Teaching students has been one of my major motivations to come back to an academic environment after various appointments in CGIAR research centers. I enjoy teaching at the University level, as I believe there are no unmotivated students. Every student wants to learn something and it is my responsibility as a teacher to engage them in learning and involve students who were not intrinsically motivated at first. I am an agroecologist working in an agricultural university so I benefit from having students who are often eager to learn. As I gained experience and confidence over the last years as a sessional lecturer teaching "Agroecology for Sustainable Crop Production" to 2nd year undergraduates, I came to regard teaching as one of my favorite tasks and a primary professional responsibility.

My educational objectives are for students to grasp the relevance of each subject, actively learn fundamental concepts, develop a systems' thinking and gain practical skills and experience. I am looking forward to a teaching opportunity in the Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems undergraduate major and other graduate groups to share what I have learned, inspire students and assist in the development of young professionals to foster their interest in improving the long-term viability of food production systems in California and elsewhere. I am also interested in teaching and developing new courses or colloquium discussions about critical issues in sustainable agriculture and the role of agroecology in international development and low input agroecosystems.

There are a number of objectives that I try to accomplish in the classroom. First, I bring a lot of energy to my class. If I can't get excited about my subject, why should the students? I try to lead them through difficult concepts in a way that catches their interest, putting knowledge into context so that its relevance is clear. I often use videos, press releases and historical events to introduce the different ecological processes, highlight their environmental, social and economical significance and provide a window onto the real world.

Whether in the classroom, in smaller groups or in the field, I attempt to facilitate active learning and interactions rather than simply delivering information to students. For instance, this semester I developed an assignment in which students were asked to investigate and present three management solutions to a local or global sustainability issue of their choice and the biophysical mechanisms involved. I think it will help students develop their system's thinking and acquire a deeper understanding of complex issues. I also aim to create a positive, fair play and respectful atmosphere where I engage students in discussion, promote participation, and where mistakes are treated as opportunities to explore misconceptions and clarify concepts.

I also encourage rational thinking to improve students' ability to reason critically and develop independent thoughts. I emphasize learning about trends and directions rather than memorization of facts so that students can think rationally at different scales and extrapolate their knowledge of field processes to watersheds for instance. I also connect my teaching material with research throughout the semester in order to provide the scientifically based information that students will need to critically assess the large body of information available to them.

I ensure that the activities and lectures I propose are tailored to the student's strength and needs, provide core learning before specialization, and are adapted to different levels of preparation. I have been an international student myself during all my university education, and so I am aware of the differences in English abilities, cultural backgrounds and previous knowledge among students. I emphasize my availability and willingness to support students sort out any problems they have with what they are learning. I also prepare final exam questions that can be completed at different levels so that students with different background and levels have an opportunity to answer.

Developing clear learning objectives for students and goals for myself for every class I teach has helped me improve and assess my effectiveness as an instructor. I have also greatly improved thanks to students' feedback about pacing of lectures among other things. My teaching evaluations showed that students appreciate my approach, my enthusiasm and knowledge of my topic, as well as my ability to help them through tutorial discussions. I am also eager to use the remarkable teaching resources available at UC Davis to develop more efficient teaching skills, especially at the graduate level, and learn more about the use of educational technologies in the classroom.

I believe in the transformative effects education can have on individuals. When starting my diploma in crop production, I did not have interest in higher education. I became a scientist thanks to several teachers who inspired me and I hope to become a catalyst for others in the same way.