Teaching Statement
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In art there are countless ways to visualize or depict meaning behind a masterpiece. In particular, each artist sees or portrays the artwork with possibly a different manner, yet the experts in the field have agreed upon certain outstanding works of genius. Similar to art, mathematics entails individualism in the sense of seeing and understanding a particular fact from one’s own perspective. More than just numerous formulas used to solve problems, mathematics aids in pattern recognition and description as well as in explanation of phenomena. Moreover, it consists of multitudes of concepts that are continually evolving, hence making mathematics a cumulative subject that is always expanding.

Unfortunately when beginning as a college educator, I was under the impression that we simply lecture. The year that most influenced my teaching philosophy occurred when I was an NSF GK-12 Fellow, which broke the aforementioned habit. It was at that time that I learned to be a more effective and relaxed teacher. Several newly learned ideas were as follows: students respond more when you speak their names, group work is good, and posing current event questions could spark intellectual thought to which mathematical abilities can be applied.

I have always reveled in the classroom interaction with the students. Upon discovering their strengths, we build upwards from there. Introducing related historical information and fascinating facts to spark their imaginations, I strive to increase their mathematical appreciation and abilities. The satisfaction from viewing mathematical enthusiasm students obtain upon understanding a concept is immeasurable.

Group work enables students to collaborate and explain solutions to problems with their classmates. Recent research has shown that one of the most effective methods for retaining knowledge is teaching others. Putting students in small groups allows the teacher to answer individual questions and observe the students learning. I have witnessed struggling students profit from this; moreover, this method provides a way for reticent students to become more acquainted with their classmates and comfortable in the classroom.

In an ever changing, hi-tech, computer savvy culture, it has become more evident that the use of computers can be easily introduced into the classroom as a tool and useful resource. At least an occasional power point presentation can create a more technological atmosphere, but there are numerous other ways to incorporate tools that are familiar to students. I enjoy showing clips from youtube.com, ratemyprofessor.com, and other web sites that are well known to my students. This often sparks intellectual thought and discussion. Then, it is left to me to steer the conversation so mathematical abilities can be applied. Unfortunately not all students are comfortable asking questions about calculus, but current events are a much more popular discussion builder and open the door for a non-judgmental, comfortable environment.

Due to my excitement in the classroom, passion for mathematics and problem solving, tremendous desire to see improvements in mathematical education, and immense aspiration to have students enjoy and discover the beauty in mathematics; I find myself ready for any new challenge that being a professor offers!