Teaching Philosophy Generative Interview Questions (15 minutes total)

1. What do you enjoy most about teaching?

   influencing students and sharing knowledge & experiences

2. What knowledge, skills, and attitudes are important for student success in your discipline (i.e., what are your learning goals for students)?

   problem solving / definition / breaking down problems

3. Give one discipline-specific example of something you have done (a teaching method or strategy) in your class to help students achieve your learning goals.

   review backwards & connect to previous topics

4. Give one example of how you assess whether your students have met your learning goals.

   quizzes.

5. How do you account for student heterogeneity in you teaching?

   group hw assigned to members

Reflection Question: (1 min, …then hand them your notes)

Pretend that your partner (i.e., the interviewee) has won a teaching award. Based on the answers above, what are the reasons that your partner won this award?

Statement of Teaching Philosophy

The first economics course I took changed my life. I was floundering in my search for a major and a career. Economics offered an appealing blend of mathematical rigor and policy relevance. By the end of the term, I had decided that I wanted to be an economist. I recognize that over the course of my teaching career, I am unlikely to convince many students that they, too, want to be economists. However, I hope that all of my students gain an idea of what it is that economists do, that they retain some enthusiasm for and interest in what economists are doing, and that they have a sense of how it applies to their own lives.

One of the primary goals I have in teaching is to help students understand the methods economists use to analyze problems. At the most basic level, this involves understanding how and why models are used. Any model is a simplification of a complex, real-world situation. I will teach my students that models can be powerful tools, but that the results can depend critically on the simplifying assumptions of a model. At another level, I want students to realize that many of the methods used by economists center on marginal decision making. In an introductory course, this insight should be realized as students apply the supply and demand model to a variety of situations. In a more advanced course, this might be realized by recognizing that the interaction of utility-maximizing agents is a common feature across models.

My second goal for student learning is for students to develop specific problem-solving tools. Unlike the methods of analysis discussed above, these tools are more specific to the level and content of a particular course. For example, a principles course should familiarize students with graphical analysis of comparative statics. How are the goals of acquainting students with methods and tools related? Understanding the methods of economics will allow a student to approach an unfamiliar problem from an economist's point of view, and set up a structure for analyzing that problem. Understanding the tools of economics will allow a student to carry out that analysis.

Finally, a major goal of mine is to have students perceive economics as an exciting and powerful field. In advanced classes, this will involve incorporating ideas at the forefront of the research frontier. In intermediate classes, I hope to achieve this goal by incorporating some accessible professional articles. In an introductory class, I have asked students to find newspaper articles that make conclusions contradictory to predictions we've discussed in class, and to analyze why the article might include a mistake or oversight.

I try to create an inclusive learning environment by being easily accessible to students and open to communication with them. When asked an unexpected question in class, I'm willing to pause for a few minutes to think before answering. If I cannot give a thorough response at that time, I return to that question at the beginning of the next class. By doing so, I hope to send students that message that I value methods and viewpoints that differ from the ones I come prepared to discuss.

I do a fair amount of traditional lecturing, but make an effort to organize and present material in a variety of ways. Diagrams are used frequently in economics classes. I like to supplement these with numbered lists of the steps involved in their construction. I also tend to write a lot of verbal descriptions on the board. At times I worry that this slows the pace of the class too much, but I have been repeatedly assured by students that this is not a problem! I also try to make connections between various topics within each course and to other courses. I find it particularly rewarding when students themselves point out connections between course content and other areas. After studying monopoly price discrimination, one student told me that he had suggested a re-design of the membership fee structure for his student organization. I have found active learning techniques to be highly effective during office hours, with groups of three to ten students. In these situations I regularly send students to the board to work on problems, or redirect one student's question to another student. As I continue to develop as a teacher, I would like to find ways of incorporating elements of active learning into larger classes.

Finally, I feel that the most important means of implementing the goals I have for students is to teach with enthusiasm. Luckily, this has been easy for me. I feel immersed in my field and truly enjoy it. Students see this in the energy and commitment I bring to teaching. I hope that these traits help students to retain an appreciation for the methods, tools, and ideas they have learned in the class long after the class is over.

Sara

Rubric for composing and evaluating statements of teaching philosophy

Categories	Excellent	Needs Some Revision	Unsatisfactory
Goals for student learning: What knowledge, skills, and attitudes are important for student success in your discipline? What are you preparing students for? What are key challenges in the teaching-learning process?	Goals are clearly articulated, specific, and go beyond knowledge level, including skills, attitudes, career goals, etc. Goals are sensitive to the context of the instructor's discipline. They are concise, not exhaustive.	Goals are articulated but may be too broad or not specific to the discipline. Goals focus on basic knowledge, ignoring skills acquisition and affective change.	Articulation of goals is unfocused, incomplete, or missing.
Enactment of goals (teaching methods): What teaching methods do you use? How do these methods contribute to your goals for students? Why are these methods appropriate for use in your discipline?	Enactment of goals is specific and thoughtful. Includes details and rationale for teaching methods. The methods are clearly connected to specific goals and are appropriate for those goals. Specific examples of the methods in use within the disciplinary context are given.	Description of teaching methods not clearly connected to goals, or if connected, not well developed (seems like a list of what is done in the classroom). Methods are described, but generically; no example of the instructor's use of the methods within the discipline is communicated.	Enactment of goals is not articulated. If there is an attempt at articulating teaching methods, it is basic and unreflective.
Assessment of goals (measuring student learning): How do you know your goals for students are being met? What sorts of assessment tools do you use (e.g., tests, papers, portfolios, journals), and why? How do assessments contribute to student learning? How do assessments communicate disciplinary priorities?	Specific examples of assessment tools are clearly described. Assessment tools are aligned with teaching goals and teaching methods. Assessments reinforce the priorities and context of the discipline both in content and type.	Assessments are described, but not connected to goals and teaching methods. Description is too general, with no reference to the motivation behind the assessments. There is no clear connection between the assessments and the priorities of the discipline.	Assessment of goals is not articulated or mentioned only in passing.
Creating an inclusive learning environment, addressing one or more of the following questions: How do your own and your students' identities (e.g., race, gender, class), background, experience, and levels of privilege affect the classroom? How do you account for diverse learning styles? How do you integrate diverse perspectives into your teaching?	Portrays a coherent philosophy of inclusive education that is integrated throughout the statement. Makes space for diverse ways of knowing and/or learning styles. Discussion of roles is sensitive to historically underrepresented students. Demonstrates awareness of issues of equity within the discipline.	Inclusive teaching is addressed but in a cursory manner or in a way that isolates it from the rest of the philosophy. Author briefly connects identity issues to aspects of his/her teaching.	Issues of inclusion are not addressed or addressed in an awkward manner. There is no connection to teaching practices.
Structure, rhetoric and language: How is the reader engaged? Is the language used appropriate to the discipline? How is the statement thematically structured?	The statement has a guiding structure and/or theme that engages the reader and organizes the goals, methods, and assessments articulated in the statement. Jargon is avoided and teaching terms (e.g., critical thinking) are given specific definitions that apply to the instructor's disciplinary context. Grammar and spelling are correct.	The statement has a structure and/or theme that is not connected to the ideas actually discussed in the statement, or, organizing structure is weak and does not resonate within the disciplinary context. The statement contains some jargon.	No overall structure present. Statement is a collection of disconnected statements about teaching. Jargon is used liberally and not supported by specific definitions or examples. Needs much revision.