

Teaching Hands-on in an Environment of Textbooks and Lectures

By Wyatt Fox

In an academic environment where, according to *Iowa State University Registrar*, students spend an average of \$520 on textbooks and supplies per semester, you will find Chad Dolphin providing an in-depth hands-on learning experience for those in AST and ITEC majors for no additional costs.

Chad Dolphin who was originally from Conrad, Iowa decided to shoot for the stars and become the first generation of his family to get a college degree. He attended Iowa State and completed his undergraduate degree in ITEC. During his years as an undergraduate student, he decided to help students in need and tutored through Iowa State University's supplemental instruction program (SI). While tutoring, he found himself voluntarily spending more of his time preparing material for his SI lessons rather than the classes he was enrolled in. This is when he found his enjoyment in not only teaching but teaching hands-on and the positive impacts that it can cultivate. After his undergraduate degree he approached a master's degree with a "why not?" attitude and committed to 36 credits of teaching during his years pursuing his master's degree.

After Chad Dolphin received his master's degree from Iowa State University, the COVID-19 pandemic struck the United States and caused a shortage of staff for Iowa State University in the College of Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering (ABE). In the college's times of need, Chad Dolphin stepped up to the plate and ecstatically accepted a position as an Instructor of Record for TSM 240.



Chad Dolphin, Instructor of Record for Iowa State University, standing in front of a metal lathe in Sukup Hall on March 11th, 2022.

In his new position he would teach a class focusing on impacting his students stronger than he would by teaching them material out of a textbook. In his class he prioritizes hands-on learning and gives students the opportunity to independently use industry level machinery to create parts and features that are usually only shown and described in textbooks.

He believes in connecting students with each other as they grow together

through their undergraduate years. He stated, "I believe connections are super important for students in the ITEC major because of how close knit the classes are." Then emphasizing, "the major has more context to it and being able to learn together helps students absorb information."

Chad Dolphin still looks to further himself not only as a teacher but also as a person. As a teacher he wants to work hard to make his students feel close to him and their peers. He referenced how many people give the advice that teachers shouldn't be friends with their students and said grinningly, "To hell with that, why can't I be their friend *and* their teacher?". With this mentality he still prioritizes teaching safety and holding an authoritative figure over students.

The biggest challenge he may face in his future is balancing his career growth and his character growth. He believes people who focus on their career growth too much turn into heartless corporate entities. The statement he wanted to conclude his experiences with was, "I want to leave a mark on the world when I'm gone".