

### **May Lin: Teaching Statement**

My background in community-engaged research, activism, and academic support for high school youth shape my expansive approaches to teaching and mentoring in university settings. I am constantly honing transformative pedagogy—whether teaching about relational racialization in a university classroom, facilitating a workshop on workers rights for immigrant workers, or developing curriculum about queer communities of color for high school youth. I equip students to both thrive in and transform the world—paying close attention to needs according to first-generation status, race, gender, class, sexuality, and disability.

I enliven theory in connection with knowledge and limitations of students' standpoint. I facilitate learning from diverse experiences within and outside of the classroom via activities that link concepts to students' own experiences, or lack thereof. For example, in my 40-person self-designed course on "Asian Americans and Education" at UCLA, I created a gallery walk where students circulated in groups, answering questions and reading their classmates' responses about their education experiences, family migration histories, challenges, and resources. I then visually mapped patterns on the board as we noted similarities and differences. In small groups, students created charts comparing how readings (e.g. Zhou and Lee's "hyper-selectivity," a community report on education barriers for second-generation Southeast Asian Americans, and Ochoa's *Academic Profiling*) would explain these patterns illuminated in the gallery walk. Students put not only theories, but their own experiential knowledge, in dynamic conversation with each other.

This example also highlights my approach to accommodating a wide range of learning styles via interactive, diverse activities and assessments. As a once-shy student, I recognize that many students do not feel confident speaking in class—perhaps shaped by being an immigrant, first-generation college student, and other factors. I often incorporate individual free-writes and pair shares on the day's reading at the beginning of class. As another example, in a high-school youth workshop on gender and sexuality, I had students place pictures of celebrities and fictional characters on a spectrum of masculinity and femininity to illustrate social construction of gender. Students spoke about characteristics associated with gender in small groups. We then reflected on gendered social norms and students' own experiences after watching a Judith Butler video on gender performativity. Such methods scaffold understandings of abstract theoretical concepts.

I also cultivate foundational academic skills by providing and modeling guidelines for active reading so students can first understand authors' arguments before jumping to critique. Students create group presentations and handouts where they succinctly synthesize the readings' main arguments and illustrate concepts with examples from current events, arts (e.g. spoken word pieces), and/or their own lives. Students credit these presentations with helping them connect course concepts to each other and to "real life" matters. I also devote substantive class and one-on-one time to paper-writing, including formulating theses and making convincing arguments.

Finally, my pedagogy involves service-learning and social transformation. In addition to supporting high school and undergraduate data collection and analysis of youth civic leadership in California, I have helped young women create a zine highlighting the need for youth development resources in Southeast Asian American communities and made a documentary with youth about gentrification in Sunset Park, Brooklyn. These perspectives influence me to challenge knowledge production hierarchies and illuminate social change efforts in my teaching. I include community reports such as Khmer Girls in Action's youth action research on health issues and invite guest speakers such as the first Hmong Sacramento school board member. To further bridge classroom and community, I gave students extra credit to present on their own involvement in on-campus activities, such as the First Generation Resource Center, and to link them with class concepts.

Students have reflected that my teaching helps them understand and analyze their world, feel affirmed in their identities while learning about others, and empowers them to become "agents of social change." In sum, my teaching seeks to empower students to understand their world in more liberatory ways, refracted not only through social critique but openings for change, as well as to provide them with the tools and inspiration to contribute to a re-imagined world.