

Teaching Philosophy

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If it is true that the passion to serve others is an inherited trait, then I can easily trace my passion to serve, directly to both of my parents. They met while working on their dissertation in education and embarked on careers as educators in order to serve students. With their words in mind to "leave this world a little better than I found it," I have endeavored to teach my students in a manner consistent with preparing them for long successful careers and lives.

My teaching approach is based on knowing my role as an instructor, understanding the goals of the student, and remembering my own personal experience. I believe that teachers build human capital and that it is therefore important to help each student develop skills necessary for success in the world outside of the classroom. I was not prepared for entry into the private sector work world on graduation from college. Therefore, I want to help my students avoid a similar outcome.

On the first day of class I like to take a survey to get a feel for students' expectations. Since my goal is to be an effective instructor, my intention is to find the best way to motivate a greater awareness of economic concepts as well as to gain more information about individual backgrounds. Subsequently, I am able to teach to my audience and help them to better absorb and retain information. Drawing on my own student experiences, I try to make the class stimulating by relying on the Socratic Method, original teaching materials based on current events, and multimedia.

One of my favorite tools is to discuss announcements by policymakers such as FOMC press releases and releases of economic data. The very nature of reporting and its regularity creates natural event studies. Their use in class exercises can illustrate how empirical economic research is conducted. In the first 5 to 10 minutes of each class, I review any major announcements, the general impact of the report, and what it broadly means for the economy.

I then present reactions (before and after) of financial market indicators to the announcements. By comparing and contrasting the report results with market conditions and reactions, students can gain insight into how financial market professionals think and how information is disseminated. Furthermore, because this knowledge is portable it can be used outside of the classroom. By this method, not only are students learning about the relationship between financial markets and the real economy, they are also able to take and share their human capital that they acquired.

Outside of the classroom I try my best to be available to students who ask for extra instruction. I have an open door policy and not only encourage students to come by and ask questions as needed but also answer emails promptly. My intention is to be a mentor rather than an authoritarian. I feel that interpersonal communication is an important life skill that allows me to get direct feedback on my teaching effectiveness from students of diverse backgrounds and experiences.

By focusing on developing student skills, I can exercise teaching flexibility at different academic levels. For example, in the fall of 2011 I taught my first principle of macroeconomics course, which also happened to be an Honors section. I therefore taught the students at a level of mathematical rigor higher than I would if it wasn't an honors section but at a level lower than I do in intermediate macroeconomics. However, I also felt because it was an honor section students should be responsible for material outside of the assigned textbook. I therefore added a reading and writing assignment which I would not require in my intermediate macroeconomics class. As a result, I feel competent and willing to teach any course in macroeconomics and time series econometrics at an introductory, advanced or graduate level. In addition I would be excited to teach microeconomics, econometrics, and finance at an introductory or intermediate level.

My goal as a teacher is to stay focused on helping students reach their potential. I try to do this in the following ways: build trust by listening and incorporating student's expectations, motivating concepts with current events, and reinforcing material through personal attention. In the future I hope to refine these techniques as well as incorporate more outside materials which expose students to relevant economic research.