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Statement of Teaching Philosophy

As an instructor and aspiring professor in economics, I believe that teaching is much more than relaying information to the students. I aim to help the students develop critical thinking skills and the economic way of thinking, which will enrich their understanding of the world beyond the classroom and after graduation. Throughout my teaching experience as both a teaching assistant and course instructor, I've identified two key teaching concepts that I believe are essential and have since incorporated into my pedagogy: relaying intuition to the students and emphasizing the practical relevance of economics.

Many economics students become mired in the complexities of mathematical equations, running the risk of mechanically solving problems without truly grasping the underlying mechanisms of the models or theories. While this approach can often net the students a high score on exams, I find these students are less likely to develop the critical and economic thinking skills that the economics major can provide and will be useful for their careers and lives. Thus, in my classroom, I always introduce the intuition behind every concept as much as the mathematics behind it, and I believe that this helps students remember even the most difficult concepts. For example, in my econometrics course, I use rulers and paper to represent vectors and column spaces to visually explain how the first stage of the 2SLS regression works to remove endogeneity. Once the students can see that first stage removes endogenous variation, they can then think more clearly about endogeneity and how to address it; what might have been just a mathematical concept transforms into a deeper understanding of economic interactions and phenomena. Many students appreciate this effort and often state in course evaluations that they have learned beyond the simple material covered in the curriculum and that I have challenged them to see the world in a more critical and nuanced way.

Further, I believe in fostering an interactive learning environment where students can readily see the tangible connections between classroom knowledge and the world around them. To achieve this, I regularly incorporate real-world examples into my teaching. In my introductory macroeconomics course, I frequently share articles from the Wall Street Journal and podcast episodes from shows like Planet Money. For instance, discussing interest rates and monetary policy in class takes on a new significance when students can see on the front page of the Wall Street Journal an article about the recent interest rate hikes by the Federal Reserve to counter inflation.

In my econometrics course, I guide students through the replication of research papers with real policy implications, such as the work by Bertrand and Mullainathan (2004)[1]. This approach helps them bridge abstract concepts, such as conditional expectations, with practical policy issues like racial discrimination in the labor market. Further, I find that doing these replication exercises encourages the students to think outside of the standard problem sets with toy data and gives them the confidence that they too can conduct professional economics research. These real-world connections and hands-on experiences not only motivate the students by reinforcing the practical relevance of their studies but also empower students to tackle the challenges that professional economists face in their work.

While classroom interactions are undeniably important, I also believe that continuous mentorship plays an essential role in a student's educational experience. I draw inspiration from my own experiences as an undergraduate in a liberal arts college, where the personal relationships I developed with my professors, who guided and motivated me to pursue a Ph.D. in economics, have left an enduring impact on my academic career. I strive to be accessible, creating an open and approachable atmosphere for my students. I find that expressing my passion for economics in the classroom and continuously encouraging students to ask questions and express opinions help them feel comfortable in approaching me after or outside the classroom, as they can see that I am willing to discuss anything and everything economics with them. As a result, students have often reached out when they are no longer my students to discuss their capstone projects, or to talk about their current economic classes, and I have mentored several others with future careers in economics The mentoring relationship presents a different dynamic than the classroom, as I can pose more open-ended questions and prod the students' thinking in more flexible ways. By extending the education beyond the classroom and semester in which I teach the students, I believe I have been able to make a more lasting impact on the students.

In conclusion, my teaching approach is anchored in cultivating critical thinking skills, fostering an economic mindset, and highlighting the real-world relevance of economics. By emphasizing intuition alongside mathematics, incorporating practical examples, and offering mentorship that extends beyond the classroom, I strive to leave a lasting impact on my students. Several students have informed me that my courses served as a catalyst for them to continue their economics studies, including Ph.D. programs and pre-doctoral research assistantships. As I look forward to continuing my teaching journey, I remain dedicated to fostering a deeper understanding of economics and encouraging students to apply their knowledge to address real-world challenges and opportunities.

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[1] *Bertrand, Marianne, and Sendhil Mullainathan. 2004. "Are Emily and Greg More Employable Than Lakisha and Jamal? A Field Experiment on Labor Market Discrimination." American Economic Review, 94 (4): 991-1013.*