Teaching, Mentorship, and Clinical Supervision Statement

My experiences as an instructor, teaching assistant, mentor, and clinical supervisor have instilled in me a love of teaching. As an undergraduate, I first had the opportunity to teach as a teaching assistant for an introduction to college skills class. I loved this experience and it sparked my interest in gaining additional teaching opportunities. During graduate school I completed a teaching citation program sponsored by the Washington University Teaching Center to improve my teaching skills. As part of this program, I was an instructor for an abnormal psychology and current research discussion class and a teaching assistant for statistics, biological psychology, and social psychology. Additionally, I have served as a mentor for over 25 undergraduate research assistants and a clinical supervisor for several graduate students both at Washington University and in the community. These experiences have influenced the principles that guide my teaching philosophy in the classroom, as a mentor, and as a clinical supervisor:

**I want my students to think in new ways.**

Novel thinking is often facilitated by an open mind. To this end, I prefer to teach using a mixture of discussion and lecture. I think that discussion stimulates open-mindedness and novel ideas, especially when combined with new information. I love to hear my students’ ideas and to help them integrate the information they are learning to broaden their thinking on current research and the state of the field. For example, when teaching an abnormal psychology course, my students read papers on the newly proposed diagnostic criteria for DSM-V. These readings facilitated discussion of the pros and cons of categorical versus dimensional diagnostic systems and showed my students that psychology is a constantly changing science. Along those lines, I think it is important to integrate recently published empirical readings into courses. I have students read journal articles as both in-class and extra credit assignments. Finally, I often discuss findings recently presented at conferences so my students have the most up to date information on the topics I present. I have found that students in my classes become excited and want to learn more about these topics. My students often seek out additional research related experiences to build upon what they learn in the classroom.

**I want my students to become enthusiastic about psychology, which encourages learning and promotes engagement and exploration.**

Boredom is a barrier to success. I am passionate about psychology and I want my students to leave the classroom feeling excited. As one of my students wrote in a teaching evaluation, “Cheri’s enthusiasm makes me look forward to coming to class.” Keeping students’ attention is crucial to learning, as has been shown empirically in cognitive psychology. I find that integrating technology, such as video examples, encourages learning, sustains attention, and promotes enthusiasm on the topic under study. For example, students in my abnormal psychology class told me that the internet video examples helped them truly understand what a diagnosed mental disorder looks like. I also encourage students to suggest topics either for the current class or for me to use the next time I teach the course. In the research discussion class I teach, I have students suggest topics for the journal articles we will read. Allowing students to participate in this way draws them in and creates greater personal engagement.

**I want my students to apply their new knowledge in the real world with a basic understanding of what it is like to think like a psychologist.**

One of the most interesting aspects of psychological science is its real world application. I frequently share with my students and mentees examples from my clinical and research work. I use case studies and provide data from my research in class and in supervision. These real world applications help students appreciate how psychological science impacts society and is integrated into every form of daily life. Along those lines, I find that one of the most fulfilling aspects of my work is mentoring undergraduate and graduate students. When I am in a mentoring role, I encourage students to learn how to work with data, such as creating a hypothesis and then using existing data to test this hypothesis. Many of my undergraduate research assistants have had opportunities to work on posters and papers with me. When I recognize a student who is willing to go above and beyond, I sit down with them, listen to their ideas, help them form a hypothesis, and show them step by step how to conduct data analysis. For me, one of the most exciting aspects of teaching is mentoring someone who is beginning to become passionate about the field, both in research and clinical work. I greatly look forward to the chance to continue to mentor undergraduate and graduate students on research and clinical topics.

**I want my students to feel challenged but confident in the skills they have learned.**

I want my students to leave the classroom and/or the research lab feeling like they have grown, and to be able to tell another student confidently what they learned. To reach this goal in the classroom, I frequently administer quizzes and written assignments to help the student solidify their knowledge. My training in psychology has informed my teaching, as empirical research shows that the best way to learn is through frequent testing. I also provide frequent feedback on written assignments. Each student brings his or her own strengths and weaknesses and I try to provide feedback on both. As a mentor, I meet my students where they are. For example, some students are able to develop new ideas independently, whereas others need someone to sit down and discuss how to brainstorm new ideas. Realistically, most students in a psychology class or even in the research lab will not go on to become psychologists. However, I want them to leave my class and laboratory feeling challenged and with continued curiosity about psychological phenomena.

Integrating these teaching methods of discussion, lecture, technology, real world application, and enthusiasm leave my students feeling challenged and ready to learn more. My ultimate goal is for my students to learn a new thinking style that allows them to observe and appreciate the world in a different light.