Matthew J. Bietz
Teaching Statement

I am drawn to an academic career because the university is a space where people of different backgrounds and experiences can come together to discuss and share ideas. As a teacher I appreciate the opportunity to bring students into those discussions to share what we know with each other.

Teaching Interests

I look forward to teaching and developing courses at both the undergraduate and graduate level. As an educator, I have a three-fold responsibility to students. The first facet is providing the information, language, and ontological base that students need to understand their discipline and connect with the subject area. The second is to provide a strong foundation in skills and methods that allows students to extend what they know, engage with new material, and critically interrogate their world. The third facet is to help students develop a strong emotional and moral center that will guide their decisions. In this area, I am inspired by Paul Thagard's work on emotional cognition, in which he argues that rational decision making is guided by an emotional core that is learned from and shaped by social engagement [1; 2].

I am eager to explore different and new methods for meeting these obligations to students. The traditional lecture format privileges the information transfer facet of education, but does less well with developing skills and enculturation. The courses I have taught have involved several strategies for fostering deeper engagement with students, including in-class exercises, group projects, and student-led discussions. I look forward to expanding these efforts in my teaching through methods like blended learning and flipped classrooms, in which students learn new content and watch video-recorded lectures as homework, allowing for more active engagement in the classroom. I am also eager to experiment with online learning, MOOCs, and other new methods for interacting with learners.

I also see design as a powerful teaching tool, and hope to incorporate it into my courses. Design exercises provide rich opportunities for addressing all facets of education: providing a platform for learning information, mastering skills, and engaging in problems that challenge and develop beliefs and values. As faculty for the Values in Design workshops, I have helped to create a week-long intensive curriculum that addresses each of these facets through a set of design projects in which interdisciplinary groups of students produce technology prototypes and design rationales in response to values-based design challenges.

Teaching Experience

I have had the opportunity to teach in both Music and Information Science, and at both the undergraduate and graduate level. At the State University of New York at Stony Brook, I was a teaching assistant for undergraduate Music Appreciation classes, where I both taught lectures and led discussion

sections. After several semesters, I was given the opportunity to be an instructor for my own Music Appreciation class. Most Music Appreciation classes are taught chronologically, which works well in the typical semester-long class. However, as this was a summer class, a chronological syllabus would have covered hundreds of years of history in a single week. This gave me the opportunity to rethink the syllabus and address a key difficulty with the typical syllabus—students find it difficult to see the relevance in music from hundreds of years ago and the other side of the world. Instead of focusing on specific time periods, I developed a new syllabus arranged around thematic commonalities. A topic like "vocal acrobatics" could bring together Mozart's "Queen of the Night" aria, Qawwali music from Pakistan, scat singing in jazz, and contemporary pop singers. By making connections across historical, cultural and genre boundaries, the students were able to relate to music that might otherwise have seemed quite foreign.

At the University of Michigan School of Information, I was a teaching assistant for "Evaluation of Systems and Services" and "Design of User Interfaces." In these classes I graded assignments and exams, and periodically lectured and led discussions. Both of these classes were structured around group projects, enhancing the learning process with active participation and engagement with the design and evaluation techniques we were teaching. A significant portion of my duties involved working closely with individuals and groups as they planned and completed their projects. I not only helped the students understand and apply the class materials, but also advised them on project management and team processes. I received strong evaluations in these classes, with 87% of my students responding either "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" to the statement, "Overall, the instructor was an excellent teacher."

More recently, I served as faculty for the 2012 Values in Design Workshop at UC Irvine. This workshop brought together 36 doctoral students for an intensive week that integrated theoretical discussion with hands-on design of values-sensitive information technologies. I have also been a guest lecturer in several courses at UC Irvine, including Social Analysis of Computerization, Organizational Information Systems, and Computer-Supported Cooperative Work.

I especially enjoy working with individual students and involving them in active research. As a doctoral student, I oversaw undergraduate and graduate students who were helping to run my dissertation experiments and code conversational data. Since then, I have supervised several graduate students at the University of Washington and the University of California-Irvine. I also recently served on a dissertation committee at the University of Washington. These students were involved with conducting interviews, performing field observations, doing qualitative data analysis, and designing visualization software. By being involved in research, students learn not just how to think about the topics of interest, but also how to plan and conduct research and contribute to the scientific literature. Providing legitimate opportunities for participation in research helps students become full members of the academic community.

I have a strong commitment to teaching, and I look forward to interacting with students both in and out of the classroom as a faculty member.

References

1. Thagard, P. (2002). The passionate scientist: Emotion in scientific cognition. In P. Carruthers, S. Stich & M. Siegal (Eds.), *The cognitive basis of science* (pp. 235-250). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
2. Thagard, P. (2004). Rationality and science. In A. Mele & P. Rawlings (Eds.), *Handbook of rationality* (pp. 363-379). Oxford: Oxford University Press.