Statement of Teaching Interests

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My desire to teach and advise students is one of the main reasons in pursuing an academic job. An important step in being a successful teacher lies with becoming excited about the teaching material. Excitement can only be achieved effectively by constantly working, researching, and studying the subject. Therefore, doing research is complementary to effective teaching; cutting edge knowledge not only equips a teacher with up-to-date examples, new applications of the material, and up-to-date information, but also provides him with a mastery of the material. However, not all good researchers are good teachers. In addition to demonstrating deep understanding in his field of expertise, a good teacher must be focused on his topics while constantly improving his lecture material, collecting student feedback, encouraging student participation and critical analysis, and reemphasizing points when necessary.

A good teacher should be focused and remember that he cannot cover the subject material in its entirety within his lectures; instead, he should motivate his students to critically read and analyze related materials on their own. To encourage independence and creativity, students must see different perspectives on issues. Over time, a good teacher needs to update lectures and accompanying materials based on the students’ needs and advances in the field. In order to recognize the needs of the current class, good teachers should constantly collect feedback from the students to understand their background and fund of knowledge. Throughout individual lectures - and across consecutive lectures, good teachers should repeat and reiterate important points - in different ways, if necessary - to ensure student comprehension. Over several years as both student and teacher, I have come to understand the importance of these principles and design my teaching method around them.

Teaching Experiences: Since joining the University of Pittsburgh as a post-doctoral research associate, I have given several guest lectures in machine learning and advanced machine learning courses.

During my PhD studies at Michigan State University, I served as a teaching assistant for different undergraduate and graduate courses such as Informatics, Introduction to Programming I, Algorithms and Data Structures, Database Systems, Machine Learning, and Data Mining. I have given (guest) lectures, designed homework assignments and course projects, held office hours, and graded coursework over ten semesters, from 2004 to 2010.

Prior to my PhD studies, I lectured in several courses, such as Artificial Intelligence and Introduction to Programming. In addition, I was a teaching assistant for multiple other courses.

Teaching Interests: Because of my background in Artificial Intelligence, I can teach a variety of related courses, including Information Retrieval, Data Structures, Probabilities and Statistics, Artificial Intelligence, Pattern Recognition, Data Mining, Machine Learning, and Biomedical Informatics. I also plan to design and teach new courses according to the needs of my new home institution. Furthermore, I aim to present seminars and run advanced courses as needed to keep graduate students abreast of recent developments in machine learning and data mining.