

Teaching Statement

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Teaching goes beyond the transmission of knowledge. It involves cultivating a unique mindset for all students equally. While knowledge is undeniably important, instilling an economic perspective equips students with the essential tools to comprehend the intricacies of the world and make informed decisions that resonate throughout their lives. My commitment to this philosophy has been shaped by both my role as an empirical economist and my extensive experience in teaching over the years.

I utilize causal inference not just as research instruments but as perspectives to guide instruction. For instance, when introducing the topic of inequality in the job market, I initiate thought-provoking dialogues with my students by posing questions and engaging them in active learning exercises. I encourage them to ponder whether they believe inequality exists in the job market, considering the ongoing real-world debate. We delve into the complexities of the issue, discussing the relevance of factors like ability and education in identifying gender or race effects. The challenge then becomes disentangling these factors in the real world. In essence, I perceive these questions as more than a quest for definitive answers, they serve as tools for cultivating thoughtful consideration of real-world issues and fostering wisdom in students.

I use virtual interface, data and movies for enhanced conceptual understanding. For example, I developed an interactive Python program to illustrate optimal choices on a budget line. I consistently utilize real-world data when introducing topics like inequality or global warming. I incorporate examples from Martin Scorsese's "The Irishman" to elucidate the rise and fall of labor unions. I utilize "Trainspotting" to illustrate various life decisions and the variables students might consider when constructing their utility function. These examples enable students to grasp the intuition behind economic theory and foster a deeper understanding of empirical questions.

I am an advocate for student-centered teaching. On the first day of class, I send surveys to understand my students' interests and concerns, tailoring my examples and questions to align with their preferences. Addressing worries about mathematical or programming aspects, I invest additional time in fundamental knowledge and operations. For students expressing concerns about their performance, I emphasize an open-door policy, inviting them to seek assistance and assuring them of my commitment to their success.

Committed to equitable education, I address Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) gaps in my teaching. I implement measures such as renaming "Office Hours" to "Student Hours", acknowledging the potential unfamiliarity of the term for first-generation college students. Additionally, I am conscious of gender inclusivity by including my pronouns next to my name in the syllabus. Moreover, I integrate DEI considerations into the very beginning of our academic journey together by including a section in the introductory survey that provides students with an opportunity to share aspects of their identity and lived experiences. This not only helps me tailor my teaching to align with their backgrounds and preferences but also reinforces the idea that every student's unique perspective is valued in our learning community. My commitment extends to underrepresented students through my contribution to programs like [Data Science Pathways](#) and [MacREU](#). I provide instruction for students from community and four-year colleges to delve into data science and programming.

In addition to my role as an Instructor and TA, I serve as the [GradQuant](#) Lead Consultant. I conduct [workshops](#) and consultations in statistics and programming for graduate students and postdoctoral scholars. Through daily one-on-one consultations, I have cultivated my ability to effectively communicate with students from diverse backgrounds and efficiently address their questions. The statistics and programming workshops I deliver not only tackle challenges faced by students but also offer a clear, hands-on guide for applying cutting-edge methods to their projects.

My teaching philosophy centers on cultivating a mindset beyond the classroom through critical questioning, real-world examples, and hands-on applications. I strive to empower students as thoughtful, analytical thinkers, prepared for the challenges of our ever-evolving world. Additionally, I emphasize the importance of equitable education for students from diverse backgrounds. I am eager to bring this philosophy as a professor in economics, where I can continue to inspire and guide students on their intellectual journeys.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement

Da Gong

As a researcher and educator in the field of economics, I acknowledge the importance of tackling broader issues surrounding diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). The constrained access to resources, whether financial or educational, can pose barriers to students' success. Consequently, as an educator, it becomes my responsibility to cultivate an environment that actively confronts and dismantles these challenges, thereby fostering equal opportunities for all students.

I actively participate in programs like [Data Science Pathways](#), a collaborative initiative focused on data science and programming. This fellowship program is designed to involve students from community colleges, undergraduate, and graduate levels, representing diverse backgrounds. Participants engage in real-world projects facilitated by researchers from the University of California. Furthermore, my commitment is underscored by my involvement with [MacREU](#), where I instruct underrepresented undergraduate students in STEM fields during a summer program.

My dedication also extends to my role as an educator. Having worked at UCR, which ranks No. 2 in social mobility among all universities and stands out as one of the most diverse universities in the University of California system, I have found that the commitment to representing different cultures and backgrounds has shaped my professional journey, enabling me to cultivate a diverse, equitable, and inclusive learning environment. For students who express concerns about their performance, I maintain an open-door policy, encouraging them to connect with me during office hours or via email, assuring them of my unwavering commitment to their success. I've incorporated accommodations into my grading system, providing an opportunity for improvement by allowing a higher grade on the cumulative final exam to replace the lowest score on midterm exam(s). Acknowledging the diverse needs of students, I outline resources for psychological counseling and disability support in the syllabus. In instances where students face challenges due to health conditions, such as hypersomnia, I demonstrate flexibility by granting extensions and offering assistance to students navigating course withdrawal processes, therefore no harm to their transcript. I implement measures such as renaming "Office Hours" to "Student Hours", acknowledging the potential unfamiliarity of the term for first-generation college students. Additionally, I am conscious of gender inclusivity by including my pronouns next to my name in the syllabus. Moreover, I integrate DEI considerations into the very beginning of our academic journey together by including a section in the introductory survey that provides students with an opportunity to share aspects of their identity and lived experiences. This not only helps me tailor my teaching to align with their backgrounds and preferences but also reinforces the idea that every student's unique perspective is valued in our learning community.

In my research contributions, I focus on issues that disproportionately affect underrepresented groups, particularly in the context of traumatic experiences and disasters such as the COVID-19 pandemic. My research explores the effects of disasters and policies, considering heterogeneous impacts across gender and other demographic factors. For instance, in my job market paper, I investigate the impact of famine experiences on trust, shedding light on the unique challenges faced by rural residents. Furthermore, my research delves into the gender-specific effects of policies, such as examining the consequences of China's zero-COVID policy on the academic performance of children aged 6 to 15, revealing differential outcomes based on gender and noncognitive skills.

My dedication to diversity, equity, and inclusion is manifested through my teaching, programmatic contributions, and research efforts—all geared towards establishing an inclusive and supportive academic environment for students.