

## TEACHING DOSSIER

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### **1. Formative Experiences as a Learner and Teacher**

My commitment to and enjoyment of post-secondary teaching began with my own experiences as a student in the different phases of my university studies. As an undergraduate student at the **University of Western Ontario** (BA, Psychology, 1971) I vividly remember taking courses with professors who were effective teachers in topic areas in which I was keenly interested. Dr. Jaroslav Havelka taught a course on Psychology of Personality at King's College, and his wise and gripping lectures were renown across the entire Western campus. Dr. Gordon Turner taught a course in Humanistic Psychology at the main Western campus that not only introduced students intellectually to this field, but also modelled its tenets of valuing others and encouraging self-directed learning and personal development. Other formative courses that I took at King's College at Western were Dr. John Snyder's Philosophy course on Existentialism and Prof. Carl Keane's English course on 20<sup>th</sup> Century Literature. These were relatively small classes that enabled a high degree of student-instructor interaction. Both Dr. Snyder and Prof. Keane were gifted teachers who led students into their respective topics with authority and grace. They left me with valuable knowledge and critical perspectives from the liberal arts that shaped me in significant ways both academically and personally.

My graduate programme in Social Work at **Carleton University** (MSW, 1975) was my first broad and in-depth exposure to the fields of social welfare and social services. The fact that I came into this programme with no previous academic background in social work or social welfare meant that I felt uncertain and disoriented in the early part of my studies. This experience left me with an ongoing appreciation of the importance of both challenging students intellectually *and* supporting them pedagogically as they undertake a new field of studies. The MSW programme also afforded me the

opportunity of “learning by doing” in my field work. I had a particularly rewarding field placement in my second year of studies. I worked with a steering committee of local activists who were establishing a citizen advocacy programme. It was set up to match volunteers on a one-to-one basis with persons with disabilities in relationships of friendship and practical assistance. This programme still operates today as [Able2](#).

At the **University of Windsor** (MA, Sociology, 1985) I extended my knowledge of the social sciences. My thesis drew extensively on my studies earlier in the programme in the fields of Marxism and Canadian political economy. I benefited greatly from the intellectual mentoring of Dr. Seymour Faber, with whom I took courses and had a close working relationship during my thesis work. I also benefited particularly from three other faculty members in the Dept. of Sociology and Anthropology with whom I took course and/or who sat on my thesis committee. During my years at Windsor I worked as a graduate teaching assistant; I also gained teaching experience as a sessional lecturer in Psychology, Sociology and Social Work.

My doctoral studies at **McMaster University** (PhD, Sociology, 1999) drew together many strands of my previous academic work in social work and sociology. I did comprehensive exams in the fields of “class, status and power” and “political sociology.” My dissertation was focussed on the political economy of social welfare and how it has shaped transformations in the Canadian welfare state. During my doctoral studies I worked as a graduate teaching assistant, and in the latter part of my programme I was asked to present at an orientation session for incoming teaching assistants. I also taught two full year courses on campus (one in Sociology, one in Sociology / Labour Studies). I also did sessional teaching for Brock University (on campus in Sociology) and for Western University (off-campus in Sociology and Social Work).

## **2. Philosophy of Teaching and Learning**

Over the years I have developed a philosophy of teaching and learning which shapes my current work as a social work educator. This philosophy draws upon my experiences during my career as an instructor in the classroom and as a workshop leader in community development roles. It also is draws on professional development opportunities that I have had to improve my teaching skills.

The components of my philosophy of teaching and learning are:

- a) **Respect for students** – students in university social work classes are adults of various ages and diverse experiences, and

who carry many responsibilities outside the classes in their paid employment, families, and communities. As an instructor I must treat them with respect and understanding, and also invite them to bring their life experiences into classroom learning in appropriate and thoughtful ways.

- b) **Critical realist epistemology** – we must recognize processes of the *social construction* of knowledge embedded in power relations, but we must also recognized *real world* phenomena in the natural and social world that deeply affect the shape and evolution of human societies. Critical realist epistemology represents a sort of ‘middle ground’ between postmodern relativism and logical-positivist objectivism in the construction and deployment of knowledge in the social sciences and in applied professions such as social work. A critical realist perspective can help us to reshape social and economic relations in positive ways in human societies, consistent with imperatives for social justice and ecological sustainability.
- c) **Critical pedagogy** – building on such a critical realist epistemological stance, I see my role as a university instructor to be that of challenging, enabling and supporting students. The goal is to assist them in acquiring knowledge based on evidenced-informed analysis of real world phenomena, and to situate this knowledge in relation to processes of social construction and power deployment in intellectual work and the broader society. I endeavour to support students in becoming critical and creative thinkers about the knowledge base and fields of practice in social work.

This intellectual journey can be accomplished through a variety of pedagogical methods. They include individual engagement with relevant, diverse course materials (readings, lectures, on-line resources, etc.); dialogue in and outside of class with the instructor and fellow students; and individual writing and group work to analyse real world data, think critically about it, and synthesize one’s own questions and conclusions. The aim of such a critical pedagogical approach is to support students in becoming capable professional practitioners and effective social activists, based on the values and ethical standards of the social work profession.

- d) **Interdisciplinary grounding** – the [Scope of Practice Statement](#) of the Canadian Association of Social Workers begins in this way:

*Social work is a practice-based profession and academic discipline founded on theories of social work, social science, and humanities. It is advanced through an evidence informed approach and recognizes the importance of Indigenous ways of knowing in practice, the development of knowledge, and education, clinical services, policy, and research.*

My personal position is identical to this general principle – that social work theory and research must be grounded in a broad range of humanities and social sciences. These include Indigenous teachings, philosophy, sociology, political studies, economics, gender studies, labour studies, and cultural studies. While there are differing and sometimes contradictory perspectives across this range of disciplines, it is part of the exciting and rewarding intellectual journey of social work to engage with a range of disciplinary knowledge bases in ways that can enhance our academic discipline and professional practice.

- e) Ongoing commitment to **teaching improvement** through self-reflection on my teaching, careful analysis of data from course evaluations by students, use of professional development opportunities to enhance my skills as an instructor, and introduction of pedagogical innovations in my courses. I have participated in many professional development events offered by the Centre for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning at the University of Manitoba. In 2016 I researched and published a peer-reviewed book chapter entitled “Distance delivery in Social Work education to support child welfare practice.” In 1996 (during my PhD studies at McMaster University) I successfully completed a course entitled “Principles and Practice of University Teaching” (Education 750, 3 credit hours, graded in a Pass / Fail format).

### **3. Highlights of Teaching Experience**

#### ***Sessional Teaching Experience***

From 1980 to 1999 I taught university courses on a part-time basis in Sociology, Labour Studies, Social Work, and Psychology as a sessional lecturer appointed by Western University, the University of Windsor, Brock University, and McMaster University. These courses

encompassed a broad range of subject areas including social theory, social policy, social work practice, criminology, deviance, social psychology, introductory psychology, and introductory sociology.

I also taught for Lambton College, Sarnia (Psychology and Sociology) and Georgian College, Owen Sound (Sociology).

### ***Teaching Experience in full-time academic appointments***

#### **University of Regina (1999 – 2013)**

Human Justice (HJ) 312: Human Rights, Human Rights Organizations, and Human Services

HJ 316: Justice, Planning and the Social Economy

HJ 358 / Justice Studies (JS) 311: Work, the Labour Market & Justice

HJ 382AB: Social Movements & Social Justice

HJ 309: Social Justice (theoretical perspectives)

HJ 384AB: Penology & Corrections

JS 801: Multidisciplinary Theoretical Perspectives on Justice  
(graduate course)

Social Work 469: Contemporary Social Welfare Policy

Social Work 810: Social Policy Analysis (graduate course)

I also taught a Directed Readings graduate course (3 credit hours) on "Advanced Issues in Penology and Corrections" to individual students on three different occasions.

#### *Course development activities at the Univ. of Regina:*

- i) Work, Economic Security and Justice  
(Human Justice 358, subsequently Justice Studies 311)

I authored and instructed this on-line course. I received two rounds of funding from the Technology Enhanced Learning fund at the University of Regina for the initial development and revision of this course for on-line delivery. I served as sole author of the course content, and worked with Instructional Designers and Multi-Media Consultants at the Centre for Academic Technologies to map out student learning activities, sources of relevant on-line information and data, and the design and delivery of the course in the on-line environment.

The course content focused on labour market trends and restructuring that affect economic security for working people. The content also covered employment-related legislation and regulation (governing such matters as minimum wage levels, employment standards, occupational health and safety, and collective bargaining) and social programs (e.g. income assistance, and universal programs such as health care and child care) that enhance levels of economic security in

Canada. These questions were considered in the context of economic globalization, neo-liberalism, increasing concentration of corporate wealth and power, and entrenched or growing levels of economic inequality within and between nations. The effects of these processes on social justice, economic security, and environmental sustainability were examined. Finally, potential strategies and practical approaches for addressing problems of work and economic security were discussed.

ii) Theories of Social Justice

I taught both undergraduate and graduate courses on theories of social justice (Human Justice 309 and Justice Studies 801) on numerous occasions in the Dept. of Justice Studies. These courses were designed to provide a multi-disciplinary introduction to the complicated and multi-layered concept of "social justice." They covered religious, Indigenous, philosophical, and social scientific perspectives. Course content included perspectives and debates on political power, economic (re-)distribution, aspects of personal and collective identity framed by racialisation, ethno-cultural belonging, gender identity, and inclusion of people with disabilities.

iii) Contemporary Social Welfare Policy (Social Work 469)

I taught this course on three occasions face-to-face, twice on the main University campus in the standard three hour once per week, and once in an all-day Saturday time slot every other week in Yorkton, SK. After these course deliveries, I adapted the course content for delivery on the University's course management system as an entirely on-line, asynchronous offering.

### **Globus Exchange**

During my appointment in Justice Studies at the University of Regina (1999-2009), I was Canadian Coordinator of a consortium of twelve universities in Canada and Europe called "Globus." This project was jointly funded as an International Academic Mobility program by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada and by the European Commission. As part of this project, I taught at the Globus Summer Institute on Social Justice and Human Rights on six occasions:

- Université de Montréal (August 2003)
- Ernst-Moritz-Arndt-Universität Greifswald, Germany (Aug. 2004)
- St. Thomas University, Fredericton NB (August 2005)
- Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium (August 2006)
- University of Regina, Saskatchewan (June 2007)
- Eberhard Karls Universität, Tübingen, Germany (June 2008)

My classes at these Summer Institutes were on the topics of theories of social justice, economic and redistributive justice, basic income, Aboriginal justice and rights, and multiculturalism.

### **Work with Graduate Students (degrees completed)**

- Sole supervisor of 2 MA (Justice Studies) thesis students and 1 MSW student (field practicum and report)
- Co-supervisor of 3 MA (Justice Studies) thesis students and 1 PhD student (interdisciplinary studies)
- Committee member for 4 Master's students
- External examiner for 7 oral thesis defences by Master's students
- External examiner for 1 PhD oral dissertation defence (in Community Health Sciences, University of Manitoba)

### **University of Manitoba (2013 – present)**

#### **Undergraduate Courses Taught**

SWRK 1310 – Introduction to Social Welfare Policy Analysis (3 credit hours):  
Distance Delivery, Winter 2021 (upcoming)  
Distance Delivery, Winter 2020  
Fort Garry, Fall 2019

SWRK 2110 – Emergence of the Canadian Social Welfare State (3 credit hours):  
Distance Delivery, Winter 2021 (upcoming)  
Distance Delivery, Fall 2020  
Distance Delivery, Winter 2020  
Fort Garry, Winter of 2015-2018 inclusive

#### **Graduate Course Taught**

SWRK 6030 – Canadian Social Welfare Policy (6 credit hours)  
Fall 2019 / Winter 2020  
Fall 2020 / Winter 2021

As Dean of the Faculty of Social Work, I was not required to teach according to the terms of my appointment. However, I decided to teach a second year undergraduate course as a contribution to the Faculty's teaching programme, to maintain and improve by skills as a university teacher, and to have direct contact students in the midst of my administrative responsibilities.

I taught SWRK 2110 (**SWRK 2110: Emergence of the Canadian Welfare State** – 3 credit hours) in four successive years as Dean (Winter terms from 2015 to 2018 inclusive). Since my return to academic ranks I have taught this course on-line in Winter 2020 for

Distance Delivery, and will teach it twice in this format in the 2020-21 academic year. During the summer of 2020 it made revisions to required work to be submitted by students (clarification of quiz questions and introduction of a new assignment based on a podcast series about the Winnipeg General Strike).

While teaching SWRK 2110 face-to-face I developed an extensive **on-line platform** in the UM Learn course management system. The site contains the Course Outline, the syllabus including the schedule of weekly classes, links to websites and other learning resources associated with each class, and additional information and links to web-based resources to which student can refer as they do assignments and prepare for the mid-term and final examinations.

### **Supervisory Work with Graduate Students**

- Thesis committee for 2 MA (Sociology) students who have completed
- Current supervisor of 3 MSW students (2 Advanced Placement, 1 thesis option)

## **4. Creative Applications of Digital Technology in Teaching and Learning**

I have a keen interest and have been involved in the use of various forms of digital technology that support student learning and skill development. Digital technology can enhance face-to-face synchronous teaching. It can also support distance education and make post-secondary education much more accessible to students who live physically distant from university campuses, and/or who have family and job responsibilities that limit their ability to be present in a physical classroom.

I was an 'early adopter' of on-line learning possibilities at the University of Regina, and was the course content expert in developing and launching on-line versions of two courses: Justice Studies 358, Work, Economic Security in Justice (initially offered in Fall 2003), and Social Work 469, Contemporary Social Welfare Policy (offered in Winter 2012).

While Associate Dean of Social Work at UR, I lent support to the distance BSW program, and taught a graduate class that was video-conferenced between Faculty's Regina and Saskatoon sites. While Dean of Social Work at UM, I took an active interest in (and ensured financial support for) the Faculty of Social Work's Distance Delivery BSW program. I also actively supported and was involved in the work



of the Prairie Child Welfare Consortium (PCWC) during my time at both UR and UM. One of PCWC's major projects was collaboration among four universities (UM, UR, the University of Calgary, and First Nations University of Canada) in the joint delivery of on-line versions of undergraduate Social Work courses related to child welfare. Students at the four universities could take these on-line courses offered by any of the partner institutions while paying tuition and receiving credit at their home institution.

## **5. Links between Classroom Teaching and Community Development**

My professional experience includes twelve years of community development work in the fields of developmental disability and mental health, and additional experience doing community organization with activist groups on a voluntary basis. This work has included organizing and conducting volunteer training and community education events at the local, provincial, and national levels.

I believe that this background in community work and community education has shaped my approach and developed my skills as a university instructor. Because of this practice experience, I have a deep appreciation of the need for intellectual **and** emotional engagement in adult education, whether it is occurring with activists in a community hall or with students in a university classroom. Adult educators must tap into human curiosity and human moral impulses to build a better society. Adult education at its best is about expanding our intellectual landscapes and building social relationships to effect positive change in real world.

On the practical level, I believe that my years of community practice in social work enable me to more effectively illustrate and/or interrogate academic theories and research as I work with students in the physical or virtual classroom. I also believe that my professional background (and my own experience as a MSW student completing field requirements) enable me to better appreciate and integrate the students' experiences in field education into our work in the classroom.

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