

Teaching Statement

In my view, the job of a professor is to generate and disseminate information. Research (by myself and others) is conducted to generate insights, and these insights are disseminated via teaching, which is conducted at conferences, via publication (in journals or the press), and ultimately in the classroom. In my teaching (regardless of venue), I attempt to convey not only the insights generated by research, but to encourage the audience to critically evaluate them.

In practice for me, this often involves scaffolded inference - an intentional partitioning and evaluation of subordinate claims made in service of a greater claim. As an example, consider the claim “gender-integrated dorms increase graduation rates”. This single claim is in fact an amalgam of multiple claims, which we can list and evaluate independently. One claim is that gender-integrated dorms as measured in relevant research are representative of such dorms in general. A second claim is that individuals in the samples in which the question is studied are affected by treatment similarly to others in the population. A third is that whatever sources of variation in educational diversity are used to make the (causal) claim are indeed exogenous. A fourth is that these sources of variation only affect outcomes via educational diversity. This sort of partitioning of composite claims is helpful for adding nuance to students’ thinking and encouraging them to learn more than a list of true/false statements (or worse - a list of answers to give on a test).

I see multiple advantages to this approach, in ascending order of their generalizability beyond the content of a given course. First, by requiring students to engage critically with claims, they are encouraged to form opinions about course content which sparks engagement and improves memory. Second, it simultaneously validates and disciplines student criticisms of course content by establishing norms for doing so. Finally, it encourages students to be critical consumers of information, which will benefit them in their careers and in other domains.

I have teaching experience with undergraduates as well as Masters students. At the Masters level, I have served as a teaching assistant for MBA microeconomics and macroeconomics two semesters each, working under Jon Umbeck and Gerald Lynch. At the undergraduate level, I was the primary instructor for one section of Introductory Microeconomics and two recitation sections of Principles of Economics. I have also served as a teaching assistant for three sections

of Intermediate Macroeconomics (under Trevor Gallen and Soojin Kim) and one section of Labor Economics (under Miguel Sarzosa).

I look forward to many additional opportunities to expand and hone my teaching skills via practice and student feedback. A major insight I've gained from prior teaching experience is the importance of establishing basic comprehension of a topic prior to expecting critical engagement from students. This helps students who find the material difficult while also respecting the choice of individuals who prefer to allocate less effort to the course in order to focus their efforts elsewhere.

I am especially qualified to teach upper-level undergraduate, masters, or Ph.D. classes in labor economics, economics of education, and applied econometrics.