

Teaching Statement

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Education is my Aladdin's magic blanket. It has brought me from a small town to a megacity and then across the Pacific to learn from the leading figures of Applied Economics. Looking back, the indispensable factor in my journey has been a row of great teachers who inspired me, helped me, and cheered for me along the way. Standing at the gate to becoming an educator, I believe that the best way to thank them is by passing on their gift to future generations.

As an international student, overcoming the language and cultural barriers in teaching has been the eternal theme in my pursuit of an academic career. How can I ever be like my teaching role models who foster vibrant class discussions and turn the classroom into an active learning playground, when words are not at my disposal and cultural unfamiliarity looms over my head? Working as a teaching assistant was the perfect stepping-stone to building confidence. It has allowed me to make mistakes with relatively low stakes and find my strengths in the process. When I sought ways to make the Friday afternoon econometrics recitations attractive, I thought about practical study methods that proved helpful when I took the course. I mapped out ideas and concepts into diagrams and tables and took students to the bird's eye view with stories. This method received the most positive feedback from the students, and they voted me the best TA of the year twice in a row. Even though I am still constantly improving my English, I have become confident about developing a unique set of tools to help students learn. I took on more responsibilities such as developing and instructing the summer math review course. Joining St.

Olaf College as an adjunct assistant professor to teach the Principles of Economics for 2024 Spring will be another opportunity to further polish my teaching skills.

Like many other international students, I came to study in the US as a pilgrim to cutting-edge education. The Teaching in Higher Education course from the Preparing for Future Faculty program allowed me to further understand the rationale and philosophy behind this exceptionality. Activities such as reflecting on the learning paradigm shift, discussing the use of technology, and jig-sawing alternative assessment strategies have broadened my horizons and deepened my understanding. Observing the instructors I assist has been another way to learn the code of conduct. From Professor Hurley, I learned about the importance of meticulous course design and the power of compassion toward struggling students. I witnessed how Professor Ritter infected the students with his passion for econometrics and R programming. I admire that Professor Glewwe would address all questions patiently and informatively.

Being a gardening enthusiast, I enjoy the same fulfillment in teaching as nurturing a flower into bloom. Teaching means living with a gardener's nurturing mindset, being a caring person, standing strong in the face of uncertainty, appreciating imperfections, and truly celebrating students' success. Teaching is also reciprocal. I believe that learning is a spiraling ladder, and each repeated exposure accompanies new apprehension. Organizing and delivering knowledge not only benefits students but also brings me to a higher step on my learning ladder. Through the teaching assistant position, I had the chance to hear the inspiring life stories of our students and to establish invaluable relationships. Teaching has become much more than a means to survive financially through graduate school. I will continue to build on my teaching profile by

taking on various teaching tasks. I will keep updating my teaching philosophy and skills through reflections on student progress and feedback, as well as learning from teaching experts and peers across disciplines.