

Teaching Philosophy

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My teaching philosophy was shaped by attending or giving lectures at local area colleges, community colleges, large private universities, and large public universities. Each of these experiences has shown drastically different teaching needs based on average class size, class composition, and aims of the class in purpose. Throughout I have had the pleasure of watching and learning from peers throughout graduate school, and tried to incorporate their styles into my own teaching. These experiences have taught me the need of providing an inclusive, receptive, and skill focused learning environment for students.

Economics is everywhere, and it is easy to find examples to bridge textbook models into everyday life. However, all examples are not always intuitive for every student in the class. Not all students share similar backgrounds, life experiences, and culture. Midway through in one of my classes I tried to create an assignment that was "Harry Potter" themed, only to realize that many of the students of color did not understand what I was asking due to not reading or watching any Harry Potter media. Building on this I moved to examples that were more inclusive, using more generalized examples from real world activities.

Following my belief in receptive teaching, I place a strong value in open and transparent communication. Throughout the semester I was forced to call on the class to let me change the syllabus due to unforeseen complications. At each step I used a mix of Google polls, email, and individualized feedback so students would feel invested in how the class changed to remain fair and accountable. After each midterm I conducted student evaluations, and tried to change how I presented materials and helped prepare students for major tests. I would then ask if students had a preference between new methods and old.

I further changed my methods after reading after midterm teacher evaluations and responses. At the beginning of the semester I started with weekly homeworks and quizzes, three lectures, and three midterms. Following the first midterm, feedback indicated that students still felt they were not seeing enough problems, so I introduced weekly recitations with long answer problem sets students solved in groups, while I rotated through helping solve specific problems or issuing class-wide reviews on topics groups were at large having problems with. Following the second midterm some students wanted smaller problems closer

to multiple choice problems on the midterms, so I switched to utilizing online learning games through the Kahoot platform with prizes for students with the top scores.

The aim of being inclusive and receptive is to help students feel invested in the class and the materials, so that they are receptive to learning a mix of life lessons and hard skills. Even during introductory classes, books such as Steven Landsburg's "The Armchair Economist" show students and teachers alike the value of deep understanding of opportunity costs and incentives in everyday life. As students advance through the undergraduate core I think it is important for most classes to focus on methods, be it simple models or the use of econometric methods and programs, over current results. My final lecture was on the signaling theory of education, that the value of college is about simply graduating over individual skills, and asking students to think how concepts in the class could be used in day to day activities, and how broadly incentives and opportunity costs arise everywhere.

Finding the right mix of lecture, homework, and test structures to accommodate and help students learn and absorb those methods is an iterative process. From my first steps giving stand alone lectures as a TA, talks on my research, and stand alone teaching at a community college, I have had the joy to continually think about and refine how I teach. From just giving lectures-as-seminars, to including recitation periods, to actively encouraging student participation in games and office hours, I have tried to improve myself as a teacher and peer to students in being inclusive, receptive to their needs, and passing along both the skills I have learned, and my love for economics.