

Statement on Teaching Values

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This document outlines a set of values that we believe are foundational to excellent teaching. These values are intended to provide structure for personal and departmental discussions on teaching. They are also intended for faculty to read and use when reflecting on and presenting their work as teachers. In addition, this document provides context and a coordinating framework for the various methods of evaluation of a faculty member's teaching. Recognizing that excellent teaching is exhibited in various ways, and in encouragement of innovation in teaching, this statement presents six broad areas in which we value faculty's teaching work and provides accompanying descriptions meant to clarify and indicate the breadth of possible contributions to that value.

We value instructors' work to create inclusive classrooms.¹ An inclusive classroom is one in which students feel that they belong and that their ideas and experiences are valued contributions to the class. Such a classroom also incorporates practices and policies that provide students equitable access to academic achievement.

We value instructors' thoughtful planning. This is intentional planning that sets goals and supports students in achieving these goals. Thoughtful planning draws from content knowledge,² pedagogical content knowledge,³ pedagogical knowledge,⁴ knowledge of students,⁵ and knowledge of the role of the class in the broader curriculum.⁶ Such knowledge may come from experience and reflection, discussion within a professional community, or literature on teaching and learning.

We value instructors' reflection and curricular evolution. This means gathering information from the classroom,⁷ analyzing it, and then using it to inform plans for future classes. Such reflection occurs within a semester in order to better teach a particular set of students as well as between semesters to better support the overarching goals of a course.

We value fostering students' intellectual engagement. That is, encouraging students to develop a deep personal commitment to exploration, investigation, problem-solving, and inquiry over a sustained period of time; and facilitating students' learning of mathematical content and skills.

We value fostering students' awareness of metacognitive processes.⁸ That is, providing structured opportunities for students to reflect on their understanding of a process or concept. Such experiences encourage students to identify methods that help them learn most effectively and can improve their ability to learn other topics.

We value faculty members' roles in mentoring. These are ways in which a faculty member takes an interest in developing a student's well-being and personal growth, encourages involvement in the mathematics community, and helps a student prepare for a meaningful and rewarding life after college.

Notes

1. This description encompasses two aspects of **inclusive classrooms**: an inclusive classroom is inviting (i.e., students are welcomed into the class) and supportive (i.e., the class helps students succeed).
2. **Content knowledge** is sometimes referred to as “expertise in the subject material”. We intend this to be broader, though—for example, a faculty member might take on a course in an area they have minimal or no training in and invest a lot of time learning the basics of a new area.
3. **Pedagogical content knowledge** has to do with how students interact with new ideas in a specific course. For example, knowing the common challenges students have when encountering particular material for the first time may inform which examples and problems an instructor uses.
4. **Pedagogical knowledge** refers to knowledge about teaching and learning that is broader than pedagogical content knowledge. For example, ways of structuring and implementing lessons, assessment methods, or how students learn.
5. **Knowledge of students** refers to students’ previous knowledge, their interests, their skills, and what they are challenged by. This may be an understanding of the generic student taking a particular course at this particular institution or of the specific students enrolled in a specific class, which may influence how an instructor designs a course in terms of content and pedagogy.
6. **Knowledge of the role of a class in the broader curriculum** means that an instructor knows how the content and skills their students work on during a semester will be useful to them after the course, and sets them up to have success in these future endeavors.
7. **Information from the classroom** can be gathered in a variety of ways that may include, for example, formal surveys, student performance on assignments and assessments, or quality of student involvement in class activities.
8. **Metacognition** is “awareness or analysis of one’s own learning or thinking processes.” (Merriam-Webster) The first sentence places value on intentionally planning activities that make students aware of the process of metacognition. The second focuses on the positive outcomes for students who are aware of their own metacognitive processes.