

Teaching Statement

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My teaching philosophy reflects my belief that an instructor should focus on practical application of material, support collaborative learning, be as adaptive as possible in her approach to students, and encourage students to become actively involved in their own education.

My daily approach to teaching stresses practicality because I believe students learn best when they see the applications of the material. When I teach, I focus on giving real-world examples and putting abstract ideas into concrete concepts. I believe this “real-world” approach encourages students to commit this material to their daily lives rather than memorize it for an exam. I also believe it is essential to assign homework containing problems that range in difficulty, e. g. some “cookbook problems” as well as more complex problems that require students to put their acquired knowledge into a broader context.

Student collaborations is another goal of mine since it is a necessary real-world skill. I assign at least one group project to my students. I have found that using my own research in my teaching also interests some students. I often use my own research topics as examples when teaching relevant statistical concepts. I also make a pointed effort to include all students in class discussion, rather than asking one of a select few students to provide answers to difficult questions. This considers the most knowledgeable students above the rest and does not foster a learning environment whose pace should be ideal for the entire class, which is my focus.

Because my various teaching opportunities have brought me into contact with students at all levels of motivation and ability—from underprivileged high school students preparing for the SAT to highly motivated adults preparing for the GMAT—I also strive to be as flexible and adaptive as possible in my approach to each student. In my tutoring and mentoring assignments, I take advantage of the high level of personal interaction to assess my students’ level of comprehension in real-time, adjusting assignments as necessary. While larger classes do not provide the luxury of as much personal interaction, I remain flexible by assessing student answers to questions I pose during class, analyzing their own questions, decoding their occasional puzzled looks and evaluating their homework and quiz answers. I adapt course material accordingly—adjusting the time allotted to complete exams, out of class assignments, or collaborative projects.

I am often successful in my teaching efforts to encourage students to become active participants in their own education by assigning projects in which students choose their own topics. I find that students synthesize statistical concepts learned throughout the semester better when they are interested in a research question they have posed themselves. I also encourage students to ask any questions at all. I emphasize in class that “there are no stupid questions.” I pause for several seconds after asking students if there are any questions concerning the material covered in the lecture so far. If I expect some questions, they are more likely to ask them.

I find teaching a challenging and rewarding part of my career. I aim to improve my teaching further through continued interaction with students.