

Statement on Teaching – Alan Zollman

When I was in the third grade, I had a hard time learning my multiplication facts, especially the 7's. I hit upon the idea that if I knew 2 times 8 and 5 times 8, then I would know 7 times 8 by adding the former products. In algebra I was pleased to see "my idea" as the distributive property of multiplication over addition, and I was delighted to share my idea with other students and my teacher. Since the third grade, my philosophy on teaching keeps changing, but my passion for learning mathematics and my enthusiasm for sharing this passion have remained.

My main teaching objective, of course, is to facilitate students in their individual learning of mathematics. I do not teach mathematics – I teach students. I work to get each of my students to be a reflective mathematician, even the student who *hates* math.

I try to initiate student reflection through my teaching methods, my curriculum, the other students in class, and through the individual. In my teaching, I ask many higher-order questions and I listen carefully to my students' thinking. Problem-based learning is incorporated into the curriculum. Class is a collaborative community of learners, where students are expected to understand their roles and responsibilities to me, to themselves, and to their peers. The individual student is challenged to connect the content to previous material and concepts, and to "muck around" while solving problems. I expect persistence, respect, and integrity from myself, and from my students.

My approach to teaching mathematics is still evolving. But I still am that third grader who thinks learning mathematics is elegant and wants others to enjoy it too.

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