Teaching Philosophy Statement

My experience of being a lecturer has taught me that the role of a teacher comes with great joy but also with great responsibility to do what enables students to learn. I like to teach to have a part in improving my society and educate a generation that functions knowledgeably in a world where rapid technological advances constantly raise new questions and challenges. Furthermore, I have discovered joy seeing students thrill when they learn something new. As a teacher I must be a life-long learner and teach my students to be the same. I find that the enthusiasm in good teachers is contagious, making the students to become engaged in learning as well.

I believe that in Computer Science, learning takes place when students fully understand how they can apply the learned material to real world applications in a meaningful way. My teaching practices make a class more interesting and engaging by having students realize what they are learning will become important and useful in a real-world context. This is why I try to make them think critically about ideas and connect concepts with everyday examples and encourage them to think outside their conventional boundaries. However, I believe this is not enough. A successful teacher not only needs to motivate the students to learn by exposing them to the relevance of the concepts, but also by motivating them to apply what they have learned. For example in my Foundations of Data Science class, I ask students to form pair groups and implement the programming concepts that they have learned in class every session. At the end of this course, I saw that for many students, the most powerful lessons were learned in informal discussions with peers, code-debugging during office hours, and pair-coding in class.

My Goals as a teacher are trying to do the best to promote growth by using creativity, and giving the students the freedom to think and discover whatever they want, while providing instructional scaffolds to support them as they learn and experiment. My teaching goals are met through students gaining a mastery of knowledge while encouraging them to take responsibility for their own learning and be active learners instead of passive. Applying this would make the students be both teachers and learners. To encourage them to be responsible learners and teachers, I sometimes evaluate my students’ success by having them peer review each other. For example in my Human-Computer Interactions class, students would be partially evaluated based on the comments and reviews they give their classmates on the work they have done on their projects. I personally feel that problem-based learning allows students to be encouraged to develop communication skills as well as problem solving and critical thinking skills.

In my point of view, there isn’t a “single” perfect method for teachers to teach their classes, but it is up to the teacher to find the ideal method(s) that work best for their class or for an individual student. In my classrooms I have my students experience hands-on practical applications and engage them in active learning, consequently I would have the opportunity to gain new insights based on the individual students’ needs. This being said, I believe that as a successful teacher I am always learning from my students in the classroom, and making necessary changes in my teaching methods to fit and adapt to the class. The path of teaching is the same as the path of learning: they are both an exciting, challenging and continuous process and in the end of the journey, there is always a reward.