College and graduate students have already spent many years as learners before they reach my classroom. Key to helping them advance is recognizing that each individual learns in different ways and accommodating their style and pace of learning. As a teacher, I want to aid the students' ability to study independently and reflect on their learning process. This approach supports students in becoming active seekers of knowledge and lifelong learners with the tools to pursue answers to questions that arise in their studies and work. In this learning environment, students practice self-correction and self-assessment, that is, to look critically at their work, and to identify and learn from mistakes.

Being able to learn independently and working in teams is increasingly important in many areas of work that students enter later in life. I believe that it is the central task of an educator to let students follow their natural interests, develop questions, and practice problem-solving. Let us take the example of mathematics, a key competency for economists. One of the teachers I admire the most, my undergraduate mathematics professor, who would put it like this: It is less and less important for people to be able to calculate things because a lot of that is automated. The human function is on a higher level, and that higher-level involves more independence and more conceptual thinking. While conceptual thinking is sometimes thought of as more academic, it is becoming a practical and necessary skill as more and more tasks get automated. The educator's role is then perhaps best described as that of a coach, who provides guidance and encouragement in making sense of the world and learning how to learn.

In teaching undergraduates at Georgia State University, it has been my goal to provide a learning environment where everyone achieves their learning goals. Georgia State is one of the most diverse universities in the U.S., with many students who experienced adversity in their lives. I taught an introductory course during the COVID pandemic, a time of crisis which amplified existing challenges. I saw my task as providing a stable, safe, and motivating learning environment to students during this difficult time. One of the most gratifying experiences has been to help students succeed. A particular student had been inquisitive and hard-working from the start but performed very poorly on the midterm exam. I invited her to attend office hours and practiced problem solving with her. She was one of few students motivated to attempt the extra credit questions and demonstrated her understanding by explaining her problem-solving process to me.

I am interested in teaching both introductory and more advanced courses related to my areas of expertise. An extension of advanced undergraduate courses would be the discussion of current applied research with students. Engaging with the diversity of economic research opens avenues for students to understand theoretical concepts more deeply and envision their own place in the field of economics, whether this is in graduate studies or in the workplace. I am also intent on developing courses centered around data analysis and projects, which complement core theory classes, and are of equal importance to the education of young economists.

In the tables below, you will find a summary of my quantitative course evaluations along with all qualitative responses for the courses I served as a principal instructor at Georgia State University. Additional supplemental materials including example syllabi and example slides are available at:

https://www.belafigge.com/project/teaching/

Summary of Quantitative Evaluations for Courses as Principal Instructor

At the conclusion of each semester, students are encouraged to submit evaluations for their enrolled courses. Each student can rate instructors and principal instructors on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 5 being the highest) for the following questions:

The table below summarizes student responses to these questions for the courses I served as a principal instructor. Average scores on a scale of 1 to 5 are presented for each course along with the departmental average in parenthesis.

Student Evaluation Highlights (1=Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree)

	Score
I engaged in the course (face-to-face and/or online) in accordance with the instructor's syllabus policy.	4.6/5
I achieved the course objectives outlined by the instructor.	4.8/5
The instructor followed the plan for the course as established by the syllabus.	4.7/5
The instructor was prepared for class (face-to-face and/or online).	4.7/5
The instructor communicated effectively.	4.5/5
The instructor was accessible to students.	4.7/5
The instructor created an environment that helped students learn.	4.7/5

Qualitative Responses for Courses as Principal Instructor (Examples)

In addition to the quantitative responses, students are given an opportunity to provide open-ended qualitative responses.

- "What were the strengths of my instructor's course management and teaching style?"

    1. He was the greatest professor I had this semester who understood students objectives and challenges during these times and his lessons were very well thought out!
    2. Very calm and went through each aspect of the lesson for enough time for people to look over, he also added a video lecture on top of the in-classroom lectures he would give extra material to work with.

- "What did I most appreciate about how my instructor interacted with students?"

    1. Understood our struggles.
    2. He always made sure we were engaged and made sure we understood the content.