

# Teaching Statement

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Teaching Philosophy: Through my teaching experiences, I learned how teaching styles could have a major impact on *maintaining students' attention* and ultimately influencing their success or failure in a class. By employing a series of impactful teaching strategies, which necessitate patience, creativity, and consistency, I try to help my students overcome attention challenges and stay focused. I will discuss a few of these in the paragraphs below, followed by some students' feedback.

I always found it complicated to listen to the lecture, retain information, efficiently take notes, and write down pertinent information from the instruction all simultaneously. Listening and writing at the same time do not come naturally and can be distracting for students, causing them to miss opportunities to learn valuable information. To address this, I always arrive five minutes earlier, split the board into two columns and start writing on the left. When the class starts, I inform the students that after I am done explaining the topic, they will be given a few minutes to write down what is written on the board. After finishing explanations and answering all of their questions, I give them some time to write down what is written on the board. During this time, I begin writing pertinent information required for the next topic on the other column. Therefore, I provide a means for students to **focus fully on listening and writing, separately**. By deploying this simple method, my students never have to worry about finishing notes before I move on to a new topic; they can focus on a single task at a time to prevent missing important information and further interact and engage in active learning.

*"Extremely helpful TA. He is efficient and already has all the formulas written on the board so that we spend the maximum amount of time learning during the class and answering questions. He makes time for us to write out notes after he explains the topic to help us pay attention and retain the information better."*

Before solving problems, I often give students a few minutes to solve them on their own. During this time, I begin walking through the classroom, seeking students who need extra guidance or appear to be struggling throughout the process. My priority is to guide those who struggle to take the first step, i.e., those afraid of writing down their thoughts and ideas. I believe I am responsible for building learners' confidence and encouraging them to freely express or write down their thoughts to solve problems. I **make myself approachable** and welcoming for them both inside and outside the class. I maintain open communication with my students to understand their needs and customize my approach to satisfy reasonable extra requirements. To accomplish this, I meet with individuals outside of the classroom to support varying comfort levels of communication.

*"He is always available and responds very quickly to questions and emails and wants to make sure everyone understands before he moves on in class."*

I have experienced how **valuable it is to use technology** and the appropriate tools to solve mathematical and engineering problems in teaching. I learned how to create simple animations by *Adobe Flash*, to be used in my teaching. Animations often serve as a "hook" in my classrooms and make the lesson enjoyable, aligning with how students learn best from visual cues. This skill helps me create a portrayal model of the text, allowing students to remember the content. This simple approach improves student engagement and subject comprehension. Additionally, it helps me convert words to animations, if possible, yielding shortened assignments and lectures that can further prevent the students from losing their attention.

*"This class was tough but you presented the info in a way I could understand. You made the class fun and engaging while making sure all students understood each activity."*

These methods are particularly constructive in teaching subjects containing the following aspects: time, speed, flow, pattern, motion, and cycle. As an example, consider the following definition: *"Flow time is the time a flow unit spends in the process from start to finish, whereas cycle time is the time between two*

*consecutive flow units.*” In Operations Management, I provide a verbal explanation to elaborate on and differentiate between flow time and cycle time. Next, I write the formulas on the board along with a formula sheet, and show students examples. Finally, I ask them to (individually or in groups) solve a simple numerical question. After solving this problem together on the board, I play one of my animations (click [here](#) to view). Although most students were able to determine the correct answer before watching the animation, often they admit that they could get a complete understanding of these terms until after watching the animation. This also highlights the benefits of visual aids and indicates that through verbal explanation, repetition, and answering students’ questions, they can gain skills to solve subsequent questions, such as those seen on exams. However, they may still fail to have a comprehensive understanding of the topic.

*“I like how he uses different color markers when explaining concepts. That helps me a ton because I’m more of a visual learning.”*

To create an **inclusive environment** for all the students, I held sessions to review the prerequisite materials to lay a foundation for the course subjects, which also fosters the students’ success regardless of their background. I have personal experience living, studying, and teaching in three different countries, where I learned the impact of both ignorance and appreciation of equity among different genders, races, religions, and cultures. The life lessons I have learned through my study-abroad experiences have made me strive to create an environment in my classroom where no individual experiences exclusion.

*“You were really caring to your students and were always prompt to help who needed. I really liked having you as a TA.”*

I complement my teaching efforts with some auxiliary principles and rules, such as giving instructions one-at-a-time and repeating them as necessary, varying the pace, and if possible, and working on the most difficult material early in the class. By taking the *Public Speaking for Academics* course, I improved my ability to communicate the same information in different forms and styles. Comparing my old and recent course evaluations confirms constant progress in my teaching abilities and demonstrates my commitment to refine my teaching approach and techniques based on students’ feedback. Receiving all the positive feedback endorses how my teaching style has been effective. To see samples of my students’ feedback and teaching evaluations, visit [here](#).

*“Honestly a fantastic TA, presented concepts in a manner that helped students learn and added a bright personality to his teaching style. Comes prepared to class everyday, always in a good mood. I really appreciated his dedication to helping us learn. Would definitely recommend a course taught by Vahid to other students.”*

**Teaching Experience:** At the University of Iowa, Department of Business Analytics, I served as a teaching assistant for **Operations Management** (10 separate classes through three semesters). Responsibilities included teaching the lecture-style discussion classes (18 to 30 students). In my third semester of teaching this course, I served as Head Teaching Assistant (360 students). The head teaching assistant’s extra responsibilities include managing a team of teaching assistants (five TAs), developing course material, accommodating students with disabilities, writing exam questions, and coordinating exam testing. I also served as a teaching assistant for the online course **Business Computing Essentials** (695 students), a course to introduce first-year students to standard business application software (i.e., word processing, spreadsheet, presentation software, and database). Before joining the University of Iowa, I taught **Operations Research II** at TOBB University of Economics and Technology and **Production and Inventory Management I** as a teaching assistant at the University of Tabriz in the Industrial Engineering departments.

I also participated in the Graduate Certificate in College Teaching program at the University of Iowa and served as a teaching practicum student for the **Foundation of Business Analytics** and **Computational Thinking (Python Programming)** course. Through this program, I have prepared and delivered some lectures and developed course content to prepare students for the final project assessment.