

My role as a teacher is to motivate and encourage my students to develop to their fullest potential in mathematics. High quality teaching is extremely important to me. My goals are for students to gain a deep understanding of the content and to know that I truly care about them as learners. The importance of the former is fairly obvious, but the importance of the latter is often overlooked. Students are more likely to work hard to understand course material if they have an instructor who loves the subject and inspires them to actively engage in learning. I want my students to experience the feeling of elation when an idea suddenly becomes obvious to them. I try to share my knowledge and love of mathematics with each student. In addition, I strive to bring excitement and enthusiasm to the classroom and to the learning experience - trying to make learning fun since it has been my observation that excitement flows from teacher to student. I believe that anyone can learn mathematics given the opportunity, the support, and proper instruction. I strongly encourage class participation and discussion in the courses I teach, and I try to provide for my students an atmosphere in which they feel comfortable asking and answering questions. To foster intellectual communication, I provide opportunities for students to learn by discovery.

Over the years, I have had the opportunity to teach mathematics in educational institutions at the secondary and post-secondary levels. The courses, some of which I developed, covered a broad spectrum ranging from the Art of Math to Calculus. All have been positive experiences for me. I have taught students of all ages and abilities from the gifted and talented to the non-traditional student, from young kids in tutoring programs and older adults returning to college to those who typically struggle in mathematics classes. It was very rewarding to see students who entered my class terrified of mathematics leave confident in their mathematical abilities. It was equally as rewarding to challenge my honors students to demonstrate their strengths. From these experiences, I have developed an excellent understanding of the challenges that students encounter in learning mathematics.

To address students different learning styles, I present the content in multiple ways and vary my teaching style to address their individual needs. I try to find ways to teach my students what they need to know and challenge them to go farther. I am a reflective teacher who tailors lessons and assessments to address the strengths and weaknesses of each student. I create handouts to supplement my lectures and I appropriately use technology in instruction. I maintain a class website in order to create an effective organized arena for posting homework, notes, solution sets, and updates for the class. I strive to develop a bond with each of my students. My office door is always open, and students frequently stop by for help or for conversation.

In addition to the formal courses that I have taught, I have also served as an academic advisor and an accelerated learning specialist at the Art Institute of Houston, a post-secondary educational institution. I earned a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) at Rice University which further refined my teaching skills. I also participated in the Teaching Workshops for Current and Future Teachers offered by the Office of Research and Graduate Studies at Rice and continue to participate in mathematics professional development opportunities.

As a graduate student at Rice University, I worked with the Cain Project to help the mathematics department incorporate a nonstandard writing component into the curriculum. The Cain Project was created to equip young scientists and engineers with skills for persuasive communication, both written and oral. We presented undergraduate students enrolled

in the differential equations courses with real life projects. Each student was expected to conduct research, solve problems, and write a formal research paper. I spent a significant length of time working to ensure that both students and faculty benefited from the written projects. Since then, I have incorporated research projects and written products in many of my courses and will continue to do so. One positive outcome is that students must thoroughly understand the material to successfully complete the projects. Often, students complete traditional homework assignments by simply repeating a specific process without really understanding the mathematics involved. Completing the written projects helps them to achieve a deeper understanding of the mathematics. A second positive outcome is the development of critical thinking and writing skills.

My teaching career has been very rewarding. In all my classes, my students knew that I genuinely cared about them and that I was willing to go to great lengths to help them succeed. My teaching evaluations have been excellent and the teaching awards that I have received have acknowledged my strong commitment to my students and to teaching mathematics. I am extremely delighted that many of my students have told me that I was the best teacher they had ever had, and some have followed in my footsteps to become mathematics majors. In several courses I have taught, there have been other sections of the course taught by other faculty members. In many of these instances, I have been pleasantly surprised to find students from these other sections attending my classes, many having to sit on the floor because there were no available chairs.

I have always wanted to teach mathematics. I have had outstanding mathematics teachers in my own education and have taken the best from each of them to craft my own teaching style. My main goal as a teacher is to present mathematics in a clear, innovative, and enthusiastic manner so that my students leave my class with a deep understanding of and an appreciation for the content and an ability to effectively communicate and utilize the subject matter. I strive to put my love of mathematics, my enthusiasm for learning, and my genuine care for students into one product: ME, the mathematics teacher. I enjoy teaching all levels of mathematics, and I look forward to working in an institution that will encourage and respect the excellence in teaching that I will bring.