

My teaching experience has ranged from tutoring and lecturing undergraduates, to contributing to a graduate curriculum and designing and teaching workshops for environmental professionals. Evaluations and feedback from students have been consistently positive. I find few things as immediately rewarding as catalyzing a deep and meaningful understanding of a fundamental concept.

At UC Davis, I participated in an interactive graduate preparatory course for College teaching. The broad range of tasks included creating course objectives and preparing lectures, designing traditional and non-traditional methods of evaluating student progress, and also included strategies for continual self-improvement as an educator and communicator. Through this course I designed an undergraduate course syllabus in Ecotoxicology covering topics from molecules to ecosystems. This also helped instigate my initiative through UC Davis Extension to design a workshop for environmental scientists and managers in the application of biomarkers for environmental water quality monitoring. These experiences were constructive for defining my philosophy for education.

My philosophy for undergraduate training stresses the importance of learning not only key facts and principles, but the integration of information across disciplines and thinking critically. Writing assignments are important for synthesizing information and strengthening communication skills. For graduate students, the emphasis shifts to fostering critical assessment of the literature, mentoring toward important contributions to the literature themselves, and encouraging big-picture cross-disciplinary thinking. Participation in constructive journal clubs and discussion groups is important for gaining different perspectives on the literature and for bridging gaps between disciplines. My broad training at the University of Guelph and University of California in biomedical and environmental toxicology and chemistry has prepared me to teach topics both inside and outside my main areas of research. Teaching a topic is the best way to master it. I have found that student education has benefited my research efforts, and perceive teaching as an important contribution of faculty to the community.