

Teaching Statement

Teaching is a combination of communication, motivation and navigation in helping students learning and understanding knowledge. My goals in teaching are promoting economic thoughts, practicing critical thinking, and becoming better learners.

My teaching philosophy formation started from tutoring middle school students physics, maths and chemistry in 2009 in China. Coaching students in solving scientific problems gave me joy in helping others and delivering knowledge. During my master program in Beijing, I started with selling notes on intermediate microeconomics as a side business and ended up teaching students in the entrance exam for master programs. I am still in touch with my students back in the training program. During the same time, I also worked as instructor in a personal finance teaching program traveling around China's universities. I have taught hundreds of students how to manage personal finance in their early twenties. During my Ph.D. program in Georgia State University (GSU), I have taught a 50-person advanced undergraduate course, Money and Credit, during the COVID-19 pandemic. In those experiences, I developed my interests both in teaching microeconomics theories, personal finance, and banking and finance. Except for the language, teaching in different counties shares the same skill set. I practice my teaching philosophy in the following ways.

Communication is the most important element in my teaching. The course Money and Credit is fully online and synchronous. I tried to make the class experience as close to face-to-face as possible. During the meeting sessions every week, I would ask questions before the class and give bonus points for students who participate in discussing the questions. To keep the communication outside the class, my midterms are three online discussions where students need to submit their written answers and provide feedback to their peers through online discussion board. I also answer to students' inquires to my best extend. My teaching evaluation from this course also reflects that I am "agreeable to answer questions". I love to create a comfortable environment for students to ask questions, which, I believe, is a necessary method to have a productive learning. Class activities help with the communication. During my experience in teaching personal finance in China, I found doing class experiments is a great way to engage "quiet" students.

Motivating is the driving force for students to show up and engage in the classroom and it can be challenging sometimes, especially during the pandemic when classes are online. Economics is close to everyday life. Finding examples isn't difficult when it comes to explaining terminologies. During teaching Money and Credit, I used example that students can directly relate like borrowing money from relatives versus taking loans from a bank. I also spend some class hours before the lecture discussing social news that are relatable, for example, the "short squeeze" phenomenon of GameStop stock. I believe once students realized the knowledge taught in class are highly relevant and useful for now and future, they will find motivation to participate in class.

Navigating means giving structures to the course. A well-planned class would help students to keep up with the schedule and make learning process more effective. Some of my students in Money and Credit finds good structure really helped them with determine their weekly work, especially during pandemic. I included weekly goals in my class and constantly reminded them with the goals during the class. Building structures would also help with grasping the full picture of the course and receiving frequent feedback from students.

Learning and understanding can be difficult sometimes. My job is to make the process easier and more enjoyable. Teaching techniques like Think Pair Share can be used even in big classes. Smaller classes can also use methods like Flipped classes. Relate teaching with research is another way to make the experience more interesting both for me and my students. Starting from simple examples, introducing possible explanation, and ending with current research is one of my favorite ways of teaching an economics topic.

To practice and achieve all the goals in my teaching philosophy, a healthy classroom environment is necessary. I want the classroom to be organized where students show enough respect to the instructor, and, at the same time, they can freely ask questions and express their ideas. So I always treat my students equally among themselves and with me. Compassion and respect is what I practice during interactions with students. Further education on becoming a good instructor is also important. Regarding future development of being an instructor, I would like to attend teaching workshops and communicate with other instructors on a regular basis. Knowing about new teaching methods is also an important part of self-improving as a instructor, but these methods need to be implicated in class critically.

From my interest and experience in teaching, I would enjoy teaching microeconomics theory at different levels. I also would like to build a class in personal finance, which should be taught at a person's younger age. Related to my research, I would like to teach classes on data analysis using Stata or how to deal with enormous spatial dataset using GIS software.