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Teaching Philosophy

"Tell me and I forget. Show me and I may remember. Involve me and I understand." – Xunzi

The quoted teaching idea was created by a Chinese Confucian, but it was in the U.S. that I understood this old proverb, which enlightened my teaching philosophy: to involve my students into the learning environment, where students are attracted, connected, supported, and guided. My teaching philosophy is further explained with four stories: 1) Kitchen Sink, 2) Horse Racing, 3) Tree Planting and 4) Mushroom Hunting.

Kitchen Sink

Instead of didactic teaching, I usually use vivid pictures to attract students' attention and explain abstract concepts. When I introduced the principle of choosing regressors, I told my students that "never put everything into your regression equation, otherwise your equation will become a kitchen sink". Then I showed them a picture I took, a dirty kitchen sink with unwashed utensils and cookers. The picture lightened the class atmosphere, and everyone was attracted in my lecture. Seeing the laughs on their faces, I knew that they would understand the "kitchen sink" equation and avoid making their equation "dirty".

Horse Racing

To help student understand and apply the knowledge, I like to connect my teaching with local economic development and students' personal experience. During the Kentucky horse-racing season, I downloaded the horse-racing records and let my students regress the racing records on the characteristics of horses, jockeys, and managers. Through this group project, they quickly perceived the use of regression analysis, and found the best strategies to select the most proper characters to predict the racing records.

Tree Planting

Students are like little saplings endowed with potential abilities to learn and grow. What I need to do is to support their growing by providing necessary water, soil, sunshine, and sometimes under-controlled cold weather shocks to stimulate their inner power. In practice, I built a "learner-centered"[1] atmosphere in-and-out of the classroom where students can develop "growth mindsets"[2]. I especially paid attention to create an easily accessible online study environment for students with diverse learning styles and intelligence. Students could conveniently find links of previous slides, worksheets, and carefully selected learning videos from the online-version course schedule. In my "*Introduction to Analysis with Business Software*" class, although Excel was the mandatory software for the average students, I introduced R with a self-recorded video for students who had further interest in analyzing data with coding. In the learning atmosphere with growth mindsets, students enjoy learning and believe that they can grow their own talents with efforts.

Mushroom Hunting

Learning is like "mushroom hunting": students are eager to hunt a true morel but can also make mistakes collecting a basket of poisonous ones. My responsibility is to become their field guide in time. By saying "in-time", I might not interrupt the mistake immediately, but let my students find the mistake themselves and discuss with their group partners at first. I then especially addressed why and how they made the mistake. To help them conquer the fear of making mistakes, I showed them my research notes recording my mistakes when learning new skills. Furthermore, I also taught them how to record and overcome mistakes by writing a "mistake book". I wrote the first three pages for the class as an example and encouraged them to continue writing their own mistake books.

Although learning styles and backgrounds are divergent among students, I believe everyone holds the right to acquire knowledge and education. The purpose of my teaching philosophy is to involve my students into a benign teaching-learning interaction to foster deep understanding and cultivate long-term self-learning abilities. In return, the pleasure and fulfillment from students' Aha Moments become my permanent motivation to keep improving my teaching abilities to help more students achieve their dreams.

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[1] Weimer, M. (2002). *Learner-centered teaching: Five key changes to practice*: John Wiley & Sons.

[2] Dweck, C. S. (2006). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. Random House Incorporated.