Writing in the Social Work Disciplines

Overview
My website offers an online resource aimed at writing instructors who work in the social work discipline. Although the resources should be useful for all such instructors, they are especially useful for instructors teaching students who want to enter Child Welfare Care Management upon graduation. The website is built around the Case Western basic template for ease of access and navigation.

Genres
I’ve included both student and professional genres on the site for an important reason: much student writing is aimed at developing both the practical skills needed for professional writing and the kinds of intellectual skills necessary to perform professional roles. By including both, I hope that writing instructors can see how the seemingly arbitrary assignments given to undergraduates do in fact relate to the expectations and duties of professional social workers.

The student genres emphasize analysis and the ability to conduct research, either as background knowledge or as part of a larger project. In my understanding, directions for writing tend to explicit, which makes sense given the level of bureaucracy social workers will encounter in the field: learning to follow directions seems as important a skill as any in social work. I included descriptions of the assignments and what I see as the rationale behind them. With the professional genres, I provided both a description and possible areas of interest for writing instructors looking to do scholarship.

Journals
For the most part, undergraduates don’t perform much research on their own and thus have limited interaction or experience with journals. The journals I chose are ones that I know social work students will have contact with (in particular, the Journal of Child and Family Studies) as well as journals, such as The Journal of Social Work, that have a more general focus and seem important to the discipline itself. The Journal of Social Work Education struck me as important not just because of its pedagogical focus, but also because it’s a possible venue for writing scholars interested in social work to publish.

Resources
The resources provided are standard fare—a handbook, a scholar, a professional organization, a database and a reference book. The Dictionary of Social Work struck me as the most useful of these resources, so I not only listed it first, but labeled it “indispensable.” I tried to speak of the usefulness of each resource to writing instructors, but also noted their usefulness to undergraduate students.