Teaching Statement

Introduction

My teaching philosophy is centered on motivating students to acquire practical knowledge while preparing them for a successful career outside the university. On this account, I believe teaching should be a holistic endeavor, helping students develop knowledge and skills as well as personal growth. Drawing from the Aristotelian model of balanced human development, I focus on three virtues: practical wisdom (*phronesis),* logical reasoning (*episteme)*, and practical knowledge (*techne)*. The first virtue shapes my role as a teacher and an advisor both inside and outside a classroom. The second and third virtues offer the basis for developing my academic curriculums and pedagogical framework.

Personal Growth

I prioritize personal growth as my first teaching goal because it affects students' overall learning and long-term career development. Personal growth concerns the appreciation of values and ethics oriented toward behavior and action. It is about the process and the means to achieve the end goal. Students without adequate personal development will have difficulties in establishing a true identity and life goals. In practice, one way to facilitate this personal growth is through mentorship. As teaching assistant for graduate courses in planning history, planning theory, and quantitative modeling, I offered regular mentorship to students by leveraging my experience in consulting and research think tank. I still keep in touch with some of the students I mentored, and they thanked me for keeping this personal connection with them even after graduation. As a new assistant professor, I will take my role as a mentor very seriously and help students discover their true selves and provide continuous guidance during and after their graduation.

Intellectual Growth

My second goal is to facilitate students' intellectual growth, mainly through lectures and classroom interactions. Learning is a complex process which involves multiple levels of understanding and practice, from information processing and repetition to problem solving. During my military tenure as Intelligence Officer in Korean Army, I acquired valuable skills in course management and curriculum development. I was in charge of developing training modules for communication and language training for over 60 soldiers and staff annually. Based on my previous experience in curriculum development, I believe the most effective way to foster students' intellectual growth is to apply different teaching methods for different target populations. I will design my courses to accommodate three different levels of learning:

- **Beginner level (early undergraduate):** At this stage of learning, students need to acquire new knowledge and absorb a broad range of information while improving analytical and problem-solving skills. To reflect this, I will help students build a foundation of knowledge, through a wide range of texts for theoretical grounding and hands-on experience for practical methods.

- **Intermediate level (senior/Master's):** Senior and Master's students have general knowledge about their major and specialization. My focus is then to help them acquire practical knowledge and skills through independent and group projects relevant to their field of interests and professional development. I will also encourage students to work in teams so that they are prepared for a collaborative professional environment.

- **<u>Advanced level (Master's/Ph.D.):</u>** Students at this stage have a good working knowledge and insights about their field and research. Hence, my focus is to enhance students' problem solving ability and creativity, and to help them become producers of knowledge. Because knowledge in applied social science is dynamic and context-dependent, I will focus on teaching new and cutting-edge research, and encourage students to synthesize new knowledge.

Skills Development

My last goal is to help develop students' skills and build their individual tool boxes. Endowing students' tool boxes with a varied array of analytical and communication skills are as important as teaching expert knowledge in a given field. Analytical skills are critical for students to succeed in a knowledge-based industry. Good communication skills and social skills enable students to interact with other people effectively and cooperatively. A team player is preferred over a solo player as interdisciplinary collaboration becomes more and more important in future academic and professional environment. During my teaching assistantship for planning history class, I helped design course assignments focused on developing a broad range skill sets through written essays, design brochures, and visual prototypes. Each student was responsible for developing his or her final deliverable, but at the same time, they were required to work together as a team to produce a group project deliverable. Learning from this experience, I will synchronize lectures and course assignments to give students opportunities to apply the knowledge they learned to producing professional deliverables. Not all classes can be designed to teach practical skills, but the idea is to give students many opportunities to learn new knowledge and skills, while mastering them through course assignments and group projects throughout their academic curriculum.

Conclusion

For me, teaching and learning are life-time commitments. My teaching experiences I acquired in and out of academia enabled me to diversify my teaching methods while preparing me to be an effective mentor and instructor to fulfill this life-long commitment. To this end, my holistic teaching philosophy, encompassing personal, intellectual, and skills development, serves as the vessel to continue fostering this commitment and relationship. I believe teaching should never cease to end after students' graduation; it must continue to evolve as a long term partnership.