

Statement of Teaching and Mentorship Philosophy

Whether I am lecturing in a large class setting, guiding a student in a one-on-one session, advising students on their research pursuits, providing clinical supervision to a novice therapist, teaching groups of professionals through educational seminars and workshops, or even providing psychoeducation to patients trying to understand the maintaining factors of their disorder for the first time, my overall approach to teaching stays constant: treat the learner as an equal contributor in the knowledge exchange. That is, my intention in any type of teaching is to empower the learner to come to an understanding of the information through his or her own individual process, and to learn how to wield that knowledge in order to meet his or her own goals.

One other important aspect to my teaching philosophy is the ability to give and receive critical feedback. This has been identified as one of my areas of strength by my own past supervisors and professors, and I strive to model this skill when I am in the teacher role. I welcome feedback, with use of formal feedback mechanisms and with regular informal check-ins with my students. When provided with areas in need of improvement or change, I am proactive about demonstrating that this feedback was valued and effectual in resulting in positive change. I also have been able to uphold my own limits by being transparent with students about which changes I can commit to that do not threaten the basic objectives of training I am trying to achieve with them. I believe this is a delicate balance that significant experience in a range of teaching interactions has helped me establish and hone. This philosophy has guided my past and current mentoring relationships, which I have been able to continue to practice in my first year here with my full-time post-baccalaureate research assistant and 6 undergraduate research assistants, and now with my three current graduate students who started working with me this past summer.

In addition, my previous teaching experiences have allowed me to take on a range of courses at the graduate and undergraduate level during my first three semesters here. In the Fall of my first year, I was able to adopt and revamp the required diversity science course for the clinical area doctoral program. This was a great experience, one that allowed me to draw from several similar courses from other top programs around the country to round out the course content and relevant readings, adding to the already strong content in the original course. In addition, my extensive training experience with clinical professionals across the country have informed my additions of experiential and training pieces to the course that I hope I can expand on even further in our clinical curriculum. In the Spring of my first year, I took on the required research methods course for our clinical area doctoral program, which was already quite established by the previous instructors in my area (Dr. Tim Smith and Dr. Sheila Crowell), and which I was able follow in my implementation to retain core crucial features from their strong iterations of the course.

I have been excited to continue expansion of my teaching repertoire by teaching a foundational course (Abnormal Psychology) to the undergraduates this Fall of my second year, and while the additional feature of having to deliver this course in an online format has not been without its challenges, it has left me reenergized about undergraduate education and facilitated significant creativity within the current constraints. In the Spring, I will be able to continue to contribute to undergraduate instruction by providing an advanced undergraduate seminar in Psychology on myths about mental illness in the media (a contemporary course on societal stigma), and having the opportunity to further hone my delivery of Research Methods again. I look forward to other chances to expand my teaching in the department, to include courses in cross-cultural psychology, evidence-based psychotherapy approaches, experimental methods, and technology in psychology.