

College of Business First Year Teaching Award

Ms Suzie Kim (Graduate Teaching Assistant)

When I first started out as a classroom teacher, teaching Management Accounting (CB2101) at CityU, I remember walking into my first class brimming with anticipation. My interests are at the cross-section of financial education, communication, and empowerment, so I was thrilled to meet with students and get to know them.

I knew from the beginning that my work ahead would be immensely meaningful. I am grateful that it turned out to be just as I expected: work and relationships rich in meaning and learning. I share wonderful memories I have made here and hope my story gives encouragement to other young teachers who are just starting out.



My first year of teaching in 2019/2020, despite my great enthusiasm, was far from perfect and anything but pleasing. I often met with averted eyes and distracted students. My skills were underdeveloped then and needed to grow fast. Compounded by online teaching, I faced great difficulty in motivating and engaging students. The gap between my overpromising and my under-delivery led me to look for ways to improve as a teacher. I found there were plenty of things one can do to instruct well. There were also brilliant teachers with wisdom I could learn from and that I had not been previously aware of. Soon, I was busy learning about teaching methods and philosophies from great minds.

Patrick Henry Winston, a late MIT professor, taught me to start with empowerment promises and use verbal punctuation. Dale Carnegie taught me to take a genuine interest in people and address them by their names. Of course, I had to put my newfound knowledge into practice. I stayed back practicing in an empty classroom. Looking back, I am glad that I devoted myself to improving and achieved some progress.

In retrospect, I believe my progress was also possible because of the students I met. It was hard to stay in the same place and be typical of what I was then (an uninteresting bore) when I knew that my students would enjoy learning with better teaching. I was motivated to become more knowledgeable and helpful because I cared about them. There was always a group of students who were committed to their success and showed me curiosity and dedication to becoming more. They got me thinking, “How can I teach something incredible that benefits my class?”

There is a quote by Marcus Aurelius (Meditations) I used to pass on but did not give much thought to, “*Each man is worth just as much as the things he cares about.*” After teaching for almost two years, I understood what those words signify to a greater extent. I felt the full force of the meaning.

It sank in especially when reading my students' thank you letters. I owe sincere gratitude to my students, the AC department, and other great teachers for making me realize the joy of caring and educating.

I am honored to receive the CB First Year Teaching Award for 2020/21. Nevertheless, the true reward for me is in the journey: everything from face-palming moments to reading touching letters from students. I want to thank my students for making me appreciate everything and making my teaching an unforgettable and remarkable experience.

