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Teaching Philosophy

My goal as a teacher is to help students learn and practice the skills they will need to succeed in the classroom and their careers. I agree with Siegfried et al. (1991) that the most valuable skill I can develop in students is the ability to think like an economist. Opportunity cost, comparative advantage, supply and demand, and the other principles of economics are useful not only for solving models on exams but also in students' own lives. For each course I have taught, I have centered thinking like an economist in my course design.

An effective method to achieve this goal is to center *doing* economics throughout my courses. This means students practice the methods of an economist in order to learn to think like an economist. Having students actively do economics simultaneously engages students and reinforces their ability to apply the skills they are learning in new ways (Becker and Watts 1998; Becker, Becker, and Watts 2006; Roach 2014). I have found that referring to students as "economists" helps students envision themselves as practitioners of the skills and concepts we cover. Because economics is so interconnected with government policy, business, and students' own lives, there are many possibilities for learning by doing in every economics course (Ghosh and Rahman 2011). One method of an economist that I highlight in my courses is the application of the models outside of the classroom. For example, as a recitation instructor for an introductory economics course, instead of lecturing about the consequences of price ceilings and floors, I used rent control and the minimum wage as a springboard for a think-pair-share and discussion to review the models. Similarly, as a teaching assistant for an upper-level international trade course, I gave students an assignment to explain the initially puzzling findings in Card (1990) using the Heckscher-Ohlin model. This exercise required students to map the assumptions of the model to an important event and use deductive reasoning. Students realized the benefits of model-based thinking as they used the model to come to a counterintuitive conclusion. As an instructor for an introductory microeconomics course, I received feedback that "the examples were, for the most part, extremely helpful in understanding concepts"[1]. Another way in which I have students practice the methods of an economist is working with data. For example, I designed assignments that started with students retrieving real trade data online and then using those numbers as the basis for a series of model-based questions. Further, I believe that actively doing economics in the classroom should extend to assessments; I prioritize written essay and analytical questions over multiple choice questions (Buckles and Siegfried 2006).

[1] My student evaluations are available on my personal website.

In addition to these specific economic pedagogical practices, I assess each student's individual needs and meet them where they are. As a participant in a certificate program on the fundamentals of college teaching, I became more cognizant of the fact that each student brings a different set of skills and life experiences to the classroom. Based on this, every student will respond differently to the design of the course. I am committed to eliminating as many hurdles as possible for students through accessible course design. For example, I was a teaching assistant for a course that shifted to an online format in the fall semester of 2020, which created an accessibility gap for students in different time zones. I reached out to the students to find a solution, and based on their feedback, I began offering early morning (in Indiana) office hours, which were at a reasonable time in the early evening for the students based in Asia. Further, it is critical to be constantly searching for ways to adapt courses that are in progress to better serve the students (Lang 2016). For example, I was a recitation instructor for a course in which students were struggling with the weekly quizzes. Before each quiz, I provided students with the opportunity to ask questions they had on the material from the lectures, but students had difficulty generating questions that deepened their understanding. To help the students succeed, I implemented a formative assessment, an ungraded pre-quiz. The students took the pre-quiz independently at the beginning of class and then broke into groups to go over their answers. During the group work, I circulated and checked in with each group. Now our discussions were based on the students' actual knowledge gaps, and the students' quiz scores improved with this mid-course adjustment.

While I am flexible based on departmental needs, I have expertise in teaching introductory microeconomics, economic statistics, and upper-level international trade. As an undergraduate student, I was extremely lucky to have an excellent introductory microeconomics instructor who was integral in sparking my interest in the field. I would be thrilled to teach this course and have the opportunity to inspire students in the same way. In addition, I would be interested in teaching intermediate microeconomics and upper-level urban and regional economics.

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