

Teaching Philosophy

I love to learn and share knowledge with others, which is why I started teaching in 2002 while also working as a computer professional. My teaching approach is business-like with an emphasis on the open communication: I provide students with everything they need to succeed in a straightforward manner and let them get used to the course environment and me. As they get to know me better, students typically increase their communication, and in the process, learn more. While it is most important to teach students the content, I also challenge them with different learning techniques and technology skills; if their purpose is explained, these challenges are accepted by the students and they often spend more time on the course material in a productive way.

Some of the courses that I taught were delivered by the intelligent tutor ALEKS (Assessment and Learning in Knowledge Spaces) in emporium style: there were no lectures but instructors were available for help. I was interested in how this approach affects students, and that is how ALEKS - and intelligent tutors in general - became the topic of my dissertation research. The research uncovered complexities to be considered when educational software is included in courses. I concluded that when considering educational software for implementation, it is essential to be familiar with all software features and to supplement them as necessary with activities directed by instructors. A strong instructor role is preferred by many students, even in cases where the software supports self-study and is considered to be of high quality, such as ALEKS.

I can help students most when I know them, which is why communication plays such a vital role in instructor-student relationships. A growing number of students are working adults and often must balance their coursework with the high demands of their jobs. I recognize that and do my best to accommodate all justifiable exceptions. This is always received very well by the students and contributes to an overall positive course environment. Through all of my communications and actions I convey the message that student success is our main goal.

Implementation of technology in education is my specialty. I strongly believe that it is to the students' advantage to learn and use different types of software, but this learning cannot obfuscate the main goal of learning the course content. I usually assign up to three percent of the grade to activities related to the installation and configuration of non-standard software. When I include technology in an assignment, the grading rubric reflects it. I carefully select which functionality I want students to learn and provide a narrated screen capture of how the assignment should be done.

The instructors are in the similar positions as students: they need to learn the technology and to implement it in their classes. This must be recognized, and the instructors must have enough time to accomplish these tasks. The good news is that technology can be introduced gradually. If the goals are set correctly, they are achievable and the progress is ensured. It is my hope that I'll be in the position to help promote technology to both students and instructors and that together, we'll witness many success stories.