Teaching Statement

José G. Mijares

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Currently, I am a Postdoctoral Scholar at the University of Denver (DU), Colorado. So far I have taught (in English) the following courses at DU: Calculus I (Fall 2013, Fall 2014), Calculus II (Winter 2014, Winter 2015) and Multivariable Calculus (Fall 2013, Spring 2014, Spring 2015).

I have had the opportunity of teaching in Venezuela and Colombia, courses for undergraduate and graduate students in Linear, Commutative and Abstract Algebra, Numerical Analysis, Differential Equations, Set Theory, Ramsey Theory, Mathematical Logic, Topology, Topological Dynamics, Number Theory, Calculus, Multivariable Calculus and Analysis. I have taught one-semester and quarter-long classes of varied size for undergraduates and graduate students of Mathematics, prospective Computer Scientists, Engineers, Administrators, Physicists, Chemists and Biologists. Besides lecturing to students, my responsibilities have included preparing the syllabus and off course grading homework and exams.

I like to have a dynamic approach to teaching in which the participation of the students in the class is constantly stimulated. Problem-solving skills, critical thinking and interest for research are some of the main capacities I try to develope in my students. Assignments of worksheets as homework is frequent in my class. I design them specially to reinforce the main concepts covered during my lectures and to help the students have a better understanding of them. At least twice a week, students receive a worksheet to practice and advance in their understanding. Usually, one worksheet is assigned every Tuesday, due Friday; and the other one is assigned every Friday, due Tuesday. I also like to have one quiz every week or every other week. I like to keep the students working and asking questions. On the other hand, receiving my students during office hours and trying to be available and accesible for them as much as possible is very important to me. I love teaching and do my best to help the students progress in their learning process. And I think my students notice it.
DU students comment:

“He knows the material very well and explains it in such an easy way. I love how he tells us how we’re going to use the concepts we learn in real life rather than just teaching us from the book. He gives us great advice on how to succeed in college and in mathematics and I will never forget the things he has told us. He is a great instructor who knows what he’s doing and I would highly recommend him to anyone!”

“Jose knew the subject matter very well and he loves to teach calculus.”

“He was enthusiastic and really tried to get us to be motivated about math.”

“He is very funny and engaging and is good to have as a laid back professor.”

“I liked how the teacher was very knowledgable in the subject area.”

“I definitely gained greater insight into calculus and its practical applications.”

“The atmosphere was comfortable. I felt like I could ask for help at any time.”

“He was very knowledgeable about the subject and took the time to explain.”

“Straightforward study instructions. Homework helped teach material.”

“The professor knew the material and was available to help. He had office hours and could answer questions.”

“The teacher gave fair examinations on our midterms and finals.”

“The strengths of the course are higher order thinking and application of real life problems. The instructor was a nice guy.”

“Homework was well chosen and a good amount to learn the material.”

“He really knows everything about calculus and when someone doesn’t understand something, he does everything to his ability to explain. He stops lecturing to help the students when they get stuck on a step which is great.”

“Enthusiastic and very funny, made the class very enjoyable.”

“There were a lot of worksheets for practicing for tests and quizzes.”

“Professor Mijares cares a lot about his students and is very willing to help.”
“Very understanding professor who was always willing to work with students on math and accommodate special situations.”

“Office hours were always available and the worksheets were extremely helpful for studying the material. The professor was always willing to help if you asked for it.”

“Made the material interesting and was fair. Good teacher.”

“Jose knows the material inside and out. He’s always prepared to go through another example on the board, and to try different ways of explaining concepts until the students ”get it.” I appreciated that he emphasized student learning over keeping a strict schedule.”

“The time management of the teaching material worked well and we covered all we needed to cover.”

“He knows his stuff and he can explain it well in a 1 on 1 setting, course was challenging but followed the book for easy reference.”

“He was very available and fair. He is also one of the nicest most caring teachers here at DU.”

“He wanted us to succeed and was willing to help when we had questions.”

“The course taught me a great deal about calc II. I also liked how the professor would hand out worksheets to assist in learning the material.”

“The course follows in line with Calc I. The instructor was encouraging and obviously loved the subject matter.”

“Very knowledgeable on calc 2 and really participated well with seeing improvement in my midterms which was nice.”

“The course is very challenging and the instructor is really good at making sure students grasp the material.”

“He was friendly and always helped students who needed it.”

Student-oriented seminar coordination. Student thesis supervision:

For advanced math undergraduate students and graduate students, I have co-organized seminars in which they can participate. I hope to have the opportunity to continue organizing this type of seminars in the future. I have been thesis supervisor for six undergraduate students, two graduate students in the Master’s program and one PhD student. All of them successfully completed their programs. You will find more information about my role as supervisor at the end of my CV.
Student community service supervision:

Finally, I think it is worth mentioning that I had the great opportunity to be a supervisor of the Community Service Program for Students, in the Central University of Venezuela (2008–2011). In that program, we helped students to serve as instructors in poor communities, in schools for children and youngsters with drug abuse problems and in homeless shelters. The Community Service is divided into two programs. One is the Induction Program (course, workshop or seminar) through which the students learn about the service, and the other is the Community Practice Program, which consists of several community-based projects in which the students participate and are conducted by the application of the service-learning methodology. Some of the responsibilities of the faculty who acts as supervisor of the Community Service Program for Students are coordinating the registration, monitoring and academic evaluation of the students participating in the program. While this program is a graduation requirement for students, to be a supervisor is voluntary.

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