

6/4/03

I would first like to express my extreme gratitude for being given the opportunity to be a part of a unique and truly wonderful *experience*. For ten weeks as a Teaching Fellow, I was a member of a rich intellectual circle that included an outstanding professor and mentor, 40 gifted and motivated students, and engaging colleague.

Students from diverse educational backgrounds and limited science background learned the scientific and applications fundamentals of genetic engineering. Indeed I was impressed with the level of comprehension and academic growth that the students displayed throughout the quarter. Each week during our seminars the students came prepared and ready to learn, this atmosphere was created by the teaching technique employed—the Socratic Method, my ability to create a comfortable environment, and excellent material in which to spring board discussions. Professor Goldberg skillfully selected material that had equal parts scientific merit and socio-political relevance. The students were engaged at step of the way, and interacted effectively with each other, the professor and the teaching fellows. At the end of the quarter each student was capable of working in a research laboratory.

Professor Goldberg provided the framework for course. His philosophy of “teaching people how to teach” creates an educational climate that facilitates the exchange of ideas as well as a wealth of experience. His skill in guiding us to proficiency using the Socratic Method prepared for our weekly seminar sessions. This allowed us to create an intellectual climate unique for an undergraduate course. This method however requires organization, patience, and preparation. Professor Goldberg showed us, by both verbal encouragement and by example, to maximize our time such that we optimize our teaching output. As the quarter progressed we, Mike and myself, soon realized that these are some of the critical qualities need to fully reach our academic potential.

My abilities as a teacher grow exponentially throughout the quarter. Before this quarter my teaching experiences were confined to strictly science students, who for the

most part had taken all of the pre-requisite courses and had a basic understanding of science and the scientific method. This course was a challenge for as many of the students were social sciences and humanities majors. I knew that I needed to prepare well, remember to be extremely patient, and create an atmosphere where the students felt comfortable asking questions to the class and answering those questions. It is my personal belief that in order for my students to have to best educational experience they need to have a level of confidence that comes from being in a positive environment, where you best is asked of you. The students saw the level of effort and energy that I brought forth and gave me more than anyone could ever expect in return. We became a close knit group of scholars and friends. Although there were times when I was frustrated, I knew that I could always seek the advice of Professor Goldberg. I can honestly say that I received nothing but positive and constructive criticism.

There we many times where I felt that I got more out of the course that the students. I consider myself lucky. This experience has given me a strong advantage over 90% of my peers. The lessons that I learned from Professor Goldberg will last a lifetime.

Thank You,

Malik Joseph Francis