

Teaching Philosophy Statement

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Since I was a teenager, I was the one whom all my friends came to for help with understanding class material and homework. I used a clear and simple teaching process that enabled them to reach the understanding that I have about the material; and I enjoyed helping my friends. After doing that for a while, I realized that I had found my niche; instructing was something that I truly enjoyed doing and was consistently complimented on. Those experiences were what made me want to begin tutoring at the age of fourteen. I was invested in teaching all the content that I was confident with, such as math and physics; later I also began teaching guitar. I continued tutoring and helping my peers throughout college and into graduate school.

While I was earning my Master's degree, I had the chance to teach three laboratory-based college courses: Computer Proficiency (a freshman-year course), Logic Design Laboratory (a sophomore-year course), and Digital Systems Laboratory (a junior-year course). Teaching these classes was definitely not the same as one-on-one tutoring. I felt responsible for the future of every single student in my classroom. There was a crossroads here, I could either make them receptive to enjoying the material or cause them to hate it for the rest of their lives. I had to make my lectures interesting so that the students could become engaged and excited about the material. I achieved that by using practical problems and relating what was learned in class to what my students were experiencing in their lives outside the classroom and what they were going to experience in their careers. I was also careful to teach each student as a unique individual with their own interests and needs. I used to sit with students in small groups – two to four students – watching how they were working and making sure that each one of them understood what was happening, how, and why; even if I had to come up with a new way of explaining a particular concept. During that period, as part of my lifelong learning passion, I received my technical certifications as a Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA), Cisco Certified Network Professional (CCNP), and Cisco IT Essentials (ITE) specialist. After completing those certifications, I continued my education to become certified as an instructor for each of those courses; and then, through hard work and dedication, I was able to become one of few Cisco instructor trainers in the world. I was responsible for training Cisco prospective instructors, and that made me extremely proud. Shortly afterwards, I started teaching these Cisco courses, along with other computing-related courses, at multiple universities. During that time, I enjoyed the freedom of designing my own courses and having a significant influence on curriculum development.

Being a professor is a career that I have chosen after asking myself the question: *What would I like to be doing for the next forty years of my life?* I have always focused on building toward this career that I love and enjoy. My teaching experience comes not only from teaching for years at multiple levels, but furthermore from studying and researching education in depth, especially engineering education. As

a professor, I would strive to make my classes an active learning environment. I would make sure that each and every student is interacting, learning from their peers, and that all students are interested in the material. That is because I believe that, in order to unleash their creativity and change the world, students should be motivated by the subjects they are learning, not the exams. I would assess my students' prior knowledge in order to be able to meet them where they are. I would also relate the content to real-life problems and find ways to make uninterested students more engaged. Since my field requires hands-on work in order to apply the theories that are learned in class, I would often provide students with hands-on workshops and projects in order for them to see and experience those abstract concepts in action. I am a strong believer and a practitioner of Problem-Based Learning (PBL), especially in engineering classrooms. I would also use my experience in interdisciplinary work that I developed by working at ICAT (Institute for Creativity, Arts, and Technology) to prepare my students for interdisciplinary teamwork that they will encounter in their careers. Moreover, I will always keep in mind that students are human beings and they need their teacher to love and appreciate them. That would not just make them more engaged during class, but they would also try their best to make their teacher proud.

Since the goal of teaching is for students to learn, I would always be evaluating what my students are learning, whether through formative assessments, summative assessments, or other informal evaluation and feedback methods. I would also be teaching them how to be active learners and give them the tools for them to be able to learn on their own and develop the ability to solve problems. After all, after graduating, they will be solving problems that might not even exist yet. And most of all, I would always try to make my students better human beings, remind them to always include love in their work, and think about the impact of their work on society and the world. Along this process, I will constantly improve my skills. I would self-reflect on every class and get feedback from my students in order to improve my teaching.

I believe that a teacher is someone who can give students something that they will never be able to find online on their own, something that can make them think and care about society and the environment, something that can make them embrace the fact that they are good and that they can certainly, in their own distinct ways, make the world a better place by unleashing their inner potentials and creativity; and I will do my best to be that teacher.