

## Teaching Philosophy Statement

By: Bahman Zamani, Jan. 30, 2008

Department of Computer Science and Software Engineering  
Concordia University

Having a teaching philosophy, although not explicitly declared, plays a key role for every educator in becoming a successful teacher. In my point of view, there are many aspects to discuss about teaching. Among the important aspects, I prefer to consider three most fundamental ones: *the teacher*, *the student*, and *the content*. In the following, I illuminate my philosophy of teaching according to the mentioned three aspects.

### 1 The teacher

I think the teacher is not just a knowledge deliverer; She/he is actually a facilitator which tries to show the ways of learning to the students. Teacher must encourage active learning and convince the students that merely sitting in the class and listening is not adequate for good learning. The reason is that students learn better if they talk, participate in the discussions, write their ideas, thinking aloud, and try to make connection between their learning and their experience.

As a teacher, I encourage cooperation among students by focusing on teamwork. This is because like many other work, learning is a social activity, therefore doing it in collaboration rather than competition and isolation, will produce better results. This is a particular issue in the field of computer science and software engineering, i.e., most of the knowledge students learn in this field is gained by doing practical team work projects.

Teachers must help students in finding the answers to their questions, both in class and out class questions. One of the main facilities the teacher must provide for the students is to dedicate office hours for the class, and be available to the students with prior appointments or by email communication. I try to be approachable to students with a variety of learning styles. For instance, I am available in my office as well as in the stairs or elevators.

Teacher must treat the students with respect, but it is not a barrier for having polite and friendly relationship with them. I believe that the respect must be mutual between the student and the teacher, and in a friendly atmosphere, the hard job of teaching and learning will become more tolerable and even enjoyable for both teacher and student.

The last but not the least is that the teacher must be respect to diverse talents and styles of students in the class and give opportunity to the students to show their talents.

## **2 The student**

By teachers' help, students should learn behaviors and social skills for being an educating professional. Following are some of the most important behaviors.

Students must adhere to the deadlines for submitting the homeworks and assignments. This is a practice for being on time on delivering the product to the customer in the real world projects.

Students must feel respect for their teachers and their world. Being respectful is not in contradiction with having a friendly relationship with teachers. Furthermore, the politeness must not be a barrier for asking questions and participating to the discussions in the class.

Student must be active in the class, in the discussions, in the team works, and spend both time and energy to gain better learning.

Students should be organized and go to the teachers based on the office hours or pre-scheduled meetings. Although I am open to answer students' questions even in the hallway.

## **3 The content**

The content consists of all materials, in any form or media, which are in fact the carriers for knowledge, e.g. text books, course notes, assignments, projects, quizzes, and exams. The teacher uses the content to transfer the knowledge to the student. The most important requirement for course content is that it must be up to date. Teacher must continuously update her/his teaching and assessment methods. This is especially an issue in a rapidly improving fields like computer science and software engineering.

In most of the computer courses, having lab assignments, projects, term papers, as well as (or instead of) mid-term and final exams helps students to learn the subject in more depth and they can use these small experiences in their future carrier. As an example, I can not imagine a "Software Engineering" course without practical projects.

In evaluations and exams, the teacher must be firm and fair. The evaluations should be measurable, relevant, and transparent. Regarding the submission of deliverables, my viewpoint is two folded. On the one hand, I am serious about the deadlines and the fines for delayed submissions. On the other hand, I think the teacher must give prompt feedback to the students and give them opportunity to review their papers and find the roots of their mistakes. This is one of the best ways of learning, i.e., learning from previous mistakes.