

Teaching Statement

I am a learner. I take pride in learning, consider learning a serious occupation, and surround myself with new opportunities to learn. As a result, I have learned a lot about being a learner. Occasionally, I have even managed to learn something about being a teacher, too. This commitment to learning has helped me recognize and appreciate the responsibilities of being a good student and the responsibilities of being a good teacher. And, most importantly, this commitment to learning has helped me locate the balance between what is important *for* students with what is important *of* teachers.

My first responsibility as a teacher is to educate students with practical knowledge. This includes helping students learn to locate a question, construct a sensible approach to answering that question, and communicate that answer to others who might have similar questions. Specific course content often acts as a method for advancing such knowledge. The result is students who can think smartly, creatively, and, most importantly, independently; after all, some of a student's most important learning will occur without instruction and outside of the classroom.

My second responsibility as a teacher is to create a classroom that makes this learning possible. For me, this requires that a high value be placed on both the knowledge and the students. When students believe that learning is a suitable currency for their efforts then those efforts seem to be less about acquiring something old and more about discovering something new. One of the easiest ways I've found to create an active classroom is to make students active in their own learning. In doing this, my classroom is one that uses many different methods to openly and freely exchange ideas and, ultimately, to reach more students. Some examples of these methods include: an interactive website for each class, PowerPoint slides, bound lecture outlines, Pod-casting of lectures, Facebook.com groups, Flash animation videos, movies, media clips, invited speakers, research papers, research projects, and community-based outings. The aim of each method is the same: to find ways of getting the knowledge to every student.

I have applied this approach to teaching in many different undergraduate and graduate (G) courses including *General Psychology*, *Infancy and Early Childhood*, *Childhood and Adolescence*, *Introductory Statistics*, *Human Development*, and *Cognitive Development* as well as *Child Development* (G) and *Cognitive Development* (G). I would enjoy teaching any of these courses again, and, with some preparation, could teach other courses too. Students generally respond positively to my classes as shown in the formal evaluations (see attached), in students' remarks, students' recommendations to other students, and students' performance in subsequent classes.

I have also worked directly with undergraduate and graduate students in my Cognitive Development Lab, on individual research projects, and on Master's and honors theses.

I enjoy learning and teaching. My commitment to learning improves my teaching and my commitment to teaching improves my learning. I find this process both challenging and rewarding, and believe it to be immensely important.