

TEACHING STATEMENT | JOHN MOORE

“Preparation is everything.” -David Robinson

The quote featured above captures the essence of my teaching philosophy, which is to cultivate an inclusive and productive learning environment that prepares students to thrive as social workers. I believe that to teach is to facilitate each student’s personal and professional development using a collaborative, strengths-based approach. As a social work educator, I aim to further students’ abilities to promote social justice, combat systemic oppression, and work with individuals, organizations, and communities across a variety of modalities. To achieve this, I facilitate a classroom experience that emphasizes a pedagogical practice-feedback loop framework built on the interconnection of micro, mezzo, and macro levels of social work practice with one another. I draw from *Bloom’s Taxonomy* to help students demonstrate a foundational knowledge of social work theory and practice as well as an ability to analyze, evaluate, and apply the pedagogical content to their current and future social work practice.

To best prepare and assist students in their training and development, my duty is to deliver pedagogical content that is significant to them personally and professionally. To me, this means delivering meaningful pedagogical content that intrigues and inspires students. For example, in my *Research Methods* course I ask students to write a reflective essay describing their personal interest in social work, their professional interests, and their overall perceptions of research. The passion that students exude for their professional interests has led me to change the original structure of the final research project assignment, allowing them to conduct it with the population they wish to serve rather than one of my choosing. Championing social justice and challenging systemic oppression are the bedrock of the social work discipline, and these are the principles that inspire many students to choose social work as a career. I recognize my responsibility to a) deliver content that is centered on social justice principles and b) continuously expand my knowledge and delivery of social justice curriculum to students.

The social work discipline’s role of preparing students to become competent professionals demonstrates the importance of connecting pedagogical content to students’ professional interests. Earning a Teaching Certificate at UT Austin was integral in fostering my ability to design course assignments that resonate with students. I continually explore ways in which I can deliver pedagogical content that will have a lasting impact on students’ professional development. For example, students in my *Research Methods* class develop their own clinical assessment surveys to gain experience in applying what they have learned about measurement in survey research to a population of interest. This activity helps students apply important concepts learned in class to the practice setting. I also provide students with exposure to resources that they can use in their academic and professional careers. For instance, I conduct a workshop tutorial where students use a geographic data resource to obtain socioeconomic information about a population and work in groups to brainstorm ways this information could be used in a grant application to benefit individuals or communities. These examples signify the value I place on the meaningful and practical delivery of course content, a standard to which I hold myself.

I expect students to actively engage in the classroom and with course assignments. To foster engagement, I provide relevant course content to inspire student curiosity and connection with course material. A typical session in my classes entails an interactive lecture with students followed by individual and/or group work to apply the concepts covered in the lecture. Integrating and disseminating course content that applies to current events, students’ personal and professional experiences, and social work curricula are strategies I employ to generate student curiosity and participation. I also offer students autonomy in the development and completion of core course assignments. In one assignment, I give students the option to present their analysis and evaluation of

a self-selected journal article as either an in-person presentation or an asynchronous video presentation. Since students' prior skillsets and the methods they wish to use to present their best work are wide ranging, I will continue to prioritize the purposeful and creative dissemination of course content and assignment deliverables to promote their learning.

Authenticity is paramount to establishing a classroom environment that is conducive to advancing students' ability to champion social justice values. To authentically address systemic oppression, I openly discuss how my status as a white, cisgender male and my professional social work experiences influence my perspectives. I also discuss how I critically evaluate these perspectives to ensure that they align with social justice principles. Additionally, I prioritize the delivery of pedagogical content that is social justice-centered at the macro, mezzo, and micro levels to help students connect social justice principles to their professional interests. For example, in one *Research Methods* class, I discuss racially discriminatory housing policies enacted in the mid-20th century. After this discussion, we as a class navigate a geographic data resource to explore how these policies continue to impact the racial and socioeconomic composition of a particular midwestern city. The class session concludes with students assessing the impact of discriminatory housing policy at individual, family, and community levels and how the data we examined can be used to challenge discriminatory policies and practices.

To promote a welcoming classroom environment, I champion collaboration and respect, which I also see as necessary for student development. For example, I obtain feedback and foster dialogue with students using both individual and group communication. At the beginning of the term, I invite students to share a bit of their background, their thoughts about learning preferences, and their views on critical components of an inclusive classroom environment through a confidential survey. I employ an array of assignment modalities (e.g., presentations, written assignments, quizzes, group work, etc.) to provide students with a holistic classroom experience in which they can exhibit their expertise and application of course content in a variety of ways. For me, rigorous self-assessment, clear communication, and soliciting feedback from students is vital to fostering an inclusive learning environment. I assess and evaluate the course experience throughout the semester to ensure that I am delivering novel and meaningful content in an engaging way. This includes routine check-ins with students to gauge what aspects of the course they are captivated by as well as identifying other topics they would like to cover.

I believe that these practices foster an inclusive learning environment that is conducive to students' professional development. I have received exemplary feedback from students about my teaching style as well as the pedagogical content covered in the course. My overall instructor rating was 4.8/5 in the *Research Methods* course I taught. Evaluation comments such as "*Professor Moore was very knowledgeable on this course and cared so much about what he was teaching. You could really tell that this was something that he cares about and knows a lot about*" demonstrate how valuable the teaching experience is for me. Two students in my *Research Methods* class subsequently secured research assistant positions, and it was very meaningful to me that they credited the course for sparking their interest in taking on such a role.

Lastly, it is my experience that acknowledging my strengths, experiences, and personality traits is essential to upholding the standards I have set for myself in the classroom. During my doctoral training, I realized I needed to recognize, accept, and showcase my personal strengths as an educator. This perspective was instrumental in my development as a teacher. It allowed me to recognize the wealth of personal strengths, relevant experiences, and professional skillsets that I bring to the table. Integrating these into my teaching has allowed me to present my best and most authentic self to students, which in turn has contributed to meaningful learning experiences and relationships between students and myself. The guidance I received from mentors in social work education was the catalyst for my current professional trajectory, and I aim to offer quality mentorship to students to contribute to their preparation as future social workers.