

Teaching Statement

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One of the reasons I chose to apply for academic jobs is that they offer the opportunity to teach. Teaching and helping people expand their horizons have always given me joy and I have been teaching different levels of classes since my undergraduate studies. I started as a volunteer for an outreach teaching program at Bilkent University, Turkey. There, I taught basic computer skills to underprivileged high school students. During my two years in this program I taught more than 100 students. In my senior year in college, I was a lab assistant for a course that taught basic programming skills to social sciences students. I was fully responsible for teaching practical programming in the lab, assisting students with their assignments, and grading these assignments. In addition to these responsibilities, I tutored individual engineering students for lower level computer science classes.

In my graduate studies, I had the opportunity to teach higher level classes. I was appointed as a teaching assistant for Introduction to Computer Systems, Foundations of Computer Science, and Programming Languages during the first year of my doctoral study in the Department of Computer Science at the University of California, Santa Barbara. I was involved in assignment preparation, grading of homework assignments and I also taught discussion sessions and substituted for unavailable instructors. I gave guest lectures for Data Structures and Algorithms I, Bioinformatics, and Database Support for Multimedia.

In addition to teaching classes, I had various opportunities for presenting research papers and topics. I presented at two international scientific conferences as well as various seminars in my department. These presentations gave me the chance to present high level scientific topics which I believe is very important for teaching graduate level classes.

I view sharing knowledge and educating future researchers as important aspects of academia, and teaching computer science is one of my high priorities. I believe that my responsibility as a teacher is not just giving lectures but making sure that students learn valuable material for their careers. To this end, I will adjust my teaching to the various levels of students and I will work with the students individually outside of the classroom to enhance their learning experience. I think that students do not grasp the material completely until they use it on their own. Thus, I will prepare practical homework and project assignments to give the students the opportunity to exercise the material taught in class. I will also ensure that the course materials reflect the latest developments in the field.

I am interested in teaching both undergraduate and graduate level courses. Although I am capable of teaching almost all classes offered at the undergraduate level, I would prefer to teach foundations of computer science, data structures and introduction to algorithms, foundations of databases, machine learning and bioinformatics. At the graduate level I would like to offer classes that are closely related to my research, namely, in databases and bioinformatics.