

Teaching Statement

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Throughout my undergraduate and graduate training, I have prioritized mentorship, teaching, and igniting student enthusiasm for the topics about which I am passionate. As a clinical psychology doctoral candidate at Duke University, I have the unique opportunity of engaging not only in rigorous research, but also in clinical practice. My teaching approach is centered on combining (a) my research on parenting and neurodevelopment; (b) my clinical skills of active, empathic listening and socratic questioning; (c) my structured and independent pedagogical study; and (d) my teaching experience to date to best suit the needs of each student in the classroom. My teaching philosophy, heavily informed by my clinical practice, is that students—similarly to patients—encode, retain, and recall information more powerfully when they think critically and arrive at each insight themselves rather than being given information outright. I view each teaching opportunity through a lens of socratic questioning paired with fostering sensitivity, respect, and open communication, and utilize my clinical skills to this effect.

Training. Across my time at Duke, I have sought out numerous opportunities to hone my teaching and mentorship skills. Through the Certificate in College Teaching Program (CCT), I have received formal pedagogical training on how to communicate insights from my field to students, and learned current best practices in teaching, learning, and assessment of student learning outcomes. CCT has provided me with ample opportunities for professional development, both in formal coursework (e.g. College Teaching and Course Design, GS755; College Teaching and Visual Communication, GS760) and applied settings. For example, I participated in a teaching observation group in which I was provided feedback on my teaching as well as given the opportunity to observe and provide others with [feedback](#). Not only did I receive valuable feedback on my teaching skills, but I also acquired the critical skillset of providing constructive feedback to other teachers in both written and oral formats, and learned from instructors across disciplines entirely different from my own.

Experience. While at Duke, my teaching has been focused within my own discipline: psychology and neuroscience. I have served as Graduate Teaching Assistant (TA) for three undergraduate courses at Duke University in the Department of Psychology & Neuroscience: [Abnormal Psychology](#) (PSY105), [Social Psychology](#) (PSY104), and Looking Inside the Disordered Brain (NEUROSCI277). I have completed guest lectures for classrooms ranging from 20-100 students in these courses as well as more advanced seminars, such as [Psychopathology in Cinema](#) (PSY500). Perhaps most importantly, through my Abnormal Psychology TAship I led two weekly 25-student discussion sections comprised of undergraduate students of all levels, ranging from pre-med freshman to senior psychology majors. The primary teaching target for the semester was to ensure that students developed a nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the symptom profiles characteristic of psychiatric disorders. After the students had learned the basics of DSM-V diagnoses, myself and my co-TA developed a [class activity](#) to push them to think critically about the function that psychiatric symptoms may serve. We began with an examination of psychiatric disorders from an evolutionary perspective, through which I challenged my students to examine specific disorders (e.g., major depressive disorder, generalized anxiety disorder) as adaptive behavioral patterns. I implored students to think creatively and examine how certain characteristics of these disorders may serve a valuable purpose for survival. Applying knowledge of effective teaching practices from CCT courses (e.g.

active learning, pair and share, jigsaw, small group work), I divided the class into groups in order to encourage discussion, and the groups presented their thoughts with the class. To ensure that all students were engaged in the dialogue, each group had one appointed “facilitator.” Throughout the presentations I used principles of positive reinforcement to reward students for sharing ideas and conceptualizations outside of their comfort zone, reaffirming their efforts to think about psychiatric illnesses in creative ways.

Mentorship. To gain practical experience applying my teaching skillset to one-on-one relationships, I have pursued a variety individual mentorship opportunities. I have mentored three undergraduate students from study design through thesis defense and publication. Across these mentor-mentee relationships, I focused not only on teaching specific skillsets (e.g. effective communication, data management and analysis, [dissemination of results](#)), but also discussion of broader concepts and processes to spark growing interest in clinical science. Within my clinical practice, I have had the opportunity to supervise undergraduate students engaged in community mental health partnerships. I have acted as Clinical Supervisor and Mental Health coordinator for The Girls Club, a Duke-Durham partnership aimed to connect undergraduate women with middle school girls attending Durham public schools. This program has been invaluable in my development as a [teacher](#) and mentor. I have supported undergraduate mentors and middle school mentees through complex stressors and, moreover, challenged myself to support undergraduate mentors in creating and providing psychoeducation rather than providing instruction myself.

Goals and future directions. Given the breadth of my experience to date, I am fit to teach introductory psychology courses across subject matter. I am also excited to design and teach more specialized courses, such as Advanced Abnormal Psychology: Diagnosis and Treatment, Developmental Psychopathology, and Developmental Clinical Neuroscience. I will teach my first course as Instructor of Record (IOR) this coming summer ([PSY105: Abnormal Psychology](#)) at Duke University in the Department of Psychology & Neuroscience, through which I hope to build confidence in my teaching abilities across the course design process by planning student learning objectives, assessments, and instruction from the ground up. Above all else, I intend to continue honing my teaching skills, broadening my teaching and mentoring experience, and fostering a reflective teaching practice as my professional development progresses informed by my research and applied clinical training alike.