**Teaching Statement**

I have had the chance to gain (extensive?) teaching experience in a variety of roles, as a lab assistant and a grader during my undergraduate studies, and as a teaching assistant and a lecturer during my graduate studies. These roles enabled me to observe various aspects of teaching and helped me shape the teaching philosophy that I strive to foster as I transition to a faculty member.

Being a graduate assistant lecturer and being fully responsible for teaching a course helped me gain an invaluable experience that is not possible to obtain otherwise. Having the ability to design the course, prepare the teaching materials, deliver the lectures, and assess the learning progress of students helped me experience first-hand which approaches support and contribute to the learning process of the students the most. It is crucial to equip students with skills that go beyond the material taught in class so that they can be prepared for the challenges that they can face in their academic and professional lives ahead. Through a student-centered learning environment students can be encouraged to become self-learners while achieving the learning objectives set for the course. These efforts can be summarized as (i) creating an interactive classroom, (ii) providing continuous feedback, and (iii) mentoring.

**(i) Interactive Classroom:** As a first step for establishing a student-centered learning environment, (I believe?) students need to be active participants in their education. Adopting an interactive teaching style rather than solely relying on traditional lecture-based delivery, can help students take ownership of their learning process. By adding review sessions into the syllabus, I have implemented this strategy while teaching ISEN 310: Uncertainty Modeling for Industrial Engineering. These sessions required students to work on problems together in groups and afterwards a volunteer from each group would come up to the board and present their solutions, after which I would go over the solution steps with the class. While discussing the problems with their peers and engaging in critical thinking, students were able to practice the concepts learned in the classroom and identify key takeaways. In addition to the review sessions, in an effort to incorporate interactive elements into the lectures, I added in-class activities (playing games, conducting experiments, watching related videos and having class discussions) to illustrate the probability concepts and their applications in real-life. Based on student feedback received at the end of the semester, these interactive elements made class more interesting and supported students’ learning process significantly(?). Using a flipped classroom method, which I intend to include in my future classes, where a part(?) of the knowledge is acquired outside of the classroom through pre-recorded videos or other supplemental material and the lecture times are utilized to collaborative learning activities, can also be an effective tool to foster a more interactive and student-centered learning environment.

**(ii) Continuous Feedback and Mentoring:** As often shown by research, grades may not always accurately reflect the learning process \citep{cain2022deficiencies} and therefore are not viable forms of feedback. Therefore, it is crucial to provide an environment that allows students to detect and learn from their mistakes in a timely manner to lay solid foundations for the forthcoming concepts that are built on top of the previous ones. Penalizing mistakes through grades, without providing proper guidance to correct them could jeopardize progress and hinder growth by prioritizing memorization of concepts rather than internalizing them. For this reason, the students should be able to communicate with all actors in their education including the professor, the teaching assistant, the grader, and academic advisors on a regular basis. By doing so, these actors could provide support and monitor the growth of the students individually in this student-centered approach which may be more effective than communicating strengths and weaknesses through grades. During my teaching assistant experiences, I always encouraged students to attend office hours regularly to receive feedback on their progress and not wait right before an exam to fill in any gaps in their understanding of the concepts.

Feedback and mentoring go hand in hand, as the former is an essential part of the latter, together with guidance. Whether it is in the classroom environment or in the context of a one-on-one advisor-graduate student relationship, mentoring helps set an example that does not force the student to fit into a mold but improve one’s unique abilities to allow the student to play an active role in their own learning. Hence, through establishing and maintaining open communication channels, clear guidance, and continuous feedback, I intend to form successful mentor-mentee bonds.

[Placeholder for a personalized paragraph for potential courses that can be taught in the department being applied to.]

**References**

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