

Formal Educational Training

Sorry, only available in English.

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Advised Students

Outreach

Materials

Teaching Philosophy

In lectures, I believe in engaging students by starting a dialogue with them and, especially for larger audiences, using polls. This way, I make sure that the students stay attentive, that both I and the students keep track of the students' learning, and that the students enjoy the lectures more. To increase engagement further, I give many real-world examples (in which I try not to reinforce any biases), and I even like to use occasional jokes or cartoons in my lectures. Ideally, I try to deliver round lectures which are on a single topic and end by answering a question from the beginning. While enjoyment typically keeps student attendance high, I make clear to the students what the boundaries of the fun are, and that the reason we are meeting is to learn. I make clear that I am merely there to alleviate the learning process (hopefully quite a bit) and that the students must eventually engage directly with the material. There are usually assignments that must be delivered throughout the semester, and I also clarify that I do not make exceptions with respect to deadlines. In my advanced lectures, I am practicing research-based teaching. First of all, I teach topics that are relevant or part of current research. Teaching such topics makes sense because these are topics that I am an expert in and that are, from my point of view, both important and interesting to consider. In addition, they are topics in which students can not only be part of an audience but also be participants in research. Being a participant in research additionally prepares them to navigate a supercomplex world by having to question the foundations and frameworks of their knowledge all the time. I am either aware of open research questions, become aware of them in preparing the course, or students make me aware of them by asking questions (I encourage them to ask specifically such questions). It is then natural that I supervise a thesis (or other research project) on any such question, as part of the curriculum of the different programs that I am teaching in.

To prepare students for research, I give students original research papers to read (most of the time only as background) as part of the advanced courses. In addition, in the assignments, I ask students open questions, i.e., questions in which the task is to prove a statement if it is true or disprove it if it is false, without saying whether the statement is true or false. That is, I ask questions to which the answer is known, but like they were research questions.

Even if I do not supervise students on the research questions, teaching benefits my research in that I become aware of research questions, in that I organize the state of the art for myself such that I get a better overview, or in that I come up with easier (to teach) arguments for certain statements. In fact, there are some topics that I may only learn (in such depth) at all because I am teaching them.

In supervising students, I believe that it is important to first find some (sub-)question that both the student and I are excited about studying; in my view, that is the main force that will keep the project going. I also believe that, in the beginning of the supervision period, frequent meetings are particularly important, so that I can reset or shift the focus whenever I feel that is necessary for a successful thesis. Depending on the difficulty of the topic, I may give more input or less. In the end of the meeting, we usually write down multiple questions that the student can look at until the next meeting. But even later, I believe that regular meetings (at least every two weeks) are necessary. I ask the students early on to write down some of the findings, to give them early feedback and take pressure from them in the final writing period.