

# Evidence of Teaching Effectiveness

Caroline Welter

I have been teaching Principles of Microeconomics at West Virginia University as the primary instructor since Summer 2024, leading both asynchronous and in-person sections. I began with a fully online course, then taught a mid-sized in-person section, and most recently, a large lecture hall section with 300 students. Because Principles of Microeconomics is a required course for many majors, it brings together students with a wide range of backgrounds and levels of preparation.

My teaching is guided by active learning principles and grounded in structure and clarity. I organize each class into 15–20 minute segments that incorporate varied engagement strategies such as interactive questions, short videos, Kahoot quizzes, and student participation. This pacing aligns with research on attention and cognitive load, helping students reset focus, stay engaged, and absorb material more effectively.

## **Instructor: Principles of Microeconomics**

In Spring 2025, I taught the largest section of Principles of Microeconomics, with nearly 300 students in a lecture hall. Because this course is required for many majors, it brought together students with very different backgrounds and levels of preparation. I was responsible for designing lectures, creating and grading homework and exams, preparing supplementary review materials, and maintaining both in-person office hours and online availability. With such a large audience, I structured each class to balance clear explanations with opportunities for interaction, ensuring that students remained engaged and supported.

Teaching evaluations reflected the effectiveness of these efforts. Eighty-one percent of students reported that my responsiveness to questions was beneficial, 79 percent agreed that the course was well organized and supported by an updated syllabus, and 75 percent noted that I made strong connections between course material and everyday life. Nearly 70 percent valued the range of assessments, which included quizzes, in-class activities, and exams.

The high levels of engagement were the result of intentional classroom design. I used short Kahoot quizzes during lectures as both knowledge checks and energizers, creating moments of active participation. Pear Deck polls gave every student, even in a class of nearly 300, the chance to contribute answers anonymously and receive immediate feedback. I also incorporated classroom experiments such as the “Trading in a Pit Market” simulation (Holt, 1996), where volunteers acted as buyers and sellers to demonstrate equilibrium prices. In addition, activities like the “Paper Bag” trading game, where students traded small gifts over several rounds to end up with items they valued more, helped illustrate the gains from voluntary exchange. These and other hands-on activities provided students with vivid, memorable experiences with economic concepts that supported their exam performance and were consistently noted in their feedback.

Student comments:

“My professor was wonderful and made me switch my major to economics because I enjoyed the course thoroughly.”

“She did a really good job of working with everyone and encouraging volunteers for demonstrations. She was very helpful for those who struggled with the coursework and provided multiple help options multiple times throughout the day. She was patient and listened to what we needed

help on and improved her teaching tactics to fit what we needed the most. Honestly, she was the most cooperative and understanding teacher I've had so far, and I really appreciate that."

"I enjoyed this course. The professor was able to teach the topics in various, engaging ways that kept our attention throughout the entire lecture. She was willing to work with students if they needed accommodations for something."

"She was able to communicate very clearly and explained the material in an understandable way. I really appreciate how consistent she was about upcoming assignments and exams."

"In my opinion, this course was very beneficial for my learning. Caroline Welter did everything she could to help improve the classes way of learning. She accommodated to our needs and helped us understand the study of Economics in the ways that was most beneficial."

In Fall 2024, I taught a mid-sized section of Principles of Microeconomics with 60 students. The smaller class size allowed for more frequent individual interaction while still requiring structured lectures and clear organization. I applied a midterm feedback survey to guide adjustments during the semester. Based on the survey results, I incorporated more interactive tools that provided immediate feedback and opportunities to practice applied questions. Students noted that these activities were especially helpful for both deepening their understanding of the material and preparing for exams. End-of-term evaluations reflected the success of these strategies. Seventy-four percent of students reported that my responsiveness and availability during office hours was beneficial, 74 percent also valued the variety of assessments, 63 percent agreed that the methods I used to present information supported their learning, and 84 percent appreciated the consistently updated syllabus.

Student comments:

"Dr. Welter did an amazing job for her first semester teaching, she was able to explain the topics. She definitely improved over the semester as we gave her feedback and listened to what we asked her to help us. When we asked for practice tests for the exam, she took time out of her day to make us a practice test. She has done an amazing job throughout the semester, teaching us all the topics we needed to know."

"Caroline Welter was the best teacher I have ever had before. She was so helpful and always available during all hours to help me and all my questions."

"This class I was struggling a lot at first, I think mainly It was slightly confusing what to study, but after I went to my professor's office hours, it strongly improved my grade in the class, and her explanations for things I was struggling with was extremely beneficial."

In Summer 2024, I taught this class fully online in an asynchronous format with 44 students. Teaching online required particular attention to clarity, organization, and communication, as students needed clear pathways to engage with the material on their own schedules. I created structured weekly modules that included recorded lectures, guided study plans, and practice quizzes. To maintain opportunities for direct interaction, I held virtual office hours and responded promptly to emails. Students highlighted these features

in their evaluations, noting that the design supported their learning and exam preparation. They rated my organization and the alignment of course content with graded assignments at 3.67 out of 5, the overall learning environment at 3.33 out of 5, and my ability to connect material to everyday life and broader issues at a perfect 5 out of 5. By combining clear structure with multiple modes of engagement, I addressed the challenges of asynchronous learning and provided students with a supportive framework to succeed at their own pace.

Overall, I consider these courses a success. Students gained a solid foundation in microeconomics, and I continually adapted my teaching methods to meet their needs. I was particularly encouraged that students recognized both my enthusiasm for teaching and my commitment to creating an engaging and supportive learning environment.