

Teaching Statement

Jinko Kanno

I taught mathematics to middle and high school students for fourteen years in Japan. Then I came to the U. S., and I have been teaching mathematics to freshman and sophomores since 1999. In my classes, I strive to make connections with my students and to involve them in the lesson. I learn their names as quickly as possible so that they know that I care about their individual needs. I also try to create an environment in the classroom that will minimize any math anxiety the students may have. Learning mathematics is not easy for everyone and I feel that students cannot open their minds toward mathematics unless they feel they have a chance to succeed. For this purpose, in the beginning of my courses, I assign my students a few tasks so that they can learn how to study mathematics. For example, they make flash cards or write practice tests. I feel it is very important for me to nurture the students' confidence and to constantly encourage them in their learning endeavors.

To provide a comfortable environment for learning, I must be confident and enthusiastic about the subject. Who can be interested in a subject if the teacher is not? I feel freer to express my enthusiasm in the U.S. than I did in Japan, where a more formal classroom atmosphere is maintained. This formality means that Japanese students are hesitant to ask questions of their teachers. I encourage my students here to both ask and answer questions and most do so without hesitation. This provides me with instant feedback enabling me to adjust the course of the lesson appropriately. I feel that it is crucial to the students' learning that I successfully establish a dialog with them and I work very hard to create and maintain this dialog. It is this two-way communication with my students, so much less constrained here than in Japan, which makes me enjoy teaching here even more than I did in Japan.