

Teaching Philosophy

I believe that we, teachers are all engaged in the continuous learning process, a fundamental way of sharing ideas, perspectives, and experiences, and of giving and receiving counsel. In the didactic triangular encounter of teacher–student–subject, the main role of the teacher remains to be guidance given to the students, while allowing them to discover the “facts” for themselves. I further believe that effective learning comes from interactive teaching which must be made interesting to the students, and the best pedagogic encounter is questions from everyone rather than just answering to all. The role of a better teacher is to perform and put up a presentation at his best on the stage of the classroom which needs interpersonal skills of effective teaching through instructional strategy, professional knowledge, internal and external reflective practice. Through this, teaching becomes dynamic and acceptable to every student as each one is different from other.

My teaching philosophy has been greatly influenced by my past professional experience. About eight years back, I joined India’s one of the most renowned consultancy firms as an Engineer. The difficulty I faced during those days was on account of not having proper training. Though my superiors helped me a lot to grasp theoretical part, but Civil Engineering was not only about understanding the theory. It is more about application of theoretical concepts to practical problems. The urge for this professional knowledge to perform advanced structural analysis drove me back to graduate school.

Following the completion of my masters degree in structural engineering, I joined academics for guiding the future engineers with two major focuses. First, to teach students the way to visualize the problem and solve it by using best available technology. I feel it is required to give emphasize on idealization of a practical model through its closest theoretical model and through this model-prototype idealization, students will be able to solve practical problems. So during giving out assignments/ examinations, I usually put 30% problems which were directly related to practical situation and not just a stereotype problem from any text book. The second focus was much deeper insight to line up a few undergraduate students and a number of graduate students towards researching on development of new technologies. A combination of technology development and its application in engineering would benefit the engineer and the society too.

I usually give an overview of the subject to the students, its necessity, and its connection to the society and also to Civil Engineering. To the freshman and sophomore students, I usually

insist on putting more stress on studying basic subjects like, mathematics and physics properly so that they can grasp and apply these subjects in later core Civil Engineering subjects. While at the classes with junior and senior students, I highlight on practical implementation, which is not necessarily a solution from the text.

Inside a classroom, I pay particular attention to weak students as their successful learning would finally indicate my success of a good teacher. I use visual aids which will help students to grasp the idea clearly. Along with this, I keep in mind the mental state of students coming from lower economic group of families. Sometimes I spend a few more hours with students who are slow-learners and financially weak to bring them at par with others. Beyond teaching in class, I always encourage and have my students come over to any workshop or construction site for hands-on experience.

I think effective teaching should encourage students to take challenges and get them involved in looking for solutions by the sheer joy of learning. Passion, creativity and dedication will grow inside students this way and keep them going. Let me continue to uphold the values of creating and sustaining an environment where high-quality teaching and learning take place. I take teaching as the most vital and enriching part of my everyday job and being a civil engineering professional. It is my responsibility to engage my students in discussions and lectures that challenge their thinking and inspire critical thoughts, and in doing so, I continue to take challenges on my own views too. I will be looking ahead, trying to be the best teacher I can possibly be with the ultimate motto instilled in my students as famously and succinctly quoted by Mr. Steve Jobs in his 2005 Stanford Commencement address, “stay hungry, stay foolish”.