

Teaching Statement

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My teaching philosophy is mainly shaped by my previous learning experiences. As a student, I valued teachers promoting creative thinking, facilitating interactive and collaborative approaches to problem solving, and maintaining a friendly atmosphere in a class room. Though learning is primarily the student's responsibility, conducting student centered teaching is my responsibility. I believe some of my responsibilities are to bring new and exciting concepts and problems to students' attention, help them understand difficult material, keep them motivated to get the work completed, and utmost, make sure to provide a path to success by maintaining the quality of their education. I also understand that it is not my responsibility to give boring lectures for hours, "spoon feed" the students with answers, and "run the race" for them if they are unwilling to put enough effort into learning.

I remind my students several times during the term that they are not in my class to fail, but to learn. I refuse to create fear in them about their grades. I encourage my students to focus on learning rather than "just" getting a grade. The idea is to improve their grades by improving the knowledge gained. In addition to exciting short lectures, I encourage them to test the concepts in labs and share their views with others in discussion sessions. All of these approaches help students improve their knowledge while receiving better grades. Also, I encourage them to share their enthusiasm about the subject or the problems during discussions just as I do in my lectures.

Class discussions are also important in stimulating creative thinking and promoting friendly environments. I encourage students to ask questions and express their views openly while respecting views of others. My experience is that whether it is a concept or a solution to a problem, students always come up with higher quality answers through discussions. Problem solving in computer science involves both creative thinking and imagination. When I introduce concepts or discuss problems, I stress the importance of imagination. This is due to the fact that I have noticed some students with in-depth knowledge in subject matter occasionally fail to produce creative solutions due to lack of imagination. This could delay the progress in their term or research projects, which I believe are absolutely vital components in learning. Therefore, I impress upon student involvement in quality scientific research.

One of the most rewarding aspect of teaching for me is the opportunity to improve my understanding and expand my knowledge base through the contributions of my students. As teachers, it would be unfortunate to overlook the fact that our students can contribute to our learning process. Our students come from various backgrounds; the diversity in their knowledge, multitude of opinions, and interesting imaginations allow me to learn from them through their questions, observations, and challenges, just as they learn from my lectures, discussions, and assignments. I believe my intellectual interactions with a diverse student population throughout my career will help me to continually improve my knowledge and understanding of my students.