

My role as an educator is to prepare students for a rewarding social work practice. Towards this goal, I strive to foster an inclusive learning environment, and to practice a strength-based approach to teaching. This approach is geared toward facilitating core social work competencies in a collaborative manner. It involves practicing critical thinking, especially when discussing clinical issues relevant to marginalized and diverse communities. In class, I emphasize the importance of life-long learning skills through several didactic models, which I tailor to the student body, to ensure that the content is accessible to a wide range of learning styles.

Critical thinking, innovation, and life-long learning skills. The core competencies taught across all my courses include critical thinking, life-long learning, and innovation skills. Encouraging life-long learning skills is especially rewarding when they are embraced by students whose backgrounds had not been in that direction. Recently one of my former students contacted me to share her future goals, *“Araceli, your guidance and leadership have inspired me to apply to the doctoral program on health administration, so I can improve services for the Latino community.”*

Diversity, belonging and inclusion. In addition to optimizing accessibility of the course content to make it representative of the entire student body, I am particularly attuned to address the academic needs of students from historically marginalized communities. During my teaching practice, I am mindful of both visible and invisible sources of diversity. My first teaching experience was with a pilot program for developing Spanish speaking social workers at Boston College (BC). I taught the course on the human behavior and the social environment (HBSE)}. Students across the board felt welcome; one student of Mexican ancestry wrote *“Araceli encourages her class to perform well academically, but she’s concerned with more than just grades. She cares about each student as individuals.”* Another student wrote *“As a non-native Spanish speaker and non Latinx student, I felt fully accepted by Professor Orozco. She always made me feel competent and capable.”*

Accessibility through Didactic Models. Since my first experience as a solo instructor in 2012 at BC, my pedagogical repertoire has grown. I use three didactic models to prepare students for a multicultural and strength-based social work practice. These are backward course design, multi-directional learning, and universal design. Together, these models make the learner’s experience the focal point of my instruction. In addition to embracing cutting-edge teaching models and accessibility technology, my teaching style is also inspired by Parker J. Palmer *“good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the learners and the instructor.”* I would add to this quote that the quality of the connection between all members of the learning space is the chemistry that ignites the learning process.

Strength-based clinical skills. A decade-long clinical tenure in community mental health informs my teaching. I have a large repertoire of declassified case vignettes that enhance instruction on strength-based clinical skills. During class, I am sensitive to individual and collective trauma. When I co-taught the introduction to social work to undergrad students (BSW) at the University of Washington, one student wrote *“I really appreciate the insight you shared on today's discussion of trauma. I'm not sure how to explain it, but a lot of what you said, resonated with me.”* Trauma-informed teaching skills also became useful -when I had the opportunity to teach remotely at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. During this difficult transition, I advocated for flexible assignment dates, self-paced learning, increasing access of materials to address student’s concerns, and focusing on learning rather than grades. I also addressed students concerns through several communication platforms.

I look forward to teaching courses on both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies, clinical practice skills, human behavior and the social environment, inter-group dialogue, CBPR, macro practice, and historical trauma. I thrive on providing excellent training to future social workers by empowering them with cutting-edge knowledge, ethical standards, and lifelong learning skills, so they can continue to work towards social and economic justice and to embrace both traditional and non-traditional sources of knowledge.