

Teaching Statement for Hiroshi Fujinoki

From my five years teaching experience in Japan, I have learned that teaching requires understanding people. I always tried to organize my lectures from a viewpoint of those who are new to the materials I was teaching and it was always challenging. It is a lot of fun to organize lectures by guessing what will be the difficult parts for my students to understand. Even though the people I saw in classrooms were with diverse cultural background, the essential part of teaching to me, understanding people to whom I was giving lectures, never changed.

Teaching means a job of the following three tasks to me: helping other people to get new knowledge, helping efficient methods for learning and helping other people to see excitement in learning. To me the order of the importance is in the reverse order as appeared in the list above (i.e., seeing excitement is the most important) although I consider the first in the list (helping other people to get new knowledge) is the core of my job for teaching. This is because if someone does not feel learning very exciting, the other two may not happen unless students are forced by someone else and most probably it will not last long just because of that. Once someone is interested in learning something, then the question is how efficiently he/she can do it. As a result, the last (i.e., the first in the list – help other people learn) seems to be the results of the other two activities to me. Because of this, I tried to help my students to see excitement in learning some subjects in the classroom at the same time I tried to introduce efficient learning skills, which I developed and learned in my life.

I think being a good teacher is similar to being a good cook in many ways. A good cook is the one who knows what's good in the food they cook and who can arrange taste so that other people enjoy good taste at the same time people get essential nutrition to sustain their life and health (and growth especially for young people). There are many subjects that good engineers are supposed to know. Textbooks are teachers' local supermarkets. However, going there, buying some foods there and bringing the foods to the home (classroom) are not enough. We have to cook them in such a way that students can feel fun in learning while students learn essential knowledge in their field. The only difference between a good cook and a good teacher is that a good teacher's work does not end when a meal is served. She (or he) has to help students digest the foods served in the meals.

I feel working as a teacher is such a wonderful job because I may be able to help other people as I was helped in my past. I think that way because I, myself, owe a lot for what I am to the teachers I met in my life. I wonder if I can do the same for other people I meet at SIUE. Teaching in academic environment will keep me interested and I am sure that I will be enthusiastic in teaching since it is based on my teaching experience for almost a decade.