Philosophy of Teaching

My academic research and teaching experience broadly encompass major issues of urban, regional, social, cultural, and economic geography as well as GIS, transportation, research methods, and location theory/analysis. This made me a broadly and professionally trained geographer. Additionally, I have obtained my Geography B.A. degree from the College of Education at Korea University. This program includes various courses in Pedagogy. This qualified me as a middle/high school teacher in Korea. Even though this qualification is originally designed for middle/high school-level students, this really helped me establish a comprehensive concept, philosophy, and ability to teach by putting this training into practice in a college level-instructional setting during my teaching opportunities at the University of Central Missouri and The Ohio State University.

My teaching philosophy has been clearly developed by my mentors’ influence during my academic career. My mentors not only helped in my intellectual development, but also provided excellent examples for me to follow as a teacher. Their devotion to students and the teaching profession have made them excellent teachers. They are prepared with both broad and professional knowledge for the class material. They built strong communication with students inside and outside of the classroom, and they have developed effective skills to convey such knowledge and abilities to their students. All of these factors are amalgamated by an enthusiasm for higher education. My teaching philosophy takes on these strong characteristics.

I always encourage students to get involved in class regardless of the size of the class. In a way, asking students to present their opinions during lecture is a good strategy for students to form unique independent ideas with critical thinking about the class topic. Group discussion and interaction are also important parts of class. Teamwork in sharing ideas and developing them along with those of others into a group opinion is an important process in both academic and social development. I respect students’ conclusions but I am always prepared to lead students in the direction they should go to reach correct conclusions and answers. Outside of the classroom, I act as a willing mentor to students, so students can feel comfortable approaching their instructor for any types of discussion such as academic advice, aid in career plans, etc. I strongly believe that instructors need to make education as enjoyable and beneficial as possible for students.

I have developed my teaching methods over the past eight years to take advantage of what I have learned from my mentors. Since I started lecturing and giving seminars, I have mainly used a computer and digital projector. Using Microsoft PowerPoint to create slideshows has allowed me to include various visual materials and to update my presentations to be current. I also used the internet and showed students good sites to access for further information.

The factors listed above cannot produce a decent teacher until they are conjoined with enthusiasm. I like teaching because I enjoy students being happy with accomplishing their academic goal in my class. I like sharing my knowledge with others and I like working with students. Whenever I teach, I put myself in students’ shoes. This really helps me better understand students and what they need from my teaching. I simply ask myself to remember my college days: what did I really want from my professors? That is exactly what students in my class now want from me.

As my curriculum vitae shows, I have had excellent opportunities to teach a variety of geography courses including Research Methods in Geography, Cultural Landscape, Economic and Social Geography, World (Regional) Geography, Earth Systems II: The Atmosphere, and lab sections of Intermediate GIS and Elements of Cartography. I have consistently received high scores of Student Evaluation of Instructions (SEIs), with my average rating being 4.38 of 5 and my highest 4.88 of 5 (see attached ‘List of Course previously taught’ and ‘SEI’ for more details). In the students’ voluntary evaluation comments, they state that they appreciate my well-organized lectures, enthusiasm for teaching and special care for students. I believe such philosophy and experience continuously encourage me to work harder to be a better teacher.