

FARISHTA SATARI

STATEMENT OF TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

Teaching and learning are essential and invigorating aspects of my intellectual life. After many years of running on parallel tracks towards building a career in the industry while also working hard to excel in academia, I have finally arrived at a juncture to have more focus on my academic track and advance a pedagogical career that I am extremely passionate about.

My teaching philosophy can be summarized by the following beliefs. I believe that students should understand the fundamental theories and concepts thoroughly to be able to use them as building blocks for tackling complex problems in any metamorphic environment, whether it is doing research or working professionally in the field. Additionally, I am a firm believer that students learn best when they are given an opportunity to undertake tasks similar to those undertaken by their professionals within a discipline. It is an educator's responsibility to engage students in a way that promotes their curiosity and interest by providing a simulating environment for them to practice what they have learned. Finally, I believe that the process of intellectual maturation is often emotionally stretching for a student. Since each individual has unique life experiences and students do not learn in a single way, an educator must be sensitive to diversity and open to employing appropriate teaching techniques to reach a wide range of learners.

My approach to accomplishing my objectives for students can be summed up in terms of the following commitments. To ensure understanding of fundamentals, I prefer conceptual learning through repetition of core ideas, putting an emphasis on critical thinking and real-world applications, and giving students ample opportunities to reflect on what they have learned through the course of a semester and in the term examination. Traditionally, there has been a major gap between how we teach computer science and how it is practiced in the industry. Thus, I like to envision ways to encourage students to contribute to one another's intellectual growth through dialogue and have students actively participate and collaborate on projects that give each a clear role, set of responsibilities, and benchmarks for meeting individual as well team goals. Teaching college students automatically implies that there are no blank slates to write on and considering my background not to mention life experiences, I very well appreciate the importance of diversity. I am not only sensitive to individual differences and varying skill-sets but open to employing a variety of teaching techniques such as lectures, discussions, hands-on and collaborative activities to stretch and broaden students' understanding by reaching them at their level.

During many years of seeing through the eyes of a student, I have actively sought to widen my repertoire of teaching techniques through keen observation of a broad spectrum of educators. If a majority of my students are like me, then it is very likely that they are working their way through college and facing real-world challenges trying to succeed in an extremely competitive environment with minimal financial support, limited time to focus, and an already exhausted mental capacity. Therefore, if learning is measured by the amount of information a student can absorb, as an educator, I am facing the consequences of the very challenges my students are up against.

Exceptional educators need to be at the cutting edge of scholarship but it is equally important for them to have the necessary professional experiences to shape young minds into future scholars, whom not only possess the necessary and required knowledge to be critical thinkers and thought leaders in the field but also develop the capacity for self-direction and the expertise to synthesis their knowledge to the advancement of self and community interests. I believe that my diverse life experiences in addition to mastery of the art and science of the field backed by over a decade of multi-disciplinary research, applied experience, and knowledge of IT industry are key to help students understand the dynamism of the computer science field and its impact on our world.

Having professionally worked on big data technologies and conducted research at the intersection of logical AI, linguistics, psychology, philosophy, political science, logic and mathematics, I am very well prepared to teach any course. However, I have a preference for teaching data science, engineering, logic, and/or game theory courses.