

William Cipolli
1000 Watermark Pl. Apt 111
Columbia, SC 29210
☎ +1 (203) 848 5643
✉ william.cipolli@gmail.com
🌐 <http://people.stat.sc.edu/Cipolli>

Teaching Statement

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My goal as a lecturer is to have a profound and lasting impact beyond simply teaching the subject material. Many things at a university affect students' experiences and education. To me, education is more than facts and formulas; it is an opportunity students get to mold themselves and the way they think and to find what they are passionate about as they start their paths towards fulfillment.

Being a dynamic, effective teacher and mentor has been and will continue to be a great aspiration of mine. Having worked with students at both the University of South Carolina and Florence Darlington Technical College, I have had the opportunity to guide and connect with close to a thousand undergraduate and graduate students of varying levels of mathematical and technological understanding. I take many steps to ensure that each student is able to succeed in my class despite their individual level of comprehension. I motivate my students to stay engaged throughout the class by lecturing with fervor, using relevant and timely examples and demonstrating, through a steady stream of feedback, how their engagement with the material is paramount to their success.

I firmly believe that one of the important aspects of teaching is one's ability to critically self-reflect and grow with their students. I often send surveys to students which gauge how comfortable they are with the material, whether they understand the methods displayed in lecture, or if they would like to see another example; this provides an anonymous way for students to provide constructive criticisms throughout the semester that they may be uncomfortable providing in person. In giving careful consideration to students' concerns, I am able to ensure that my lectures are effective and helpful for a variety of learning styles.

Math, Statistics or Computer Science may not be among a student's favorite courses, but there is usually a way to think about these subjects so that they relate to their interests. The surveys also allow me to find what types of examples students can engage with. Asking questions about students' majors, hobbies and even about themselves gives me the ability to customize the material towards their particular interests. Utilizing this technique has drastically improved my classroom atmosphere; instead of using basic mathematic examples, students are more engaged in the material because they feel that it is being explained in a manner that is relevant to their lives. Customizing the material towards the students' interest encourages them to engage in the material; even the students that openly dislike math or statistics have relayed positive feedback, saying personalized examples made the material easier to understand and pay attention to.

To enhance this I have developed and implemented standards based system for testing. My system consists of many unannounced short quizzes in place of long infrequent exams so that students can receive a steady stream of feedback throughout the semester. This unannounced aspect of this system promotes proactive, long-lasting learning while discouraging short-term memorization of material. Additionally, the steady stream of feedback allows students to quickly recognize their weak points while affording them the opportunity to improve upon them before becoming overwhelmed with poor test grades and new material.

I often tell students that math and statistics are like a stairwell – the second level of steps is practically useless if we don't have a sturdy first level.

I try to get the students to realize they are the most important advocate for their education. Every class they take is part of their preparation for future interviews and jobs. At the small, private undergraduate school I attended a professor once told me that the difference between the big Ivy League universities and their counterparts is that students from the former will get a top-tier education because that level of study is expected of them, and at other institutions a student might have to go looking for it; unwaveringly, however, that top-tier education is always available. I want to encourage students to realize they can get that education, and to want to look for it.

I have been lucky to have teachers and professors make me realize how important this type of teaching philosophy is. Many of my professors, in both undergraduate and graduate studies, have shown how committed they are to teaching and the success of their students. My teaching style is a combination of those qualities I have enjoyed as a student, with many of my professors, in addition to new ideas like online polling throughout the semester and a standards-based system for testing.

I want to empower students to reach their highest potential by making difficult subjects in math and statistics seem more comfortable by displaying material with relevant examples in digestible pieces. I aim to not only teach the facts and formulas of mathematics but to help mentor and guide my students towards personal and academic growth and success throughout aspects of their entire college experience. To this point, in addition to being active in these endeavors my door is always open and I encourage students to come and discuss anything whether it's a question from class, a suggestion that might make things easier for them going forward or otherwise. My goal is to make learning an interesting and inspirational experience for my students. I enjoy these challenges immensely and believe I do and can continue to make a difference.

Student Feedback

Last updated: September 24, 2015.

This document provides a complete summary of student evaluations during my 4 years as a Graduate Assistant (Fall 2012-Summer 2015).

As a Graduate Assistant at **The University of South Carolina**, I have taught 2 different courses:

- STAT 201: Elementary Statistics
- STAT 515: Statistical Methods I

It is required that each student completes a course evaluation towards the end of the semester. One question asks the student to rate "the overall performance" of the instructor. A standard 5-point scale is used as a measurement system (5 = best).

STAT 515	Summer 2015	4.6/5
STAT 201	Spring 2015	4.8/5
STAT 201	Fall 2014	4.8/5
STAT 201	Summer 2014	4.9/5
STAT 201	Spring 2014	4.9/5
STAT 201	Fall 2013	4.6/5

Below I provide handwritten student comments taken from the evaluation forms at USC for the question "please comment on what you feel are the positive and negative aspects of your instructor and his/her teaching outlook;" every (legible) comment has been included.

STAT 515: Statistical Methods I

Target audience: Undergraduate and graduate students from other majors

Summer 2015

- Teacher cares and is funny. It's my second time taking it and I learned a lot more than the first time with a different teacher.
- BEST INSTRUCTOR EVER!!!!!! WE NEED MORE PEOPLE LIKE HIM TO TEACH!!!
- Will is amazingly gifted at both statistics and the R software. Unfortunately, I think it's hard for him to see from the POV of someone who doesn't understand it as well.
- Will is one of the best teachers in the math department that I have encountered.
- Very good/passionate teacher, but at times I feel like you know the subject so well you assume we do also & really we don't. I enjoyed the class though.
- He is very nice and makes class fun, but since it is a graduate level course he seemed to assume we did not need help and did not seem to care if we were interested in the material. I would have appreciated a little more help when I came to ask questions
- There was too much focus on the PowerPoints and not enough practice problems in class. The homework was helpful but confusing at times because we didn't do problems in class.

STAT 201: Elementary Statistics

Target audience: Undergraduate non-majors (mostly freshmen and sophomores)

Spring 2015

- Will did a great job of making class fun and interesting! He cares about all of us and wants us to learn the material. The only problem I came across was understanding the material on the PowerPoint slides. I am very happy I took Will's class and he was extremely helpful by offering extra help after class and extra problems for every chapter.
- He was a great professor. He made it easy and fun to learn. He was always funny. Sometimes a little intimidating but overall one of my favorites.
- He does a great job making the lecture fun and clearly teaching all the material
- Will is a great instructor who really cared about his students. He was understanding and patient with all of us and our questions.
- I thought he did a great job explaining things and using examples that would help me on the test. Thanks for grading things so quickly.
- The positives of my instructor are that he is very enthusiastic and always comes into class in a positive mood. He teaches very lively and energetically which helps keep the class involved. Maybe answer some questions more straight forward, other than that no negatives for Will's teaching aspects and personality.
- Very energetic and funny (makes class interesting) could work on going through the chapters more slowly. Sometimes it feels rushed and I feel like I don't receive all of the information I need.
- The PowerPoints are fantastic and most of the data used in class was pulled from our class so it made it interesting.
- Will was a nice fun guy but his teaching skills could still be improved. The explanation behind why and what certain statistical tests or variables could have been better but overall a good teacher.
- Very funny and relatable. Young and dresses nice so he was enjoyable to look at in class. Always came in with a smile and I really appreciate that.
- Very enthusiastic about the subject and motivates students to participate and learn rather than memorize the material.
- He really wanted us to understand the power of statistics which made the material very interesting.

- I liked this teacher. He always had a positive attitude and motivated us to learn. Wish I had him next semester.
- Will is the best teacher at USC. He actually cares if you learn the material. I have nothing bad to say.
- I learned a lot this semester and will made the class interesting which helped a lot.
- Very positive and willing to help.
- It was obvious that Will really cared about his student and wanted them to do well. All teachers should have this quality. Provided more resources for extra practice than all of my other courses combined.
- Will was an amazing teacher and so passionate about stats. He really wanted students to learn and do great as long as they took effort.
- Very interactive with the class, well informed, knows his stuff and funny.
- He did a great job taking the time to work out problems with us during both class time and office hours.
- Will is very outgoing, high energy person. He makes class interesting and is very approachable. His class is great.
- Will was overall an excellent teacher. He went above and beyond for the success of his students. He also made sure to answer all of my email, in class and extra help questions.
- He is passionate about the subject and wants the students to learn. He is fair with grading and absences. Overall, no negative aspects.
- Very passionate teacher. Extremely good instructor in my opinion.
- Will was good with the students and clear during lecture. Was always willing to go over things if unclear. A+ job.
- Friendly and approachable. I didn't like working with classmates to independently figure out/solve on our own.
- Great! Really cares that the students learn and do well.
- Very energetic which helps the students stay awake/pay attention. Cares about the quality of students education.
- He is a great teacher and motivates the class to do well.
- He cares about the content and students learning the content and understanding how the course does impact things you do everyday. Strong knowledge of the material.
- Concerned with students – helpful/approachable but sometimes unclear with examples in class.
- He knows his subject well and enjoys teaching it but can get off topic.
- Very motivated, gives good lectures but goes over the material a bit too fast.
- Always willing to meet with students, provided extra material, timely grading and used different teaching styles to accommodate everyone.
- Will did a great job of making the class enjoyable and understandable. I would highly recommend others to take his class.
- He is very helpful, approachable and funny. Makes things interesting and gets you involved. Knows what he's talking about. Maybe just slow down the emails a little.
- He is very energetic and makes AM class bearable.
- Fun, understanding, knowledgeable. If you ask a question he will give and answer and be able to explain it. Very approachable.
- Everything was great.

Fall 2014

- Will did a great job and really knew his stuff. Would definitely recommend taking his class!
- Will is great. He loves what he teaches and it shows. He respects all his students and encourages them to learn. Would recommend to anyone.
- Funny to keep us engaged. "Laid back" and gives second chances.
- Great teacher. Enthusiastic and willing to help out in any way possible.
- Will is one of the best professors I've ever had. He is always willing to help out his students and is willing to meet up with students during office hours. He is clear as to what he expects out of his

students. He keeps the class interesting and engaging.

- He cared about the students and had energy – nothing negative.
- Very knowledgeable and made an 8:30 math class fun. No negatives.
- I feel like Will was a great instructor He actually wants his class to succeed and make good grades. Wonderful!
- Really motivates students to learn, while making the subject fun.
- Very good at keeping students interested.
- Good teacher, keeps it interesting even though he knew class was out of it at 8:30 in the morning. Can tell he enjoys what he does.
- Teacher cared about students and their grades, helped us when needed. Always responded to emails. Best mat teacher I've ever had.
- Great in all aspects
- I enjoyed this class and the teaching by Will. He enjoys what he does and makes learning a better experience.
- HE was a pleasant person but was vague when we asked questions. He was sarcastic in points where students were serious. He knew what he was talking about and teaching but didn't understand when students didn't learn as easily as others.
- He wants to help you, you just have to ask.
- Will was always engaging and wanted to present the material in an interesting way. I found his use of class data the most fascinating part of his class.
- He was clear and was able to answer questions precisely but we didn't do a lot of work on our own in class.
- My professor was a very good professor. Full of energy for an 8:30 class. Really enjoyed him – don't really have anything negative to say just wish he gave a little extra credit.
- Very upbeat for the morning which is good but made us feel guilty sometimes for not being upbeat.
- Great teacher and person. Makes you earn the grade.
- I don't have any negatives. He made class very interesting and fun to learn. He was always willing to help you with whatever you were stuck on.
- Makes the information easy to understand.
- One of the best teachers I've ever had.
- Overall, he is a fun teacher and is easily approachable. I felt like he was teaching us higher level statistics time and/or he might have made the material presented seem harder than it should be. Work on explanation of course work so it's easier to understand.
- The instructor made the class enjoyable and was very clear when explaining the material.
- Will loves teaching and he is very good at it.
- Will was a really great professor. Not only did he teach the material well, but you could tell he really cared a lot for his students. He was always willing to do whatever to help us learn and he cared that we learned statistics past the spectrum of this class.
- Will always has a great attitude and tries to make the class entertaining and engaging. He has a lot of knowledge of the material and is always happy to help.
- He was very understanding and seemed to really care about his students, negative - none.
- Challenging but its good to have a challenge.

Summer 2014

- Extremely smart and enthusiastic. Always trying to make thinking about things simple. Great teacher.
- Outstanding Teacher.
- Very friendly and outgoing which makes the subject interesting.
- Very enthusiastic. Caring approach to teaching but sometimes the pace was too fast to listen and understand.
- Will is an excellent teacher. I hate math but enjoyed learning from him this semester.

- Will is a great teacher and his ideas are better than whoever is making them now.
- Will was great
- Will's enthusiasm is easily his strongest trait on top of his extensive knowledge of the material. Nothing negative to report.
- Very explanatory and helpful. Best stat professor by far!
- Will was always quick to answer emails and his tests reflected what we learned in class.
- I enjoyed his take on the subject matter and how it applied to many aspects of life and many careers.
- Will was an excellent professor. Made stat 201 an excellent summer course.
- He was enthusiastic and took time to answer any questions I had. He seemed to want everyone to try their best and understand the material. He had great powerpoints.
- Great guy – very personable. Willing to help. Not so many powerpoints please!
- Super well prepared (site, video, lab walk-through). Personable.
- Awesome!
- Practice exams and website help immensely. If you do not want something in your class, rewards students instead of punishing them. Positive reinforcement is always more successful than negative reinforcement.
- Wonderful teacher, very personable, knowing what he's doing. I would recommend him to everyone!
- Great teacher, really help explain problems in a way that's easy to learn.
- He was a great instructor and did his job very well.
- Very patient, laid back and responded quickly to emails. Negatives: none.
- Really enthusiastic and willing to help
- Very helpful to students
- He was very enthusiastic about the material. He used examples that were fun and meaningful.
- Seems to really enjoy teaching and tries to engage students in the importance of statistics by showing examples of everyday usage. Labs were hard to understand during lab time, but understand it when I got home and looked at it.
- Will is a great teacher, this was the first time I didn't fall asleep in a math based course. I enjoyed it.

Spring 2014

- Very enthusiastic and cares about the material and the students!
- I loved this class. I'm not a math person but I understood stat through his teaching.
- He's always prepared and on time for class but got upset when proven wrong.
- Great professor – makes statistics pretty easy for people who don't get math at all! Loved him!
- The best stats teacher I ever had. If there was a perfect teacher, he's perfect.
- Will was one of the best professors I have had at this university – he motivated students to learn and had a lot of charisma which made the class interesting.
- Will does a really good job of emailing back and helping understand the material.
- He was a great teacher. Very helpful.
- He made statistics very enjoyable. I learned so much!
- Cool professor, very laid back and knowledgeable.
- Made class interesting.
- Good, easy going.
- He made stats fun. Always was a joy to come. Also he was very helpful.
- Will was always positive and in a good mood.
- Great professor, I just hate math and I'm very bad at math.
- Very easily made the course more interesting and was over to get students involved.
- Kind of hard to still understand.
- Very helpful, willing to explain things.
- Sense of humor!
- Will was great! Generous and helpful!

- He literally is the best teacher I've ever had. Will helps students with anything they need help with and wants his students to succeed.
- Positive: Expressive, fun, gets people excited and involved.
- Really connected with the students.
- He is passionate about statistics and does his best to be fair about the class and materials.
- I felt he really cared about us and wanted us to succeed.
- Best instructor in the math department thus far.
- By far the best instructor I've had in five years at USC.
- Very concerned about his students. Goes above and beyond what is expected of a professor. Give the man a RAISE!
- Will is a boss!
- Mr. Cipolli really cares about his students and motivates you to learn the material.
- Makes class interesting.
- Really cares about teaching and gives good examples in class.
- Course is well organized.

Fall 2013

- He kept the class entertaining
- The positive aspect is his energy. He loves his job and he is a great teacher. I would recommend him to everyone. No negative aspects.
- He was very enthusiastic about teaching and did his best to help us learn the material without making it difficult.
- He was very concerned about the students grades and graded fairly.
- Class act. Great professor. Best math course I've ever taken.
- He moves at a great speed and goes above and beyond to help us.
- Class was too easy. You could see how exhausted everyone was. The notes were very helpful.
- I feel will was very knowledgeable of the subject and taught it well but I feel like he was too nice to the students and gave too many extra chances.
- Very positive and helpful – evident that he wanted students to learn and understand material.
- Will is sunshine on a cloudy day. He's a real chill dude and knows all kind of stuff about stats. He is the man, plus he is a very snazzy dresser.
- PowerPoints are good and helpful. Study guides are also helpful. Good teacher.
- Great instructor!
- He's a very helpful instructor and wants students to learn the material. He should be a little stricter on the homework.
- Will was a great instructor. He was very fair and pushed us to do well. He taught the information in a fun and interesting way.
- He was down to earth and approachable – he got off topic often though.
- Really motivated students to learn the material – no due dates and moved a little fast.
- The positive aspects of my instructor is that he makes sure everyone understands the material and does a lot of examples.
- Very active and made the class lectures engaging. Was about tests and grading. No negative aspects.
- Will truly was an amazing teacher. Even though I hate math and struggled with my goals, Will never gave up on me and always answered my questions with patience and care. He really is a talented instructor and I would recommend him to anyone.
- Very laid back attitude and brings the material down to our level. Sometimes moves too fast.
- He's smart and knows the material but sometimes isn't thorough enough.
- He's always willing to help, but no jolly ranchers.
- Very understanding and helpful.
- Class was very early and not mandatory so it was hard for me to get motivated to attend. Teacher was

fair and approachable.

- The professor was really funny and had a good attitude throughout the course. He really wanted students to learn the material and helped us a lot.
- Just great.
- Very good teacher. Cares about students and grades fairly.
- Great instructor, didn't over complicate the subject at all. Made the class fun and interesting.
- Helpful – study guides are good and he explains the material well.
- Knows his stuff and is interesting, learning math at 8:30AM is just hard and that's not his fault.
- Very concerned about students learning and progressing. Has flexible hours outside of class.
- Makes class fun and makes you want to learn.