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Teaching Statement

My teaching journey, deeply intertwined with my research endeavors, reflects a commitment to fostering a learning environment that is both inclusive and challenging. Rooted in my research at the nexus of education, labor markets, inequality, and discrimination, I bring to the classroom not just theoretical knowledge but also a profound understanding of real-world implications through tangible topics.

Pedagogical Approach

Drawing from my diverse educational experiences, from Urmia University in Iran to the University of South Carolina in the USA, I believe that effective teaching is not a one-size-fits-all endeavor. It is an ever-evolving endeavor, requiring adaptability, continuous self-assessment, and a keen sensitivity to the diverse backgrounds and needs of students. My approach is characterized by a blend of traditional teaching methodologies and innovative, technology-driven techniques, ensuring that students remain engaged and empowered.

Adapting to Modern Challenges

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and its unprecedented challenges necessitated a swift and comprehensive shift to online teaching, a transition I embraced with passion and adaptability. Whether in-person or online, my teaching philosophy remained anchored in active engagement, inclusivity, and a relentless pursuit of knowledge. To complement traditional course material, I frequently integrate media, games, and digital tools, ensuring a dynamic and interactive learning experience for my students. This multi-faceted approach not only enriches the learning environment but also resonates with the diverse learning styles of students in this digital age and demonstrates my capability to thrive in varied teaching environments.

Course Development

One of my proudest achievements as an instructor and educator has been the development of the “Introduction to Economics” course. From curating the syllabus to designing evaluations and course material, I meticulously crafted every aspect of the course, ensuring it provides a comprehensive overview of foundational economic principles while also addressing real-world applications.

Student-Centered Learning

Feedback from my Introduction to Economics courses underscores my emphasis on interactive and student-centered learning. I employ a mix of lectures, discussions, group projects, and real-world case studies and incorporate questions that resonate with students’ daily lives to ensure that students can apply theoretical concepts to practical scenarios. Economics is the combination of art and science that provides scholars with a toolkit applicable to their everyday lives. I start teaching the principle rules of economics to my students in the context of their own life to make the concepts tangible for them. For example, in my class in my Introduction to Economics course, I encourage students to think about the opportunity costs of attending my class. I ask them to consider how they make the

decision to attend the class in light of their limited resources and time. In this teaching paradigm, critical thinking and quantitative analysis of their life events are two base lessons that my students gain.

Mentorship

Beyond the traditional classroom setting, I have had the privilege of guiding and mentoring students in their independent research endeavors. Notably, I served as a mentor for an honors student's research project. This ongoing experience allowed me to nurture a student's passion for economics and to instruct them in the ethical conduct of research, guiding them from the initial stages of research conceptualization to its culmination. It reaffirmed my belief in the importance of providing students with opportunities to delve deeper, ask challenging questions, and contribute to the field. Such mentorship roles have enriched my teaching practice, reinforcing the idea that learning is not confined to classrooms but thrives in real-world applications and investigations.

Inclusivity and Equity

Given my research focus on inequality and discrimination, I am acutely aware of the challenges faced by marginalized groups in educational settings and the consequences of biases. My classroom is a sanctuary where every student, regardless of their background, feels valued and heard. I employ strategies like think-pair-share, randomized group assignments, and open discussions, fostering an environment of mutual respect and understanding. Through open discussions, reflective assignments, and continuous feedback loops, I ensure that students from all backgrounds can thrive and contribute their unique perspectives. In addition to my teaching endeavors, my role as the president of the Iranian Students Association at the University of South Carolina has deepened my appreciation for diverse perspectives and has informed my efforts to create an inclusive classroom environment. A mutual respect in a safe environment for anyone from any academic and social background is a necessity for creating an effective learning environment.

Continuous Growth and Reflection

As an instructor, I believe that learning is a two-way street. While I impart knowledge and skills to my students, they, in turn, challenge me to refine my teaching methods and stay updated with the latest in the field of economics. I view teaching as a dynamic exchange, where feedback is invaluable for growth. My teaching evaluations, coupled with self-reflection, guide my continuous evolution as an educator. Through consistent feedback loops and reflection, I refine my methods, ensuring they align with the evolving needs of my students.

Future Aspirations

Continuous reflection and growth are cornerstones of my teaching philosophy. As an international scholar, I have firsthand insight into the challenges diverse students might encounter in the classroom. This understanding propels me to preemptively address potential issues, ensuring an inclusive learning environment. Engaging with seasoned educators has been instrumental for my growth, providing invaluable feedback on areas of improvement.

Teaching, for me, transcends the confines of a profession – it is a vocation, an opportunity to inspire, challenge, and be challenged in return. As I navigate the ever-evolving academic landscape, I remain committed to fostering a dynamic, inclusive, and impactful learning environment. I aim to stay at the forefront, integrating digital tools and online resources to enhance the learning experience. My experiences, both online and in-person, have equipped me with the versatility and resilience to contribute meaningfully to diverse educational settings.