

*"The world was thinking wrong about race, because it did not know. The ultimate evil was stupidity. The cure for it was knowledge based on scientific investigation." – W.E.B. Du Bois*

Teaching is one of the most important ways I live out my commitment to equity and social justice. Coming from humble beginnings and having faced challenges as a student myself, I know how transformative it is when an instructor makes complex ideas feel within reach. These experiences guide my philosophy of being **accessible, empowering, and authentic**. I view teaching not only as delivering knowledge but as building capacity in students to question assumptions, apply evidence responsibly, and use their training to advance health and social justice.

### Core Beliefs and Goals

My philosophy rests on two foundations: first, the belief that knowledge should be scaffolded in ways that are inclusive and just, and second, the conviction that education should prepare students to confront inequities in systems and communities. I draw inspiration from Du Bois's call for knowledge grounded in scientific investigation and from Bloom's Taxonomy as a framework for moving students from recall to critical analysis and creative problem solving.

My goals as an instructor are to:

1. **Be accessible** by ensuring that students can reach me for support and by making material clear and manageable.
2. **Empower students** by setting high standards, scaffolding learning, and valuing reasoning as much as outcomes.
3. **Teach with authenticity** so that students trust me and feel comfortable bringing their own experiences into the classroom.
4. **Prepare students as professionals** who can apply their knowledge to advance equity in healthcare and society.

### Putting Philosophy into Practice

**Accessibility** begins with being approachable and responsive. I record sessions so material can be revisited, stay active in discussion boards where students are expected to post and respond to peers, and commit to replying to emails within 24 hours during the week. I also encourage professional connection by sharing my LinkedIn profile, giving students another avenue for engagement and mentorship.

Clarity is equally important. I provide structured materials, transparent expectations, and timely feedback so students always know where they stand. Guided by Bloom's Taxonomy, I design assignments that progress from foundational skills to higher-order application and creation. For example, in applied research methods, students begin by developing a PICO question (Population, Intervention, Comparison, Outcome) to frame a clinical or public health problem. From there, they learn to distinguish between different types of study designs, and apply descriptive and inferential statistics to summarize and interpret data. These activities build step by step so that by the end of the course students can not only interpret evidence but also conceptualize how to design a study or project that addresses a real health problem.

**Empowerment.** Students thrive when they know their instructor believes in them. I tell students directly: struggling is part of learning, and you are capable of this work. I reinforce this with

transparency about my own path. Coming from a clinical and technical background, I initially struggled to learn epidemiologic and statistical methods. With persistence and mentorship, I built enough expertise to now teach these courses confidently. For example, in *Applied Research Methods* (RESPCARE 521 at Boise State), I guide graduate students through foundational concepts in epidemiology and biostatistics, including study design, variable classification, and regression modeling. Early on, I often leaned heavily on notes and external resources, but over time I've developed a deeper understanding of how to explain statistical methods in clear, practice-based ways. This growth has allowed me to move from simply presenting material to actively engaging students in interpreting results and applying methods to their own research questions.. Sharing this journey helps students see that mastery comes through effort and support, not innate ability.

My approach reflects a compassionate pedagogy. I believe that students demonstrate learning when they can conceptualize, even if the final answer is incorrect. To honor this, I award partial credit for sound reasoning and provide detailed, timely feedback to refine understanding. While testing captures knowledge at a single moment, I design opportunities for students to engage deeply with concepts, wrestle with mistakes, and grow through reflection. This communicates that critical thinking matters and that mistakes are opportunities for growth, not signs of failure.

**Authenticity.** Trust is foundational to learning, and I build it through authenticity. I am transparent about expectations, constructive in feedback, and clear in grading. Students know I will hold them to high standards while also providing the support to achieve them.

I bring humility to my teaching by crediting mentors who shaped me and acknowledging that I am still learning. This models vulnerability as part of scholarship and signals that growth is lifelong. Authenticity also means creating space for students' voices and showing them that what they bring matters. One practice I adopted while serving as a teaching assistant in *Introduction to Research* course under Dr. Walsh is beginning class with the question, "*What is something you learned since the last time we met?*" When a student once casually mentioned attending a concert, we treated that response with genuine curiosity. It opened the door to a discussion about mist machines, aerosols, chemicals, and pulmonary health. That moment demonstrated to students that even a casual observation can be a valid entry point into academic inquiry. Authenticity in this sense is about showing students that I value their contributions and will meet them where they are, turning what they share into opportunities for deeper learning.

### **Alignment with Profession and Mission**

As an educator in health sciences and social work, I see teaching as an act of equity. By demystifying research methods and statistical reasoning, I provide students with tools to analyze systems that shape health. By validating diverse voices and perspectives, I foster a classroom culture where inclusiveness is practiced daily. By setting high expectations and supporting students with compassion, I prepare them to lead with both skill and empathy. My teaching aligns with the mission of social work and public health: to prepare professionals who can generate knowledge, challenge inequities, and improve the lives of vulnerable populations. For example, in *Applied Research Methods* at Boise State, I guided respiratory therapy graduate students through the process of framing research questions, selecting appropriate study designs, and applying statistical tests. Many students entered the course with limited confidence in research and statistics, but by using case studies from respiratory care, such as evaluating the

effectiveness of new protocols or comparing outcomes in lung function measurements, I was able to make methods concrete and clinically relevant. Watching students move from apprehension to confidently interpreting results underscored for me how teaching research can expand both their technical skill and their professional voice.

**Conclusion**

At the heart of my teaching is this: I want students to leave my courses not only with knowledge but with the belief that they can use it to create change. My philosophy—accessible, empowering, and authentic—is shaped by my own journey and guided by my commitment to equity. Teaching gives me energy, purpose, and hope, and I bring that same energy into every classroom. Whether helping undergraduate students in *Applied Research Methods* see statistics as a tool for improving patient care, or graduate students in *Capstone* to design projects that integrate research into clinical practice, I strive to show that knowledge becomes most powerful when students believe they can apply it to make a difference. That belief is the lasting outcome I hope every student carries with them..