

Evidence of Excellence in Teaching

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Presented on the following pages are quantitative and qualitative evaluations of my teaching. Areas of evaluation encompass: 1) knowledge of material; 2) concern for student learning; 3) organization of presentation; 4) scope of discussions; 5) student-teacher interaction; 6) communication skills; 7) value of section; and 8) overall evaluation. Teaching effectiveness data from both USC and UCLA are provided. As these data demonstrate, my average instruction effectiveness for ranking across eight areas of evaluation for all courses taught was 8.57 out of 9. In the broader context of cross-course departmental evaluations, I have been consistently ranked in the 95th percentile or higher throughout my teaching career.

As a complement to my extensive “traditional” experience as a Teaching Fellow at UCLA, my experience at USC has emphasized a set of innovative “immersion-based” teaching skills. The Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy is a heavily research-oriented department with an explicit “learning through research immersion” focus. During my first two years at USC, I was given curriculum course releases (100% & 50%) in order to facilitate completion of a \$3 million NIH research project. As part of this NIH research commitment, I was directly involved in mentoring, teaching, and supervising both graduate and undergraduate students. This teaching took place in the context of immersion in ongoing collaborative data collection and analysis. Formal didactic work took place in weekly 3 hour meetings—much like seminars—in which practical research skills, theoretical competence, and analytic/interpretive skills were developed and practiced in the context of focused research projects. This unique approach to learning has helped me to refine my style of teaching and mentoring, integrating my extensive classroom skills with a practice-based apprenticeship model of “teaching and learning through doing.”

Since this project has come to an end, I have been designing and teaching graduate seminars, undergraduate major courses, and minors courses. In contrast with my experiences at UCLA (where classes with 500+ student were common), my experience at USC reflects a distinctly different philosophy of learning, in which all course offerings are run as small-group seminars. While I feel comfortable with both large lectures and small-groups, the intimacy and immediacy of engagement in the small-group seminar is my preferred style of teaching. I have included summaries of Fall 2008 teaching evaluations, and can forward evaluations for the current semester when they become available in late January.

Following the quantitative summary is a selection of student comments taken from anonymous course evaluation forms. Copies of original instruction evaluation summary forms and student comments are available upon request.

Quantitative Summary of Teaching Effectiveness (USC)

OT 655 (Doing, Being, and Meaning in Everyday Life)

Semester	Course & Section	Teaching Effectiveness Ranking (Out of 5)
Winter 2010	OT 510	Available June 2010
Fall 2009	OT 300	Available Jan 2010
Winter 2009	Course Release (Research)	n/a
Fall 2008	OT 655	4.88 / 5
Fall/Winter 2007	Course Release (Research)	n/a

Quantitative Summary of Teaching Effectiveness (UCLA)

Anthro 7 (Human Evolution/Physical Anthropology); Anthro 33 (Language and Culture)

Quarter	Course & Section	Teaching Effectiveness Ranking (Out of 9)
Spring 2002	Anthro 7 - 1R	8.48
Spring 2002	Anthro 7 - 1Q	8.03
Spring 2002	Anthro 7 - 1N	7.94
Winter 2002	Anthro 7 - 1N	7.78
Winter 2002	Anthro 7 - 1P	8.40
Winter 2002	Anthro 7 - 1Q	8.28
Spring 2001	Anthro 7 - 1C	8.32
Spring 2001	Anthro 7 - 1D	8.33
Spring 2001	Anthro 7 - 1I	8.29
Winter 2001	Anthro 7 - 1E	7.91
Winter 2001	Anthro 7 - 1F	7.92
Winter 2001	Anthro 7 - 1Q	7.98
Fall 2001	Anthro 33 - 1G	8.22
Fall 2001	Anthro 33 - 1H	8.03
Fall 2001	Anthro 33 - 1I	8.14
Spring 1998	Psychiatry 99 Honors	n/a
Winter 1998	Anthro 7 - 1R	8.68
Winter 1998	Anthro 7 - 1G	8.32
Winter 1998	Anthro 7 - 1O	7.60
Fall 1997	Anthro 7 - 1Q	8.11
Fall 1997	Anthro 7 - 1O	8.28
Fall 1997	Anthro 7 - 1B	8.24
Spring 1997	Anthro 7 - 2F	8.21
Spring 1997	Anthro 7 - 2E	8.26
Spring 1997	Anthro 7 - 2K	8.19
Winter 1997	Anthro 7 - 1Q	8.20
Winter 1997	Anthro 7 - 1I	7.88
Winter 1997	Anthro 7 - 1G	8.35
Fall 1996	Anthro 7 - 1L	8.07
Fall 1996	Anthro 7 - 1G	8.01
Fall 1996	Anthro 7 - 1C	8.10

Selected Student Comments

(Source: *Anonymous Instruction Evaluation Forms*)

Very enthusiastic about subject matter, spent a lot of time and thought to prepare for class & help explain difficult concepts. Encouraged lively discussion and respectfully criticized/explored our thoughts to help us understand our views & the views of others. Provided a strong base of knowledge & support that will be very useful for the remainder of [the] program. Excellent!

—OT 655 Student, Fall 2008

Dr. Groark facilitated discussions that were useful and informative. He showed concern for student's intellectual growth and achievement. Overall Instructor Rating: 5/5.

—OT 655 Student, Fall 2008

Kevin was absolutely fantastic! He *made* the course. He was such a benefit for me that I would have been completely lost in the course materials without his clarification of lectures, articulation of readings, and his knowledge. I felt extremely comfortable to seek help outside of class for I felt that he truly cared about where we stood in class (as far as understanding material). Very helpful. Thanks, Kevin!

—Anthro 33 Student, Fall 2001

Kevin's a highly knowledgeable person on the material of the course. He's very personable and accessible, and possesses excellent, enthusiastic communication and teaching abilities. If it's his intent, he'll make an enjoyable professor in the future. Thanks!

—Anthro 7 Student, Spring 2001

Kevin was great. He has a complete mastery of the material and was able to convey his knowledge effectively to the class. Always helpful, this section was beneficial to me. Kevin's explanations clarified course materials well. Never boring, with a great sense of humor and a desire to help his students.

—Anthro 7 Student, Spring 2001

Kevin is an excellent teacher, socially geared and easy to talk with—he made this course enjoyable. In addition, I learned from him. I hope that he doesn't lock himself away in a research position and instead chooses to teach.

—Anthro 33 Student, Fall 2001

Kevin was a great TA. He always had a structure to his sections and explained anything that I had in question before section. He also always answered questions with great clarity. His superior knowledge of the material shines through!

—Anthro 7 Student, Winter 2002

Section was *so* helpful. I found it more helpful than lecture. Kevin always expanded on ideas and explained them very well. I wish Kevin could have given lectures instead of the professor. He is an excellent TA and person. Thanks, Kevin, for all your help.

—Anthro 33 Student, Fall 2001

Strengths: The TA was very knowledgeable about the material and made discussions engaging and interesting. TA was better than most of my professors this quarter. No weaknesses.

—Anthro 7 Student, Winter 2002

Kevin Groark was by far my most helpful TA that I've had since I've been at this school. I really didn't like the course of the subject material, but I enjoyed section. I probably would have dropped the course if I had a different TA.

—*Anthro 7 Student, Winter 2001*

...Kevin was the one bright spot of this whole course—he helped us decipher the unintelligible ramblings of the professor and seemed like the one person who actually cared about teaching us something. He is a good person, is helpful & communicates well. If not for him, I would have been totally lost.

—*Anthro 33 Student, Fall 2001*

The reason I chose [this] 8:00am section was because I don't usually attend them, and I had no intention to [attend this one]. However, this TA is probably the best or second best TA I've ever had, and he almost convinced me that my loss of sleep was justified! A very good TA.

—*Anthro 7 Student, Spring 2002*

Kevin was the saving grace to this course. The professor was totally lacking in all aspects of teaching. Kevin was patient, knowledgeable, helpful and understanding. All of the qualities that [are] needed in a good teacher.

—*Anthro 33 Student, Fall 2001*

I thought Kevin did an excellent job in section. All sections were very organized and they all covered the material relevant to the course. No second was wasted, and all information given was useful within the course and for expanded interests [in] evolution. Kevin was one of the best TAs I've had since coming to UCLA.

—*Anthro 7 Student, Winter 2002*

Kevin did a wonderful job of interpreting the uninterpretable and being both an emotional and academic support for all of us. He was more knowledgeable and had better communication skills than the professor.

—*Anthro 33 Student, Fall 2001*

Kevin was a really fun TA. I've had a great time in his section because he seemed to really care about whether we understood the material and always managed to relate the lecture materials to "everyday things." He was great...

—*Anthro 7 Student, Spring 2002*

I wouldn't have been able to stomach this course without Kevin's help. He should be the one teaching. I would definitely take a class with him again. He has clear explanations and is very willing to take suggestions and genuinely wants to help with any issues. Thank you, Kevin!

—*Anthro 33 Student, Fall 2001*

Kevin—I really enjoyed attending your section. You maintained a good learning atmosphere, but also made the environment comfortable and easy going. You are the best TA I have had at UCLA...

—*Anthro 33 Student, Fall 1998*

Kevin is an excellent TA. He always expands on the ideas discussed in class and many times makes them much clearer. He has great, accurate knowledge of the subject and presents it very concisely. I liked the discussion a lot. Oh, and he has endearing mannerisms!

—*Anthro 7 Student, Winter 2002*

I believe he had a high knowledge of the material and was exciting to listen to and look at. He made the class interesting and knew what he was talking about.

—*Anthro 7 Student, Winter 2002*

Kevin was extremely knowledgeable and concerned with his students' general understanding of the class material. The discussions were clear, concise, and well-organized. Kevin coupled discussion very well with class lectures and was extremely energetic for an 8am time slot. Thanks for all of your help!

—*Anthro 7 Student, Spring 2002*

Kevin is a great TA because he is flexible. If anyone has a specific concern, he is willing to change his [discussion] schedule. He goes into detail with the lecture ideas and is *really* good at communicating in non-technical terms!

—*Anthro 7 Student, Winter 1998*

I had a great time learning in this class. It made anthro a lot more interesting. Thanks.

—*Anthro 7 Student, Winter 2002*

Kevin is a very pleasant TA. He explains all the course concepts extremely well, making difficult concepts easy to understand. He keeps everyone paying attention with his good sense of humor, and makes it clear that he really cares about the welfare of students.

—*Anthro 7 Student, Spring 2001*

Great section—you should teach this course!

—*Anthro 7 Student, Winter 1998*