Teaching and Research Statements

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TEACHING STATEMENTS
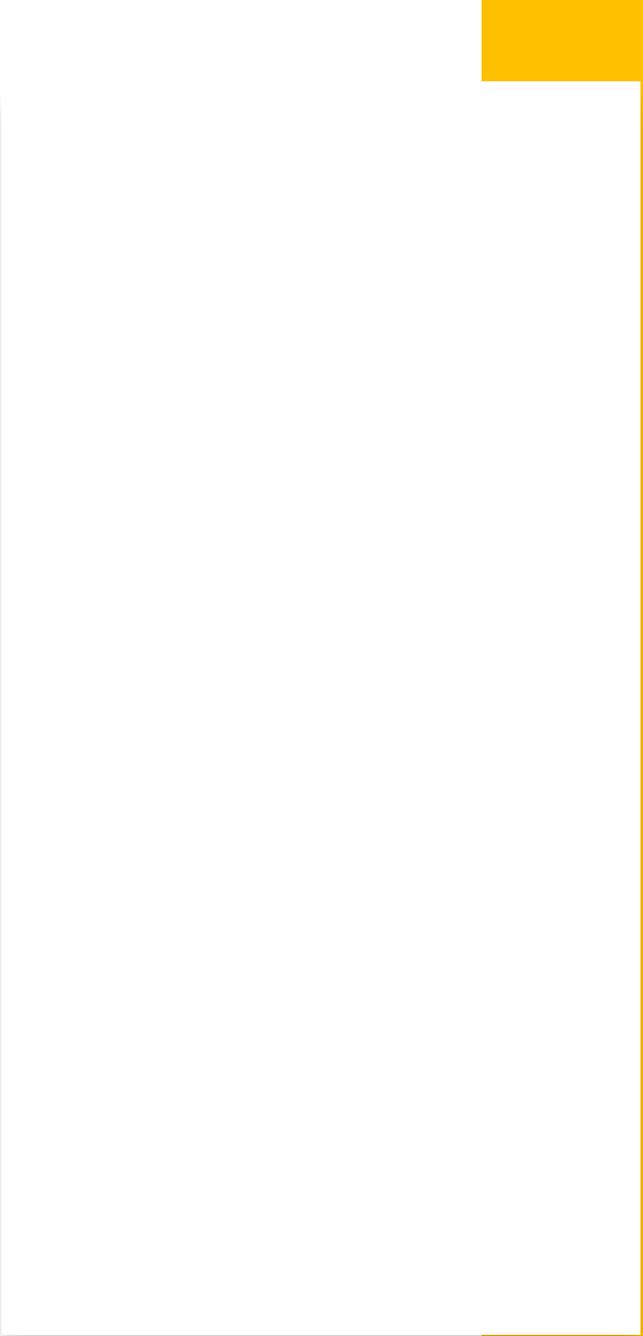
# Teaching Philosophy Statement

1-2 pages

Clear and concise account of your teaching approach, methods and expertise.

Answer these questions:

- Why do I teach?
- What do I teach?
- How do I teach?
- How do I measure my effectiveness?

Format

- Brief and well written
- Narrative, first-person approach
- Be specific to your discipline and with your examples rather than abstract
- Stay away from using jargon and technical terms
- Make it unique to you
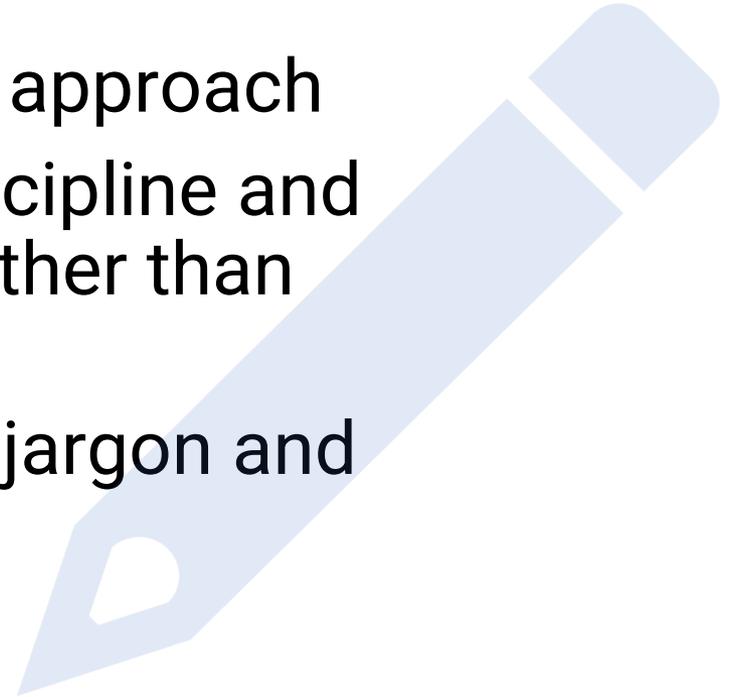
"Why do I Teach?"

Teaching is an integral part of my identity as an academic. Because we are scholars inside and outside of the classroom, my research informs my teaching and my teaching informs my research. Early in my career, I developed a passion for helping students to think critically about quantitative methods and child development. This desire grew out of my own experiences first as a student and then as an instructor….

What do I Teach?

- As a civil rights educator, I cover Section 8 housing subsidies and processes involved in searching for housing. My course addresses risks such as being inadvertently pushed into sub-standard sectors of the rental market due to discrimination from landlords and property managers on the basis of race, familial status, and other factors. The students learn about types of housing discrimination that commonly occur, the legal limitations on landlord screening practices, and what non-profit organizations can do to help (e.g., investigate and take legal action against a perpetrating landlord in order to compensate them for discriminatory treatment)….

"**How** do I teach?"

When I teach my undergraduate students about Hart and Risley's (2002) study on the impact of family income on children's language development, I have students evaluate current government initiatives to improve educational outcomes with respect to this finding. This activity leads students to reflect not only on their own early learning experiences, but to think critically about how this finding could be translated into programs aimed at reducing the disparities associated with early economic disadvantage.

"How do I measure my Effectiveness?"

- Does my approach to teaching work? I believe there are multiple ways to determine this. First, students' numerical ratings of my classes have been very positive. These ratings have often been accompanied by comments from the students that expressed how my enthusiasm for the material increased their own interest in the course. Further, and in my view, more importantly, many students believed that their increased interest in the subject resulted in improved performance and learning. Second, I have been honored to receive awards for my teaching at the departmental, college, and university level. Finally, I have had the pleasure of interacting with many of my undergraduate and graduate students after their semester with me has ended. Over the past several years, I have integrated many students into my lab after they expressed interest in working with me in a research setting….

Teaching Philosophy

Based on over a decade of work in the field I believe that interior design is best served by a formative professional education, the core purpose of which is to shape students into practitioners who are conscientious and thorough, and decidedly passionate, in their work.

I am reflective and purposeful in my teaching, starting from a philosophy grounded in theories of constructivism and active learning. Active learning, in the broad sense, shifts the focus of activity from the teacher to the learner. This student-centered approach suggests the use of multi-modal learning – listening, reading, writing, discussing, and problem-solving – and higher order thinking tasks such as analysis, synthesis and criticism. A constructivist approach to active learning considers the influence of a learner's constructs, or mental filters, and the different ways knowledge is shaped when new information interacts with existing. This approach plays off of a student's innate curiosity about the world and how things work; it suggests the use of discovery, hands-on experiences, project- and task-based learning and collaboration. I believe this philosophy articulates well with the studio-based learning environment at the core of our nationally ranked interior design program.

From this theoretical foundation I create an environment in which students can positively shape their own learning experiences. From day one I make sure students have buy-in on the idea that they are responsible for their own learning and understand how this perspective will shape the course. In this environment students are not simply left to fend for themselves; for every new content area I provide guidance and good examples early on, and then create multiple opportunities for problem-based application that allow room to fail, to explore possibilities without a given solution, and to seek resources before seeking assistance from myself or their classmates. I bring theory to action by challenging them to think deeply about their goals within the context of the course and beyond. I also aim to provide instruction that can reach everyone – for example by explaining a process verbally, showing visual demonstrations, and then guiding students through hands-on exercises. Lesson plans target specific objectives but remain flexible to accommodate unfolding events and individual student concerns.

I employ a conversational lecture style in a relaxed environment that encourages open discussion, reasoned questions, and outcome-oriented creativity. Although I cultivate a casual and approachable teaching style, I hold my students to the highest standards of professionalism in their work. Comments from my student evaluations frequently address my strict grading policies and elevated expectations. They also show appreciation for my fun, approachable, and supportive attitude. Most of my students embrace my style of teaching and enthusiastically take charge of their own learning. It is rewarding to see that many carry their new attitudes, values, and beliefs about learning into their future coursework and careers. My student, peer, and external evaluations of teaching consistently report that I am an effective teacher; my student evaluation averages have been in the range of 4.98-5.81 each semester and I have been honored with the SGA Outstanding Faculty Award (2015).

My professional experience and NCIDQ certification, the national professional exam for interior designers, enable me to teach where I am most needed, and so I have successfully managed seven new course preps since Fall 2011. Each semester I adapt the specifics of my approach to what I know of the incoming cohort of students – their strengths and weaknesses, and interests – to make the course content relevant to their needs. I am also proactive in analyzing and resolving weaknesses.

My strong pedagogical foundation and teaching experience across three Universities have further enabled me to make valuable contributions to our undergraduate and graduate programs beyond day-to-day teaching activities – marketing and recruitment; curriculum development and assessment; accreditation compliance; and strategic planning. I enjoy the challenges and opportunities inherent in teaching and will continue to demonstrate my value as a teacher and colleague through tenure and beyond.

Getting started....

- Generate ideas for your teaching philosophy.

  - Why do I teach?
  - What do I teach?
  - How do I teach?
  - How do I measure my effectiveness?

RESEARCH STATEMENTS
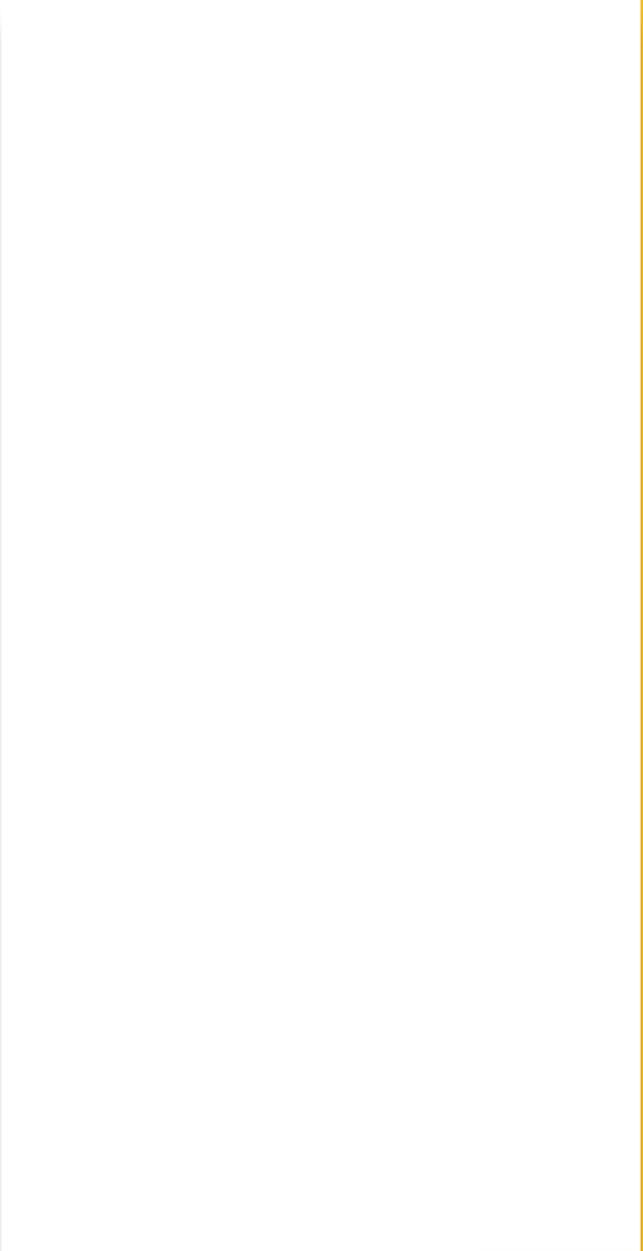
Areas to address in your research statement

1. **Main themes** of your research/scholarship, why they are important (the "so what").

2. **Contributions**: How your research/scholarship **contributes to your field.**

3. **Programmatic**: Describe research problems/issues you have addressed in your work; convey **connections** among your projects.

4. **Recognition** your research has received - publications, presentations, grants, awards, etc.

5. **Funding** history and potential (if relevant).

6. **Collaboration (current/potential).**

7. **Future direction(s)** of your research/scholarship.

- Brief and well-organized
- No grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors
- Aim for 1-3 pages
- Single-spaced or 1.5 spaced
- Concise paragraphs
- Short bulleted lists can be used
- Clear subject headings can be helpful

FORMAT

Main Themes

I have been examining the dynamic roles of parents and peers in the co-construction of adolescents' and young adults' identities, and the implications of identity processes and outcomes for adaptation in adulthood. More recently, I have begun examining adolescent and young adult romantic relationships, and the intersection between identity formation and romantic attachment.
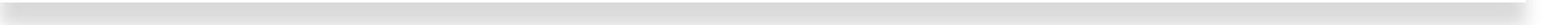
Contributions

- I have engaged in ongoing development of new identity measures, including the Identity Processing Styles Q-sort (published in the Journal of Adolescence) and the Possible Selves Q-sort (published in the book Possible Selves: Theory, Research and Applications).

- I have found that factors including higher maternal education and family income, secure parent-child attachment relationships, more family routines, and better child self-regulatory skills are associated with lower levels and more rapid decreases in internalizing and externalizing behaviors. Further, although numerous classroom features are related to children's behavior, the student-teacher relationship seems to be the single strongest predictor of positive mental health in the classroom context….

Programmatic

- One line of research has examined how the early environment shapes romantic functioning and stability in young adulthood….A second line of my research focuses on those individuals who are able to cultivate and maintain happy marriages later in middle adulthood….My current work ties together these lines of research by examining the antecedents and consequences of marital quality in older adulthood, a particularly appropriate developmental period for this line of inquiry.

- Together, the research I am conducting on identity development and quality of romantic relationships is contributing to knowledge in areas of adolescent development and creation of curricula promoting healthy relationships for youth.

Recognition

I have established a solid foundation of juried publication and exhibition outcomes from which I am building a scholarly agenda of demonstrated merit to my department, University, and to the profession at large. This body of work has earned me an invited membership among the Interior Design Educators Council Academy of Reviewers and the Center for Health Design's EDAC Advisory Council.

Funding

- As a PI on a grant from that National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, I have continued this line of work by exploring the factors that comprise social competence from early childhood through adolescence.

- My colleagues and I have received funding from the United States Department of Health and Human Services, and from the Alabama Children☐s Trust Fund (Alabama Department of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention) to examine the efficacy of a relationships education program and to address linkages between adolescent identity and close relationship knowledge and skills.

- Research indicates that certain segments of the older population may be especially vulnerable to worse outcomes later in life (e.g., poorer health, less wealth) as a result of accumulating previous negative marital experiences. To understand the mechanisms underlying these links, I was funded by the Fetzer Institute to collect observational, physiological, and interview data from 64 high-functioning, older couples to explore compassionate love as one such mechanism.

Collaboration

- I incorporate emerging technologies to find solutions through my collaborations with experts of different backrounds. Currently, I am conducting research with colleagues in the Department of Material Sciences Engineering and in the Department of Physics to develop flexible fabric-based sensors using nanotechnology and smart materials to monitor vital signals for healthcare and well-being…

- Work with my colleagues at the RAND Corporation on the nationally representative Health and Retirement Study, funded by the Michigan Retirement Research Center and the RAND Center for the Study of Aging, indicates ….

Future Research Plans

(and concluding points)

I will keep updating emerging technologies, techniques, and materials and will search for creative applications that can lead to successful grant and funding support…. Through my involvement with the Global Partners Program Grant funded by the Office of International Programs at Auburn University, discussions have begun on collaboration with the College of Liberal Arts and the College of Education with the aspects of functional clothing development research.

Given the unprecedented growth in the number of older adults in the United States coupled with rising health care costs, it has become increasingly important to understand howpartners promote each other's' well-being and under what conditions. To address this critical and timely issue, my future research will follow these couples over time as they begin to transition into caregiving. This will help us not only understand how to promote health through relationships but begin to determine how to help older adults sustain loving relationships when they are confronted with the challenges of aging.

Statement of Research Interests

My research program focuses on intrapersonal, interpersonal, and social-contextual factors that serve to enhance or undermine romantic relationship quality across the lifespan, and how the quality of one's romantic relationships are in turn linked to well-being in adulthood. Utilizing a developmental perspective, my research has further sought to explicate the extent to which the antecedents and consequences of relationship quality may depend on when in the lifespan they are experienced.

One line of research has examined how the early environment shapes romantic functioning and stability in young adulthood. Though there has been growing concern that the institution of marriage is becoming obsolete in younger generations, finding happiness with a long-term partner remains an important goal for most younger adults. Despite the uniformity of this goal, my research with Greg Pettit suggests that the extent to which young adults can initiate and sustain romantic relationships varies considerably. This variability appears to be forecast by earlier differences in familial and peer relationships. For example, my research has found young adults who had problems with their parents in childhood (e.g., harsh discipline, differential treatment) not only were less involved in romantic relationships but the quality of these relationships once they entered into them was compromised.

Augmenting this work, a second line of my research focuses on those individuals who are able to cultivate and maintain happy marriages later in middle adulthood. Although most adults desire a happy marriage, we know relatively little about what these relationships look like for those able to achieve this goal. Contrary to Tolstoy's assertion about the uniformity of happy families, my work on happily married couples reveals meaningful variability in how they interact, both within and across couples and across different types of marital interactions. This variability is critical if our goal is to promote happy, healthy marriages, as it means that we must design programs that can be tailored to meet the needs of different types of couples, a conclusion consistent with my prior work on risky relationships. Specifically, we found that equally distressed individuals often experience different combinations of risk factors, which means that no single approach toward strengthening relationships is likely to be effective for all individuals. I have begun to further explore this idea in collaborative work that examines the extent to which a variety of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and social-contextual factors (e.g., race, income, marital status) moderate how relationship-enhancing programs work to promote relationship quality.

The importance of identifying the antecedents of relationship quality becomes clear when considering the serious consequences of unhealthy relationships for couples' well-being. In work with collaborators, we have found that the negative effects of relationship dysfunction reverberate not only through the day but also into the night. Our research shows that middle-aged couples who engage in more psychological and physical aggression towards each other have poorer subjective and objective sleep quality both concurrently and over time. Further, we find that these negative effects are exacerbated by spouses' intrapersonal characteristics (e.g., mental health), again underscoring the importance of explicating the variables that serve to either exacerbate or ameliorate risk within intimate relationships.

My current work ties together these lines of research by examining the antecedents and consequences of marital quality in older adulthood, a particularly appropriate developmental period for this line of inquiry. Work with my colleagues at the RAND Corporation on the nationally representative Health and Retirement Study, funded by the Michigan Retirement Research Center and the RAND Center for the Study of Aging, indicates that certain segments of the older population may be especially vulnerable to worse outcomes later in life (e.g., poorer health, less wealth) as a result of accumulating previous negative marital experiences. To understand the mechanisms underlying these links, I was funded by the Fetzer Institute to collect observational, physiological, and interview data from 64 high-functioning, older couples to explore compassionate love as one such mechanism. The specific objectives are to: (1) describe the nature of compassionate love in marriage in older adulthood; (2) examine the mental and physical health consequences of compassionate love; and (3) identify the individual and dyadic correlates that distinguish those who respond compassionately to their partner's needs and rise to the challenge of caretaking from those who do not. Our work suggests that the links between compassionate love and health may be more complex in older adulthood than at earlier points in the lifespan, with the receipt of compassionate love appearing to actually undermine older spouses' health. Even the most well-intentioned support can erode older adults' feelings of competence – a concern given that many have viewed spousal caregiving as an expedient fix for a health care system overwhelmed with the needs of an ageing society

Given the unprecedented growth in the number of older adults in the United States coupled with rising health care costs, it has become increasingly important to understand how partners promote each other's' well-being and under what conditions. To address this critical and timely issue, my future research will follow these couples over time as they begin to transition into caregiving. This will help us not only understand how to promote health through relationships but begin to determine how to help older adults sustain loving relationships when they are confronted with the challenges of aging.

Getting Started…

Jot down some ideas for content: →

| **Main themes** of your research/scholarship | → | **Examples** of research problems/issues you have addressed (how do they connect?) | → | **Future Research Directions** (goals for next 2-3 years) |

Then (where you have info):

| Contributions to the field | → | Recognition | → | Funding (current/potential) | → | Collaborations (current/potential) |
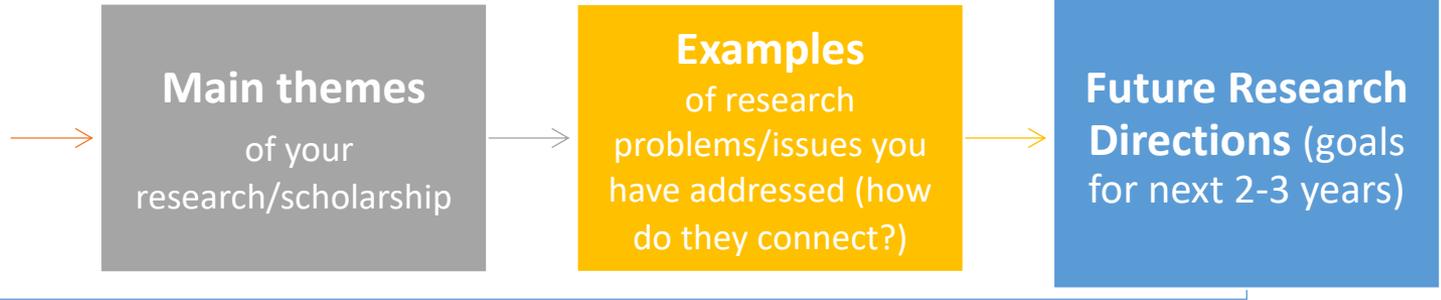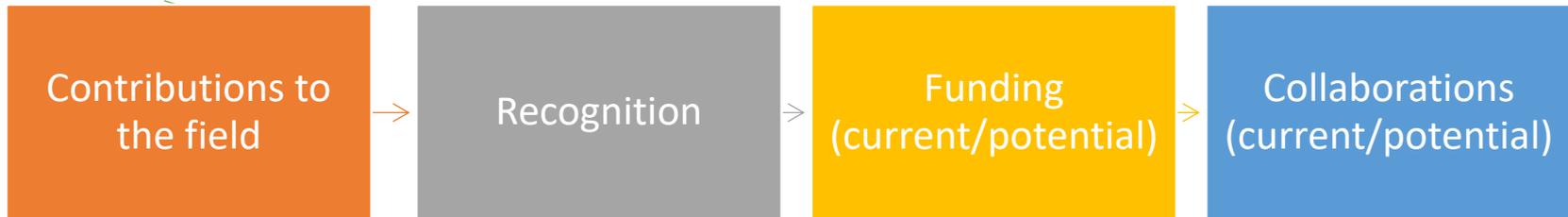
Resources

CHS Graduate Student Professional Development   http://www.humsci.auburn.edu/academics/grad_prodev.php

Dissertation Support Application
http://humsci.auburn.edu/research/files/dissertation_research_support_request_2018.pdf

2021 CHS Graduate Student Research Symposium
http://www.humsci.auburn.edu/research/grad_research_symposium_2021.php

Graduate School Information and Supports   http://graduate.auburn.edu/
        Professional development page http://graduate.auburn.edu/current-students/professional-development/

Writing Supports   https://auburn.edu/academic/provost/university-writing/