Teaching Philosophy Statement

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My teaching philosophy is based on the principle that learning is a cumulative and reflective process in which students progressively build on prior knowledge to develop more complex concepts. For this reason, my teaching practices are dedicated to guiding students in bridging their existing knowledge with new material, fostering a sense of ownership over their learning. This belief stems from my experience as a Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) in quantitative methodology courses within the Educational Measurement and Statistics (EMS) program at the University of Iowa, where I am pursuing my PhD.

My teaching practices are mainly focused on the comprehension of the course contents, the internalization of what has been learned, and the development of skills. To ensure student engagement, I begin each class by assessing their prior knowledge of quantitative methods and statistical software, such as SPSS, R, Stata, or Mplus. This helps me tailor my teaching approach to their needs. For example, many students initially struggle with interpreting interactions in regression models. To clarify this concept, I ask them to design a hypothetical study, identifying predictors for the analysis of an outcome. Then, I prompt them to consider how one predictor’s effect might change (i.e., is *moderated*) if the value of another variable changes. When students have an ‘aha!’ moment, they feel more prepared to engage with the practical aspects of statistical analysis, class activities, and homework.

To encourage participation and the exchange of ideas in the classroom, formative assessments and guided examples are my preferred methods. Questions focused on the research decision-making process and examples showing how to perform and interpret specific statistical analysis encourage students to ask questions about the *how* and *why* of quantitative methods. This problem-based learning reflects the differences in the students' backgrounds and their professional fields, which enriches the diversity in the classroom. When leading a discussion, my main role is to ask and answer questions, offering a reflection or line of reasoning when appropriate.

To recognize the practical value of quantitative methods, I have seen that semester-long research projects are an effective assessment method. Students deepen their understanding and apply course concepts through these projects, reinforcing and expanding their knowledge by directly engaging with quantitative methods. As a student, I found such projects invaluable in recognizing the strengths and limitations of different data analysis techniques. As a GTA, I have observed how these projects help students connect research design with statistical methods, fostering both critical thinking and practical experience, which are substantial for professional development. While I have not yet designed formal evaluations, in the future I plan to integrate structured research projects into my quantitative methodology courses, using rubrics with defined checkpoints to assess critical stages, such as problem statements, methodology, and preliminary analyses.

Ultimately, my teaching approach—both inside and outside the classroom—aims to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to understand, apply, and critically evaluate quantitative methods, fostering their autonomy and professional growth.