

Why I Teach:

Throughout my undergraduate program, I have taught chemistry and engineering as a Teaching Assistant, Honors College Tutor, Supplemental Instructions Leader and Learning Assistant. I do these simultaneously among other jobs and research positions. While I am evidently a poor college student, it would be an oversight to say that I am driven to these teaching roles for finances; I get paid for 20 hours a week for all of my jobs per university guidelines and volunteer the rest. Two years later, I would not have it any other way.

Growing up in a state that is ranked 49th in education (Nevada), I venerate the work that teachers do. From living in an environment where hard-working students (such as my mother) need to use calculators to compute what three times ten is, I am aware of the systemic barriers and bias that prevent equitable opportunities in education. Strikingly, I have realized that it requires an education to receive one. From the very personal experience that is engendered “being” first-generation, I can understand one principle idea: everyone deserves to have an environment where they are encouraged to succeed.

To stand in front of a classroom and have the trust of this generation’s future STEM leaders is a humbling experience. From working in over 20 classrooms, –some I have assisted, some I have taught– and personally helping hundreds of students in their education, I have 2 (two) main reasons why I continue to do the work that I do:

- 1) I want to promote education and provide every student the chance to be successful
- 2) I am touched by their realization that they can be successful in STEM

From helping students tinker with titration set-ups and patiently showing students how to convert moles to grams, I can never get tired of seeing them appreciate their education the way I have once. I can only explore opportunities to outreach my services to students. I will continue my work as an educator through peer tutoring, leading office hours, study groups, studios, labs, and part-time lecturing. I will also be expanding my chemistry server and teaching website when I have more time.

Over the years, I have had dozens of students and residents come back and thank me for being the reason they remained in engineering or for pursuing research opportunities in STEM. I am thankful for them for giving me the opportunity to practice my pedagogy skills. While bittersweet, I know these experiences will follow me to any academic career path I take and will only help me to become a better mentor and future professor.

I aim to make education accessible, personable and rewarding. By doing so, I honor the teachers back in my home city for allowing me to walk in their footsteps and improve education.