

Statement of Teaching Philosophy

Kenneth Whaley

My development as a teacher requires continual internal reflection paired with discussion of pedagogy with peers and more experienced colleagues. As a lover of economics who teaches students with a wide array of passions, I enjoy the challenge that comes with bringing economic principles to light for students from all backgrounds. Reaching students with broad interests demands humility, however, and to educate them I must continually seek to understand how they learn from me. As technology continues to expand the set of ways students can learn material, I understand that remaining flexible in my approach and adapting best practices of those around me allows me to maintain a consistent level of teaching quality.

I am most honored to have won the College of Business *Outstanding Graduate Student Teaching Award* for the 2018-2019 school year. In my last four semesters at Clemson I have worked to create an engaging, respectful classroom environment that is equally welcoming to students requiring extra work to grasp economic principles and those who have a natural inclination towards economic logic. Having the past fortune of teaching reasonably small classes, my core methodology combines lectures, group assignments, and interactive problem solving to reach students. Depending on the course being taught and the size of the class, I expect to adjust how I weight each component of my core approach.

For principles of macroeconomics about two-thirds of the course are lecture days, where I present conceptual grounding and cover the history behind the well developed economic theories taught at the undergraduate level. The other one-third of total class days are spent interactively in student-led or instructor-led interactive class time. Student-

led classes consist of group assignments in which I am essentially an extra member of each group. While students work through problem sets I am able to observe how they process economic questions, and push them to explain their logic to each other when I sense them heading down the right path. This allows me to instill a sense of confidence in students as they take small steps in knowledge formation, and learn how they are generally engaging with the material being taught. Conversely the interactive instructor-led class time is spent working the more challenging problems out on the whiteboard. As I go step by step through the setup and solutions, I encourage students to show me how they approach each piece of the puzzle. The interactive sessions are designed to help me detect weakness in how I teach material with analytical solutions.

One of the most valuable traits I seek to impart on students is a sense of ownership and autonomy towards their own academic outcomes. In that light, each semester I find myself reiterating two important facts about my approach to teaching and grading. First, students are not expected to know everything coming into the course, as such I am strongly inclined to reward gradual improvement of work over the course of a semester. Second, I try my best to match the intensity of students that want to learn the material but need extra help. I do this because I would not be in this position myself if my undergraduate Professors had not done the same for me.