Suchy: Teaching Statement

<u>Graduate and Undergraduate Teaching.</u> Since joining the department in the fall of 2002, I have contributed to both graduate (Cognitive Neuropsychology; Interviewing and Cognitive Assessment; Clinical Neuropsychology of Emotion; Neuropsychological Assessment Prepracticum and Practicum; Biological Bases of Affective and Cognitive Processes) and undergraduate teaching (Cases in Clinical Neuropsychology; Neuropsychology of Emotion and Personality).

As an instructor, I try to achieve three main goals. First, I strive to deliver conceptually rich lectures that facilitate deep-level understanding and meaningful learning. My style is to first present the "big picture," which may include a presentation of a historical perspective, examples of relevance to everyday life, and the hierarchical relationships between the current topic and other topics discussed in previous lectures or prior coursework. Only after solidly anchoring a given topic within the bigger picture do I proceed to present more detailed and focused information. This allows students to understand how topics relate to one another, and inherently encourages rehearsal of previously learned material.

Second, I challenge students to be active participants who contribute to class discussions, ask questions, or raise related topics or issues from other courses or even from their daily lives. Similarly, I expect that students *themselves* generate answers as to how any new material relates to material covered in prior classes. This facilitates deep encoding of both new and old material, while also facilitating alertness, interest, and investment in the learning process. As a further means of reinforcing learning through active participation, I organize hands-on exercises that allow the students to see the relevance of each topic to their lives. For example, in the undergraduate neuropsychology classes, students perform exercises that simulate certain neurologic conditions, allowing them to experience the phenomenology of some of the disorders discussed in class.

Lastly, I believe that assessment of students' knowledge is yet another opportunity for learning. Thus, in my exams, I ask questions that require students to apply what they have learned in novel ways, or to integrate across topics covered in the course of the semester, rather than regurgitate memorized details. I also review the entire exam with the class, to further ensure that students have the opportunity to learn from their mistakes, or to further consolidate what they had already learned.

I have been receiving highly positive feedback from students (for example, 83% of students in my most recent undergraduate class endorsed "strongly agree" for the item "overall effective instructor," with the remaining 17% endorsing "agree"). Students invariably comment on finding the material I cover challenging (e.g., students commented that, "This was one of the most comprehensive reviews of anatomy that I've ever had" or "a challenging and stimulating class"), but also express appreciation for having learned a lot while finding the learning process enjoyable (e.g., "She incorporated relatable real-world examples and humor into her lectures, and encouraged (if not at times demanded!) class participation and engagement," or "the way she made us learn as we got along was just astonishing" or "discussions were entertaining and thought provoking"). I am appreciative for having the opportunity to have a positive impact on our students, as well as for the opportunity to work with students who are eager to learn and to be challenged!

<u>Research Supervision</u>. Since joining the department, I have served as the primary research advisor for 13 graduate students. From among these, 7 have completed their Ph.D., 1 is currently working on her Master's degree, 2 graduated with a terminal Master's degree, and 3 left the program after completing their first year. All my advisees who earned their Ph.D. completed the program in six years (five years plus internship). Additionally, I have co-supervised additional four students, all of whom have completed their Ph.D. . Lastly, I have supervised a number of Senior Honors Theses, as well as several UROP funded projects with undergraduates.

I meet individually with each student on an as-needed basis (ranging approximately from several times a week to once every three weeks, though standing weekly meetings are the mode), and have group meeting with the entire lab as needed (but no less than two times a semester). I believe that both group and

individual meetings are crucial for the students' growth. In particular, individual meetings are an opportunity for the students to ask about specific aspects of their project and seek advice about their educational and career goals, as well as more personal questions related to their professional development. The group meetings are an opportunity for everyone to keep apprised of other projects in the lab, as well as to engage in a group problem solving process to facilitate continued improvement of the general organization and efficiency of our work. Additionally, these meetings serve as a forum for reading and discussion of articles, and for sharing the results of our own work.

<u>Program Development.</u> I have developed, and then coordinated for 12 years, our department's program for training students in clinical neuropsychology. Our clinical neuropsychology trainees have done exceptionally well: They have all secured prestigious neuropsychology internships (e.g., University of Florida, UCSD); after completing internship, all our students complete a 2-year postdoctoral fellowship in neuropsychology (nationally only about 75% of applicants get placed); after completing their postdoctoral training, students moved on to academic medical center jobs.

<u>Course Development.</u> Since my last review, I developed a new course (Biological Bases of Affective and Cognitive Processes) in response to changes in curriculum requirements mandated by the APA. I first taught the course in the spring of 2018. The response from students was highly positive. Specifically, the average score for the item "Overall, this was an effective course" was 5.7, and for the item "Overall, this was an effective instructor" was 5.8. Students commented that "The connection to real-world examples and Yana's lecture style were very effective" and "The easy-going nature and receptiveness of Dr. Suchy made the class an overall positive learning environment, which facilitated discussion." I intend to teach this course approximately every other year to facilitate students' timely completion of the APA requirements.

In addition, over the summer 2017, I was part of a three-faculty team (with Matt Euler and Sommer Thorgusen) revamping and optimizing the first-year graduate assessment sequence. Out of these efforts, a new course was developed (Foundational Clinical Skills) that focuses on helping students develop skills that comprise the so-called "nonspecific" factors in psychological intervention, while also facilitating effective interviewing and test administration skills. The course is integrated with two other first-year assessment courses and is comprised of lectures, practice interviewing sessions, and individual supervision of students interviews and test administration.