

## Teaching Philosophy

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### Independent Teaching

I am a postdoctoral instructor at University of Nevada, Reno. I currently teach two sections of principles of microeconomics and principles of statistics. Previously, I taught an independent section of Principles of Economics with full pedagogical control for three semesters at Western Michigan University. At State University of New York, Oneonta, I worked as a visiting lecturer before joining the economics department at University of Nevada, Reno. In Spring 2023, I will be teaching introductory econometrics, intermediate macroeconomics, and statistics<sup>2</sup>.

My course in principles of statistics covers basics in probability theory, building descriptive statistics, and an introduction to OLS approach. My microeconomics course provides the students with the building blocks of understanding the economic approach to examining consumer and firm behavior. In addition, I use this course to teach students how economists build theories to understand the real world. As an instructor, my primary goals are to build a better learning environment for the students that ensure the inclusivity of students from diverse backgrounds, incorporate newer teaching methods, and improve teaching continuously. Below I discuss my commitment to diversity, inclusion, equity, and the instructional strategies I used in teaching.

### Diversity, Inclusivity, and Equity

In graduate school, I have read and taught a lot about the importance of economic efficiency. In comparison, the discussion of inequality appears to receive much less academic emphasis. My training in economics taught me how economic inequality can be a barrier in the path of socio-economic progress. Inequality of opportunities in education and health would generally translate into inequality in economic outcomes. My approach to teaching and guiding students is focused on building an inclusive environment for students of diverse backgrounds, which I consider is a pathway to reducing inequality of opportunity in education. I have mentored diverse groups of students at Western Michigan University (WMU), SUNY Oneonta, and University of Nevada, Reno (UNR). These institutions champion building inclusivity with different approaches which helped me build my commitment to supporting diversity, inclusivity, and equity throughout my academic career.

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<sup>2</sup> To receive my course outlines, samples of active-learning exercises, and samples of

I received professional training on addressing the issue of inclusivity at WMU. This program also trained me to better understand the differences in the needs of international students, students from underrepresented groups, international students, and less-privileged students. At the institutions where I taught, I have consistently worked with the disability service offices to accommodate student needs. In 2020, I participated in a training program titled “Safe on Campus” which focused on promoting conversations toward building a safe environment for sexual minority students. Furthermore, in my Ph.D. research racial and gender differences in educational outcome is a key focus.

To build an inclusive and supportive environment for students, one needs to include active discussion about topics related to diversity, inclusivity, and equity in the course. Training in economics includes widely reading topics such as inequality in health, education, and demographic differences in earnings. I utilize this opportunity by discussing topics of inequality and poverty in class. I have adopted a range of practices that would improve the learning environment for students of diverse backgrounds. I think some simple efforts can make big differences in the quality of teaching. On the first day of class, I always take a conversational approach to connect with the students. I participate with the students in a group discussion about their preferred pronouns, how to pronounce their names, where they grew up, their national origin or hometown, favorite movies, and books, favorite type of pets, etc. I use frequent testing to detect students showing early signs of course withdrawal. I use office-hour meetings to address the issues that hinder individual progress. I build a welcoming environment for my students and most of my students openly share the factors that inhibit their learning.

I use icebreaker sessions and an active learning method called think-pair-share to detect students who are less intent in engaging in class. Icebreaker sessions help students who deal with communication apprehension. On the other hand, many students do not want to be very direct about their concerns about the class. Using anonymous student evaluations informs me of their concerns and allows me to address them. Comments on teaching helped me adjust the pace of the lecture, adjust the number of slides, and increase the number of graph-drawing exercises to meet the average student’s needs. As a mentor and a teacher, I put aside my perceptions about the levels of difficulties of certain topics and carefully listen to the challenges the students are facing, because their perceptions vary widely due to the differences in their background and educational attainment. Understanding the differences in their perceptions helps me appreciate their challenges.

In my future academic career, I plan to take a multipronged approach to promote diversity, inclusion, and equity. I am committed to supporting a diverse and inclusive teaching environment for students. Moreover, I am committed to supporting student success through creating an environment for experiential learning and providing academic and research advice. To serve a diverse group of students, I will focus on designing courses that address the needs of underrepresented groups of students. I will work with the faculty to discuss and adopt effective teaching strategies for educationally disadvantaged students. The primary objective of these strategies is to encourage critical thinking and spirited dialogue that informs all students of the experiences and the perspectives of the underrepresented students.

My next approach would be to engage in outreach programs and initiate dialogue with the faculty on implementing recruitment and retention strategies. The outreach programs should be a gateway to understanding the specific needs of underrepresented students. Further, I plan to continue engaging with students and student bodies on campus to initiate dialogues to increase my knowledge of the dimensions of diversity based on different identities, such as ethnic, socioeconomic, racial, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and national origins. Lastly, I plan to serve on campus committees focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion of underrepresented individuals, discuss the challenges faced by them and work toward removing barriers to their full and equitable academic participation and advancement.

### **Instructional Principles and Methods**

To date, I have relied on a mixed classroom structure, with about 2/3 of class time devoted to the traditional lecture that is enhanced with active learning methods including think-pair-share, short quizzes, and graphing and analytical exercises using Microsoft Excel. Many of my students mentioned that they enjoyed using desmos.com for in-class graphing exercise. I find that the quizzes are particularly useful because they serve to encourage class attendance and engage the students during class, while also providing me feedback on student learning. My teaching is geared toward maximizing student attendance, student engagement, and peer interactions during class.

Addressing the performance of the struggling students requires bringing in a positive attitude in class. I find having direct conversations to be an effective strategy to boost student confidence. When I meet struggling students separately in the office, I discuss their place in the current grade distribution and their class performance trend, especially in the quizzes and the homework which is given every week. Even seeing a small improvement in grades in weekly tests and assignments helps the struggling students increase their effort to succeed. I have used my office hours to attend to small groups of students who needed some extra help with their studies. Especially, students who never used excel can face difficulties that others may not. I help these students catch up with the peers by teaching them excel separately.

A method I use in my classes to connect with the students is to encourage them to share their own personal academic interests. I have seen students who participated in small group discussions on average see better course outcomes. I believe personalized instructions to the struggling students outside the class can harmonize performance in a class of heterogeneously skilled students.

I design my class to include current real-world issues in-class lectures and discussions. I cite recent news articles related to discussion topics whenever possible. At times, I provide new articles for class discussions, some of which are curated by Marginal Revolution University (EconInbox).

My students bring to my classroom a wide variety of experiences, including differences in learning styles, comfort, and skills with math and majors. Most of the students in my class are business majors,

but our department also draws many students from engineering and aviation. This presents the challenge of making economics interesting, particularly to students who may be taking their first and last economics course, while striking a balance between challenging the stronger students while also meeting the needs of the academically weaker students in the classroom. One technique I use in class is that during think-pair-share sessions, I ask students to pair up with another student with a different major, or of a different racial or ethnic background. This method works very well in my class as an icebreaker. Some students who appear to engage less in the class discussion, for reasons ranging from communication apprehension to lacking interest in the subject matter, communicate better after think-pair-share sessions.

In Fall 2022, I am teaching a course on statistical methods using excel. I arranged for a computer lab for the class meetings. With every lesson that I teach, I give in-class excel exercise to my students, so they practice what they learned about in class. In addition to having my students work on data available with the book, I also give exercise using real-world survey data. I encourage students to develop their data exercise into a project which they can publish on websites like medium.com and R-pubs.com. The goal of developing such projects is to not just about gaining some research experience but also to build marketable data-analysis skills.

### **Future Teaching Goals**

I would enjoy teaching a wide variety of economics courses. My foundation training has prepared me to teach introductory and intermediate macro and microeconomics. I am also trained to teach introductory econometrics with the use of R and STATA. My doctoral training included advanced courses in microeconomic and macroeconomic theories and applications. Additionally, I have a strong background in labor economics, international economics, and development economics due to my doctoral specialization in these areas. Currently, my goal is to find employment as an academic so that I can pursue interesting research projects while continuing to teach and connect with students.