/common/pages/UserFile.aspx?fileId=99780

Across all of the 22 sessions included in the evaluation, participants were highly appreciative of the preparedness of the facilitator, and the clarity and delivery of the presentation (*Figures 4.3 – 4.4*). They agreed that the workshop was the right length of time, with neither too much nor too little content. They were satisfied with the opportunities provided to interact with other participants, and enjoyed the community activities.

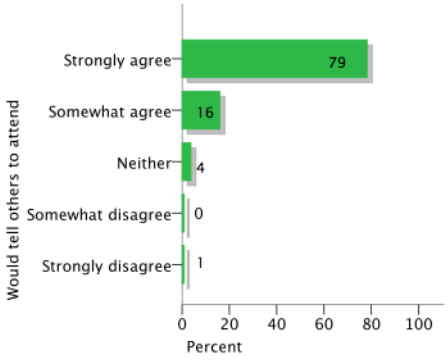
Figure 4.1 – Training Met Overall Expectations (Workshop Evaluation v.1)



MEAN=4.8

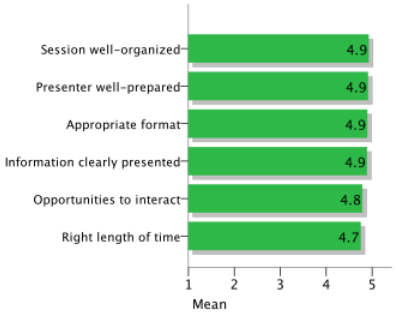
(5=Strongly agree and 1=Strongly disagree)

Figure 4.2 – Would Tell Others to Attend (Workshop Evaluation v.2)



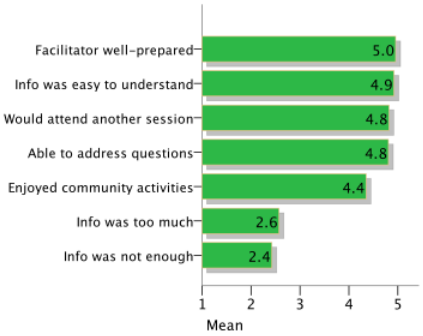
MEAN=4.7

Figure 4.3 – Satisfaction with Training Session (Workshop Evaluation v.1)



(5=Strongly agree and 1=Strongly disagree)

Figure 4.4 – Satisfaction with Training Session (Workshop Evaluation v.2)



(5=Strongly agree and 1=Strongly disagree)

When asked to share what they liked best about the LTSACC training, workshop participants highlighted the "easy-to-understand" presentation from the "friendly," "well-informed" facilitator, and the "comfortable, laid back" atmosphere:

> *Facilitator was knowledgeable and perceptive of different world issues. Workshop was very encouraging and warm to be inclusive of learning and exploration of ideas. All participants were placed at ease right from the beginning of the workshop to end. (Workshop, Trained)*

Teaching Experience

Pedagogical training in academic teaching

Training Summary

Paivi Abernethy

Select the Internal Training Course Name to view Details.

Internal Training			
Course Name	**Course Start Date**	**Course End Date**	**Status**
Course Design Fundamentals	02/28/2011	02/28/2011	Completed
Effective Lesson Plans	02/08/2011	02/08/2011	Completed
Teaching and Learning Styles	01/19/2011	01/19/2011	Completed
Preparing to Teach at UW (ITA)	09/14/2010	09/14/2010	Completed

Academic teaching experience

As a Sessional Lecturer:

- "Environmental Justice and Health" (Spring 2012)
  - ✓ A new course developed from scratch
- "Environmental Analysis & Solutions III: Greening Communities" (Fall 2013)
  - ✓ Mandatory core course in qualitative research methods
  - ✓ Syllabus adapted from the previous year (significant changes, incl. the readings)

As a Teaching Assistant:

- "Politics of Sustainable Communities" (Winter 2011)
- "Environmental Analysis & Solutions III": Qualitative methods (Fall 2010)

Adult education development and teaching

In all my positions held within academia, as well as the public and private sectors, I have regularly provided lectures, workshops, and public presentations for academics and other professionals. The list below offers a few specific highlights from those tasks:

- Created a new modular audience specific, global internal training concept for the entire corporation: planned, implemented and evaluated the 3–day pilot training session, including hands-on laboratory workshops, targeting African and Asian distributors (as the Application Manager with Chr.Hansen);
- Created a new internal training concept adaptable for different levels of the organization, developed and implemented the education plan, incl. the development of a binder and target audience specific training sessions (as the Application Scientist with CRS Robotics);
- Functioned as a PhD co-supervisor (the company representative) for a Trent University student: Automation of Forensic Science (as the Application Scientist with CRS Robotics).

Päivi managed several Customer Development Projects succesfully with global customers in the period, where Chr. Hansen benefited from her ability to see the projects from many angles. Both the overall strategic angle and the more specific tech
fermentations had to be planned executed and report

7 months after job-start, Päivi was the driving force b
where Chr. Hansen's main distributors were trained i
fermented milks. The work included planning the sem
giving lectures and facilitating workshops. All carried
the rest of the team.

Beside the larger customer projects, Päivi was also resp
service. She worked as the team leader for a team of 3 t
customers and sales staff were handled under time press
the new job, Päivi managed to keep a high service level,
across her table.

Personality
It has been a **big** pleasure to work with Päivi. Her high er
working environment surrounding her, has given me a lot
old issues, and created a lot of ideas in my mind on how to improve efficiency in the work we do. Her intelligence and ability to see the big picture, makes her an attractive discussion partner when a problem has to be solved. Her humour makes it fun !

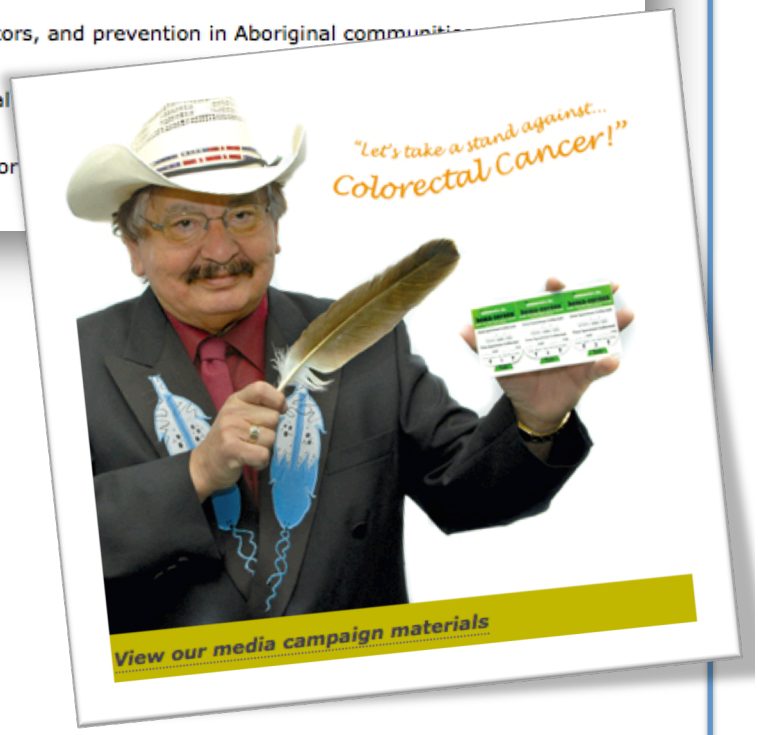
I would like to give Päivi Katila my warmest testimony, and I wish her a lot of success in her coming job.

[redacted]
Head of Department,
Email: [redacted]

Public health workshops

In general

As a community health promoter and health promotion specialist, it was my main task to educate other health professionals and social service providers about various aspects of chronic disease prevention, community engagement, advocacy, and healthy policy development. At Cancer Care Ontario, I travelled across the province to train health professionals about how to provide culturally appropriate cancer prevention education in First Nations communities (Community Learning Series).



First Nations

Organized lectures and workshops as well as Health Fairs in First Nations Reserves and Indian Friendship Centres upon invitation, both locally and Ontario-wide (as Aboriginal Health Promotion Specialist, Community Health Promoter, & as a consultant), i.e. in Sioux Lookout, Parry Sound, Magnetawan First Nation (FN), Henvey Inlet FN, Nipissing FN, Wasauksing FN, Shawanaga FN, and for the Seven Generation Education Institute in Fort Frances, ON.

Appendix 1: Sample rubric

Example: A rubric I adapted for ERS 275: Environmental Justice and Health

ERS 275: Rubric for Independent Research Paper (35% of final grade)
A. Basic requirements: NAME _____
i. **Submitted June 28** in UW-ACE (file name: Your name Your group, e.g., Larson Mosses) **OR 0%** (unless I pre-approved an extension)
ii. Format (**-1% each if absent**): appropriate title; name on p. 1; pages numbered. Put references, labeled figures/pictures and summary tables, and appendices with data (if necessary) as extra pages at the end.
iii. Length of text: 2, (Times font, 1" margins; **-3%/extra page**).
B. Rubric elements: These components/criteria are equally important. The total length of the paper should be 2,500 words. *If you are doing a literature review, utilize/discuss data from refereed journal articles to engage with the environmental/social justice discourse*.

Element	50-60%	60-70%	70-80%	80%+	Comments
Introduction & definitions (incl. ethical basis for the case)	Poor abstract. Very weak introduction to issue and no definitions.	Inaccurate and limited introduction to issue and/ or definitions.	Generally good, but not as fully developed as →.	Accurate and comprehensive introduction to the issue and definitions to abstract terms used. This is clearly linked to description of the specific environmental justices issue you studied and why it is of interest from the perspective of environmental justice.	
Stakeholders, vulnerable populations, types of environmental justice & types of knowledge used for decision making	Poorly identified or described stakeholders, vulnerable populations & types of justice	Descriptions of stakeholders, vulnerable populations & types of justice limited.	Generally acceptable, but not fully developed/justified	Clear descriptions and a good analysis of all stakeholders, vulnerable populations & types of justice.	
Discussion (incl. facts & sociocultural/ political context; general analysis)	Inadequate discussion of the case study, with inaccurate facts and/or poor analysis.	Limited in one or more dimensions.	Generally good, but lacks adequate detail in some parts relative to →	Concise and accurate discussion of the case study, with accurate facts and good analysis. Well-referenced, justified arguments. Adequate description of the situation in the sociocultural context.	
Suggested solutions & barriers/ facilitators and/or lessons learnt	Non existent or inadequate	Limited	Generally good, but lacks adequate detail in some parts relative to →	Draws together various parts of the case study to suggest some solutions or lessons learnt. Reveals a deep understanding of the levels of complexity with respect to a given environmental justice case.	
Writing effectiveness	Unclear, imprecise, poorly organized and/or rambling	Weak, but not as weak as ←	Generally good, but not as strong as →	Clear and concise, with precise descriptive language and well-organized paragraphs.	
Spelling and grammar	Multiple errors; Appears not to have been proofed.	Several errors	Few errors	Very few if any errors; Appears to have been proofed carefully. (Recommendation: have a trusted classmate or friend proofread it for you before you submit)	
References	Very little referencing, perhaps course textbook but nothing else. Not cited properly.	Minimal referencing and/or engagement with journal articles.	Fewer references, including several peer-reviewed journal articles. Some problems with citation style.	**Ten** or more relevant references other than readings, some additional references to readings/ lectures. References cited appropriately in the text; you do not require page numbers unless quoting, which you must indicate with quotation marks. Proper citation format (APA; See syllabus for details).	