

University of Washington School of Social Work

As a practitioner and community-engaged researcher, I bring a combination of empirical study and experiential knowledge to facilitate the integration of social work curricula into students' personal and professional lives. My mission as an instructor is two-fold: 1) to foster critical thinking through individualized and accessible learning; and 2) to create community in the classroom that promotes prepared to make change.

During my doctoral program, I taught introduction to clinical practice (4.6/5), introduction to families and groups (4.6/5), and research methods (4.7/5). I also assisted in Introduction to Disability Studies (4.2, 4.3/5) and shadowed an advanced multigenerational practice course.

It is imperative for students to understand the full legacy of our profession, and to foster a critical awareness of the multitude of ways social workers are perceived by communities. Holding this guiding principle allows me to honor voices outside of the academy, anchor lessons in historical contexts, and promote mutuality in the classroom. Through attention to the classroom process as a community-building tool, learners in my classrooms will develop skills and resources to contribute to the social work workforce and demonstrate a commitment to a professional community.

### **INDIVIDUALIZED & ACCESSIBLE LEARNING**

---

My affiliation with the disability studies program throughout my time has equipped me with resources for making personalized accommodations and for making efforts to design for flexibility. I've utilized frequent personalized feedback prior to evaluation to increase accessibility. Universal design learning<sup>2</sup> guides the creation of my syllabi—assignments are small and frequent, and designed to give students options in the topic and methods of completion. In the foundational groupwork course, I prompted students to design and plan a therapeutic group and choose how to showcase it to their peers. This flexibility allowed students to create TikTok series, academic posters, artwork, and recruitment pamphlets to demonstrate their learning. Students reported this to be engaging, stress-reducing, and useful in real-life implementation. In student evaluations, students have noted my prompt and thorough feedback—I present students resources and materials to further their individualized learning, invite them to

1. Gradel, K., & Edson, A. J. (2009). Putting universal design for learning on the higher ed agenda. *Journal of Educational Technology Systems*, 38(2), 111-121.

examine the contradictions that arise in developing a professional identity, and provide encouragement and validation that encourages the safety required to be challenged.

## **CLASSROOM PROCESS AS COMMUNITY-BUILDING TOOL**

---

*“This class was intellectually AND emotionally stimulating. I felt myself stretching mentally as I was continuously researching outside of the class material on something that was mentioned in class and interested me. On an emotional level, I felt supported by Ian’s facilitation of the class and was able to grow in my empathetic skill as well and learning to listen to my classmates on a deeper level.”- Student evaluation*

I co-create environments with my students through an emphasis on collective development with regular anonymous exit tickets and flexible course design. I emphasize that in our educational journey, we are accountable to the communities we serve—I demonstrate this while teaching through collaboration with artists, activists, practitioners, and those with lived experience in lectures. These partnerships promote identification of safe spaces outside the university to expand student learning, activism, and professional development.

When teaching virtually during COVID-19, I ensured class time was focused on breaking isolation through assigning regular small groups based on interest area. These groups were given a mock client scenario related to the topic every week. These weekly small groups were accompanied by discussion and activities with large groups and randomized small groups. Lectures were pre-recorded and used journaling prompts to assist students in bridging content. Through these practices, students formed collegial relationships with one another, shared personal anecdotes and reflected on their felt experiences, and supported each other’s development as social work professionals.