

Teaching Statement

Jose Andre Morales

May 2008

My teaching philosophy views being a professor as several leadership responsibilities bundled into one role. Conveying knowledge is the key goal where lectures, class notes and examples must meet this goal on a diverse set of students. Always being available to help students encourages questions and instills student comfort in knowing the teacher can be easily reached to answer questions. Creating a friendly classroom environment allows students to focus on what is being taught during class and gives them confidence to ask questions. Serving as a role model for my students encourages their pursuance of academic and other leadership careers.

While earning my PhD, I have developed my teaching philosophy by having been the instructor of record for five undergraduate Computer Science courses taught in four separate semesters that I volunteered to teach. Four classes were Introduction to Java programming (COP2250) with average of 22 students per class and the other was Data Analysis (CGS2518) with 40 students. In performing this role I independently taught the class for the full semester and was solely responsible for homework preparations and evaluation plus creating, proctoring and grading examinations, preparation of class lectures, creation of class notes and examples, lecture schedules and handling all student questions and needs during and beyond office hours. I received outstanding class evaluations from my students, which are available at the department's main office.

I try to convey simple and understandable knowledge to my students. This involves orating real world examples in a language students can relate to. I bring humor into the class making the atmosphere fun and enjoyable. This has a profound effect on my students, they enjoy coming to class, and they feel comfortable in the class and around me, facilitating their learning and question asking. Many of my students ask my advice on what to do next in completing their degrees. Being Hispanic, I naturally attract my Hispanic and minority students who look up to me as an example of what they could become. This is an important aspect of teaching as underrepresented minorities need strong role models to promote increased earning of Masters and PhD degrees. I am proud to serve as a role model for others and I will continue promoting the pursuance of graduate degrees by underrepresented minorities. Being available for help is critical and I always devote as much time as needed to answer my student's questions. Based on my experience, once my students know they can approach me anytime for help outside of office hours they take full advantage which results in better learning and understanding of the lectures.

To conclude, I am comfortable and able to teach classes at the undergraduate and graduate levels especially programming, data structures, computer security and my research area of computer virus detection. I am particularly interested in organizing seminars in computer virus analysis and defense. I also want to organize seminars promoting minority pursuance of advanced degrees in computer science. I will enhance my teaching philosophy through student feedback, teaching seminars and classroom experiences and I am committed to performing my best in this most important of leadership roles.