

Teaching Statement

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When you teach someone something, you live in their mind for as long as they are using that knowledge. One of the most amazing things about teaching is the role you get to play in people's lives; you never know how much your teaching is going to affect them, and their future decisions. That is why I make it my philosophy to communicate with my students and build a professional environment in which they feel free to share their objectives and expectations.

Teaching is more than just filling boards with material. When I enter a class, I make it my duty to get students excited about the material to an extent that they want to learn for the sake of the knowledge, not only because it is required. To do so, at the beginning of every semester, I use extra credit incentive to get my students to come to office hours. I use these short visits from the students to learn about what they are studying, and what are they interested in learning. Knowing this helps me explain to them the importance of the class for each one individually. Moreover, having a conversation with students outside the class helps build a bridge between the teacher and the students, and gives the students the confidence to speak up during class conversations. I have tried this approach twice now, and I realized that these short meetings with the students had a positive effect on the general class atmosphere.

In class, I get the students involved as much as possible. I believe that engaging the students create an environment in which everyone in the class feels comfortable to ask anything. I make it clear that every question is worth asking, all their ideas and thoughts on the subject are welcomed. A lot of my students tend to learn from their classmate's questions and mistakes. Furthermore, I always encourage my students to participate in professional activities outside the class. In the spring 2015, I mentored two groups of students, helping them to present posters during the poster session at the Philadelphia Undergraduate Mathematics Conference Series, for which I was a student co-organizer, at Temple University. Four of my students participated, they presented two posters, one about the infinity of prime number, and the other about teaching the concept of the area of a circle to middle school students. They enjoyed the conference and had a great experience presenting their material.

Student co-organizer at the *Philadelphia Undergraduate Mathematics Conference Series*, held at Temple University, Spring 2015. I mentored two groups of students, helping them to present posters during the poster session.

In my class, I keep my students informed to where the course is headed, and I remind them what the goals are. For example, at the beginning of the semester, I give the students a summary of what they have learned in prerequisite courses, afterwards I give them a course plan showing the stages we will cross, going over the basic ideas that will be covered. One of the things my students enjoy is emphasizing where previous concepts they learned, is being used proving new material. Another thing I insure, is giving them real life applications to the new theorems we are proving. I believe that knowing where you are headed makes the road feel more familiar and a little bit easier. I have realized that students are more interested and pay more attention when they are aware of what lies ahead.

As a teacher, I also am devoted to the excellence in teaching the material itself. I am very detailed in my approach, I present the material in a very logical way, explain everything thoroughly, and keep a very well organized board. I also make sure that the students get the reasoning behind the steps that they are asked to apply. In my opinion, that makes it easier for the students to solve problems.

On the other hand, I participate in undergraduate events and conferences whenever possible. I have given more than one undergraduate talk during the “Math Club” meeting at Temple University, and during the “Eastern Pennsylvania and Delaware Section of the Mathematical Association of America” Meetings. Those meetings helped gain more background in dealing with undergraduate students interested in mathematical research, as well as the art of presenting mathematics in an interesting yet appropriate manner for undergraduate level. Moreover, I participated as a volunteer in “*MathCounts*” regional competition for middle school students that was held at Temple University February 2016, the experience gave me an insight at the Mathematics level for middle school, and the activity itself gave me a backstage view to what goes on in preparation for such competitions . Furthermore, in order to gain more teaching skills, I successfully completed the Teaching in Higher Education course in 2015, and completed a Reflective Practicum. The Practicum involved regular meetings with a faculty advisor and other graduate students with the goal of sharing classroom experiences and best teaching practices. Completing this excellent program earned me a “*Teaching in Higher Education*” Certificate from the Teaching and Learning Center at Temple University.

Teaching, if you are doing it right, is not an easy job. You have to be willing to put effort, care and devotion into your work in order to help the students succeed. That is exactly what I do in my classes. Aside from just presenting the information I care about my students, and truly work hard to make sure that everyone is trying his best. I always start my semester aiming that by the end my students would be more knowledgeable of the material, and comfortable enough to discuss and apply what they learned. Finally, I will end by few student quotes from my class evaluations

“Hussein Awala taught Calculus II so well that my confidence in the subject matter is extremely high”,

“This instructor was much more clear as to the reasoning behind the material rather than just the steps to complete a problem. That was exactly what I needed to understand the material I failed to grasp last semester”,

“Professor Awala’s passion for the material and dedication to the students contributed greatly to my success in the class. It was very clear that unlike some professors who just teach the material and expects some students to fail and they simply blame the students, Professor Awala was truly concerned with the well-being of each and every student and tried his best in every way to help them succeed”.