

Jennifer L. Groman, PhD
Year Six Application for Tenure

Teaching, Scholarship, and Service Reflection for 2017-2022

III. A. & IV. H. Reflection on Teaching

I feel as though I was just here – putting together my portfolio for Fall, 2021 and my application for promotion to Associate Professor – my, as it turns out, *successful* application for promotion to Associate Professor. What a great feeling.

As I write this reflection, I am looking forward to Year Six – a new College Dean, hope toward getting back into the field to visit internship students, hope toward once again offering optional face-to-face Saturday sessions, and a new move to 16-week classes in Spring semester, 2023. I anticipate a good year ahead.

Reflecting back on 2021-2022 I saw one of my first truly mentored students, Kaelin Lee, obtain her EdD. I co-hooded her with Dr. Judy Alston, and now know that Dr. Lee is moving forward to find her place in the field. She and MEd Student Sharon Scott nominated me for the Faculty Mentor Award, another great feeling.

Teaching-wise, this was a year of holding my own and being responsive to student needs. I made few major changes. I feel as though I have reached a strong balance in the courses – weekly video and office hour support, strong readings and response assignments that offer depth and choice, and constructive feedback to help students feel seen and apply their knowledge and skills to the classroom.

I revisited the basics of the courses, especially with an eye toward the State Review and HLC Review coming up this year. All Knowledge, Skills, and Disposition (KSD) statements were reviewed, and 652, 653, 654, 710, 891, and 796 KSD statements were all updated, which means the pre- and post-assessments now truly reflect the course objectives. In addition, all KSD statement alignment with current standards (ODE, NAGC/CEC, OAE) were re-examined, and I added alignments to AU SLOs, AU/COE SLOs, and Ohio Regents Standards for the upcoming reviews.

I also worked with adjunct Mrs. Janet James and Professional Instructor Dr. Pat Farrenkopf, who also teach in the program, and updated and aligned the rubrics for the culminating assignments in EDIS 652, 653, 654, 710, and 781, the two capstone courses. I am also finishing up a full revision of the EDIS 781 Capstone Thesis Handbook, something that was desperately needed. I hope this gives thesis students more support as they work through their research and writing.

So for now, everything feels tidy, everything feels ready to go into the new school year. That said, I just learned that Spring, 2023 will see our courses expanded from 12-weeks to 16-weeks, something I am very much looking forward to. This semester I am working with Pat and Janet to consider updates to those Spring courses to accommodate this extension of the semester, to deepen the content they already experience, and expand content to students' ever-changing needs in the field, including more information on diverse populations, twice-exceptional students, working with parents, and creating Written Education Plans and goals.

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L. Reflection on Scholarship

The continued growth of this scholar is a merging of the discipline of her mind and time, the culture of her passions and experiences, and the hopefulness of new works in the field. My research agenda includes creativity studies, transpersonal psychology, and giftedness.

Discipline

In their youth, musicians are taught the value of daily practice sessions. Scales, arpeggios, and etudes make up the repertoire of mastery – as does the effective use of the time spent, as a musician would say, “in the woodshed” practicing. I am a member and small group coach in the Ashland Research and Writing Community AURWC. The group gives me support in my own research and writing, and allows me a chance to lead a small group and support others in their scholarly work. I have dedicated myself to at least 30 minutes a day to reading, gathering information, writing, editing, and being made accountable to my small group for how I use the time and organize my writing projects. This is the discipline of my scholarship. I make time for it daily.

Creativity studies

From my early endorsement work at Ashland University, I discovered the fascinating breadth of creativity, specifically how certain overarching ways of being that are exemplified in creative individuals have the capacity to enhance our lives and our work. My research question today is “How does creativity impact teachers’ professional and personal lives?”

As I move into my sixth year of scholarly work in creativity studies, I feel as though creativity training can add a sense of calm, purpose, and joy to a profession that seems rife with challenge and exhaustion. In addition, all teachers know the significant power of relationship in reaching students and supporting their potential. Creativity the way we teach it at Ashland University has the capacity to give teachers the tools they need to make these strong connections.

Transpersonal psychology

I also see that creativity work with teachers merges beautifully with my transpersonal scholarly life to create opportunities for teachers to help students identify, talk about, and resolve many of the social and emotional issues that gifted children deal with – underachievement, depression, isolation, perfectionism, social relationships, and empathy are only a few of these.

I have been working diligently to publish a scholarly work in the field of transpersonal psychology, and have joined the Association for Transpersonal Psychology (ATP). I am excited for the future – where this research and writing will take me.

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Giftedness

My teaching history - interacting with gifted children and adults who have such a unique way of being - leads me to learn more about this population. My research in the field of intelligence, giftedness, and creative individuals serve my goal of improving the Gifted Intervention Specialist endorsement program here at Ashland University, but it also frames the work I do with teachers, soothes my own feeling of alienation in teaching a misunderstood and under-served population of student, and experiencing the joys and challenges of higher education in the 21st century.

Why do we create? Because it is hopeful.

I view my scholarly and creative work as hope-full – full of hope. It is vital in these challenging days. It is an act of creation: researching and writing an article on the ways creativity work improves teaching and teachers is hopeful; researching and involving teachers in creative teaching that honors the individual, and provides a sense of mindfulness is hopeful; holding conversations about how to improve the social and emotional well-being of gifted students with an eye toward improving it is hopeful; and showing the way toward transformation is hopeful. Teaching itself is hopeful, when we are eldering individual human souls into finding their own way, their own purpose, and their own voice.

Note regarding open-access journal publications: No type of payment, monetary or otherwise, has been made by me for any of my publications.

VI. F. Reflection on Service

The continued growth of any institution is symbiotically connected with the continued growth of its leaders and members. My record of service to the university, college, department, profession, and community exemplifies my desire to actively serve Ashland University to not only support my own interests and causes, but in a responsive manner to support the organizations in those places of highest need.

My service interests fall within these areas of the University: faculty/colleague support; support of teachers of the gifted and students who are gifted; learning University structures and processes; transparency; and forwarding the good name of Ashland University as an institution. As I strive to be responsive in my teaching, I also wish to be responsive to the needs of the community, University, College, and my department. I choose service opportunities based on my ability to improve my overall knowledge and skill set, add positively to the organization, and my ability to connect deeply with the purpose of the organization.

Improving my overall knowledge and skill set

In my Year Three Review service reflection, I spoke a great deal about feeling insecure in my knowledge, skills, and capability to contribute well to service activities. I also spoke about

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not allowing uncertainty to frighten me away from service opportunities, and not letting challenges and frustrations stemming from those activities cause me to be discouraged or disconnected. I vowed to move forward with strength of commitment, openness of heart, and presence of mind.

Moving into the role of Secretary of the Faculty Welfare Committee gives me a chance to lead and learn about committee work and be accountable for the work we do. In Spring, 2022, I was nominated to represent faculty as University Human Resources and Administration moved to revisit and select new medical and pharmacy insurance plans – it does not have an official name, but could be called a Benefits Stewardship Committee. Meetings continued through Summer, 2022, we are currently making those decisions. Doing this work meant a very steep learning curve for me. The committee and our representatives from McGohan Brabender have been supportive, and I feel part of an important team that has listened to university constituents (faculty, staff, administration) to improve the health and welfare of us all.

Adding positively to the organization

Taking on Higher Division Chair with the Ohio Association for Gifted Children provides me the opportunity to connect with university colleagues from throughout the state, and establish and maintain a sense of camaraderie with other institutions. I view this position not in a competitive way, but in a way that connects us to make us all stronger. By initiating an updated list of institutions in Ohio with Talent Development programs, I am offering Ohio schools a place where they can find a program that fits them perfectly. I believe that Ashland University has the best program in the state, but we are most definitely not the only program. This kind of friendly competition and camaraderie inspires me to keep the division collegial and helpful to all, and shows Ashland University as a collaborative leader in the field.