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**Teaching Statement**

*Development of Teaching Beliefs*

My teaching philosophy conceptualizes students as sense-makers and active problem solvers. I am a former teacher with a master's degree in teaching and a doctorate in education policy from Michigan State University. As a passionate advocate for education and social justice issues, I strive to positively impact young people's lives in both my professional and academic work.

My experience with students from a variety of academic backgrounds and cultures strongly influences my teaching and defines "positive impact" and "success." As a fifth-grade teacher, each of my students could point to our definition, hanging on the wall—a painted canvas with their handprints—"Your talent is the world's gift to you. What you do with it, is your gift to world." This belief, that we all have unique talents and it is our social responsibility to contribute them toward public good, undergirds my teaching and research.

*Teaching in the Classroom*

My teaching experience began as a Teach for America corps member and Chicago Public Schools teacher. Entering a south-side, high risk, urban school, I was aware of my students' vulnerability and academic challenges. As an educator, I have built a balanced literacy curriculum with colleagues and worked with the University of Illinois-Chicago to revise a new addition for a progressive mathematics curriculum, Math Trailblazers. Through perseverance and teamwork our third-grade class attained the highest reading and math scores in school history. These scores were a result of effective instruction, increased parental involvement, and student engagement. Our students believed in themselves, and it showed.

As an educator, I have worked in rural, urban, and suburban schools with students from varied academic backgrounds. As a fifth-grade elementary schoolteacher, I developed a modified flipped classroom, infusing technology into the curriculum. This included creating mathematics videos to present content and teaching students how to develop, prepare, and present their own content through Keynote, iBook, and other media. Though parents and students were initially skeptical of the increased responsibility to create rather than absorb content and to iteratively engage in technology, they quickly became invested in the initiative. For example, parents felt they could finally help their children with mathematics homework because they knew how I was presenting and explaining content. Parents with special needs students could watch lessons several times, pause it, or take breaks. Finally, all students reported feeling more independent completing their mathematics work. Student engagement and application of content in novel contexts, requires students to both learn and demonstrate learning through doing.

*Teaching in the University*

For the past 11 years, I have worked as a teacher and mentor in P-20 schools or university—

public and private. I have found learning happens when students are inspired to consider their world and, this consideration often occurs with teaching that requires students to go beyond tacit knowledge accumulation and question, hypothesize, and explore the concepts and phenomenon they are studying. This is my primary goal in my interactions with undergraduate and graduate students, and as such I include students directly in research and provide them opportunities to prepare and present content at national and international academic conferences. Over the past two years, I have supported 5 students in the development and presentation of Teachers in Social Media research, and my undergraduate students have won their division in the Undergraduate Research and Arts Forum, with first place presentations consecutively.

Within Teachers in Social Media, I direct 11 students and collaborate closely with other faculty within education and computer science. Students are divided into one of three teams to coordinate research and training including a social network team, an educational content team, and a computer science team. I focus on maintaining a community of learners through formal and informal venues. I hold bi-weekly full team meetings, meet regularly within social media content teams to discuss analysis, preliminary results, and manuscript preparation, and meet with students individually to check in on coursework and degree progress. Informally, I have team dinners several times a year to celebrate students' accomplishments and project work. In all my interactions with students, I seek to facilitate their exploration of theoretical perspectives, experiences, and support their development of a unique skillset.

For more information on the Teachers in Social Media Project, check out our website at:  
[www.TeachersInSocialMedia.com](http://www.TeachersInSocialMedia.com)