I approach teaching as a numbers game. In other words, my overarching objective is to grow the number of competent social work graduates engaged in some level of macro practice by creating a classroom multiplier effect, or contagion experience. I believe more social work graduates are called upon to fulfill macro responsibilities given the continued reductions in government-funded social services and the sharp political divisions that threaten the future well-being of our nation's population. I accomplish this effect in the classroom through various approaches to teaching.

The classroom is not only a physical space for required learning, but rather a hub for the pursuit of deeper levels of knowledge that are transferable to practice. For my first approach, I impart an expectation of high academic standards. These standards are rooted in grading, but the emphasis is placed on developing employable expertise and upholding the profession as its future leaders. During preliminary course conversations, I share CSWE statistics about the low number of policy practicums and published accounts of costly macro decisions that produced unintended consequences because a social work perspective was missing. Students have reported sharing that my course is not an 'easy A', but fair with clear expectations.

Secondly, I introduce discussion topics that are relatable to the entire class. This serves to reduce anxiety about the content and to gain a sense of the classroom dynamic. For instance, in an Austin-based course our first semi-circle discussion pertained to a proposed local policy to curtail barbecue smoke emitted from restaurants. The constant smoke purportedly devalued residents quality of life but opponents argued the ordinance would hurt small businesses. In barbeque-centric Austin, the policy generated a robust debate. Students also shared the story with peers, and I was able to parallel students' positions to later discussions about latent values found in anti-poverty policies. This approach expands students' confidence to engage regardless of their desired specialization.

The third factor is my instruction style. I excel at lecture instruction that incorporates graphics more than text-based slides (similar to TED Talks). I also use new multimedia technologies during lectures such as live polling through SMS messaging and audio/video contextual artifacts. I am able to instill core concepts through a combination of these lectures, subsequent micro discussions, and in-class exercises. Additionally, students are responsible for completing applied assignments that encourage them to treat the coursework as 'real world' tasks, my fourth approach to teaching. As such, students complete assignments like writing opinion editorials and delivering legislative testimony before a mock committee made up of leading bipartisan policy analysts from the community. One of my greatest teaching moments to date occurred when I happened upon a local evening news story that featured a former student. The student delivered remarks at the opening of a hospital wing dedicated to children who have eating disorders. The
student later informed me that our mock committee hearing and associated written testimony prepared her for the unexpected task. My teaching, in a small but exponential way, contributed to thousands of people learning about a valuable community resource for children in need.

Moreover, I believe the most successful students are not those who excel at rote learning alone, but those who use courses to challenge their understanding of current social work practice and to synthesize their learning across courses. This subjective experience calls for my last key approach to teaching, cultivating timely student feedback. In addition to traditional end-of-term course evaluations, I incorporate a mid-term evaluation and flexible one-to-one meeting opportunities outside of class to ensure that the course is progressing as planned. This feedback is solicited anonymously and in the open group setting. What's more, I harness technology to simplify the meeting process by scheduling through web-based platforms like Calendly and offering to meet virtually via Skype or Google Hangout. I learned the approach of frequent touch points when challenged by a class where nearly a fifth of the students required a learning accommodation. Our meetings allowed me to assess the viability of varied approaches to teaching the same content. The need for frequent feedback was also affirmed when providing digital literacy training to low-literacy and older adults who may have negative school memories or do not see a use for technology in their lives. I find that opening the door of communication has also afforded me subsequent research and speaking opportunities through student connections.

I have been able to hone my skills as an educator through teaching experiences in academic and nonprofit settings. I am knowledgeable of all core areas in social work education at the undergraduate and graduate levels with a preference for policy, social welfare, and organizational courses. I am also interested in courses related to the role of technology in social work. Social work practices will evolve over the next several decades in order to respond to emerging twenty-first century social problems. It is my desire to spread knowledge that equips a multitude of new practitioners with the skills to respond effectively.