

TEACHING STATEMENT

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Having opportunities to teach students has been an important motivation for me to pursue an academic career. I have enjoyed teaching, and have considered it an essential part of being a scholar for several reasons. First, teaching is an important way of serving the society with the knowledge gained from scholarly activities. Second, teaching will help me refine skills for communication, as well as keep the breadth of knowledge as a scholar. Finally, I believe that the best way to learn a topic is by teaching it, and that teaching the topics of my interests will provide new understandings and perspectives that are necessary for my research.

Teaching Philosophy The environment surrounding college education seems to have changed dramatically over the past few years. There are vast amounts of educational materials freely available on the internet – course materials, books and video lectures. More importantly, search engines allow instant access to almost any kind of information. To me, these changes seem to call for a different emphasis on education in general and college-level teaching in particular.

I have several philosophies in teaching which are shaped by the demands of changing times. First, I put high emphasis on motivating the subject at the beginning, because I believe that a well-motivated student would not only learn better, and but also be willing to find more about the subject himself.

Also, I think understanding the principle behind the subject (‘why’ and ‘how’) is more important than the knowledge of the subject (‘what’) itself. For instance, in teaching the design of ranking algorithm for documents, what matters are the motivations and guiding principles behind the design of ranking methods in general, as opposed to the details of different algorithms.

Teaching Experience My personal experience in teaching has been the foundations for these beliefs. During high school years, I realized that reflecting on and improving methodology is critical for excellent academic performance, and this allowed me to improve my school grades throughout my high school years. After I entered Seoul National University, I had opportunities to publish a book on my studying methodology, which provided me with numerous opportunities to give talks about how I studied. During my college years, I taught English and Mathematics as a lecturer in a private institution, and I realized that the degree to which I motivate my students on a given subject is critical for my success as an instructor.

At University of Massachusetts in Amherst, as a teaching assistant for a graduate-level Information Retrieval class, I taught a lecture on Personal Information Retrieval, and helped students design and implement a search algorithm for email archives. I also had chances to give a talk about my research during conferences. Going through with these opportunities, I realized that I often get best of ideas during the preparation of lectures, while trying to re-construct the materials from the view of attendees. These experiences all has contributed to my passion for teaching.

Teaching Interests I have broad interests in teaching any undergraduate and graduate-level courses that will become a foundation in designing, implementing and evaluating an interactive information retrieval system. Based on my background in research, Information Retrieval would be my primary teaching area, and I can provide a curriculum with a particular strength in web search, interactive IR, and structured document retrieval. Also, Personal Information Management (PIM) has been a core theme of my thesis work, and I can provide a course with emphasis on the design and evaluation of a PIM system.