

Farber, Teaching Statement

My pedagogical strategies are dedicated to teaching the principles of educational technology research through hands-on methods. I study best practice models that pertain to game-based learning, project-based learning, educational technology, and new media literacy. Then I apply research-based approaches throughout the teacher education courses I design. This practice encourages students to become active learners. In my teacher education courses, it models how students have a sense of agency through digital media content creation and publication. In November 2014, I was awarded a competitive campus-wide Trailblazer Award from New Jersey City University.

I draw upon new media tools with affordances that invite students to play with digital content. When teaching principles of remix in EDTC 623: Introduction to Educational Technology, we used software to create viral video campaigns. Media was authored and then shared in communities of practice. The purpose of the project was to analyze how ideas today spread, compared to how technology tools facilitated changes in the past (e.g., social media and the spread of the Arab Spring in 2011, compared to how the printing press in America was a tool to mass distribute the revolutionary ideas in Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*).

Guided by my research of project-based and game-based learning, my teaching methods reflect a pedagogy that encourages students to create digital content, which is published for public exhibition. The result is the use of games as a model, which the student remixes to generate new media content. For example, in EDTC 615: Technologies in the Social Studies Curriculum, my students explore how that historical empathy can be taught in social studies classrooms. The culminating collaborative projects pertain to games as systems, which model real world interconnections.

Playing serious learning games (e.g., *Darfur Is Dying*, *Peacemaker*) can promote empathy with students. As students play, I ask them to be attentive to the story structure, accuracy of content, the design elements, and the learning outcomes that result from the choices the player might make. I then ask them to design game-like experiences for other users. In doing so they reflect on the processes that drive the way players make choices. In EDTC 642: Introduction to Authoring Tools, the class is given the opportunity to create games using a choice of design applications. One group used the interactive fiction authoring Twine to write text-based game. The result was a narrative-driven, branched story told from the second-person perspective. Set in the Valley Forge encampment during the American Revolution, some of the choices presented to the player were in French. The students wanted to evoke a sense of bewilderment for the player, who took the role of a young soldier confronted with orders Marquis de Lafayette, the French military officer.

My extensive experience in teacher education coursework at New Jersey City University, and undergraduate writing classes at Rutgers University, along with my broad research interests make me confident and enthusiastic about teaching a wide variety of teacher education courses, from designing meaningful learning experiences to the application of game-based and project-based learning in 21st Century classrooms. My teaching strategies are dedicated to teaching the principles of digital literacy in hands-on ways that will remain with students well after coursework concludes. I am comfortable combining lectures, in-class and online discussions, and analytical and creative media assignments to help students become aware of the ways that playfulness creates the zone of proximal development.