

Michael B. Himle
Teaching Statement: 6/4/24

Teaching Statement

My approach to teaching is centered around the idea that learning is an active, multifaceted, individual process that is shaped by context, experience, and individual differences. I believe that the most important and rewarding part of effective instruction is making a genuine attempt to understand the learner's history and background, to meet them where they are, and to empower them to engage in their own learning process. I understand that teaching is about more than simply imparting knowledge. It requires students to be actively engaged, self-aware, and open to new experiences. I strive to make the material I am teaching personally relevant to each student, then leverage that personal connection to increase engagement and to guide students to understand how their own experiences shape their understanding of the material. This provides the foundation to challenge students to understand the topic from outside of their own experience, to increase their awareness and understanding of the way culture and context shape their own behavior, the behavior of others, and interactions between and among individuals.

In my undergraduate classes I spend considerable time presenting "psych as a science" and connecting topics to everyday issues. I see the various topics covered in the class as a gateway for how to think about psychology critically and scientifically more so than teaching facts or concepts. I deliberately strive to incorporate learning strategies and assessment methods that foster competencies in areas recommended by the Council of University Directors of Clinical Psychology for undergraduate students, including ethical awareness and decision making; scientific mindedness and openness/ability to consider diverse perspectives; analytical thinking; a willingness (and ability) to respectfully challenge assumptions; creative thinking; effective interpersonal and collaborative skills; a growth mindset; and capacity for self-awareness, self-reflection and self-evaluation. My own commitment to being a lifelong learner is also an essential component of my teaching. I stay abreast of new research regarding evidence-based instructional techniques and strive to find creative ways to incorporate and apply those techniques in the classroom. I organize my courses around a small number of learning objectives and simplify complex topics by emphasizing higher-order concepts and principles. Even in classes with large enrollment, I strategically offer opportunities for student involvement through demonstrations, small class experiments, between-class challenges, and brief experiential exercises. I spend considerable time talking about research methods and critical thinking before we divulge into, and critically evaluate, the topical chapters. By the end of the course, I hope that the students will think critically about how we understand psychological phenomenon and have the skills to critically evaluate the multitude of claims that bombard us on a daily basis- both in the media and in our everyday experiences- with the ultimate goal of helping them think in a more complex and scientific way about the world around them.

I also enjoy advising and mentoring students in research and supervising graduate students in their clinical work. My research lab has a strong clinical focus and aims to use research to improve clinical care for individuals with Tic Disorders and related conditions. In addition to research, the lab emphasizes providing evidence-based care, education and training, and outreach and advocacy. My supervisory style is a balance of instruction, modeling, and supporting students to have the confidence to make independent decisions (and mistakes). In clinical supervision, my goal is to teach them to conceptualize a case, apply conceptually appropriate evidence-based therapeutic techniques, to monitor a client's progress, and most importantly to empower clients to make changes and work toward personal goals. Both graduate and undergraduate students in my in my lab also have the opportunity to be involved in the entire research process from study conceptualization to data collection to data analysis and interpretation to reporting and presenting the results at conferences and/or in professional publications. I believe that involving students at

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all levels of the research process teaches responsibility and ownership over their work and fosters generativity and excitement for the research process. I also emphasize the importance of community engagement and advocacy and strive to provide opportunities for students to engage in community-based outreach projects related to clinical psychology (e.g., organizing our annual Tourette Disorder education event, distributing informational “toolkits” to local educators and care providers to help them better understand OCD and Tourette Disorder, etc.).