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Statement of Teaching

Teaching Philosophy

My teaching grows from the same questions that organize my research and clinical practice: how social work understands disability, how those understandings shape clinical judgment, and what changes when disabled and Deaf people are treated as sources of knowledge about their own lives. I have practiced clinical social work since 2009, taught for more than a decade across BASW, MSW, and doctoral programs, and built a research program on language deprivation, identity formation, and behavioral health access among d/Deaf people. This work is a single body of work, and three commitments organize it: Disability Justice, clinical judgment, and accessibility. My aim in every course is to create a space that is both demanding and supportive, where students are pushed to think harder than they expected and given the structure they need to do so.

First, social work cannot be taught in a vacuum. What the profession knows is rooted in a history that has marginalized disabled, Deaf, LGBTQIA+, and BIPOC people, among many others. I ask students to connect what they are learning to that history and to the present struggle for equity. In practice, this means moving students from cultural competence toward a critical Disability Justice framework that treats disability as a source of knowledge and leadership. My teaching here draws on national work as well: as inaugural Chair of the NASW National Committee on Disabilities, I help shape how Disability Justice enters social work practice, ethics, and professional education, and how students encounter those debates as they unfold. As a DeafDisabled educator in a profession where disabled faculty remain rare, I know that my presence in the room is part of the curriculum: students learn from a life experience different from the one their textbooks assume.

Second, students build ethics and clinical judgment through practice. I hold students to a high standard of ethical and clinical reasoning, and I teach it as deliberation, developed through reflection, case work, disagreement, and diverse readings, and grounded in the best available evidence. I teach DBT, trauma-informed care, and other evidence-informed models the way I use them with clients, as structured tools that still require judgment about the person in front of you. I would also bring my own scholarship into clinical courses. The Embodiment-Identity-Access (EIA) Assessment, which I am developing with a colleague, gives students an alternative to deficit documentation: it asks what in a client's environment produces the difficulty they bring into the room, and it starts from the client's own knowledge. My bilingual English and ASL practice with Deaf, DeafDisabled, and hard-of-hearing communities shapes how I teach cultural humility: approach difference with curiosity rather than mastery, and treat clients as the experts on their own lives.

Third, accessibility is a design principle. I build every course so that students who learn differently, use assistive technology, or balance study with work and family can participate fully without asking. Captioned and signed video, alt text, and accessible documents are multiple ways to show that learning, predictable structure, and clear communication are built into my courses from the start. These elements show future social workers what accessible, justice-oriented practice looks like before they are asked to deliver it themselves.

Teaching Experience

Since 2023, as a Visiting Lecturer at the University of Kentucky College of Social Work, I have served as instructor of record for fifteen distinct courses (36 sections), all online. The range matters as much as the number: foundational ethics for BASW students; MSW courses in practice with individuals and families, theory, and psychopathology for clinical practice; advanced policy analysis; program evaluation; clinical supervision and ethics; and doctoral courses in theory, clinical praxis, social work education, and justice-informed practice. I coordinate multi-section courses and oversee more than ten instructors, co-teach the DSW capstone, and have led DSW residency week and new student orientation for three consecutive summers.

Before UK, I taught research methods and macro and micro practice in the BSW program at Gallaudet University in a fully ASL-immersive environment. For over a decade, I taught American Sign Language and disability studies at Connecticut College and Manchester Community College.

Mentoring and advising are the aspects of my teaching I find most rewarding. I co-author peer-reviewed manuscripts and a textbook proposal with DSW students, have served as a faculty mentor for two student research studies requiring IRB approval, and review MSW and DSW admissions. Students need an advisor who is easy to reach and knows the curriculum well enough to help them plan, and I bring that to advising at every level, including doctoral students.

Commitment to Effective Learning

Effective teaching is measurable, and I hold myself accountable to those measures. Across twenty-two evaluated sections at UK, students have consistently described me as responsive, fair, respectful, and thorough in my feedback, with instructor quality ratings above the college average across the full record and a perfect rating in one recent doctoral section. The comment I hear most often is that my feedback is fast and specific enough to improve the next assignment, which is exactly what I want feedback to do.

The evaluation record has also taught me a few things. Two terms were harder than the rest. One was an overload semester, and in hindsight I spread myself too thin; the other was an intensive summer format. Some of what students described reflected those conditions, and some of it was mine: feedback that took too long, grading decisions explained with too little specificity, and scheduling communication that wasn't as accurate as it needed to be. I responded with lasting changes. I now set short, predictable feedback windows and state them on the first day; when I deduct points, I explain why and name a concrete next step; I redesigned a peer-review structure that students experienced as grading each other in my place; and I keep the syllabus, the actual pace of the course, and every announcement in a single, consistent channel. The following terms showed the changes working, including in a redesigned offering of the same summer course, where my teaching received the strongest student ratings of the term. I understand effective teaching as reading evaluations closely, separating what belongs to the course from what belongs to me, and fixing what is mine.

Because most of my recent teaching has been online, I am deliberate about presence: I post weekly accessible video mini lectures that respond to patterns in students' work and prep them for the week ahead, something that students repeatedly cite as the most valuable part of the

course, and announcements written as teaching. Structure, clarity, and warmth make learning rigorous and humane in any format, including the campus classroom.

Curriculum Development and Courses I Would Bring

I build courses that institutions keep. At UK, I developed a Disability Justice course for the MSW program and carried it through curriculum approval for the BASW, redesigned two DSW courses (Critical Issues in Social Work Education and Advanced Psychopathology and Psychopharmacology), and collaborated with the Director of BASW Undergraduate Studies on expanding Disability Justice content across the curriculum. At Connecticut College, the ASL curriculum I designed for a pilot is now permanent.

My strongest record is in the clinical practice sequence, along with HBSE, ethics, and psychopathology, and I welcome the chance to bring cases from Deaf and disabled communities into clinical and simulated practice courses. Two electives would extend a clinical curriculum. In Clinical Practice with Deaf and Disabled Clients, students would learn to recognize language deprivation, distinguish its effects from the psychiatric symptoms it is often mistaken for, adapt assessment and screening so the instrument does not become a barrier, decide when and how to work with an interpreter, and adapt trauma treatment for clients whose early trauma was bound up with communication access. In Disability Justice in Clinical Practice, adapted from my approved UK course, students would learn to identify where standard assessment and documentation locate a problem in the client that belongs to the environment, and to write assessments and treatment plans that correct it. I can teach both on campus and online. In doctoral programs, I would bring my experience teaching clinical supervision, clinical praxis theory, and doctoral scholarship.

Closing

I want students to leave my courses clinically skilled, ethically grounded, and committed to accessibility and justice, prepared for the complexity of contemporary practice and for the satisfaction of doing this work well. A good education teaches students to think critically about what they know and to continue learning after the course ends. That is what I bring to every course I teach.