Statement of Teaching Philosophy

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Thank you for the opportunity to present a statement on my approach to teaching. I am an outgoing person and love to learn about my students and their interests. I especially like to incorporate examples from everyday life. When my professors told us where a chemical was commonly used, it made learning chemistry more relevant and enjoyable for me.

No two students are alike and therefore I incorporate three types of learning methods into my lectures -- visual, auditory, and tactile/kinesthetic. I present the material in the form of a Power Point lecture and then use examples to demonstrate how to solve the problems. These problems are done on the board or a smart computer in real time. I also look at what the corresponding lab is working on and tie that material into my lecture, so the students are familiar with the concept and theory. I will use the lab to drive home the material learned in class and vice versa. If possible, some of the examples used in the lecture will be from the lab.

Listening to somebody drone on about a subject is counterproductive for the audience. I like to ask questions of the students during the lecture to make sure they are following along. I will ask if they understand what I just said and have them to briefly explain the concepts back to me. For large lecture classes (350 students) I use TurningPoint NXT clickers where I can ask any type of question on the power point slide about a concept I just explained and see if they understand what I just lectured on. If the material was not clear I will then explain it again using a different way of instruction.

I also believe it is important for students to do several problems by themselves or in a study group (i.e., homework). Homework is assigned and constitutes a small percentage (4-10%) of the student's final grade. Extra non graded homework is also suggested coming from the end of chapter problems. To give students an added incentive some of the test questions will come from the homework. I will have the homework solutions and --most importantly---how I worked them, available in my office for the students to check and posted on elc (if available). I know it is hard for students to motivate themselves to study, so I give them an added incentive by giving weekly quizzes. The quizzes are administered with the same clickers that are used during the lecture for questions. I have found that most of the students then keep up with the material and do much better on the subsequent test. I also do not offer make up tests or quizzes, instead the lowest test and quiz score will be dropped. No teaching style is set in stone. Every class is different, and, depending on their abilities, I might need to adjust to the students. I will adapt to what the students need and how they learn and what works. I will be available for questions during office hours and before and after class. I realize, I cannot make students come to me for help, but I can and will be available if they need assistance. I will be approachable, and I will learn their names and a little of their background.

For me, a teacher is respectful, understanding, approachable, and supportive. The way I interact with students demonstrates my respect for them.