Teaching Philosophy
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Teaching has both an explicit and a tacit dimension. The instructor must transfer explicit course content to his/her students, while at the same time modeling professionalism and a passion for discovery. In addition, instilling a strong sense of relevance to the material being taught will motivate the students. Here, I discuss the tacit dimension of teaching, because the outcomes of attention to this dimension; motivation, professionalism and appreciation, make teaching rewarding to me.

One of the most important values that an instructor can instill on his/her students is professionalism. By paying attention to punctuality, organization, appearance and demeanor, an instructor will serve as a role model, whom the students will emulate when they conduct job interviews and enter the real world. While taking the subject matter seriously and showing interest in it will help foster a sense of professionalism from students, keeping the environment relaxed with a touch of tasteful humor can go a long way to elicit interest and respect from the students.

Another value that an instructor can instill on his/her students is a passion for discovery. By phrasing statements as challenging questions, an instructor can create a sense of ongoing curiosity that can lead the student to think critically not only in the classroom, but throughout their professional lives. This should lead to more participation, better attendance, and more preparation time on the part of the students. Beyond the classroom, this sense of curiosity should entice students to augment their education, and to spend more time exploring their career options, which will hopefully lead to greater satisfaction with their careers.

Finally, buy stressing the relevance of the material being taught, the instructor can not only entice the students to expend more effort and pay closer attention, he can provide the students with several tools that can have an immediate impact on their impending job search. For example, I teach an advanced programming course at FSU, which involves 8 individual assignments. Assignment 8 is not time consuming, it simply involves taking assignments 3-7, putting them into one program with a main menu, and a copy of the student's resume. When the assignment is complete, the students have a robust portfolio that can be put onto a CD and given to recruiters, setting them apart from those with no such portfolio. This creates an immediate sense of relevance, particularly for the students that are about to graduate.

In the six years that I have been teaching, I learned a great deal myself. Most noticeably, I have learned that clear and easy to understand presentation of material is not the most rewarding part of the experience. Rather, it is the subtle impact that an instructor can have on his/her students by modeling behaviors that will lead to success. While I have already come a long way, I look forward to the opportunity to teach more, so that I can continue to grow and understand more about human nature myself.