

University of Washington School of Social Work

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My primary goal as an educator is to foster students' capacity for problem-solving and igniting social change through life-long learning, collaboration, and conversation. To achieve this goal, my pedagogical approach emphasizes: 1) centering students' passion, practice wisdom, and diverse experiences in learning; 2) integrating research, education, and practice; 3) emphasizing interprofessional perspectives; and 4) encouraging self-care and mutual care.

This approach is based on my practice experiences working with migrant workers and their families, community volunteers, and older adults and their caregivers. Additionally, it is being strengthened by my continuous learning through my coursework on instructional theory and practice, Interprofessional Education (IPE) training, teaching practicum with faculty, and co-learning with students and mentees.

Centering students' passion, practice wisdom, and diverse experiences in learning

Many students have fought for social justice in their everyday lives, while their experiences are often not addressed in the existing literature, theory, and research. This is especially true for those from marginalized, underserved groups. Therefore, I strive to prepare students to develop their professional knowledge and skills by talking about their stories and discovering their unique experiences, struggles, and strengths. This approach allows them to identify what they perceive to be missing from the literature. Students have highlighted in evaluation that this motivated them despite the challenges of learning how to conduct their first research project: **"I'm proud that I've come up with something I'm interested in researching and that I've kept going even when I have felt stuck or overwhelmed."**

Integrating research, education, and practice

Since 2013, I have collaborated with community practitioners to develop dementia service, a field that was growing and evolving rapidly. This experience exposed me to the necessity as well as the challenges of integrating research into practice globally. Therefore, when I became an instructor for research courses, I decided to collaborate with the students, using a participatory approach to explore different strategies to integrate research into their practice and education. These strategies include 1) developing tools for students seeking advice from other practitioners, clients, and practicum supervisor about their research topics; 2) examining how their practicum sites collaborate with research and how they could get involved; 3) inviting guest lecturers sharing their experiences of developing research that aims for intervention development and policy advocacy; 4) introducing research methods that students could also use in their practice, such as documentary, photovoice, and community-based participatory research; and 5) collecting students' feedback on these new strategies.

Students shared how the research project enriched their practicum experiences. For example, one wrote, **"I'm proud that I have gotten more clarity about what I would like to research, and that it involves my practicum site and possible improvements to their service. That is an exciting idea to me."** Another explained, **"Designing this study has aided and**

empowered me in finding evidence that shows some social justice issues in my practicum, that I could work with social workers there to address them.” Some other students shared their insights with me about factors that impact their efforts to integrate research into their practice sites, including the course plan, organizational barriers, peer support, research mentoring from practitioners, and lack of resources and time. With their feedback, I have a better understanding of how to address these systematic barriers as well as resources that can integrate practice, education, and research.

Emphasizing interprofessional perspectives

Our society increasingly faces complex social problems, which all require collaborations between different professions. My transdisciplinary training in aging, health, disability, and caregiving has revealed the critical importance of interprofessional practice and education. Because of my prior experiences in Interprofessional Education (IPE) in geriatrics, I was first selected to join in the IPE Teaching Fellow program provided by the UW Center for Health Sciences Interprofessional Education. I have subsequently integrated IPE into my teaching and mentoring practices. I have mentored three students from BASW, MSW, and Bachelor of Nursing programs in the field of geriatric social work, indigenous health, and dementia caregiving. I intentionally invite guest lectures who are social work scholars doing transdisciplinary research (e.g., environmental studies, geography, psychology, social policy, public health) in order to demonstrate the scope of knowledge bases for social work. I have also participated in developing an IPE Strategic Plan for UW School of Social Work, which allows me to learn how to navigate the administrative structures across campus that might impact the implementation of IPE.

Encouraging self-care and mutual care

As an educator, I integrate self-care and mutual care as an essential pedagogical goal in my teaching and mentoring. I believe students' capacity in self-care and care for others is critical for them to sustain and thrive in their efforts to address social injustice. I encourage students to express their emotions, such as anxiety, sadness, anger and explore how these negative emotions are valuable to reveal the limitations of current education and welfare systems and guide future efforts. Throughout my teaching, I frequently ask for feedback from students, especially any microaggression or accessibility issues they may have experienced during the class. I am also committed to forming a learning community and encouraging mutual support using group work and peer-review. Many students have care responsibilities or live with chronic illnesses and disabilities, which impacts their learning styles and schedules. I always prioritize their health and well-being, support their care responsibilities, and modify their study plan to ensure they meet their learning goals. One student shared with me, **“You have helped me a lot throughout this process and I will always remember your laid-back but organized/supportive structure. You were always so open to supporting and going out of your way to help.”**

In sum, my pedagogical approach highlights the importance of facilitating collaborations between diverse departments and stakeholders and supporting students' self-growth in their endeavors of social justice. In this way, I strive to better equip my students and myself to advocate innovative changes in current education systems, academia, interprofessional care teams, policy-making processes, and everyday lives.