**Philosophy of Teaching**

Many people struggle in trying to determine their profession. I am fortunate that I realized early that I wanted to teach, which allowed me to focus my efforts, and in my opinion, to become an effective educator. The lecturing styles of my previous professors have influenced my own approach to teaching and have helped me to recognize which techniques are effective in the classroom and those that are not. My philosophy may vary slightly with time, but there are a set of fundamental beliefs based on my personal and teaching experience that guide my teaching endeavors.

I believe that:

- the classroom should be engaging and highly interactive, which begins with establishing relationships with the students. This requires educators to actively invest themselves in the success of their students, including knowing their names and backgrounds. By creating strong relationships, students are more likely to approach the professor if they are having difficulties, more likely to remain in school and thus more likely to graduate. I believe these relationships are meaningful, as many of my previous students continue to stay in touch.
- if students are willing, they can learn and be successful - regardless of socio-economic or cultural background. I believe that the success of a student is the result of their own hard work combined with a coordinated effort among faculty.
- the highest compliment is positive feedback from students – as they are the ones best qualified to evaluate performance. However, being a good teacher is not about winning a popularity contest; it’s about conveying knowledge and giving students the tools they need to effectively utilize that knowledge.
- the success of teaching should be measured holistically. While grades must be assigned objectively, I measure my teaching effectiveness as the relative difference in the student at the beginning and end of the course, which includes knowledge, academic maturity and ability to analyze and solve problems. If a student enters my class already knowing the subject well, what impact will I have in that student’s academic life? Even though that student may earn a high grade, how can I claim teaching success?
- technology in the classroom is both a blessing and a curse. I rely heavily on technology for many of my courses, and having a Web presence allows me to post lecture content and coding examples throughout the semester; students can follow along in lecture, download materials and study as often and whenever they choose. It also opens other channels of communication with my students, as students can ask questions via email or messaging services (such as Skype). However, it is also necessary to compete with technology to win the attention of the students during lecture, as there is a temptation to use laptops for “other activities”, such as streaming audio and video (YouTube) applications or Facebook.
- online teaching is more than just the selection of a good textbook with an online discussion forum. I began developing online content in 1999, including streaming audio from my lectures (using RealMedia), narrating PowerPoint, recording chromakeyed video lectures (similar to broadcasting the weather), and developing collaborative online environments for programming courses. I currently use screen-capturing technology (Viewlets) as a lecture “replacement” for three reasons. First, students need to see the process of building, especially in applied courses such as programming; posting a completed solution fails to show how it was derived. Second, online education is appealing to those who live in remote areas, where high speed connections may not be available; screen-capturing technology is a visual medium that compresses well and is more-readily deliverable for those with slower connections. Third, developing content is straight-forward; a clean lecture can be produced in a few hours. I also believe that online education demands different behavior from faculty members and students. Students must be disciplined, self-
motivated learners who are prepared for this style of course. Faculty must understand that online courses typically require *more* time than traditional courses, and they must be willing to consistently log in at various times throughout the day. Finally, I believe that for online courses to maintain their integrity, it is necessary to ensure that exams are completed by the student, without the assistance of others.

- courses should be well-organized and prompt feedback should be given to students about their status in the class. Quick turnaround on assignments and exams allows an instructor to identify potential problems early and to preemptively address them.

In closing, I have a vested interest in the academic life of my students and strive to help them to become successful, contributing members of society. I take my teaching responsibilities seriously, have a passion for teaching, and truly enjoy the time I spend with my students. It is my hope that I make a positive impact on the student and instill an appreciation for higher education. Although it may come in the form of an email, a phone call or a visit, it’s always a fantastic feeling when a former student says “thank you for what you have taught me”.