

From my teaching experiences inside and outside the classroom, I have had the opportunity to think carefully about my teaching philosophy and values as an educator. There are three essential ingredients of teaching for me that I seek to cultivate and apply in my future teaching career.

First, I believe it is critical to acknowledge the diversity among students. To assist students from various cultural and academic backgrounds, I focus on creating clarity in teaching and adjusting my style. My experience working with both undergraduate and graduate students has taught me how students from diverse backgrounds respond to challenges differently. For example, mathematical skills are essential to economics; however, students sometimes struggle with grasping the underlying intuition. Some of my students in the “Applied Managerial Economics” course were strong in math; however, they had a hard time due to limited exposure to economics. With these students, I have learned how important it is to focus my explanations on the underlying intuition so that students can relate their understandings to real-world applications. This approach also makes learning and teaching more practical, meaningful, and enjoyable. My experience conducting policy analyses and research on international finance, trade, and macroeconomics before my studies at Cornell enabled me to provide more engaging examples in the “International Trade and Finance” class.

Second, an individual’s education requires tremendous effort from both the instructor and the student, and engagement from one fuels engagement from the other. A way that I have fostered this mutual effort is to provide students with prompt and constructive feedback. It allows students to learn from possible mistakes while the material is fresh in their minds. I provide meticulously detailed feedback on students’ writings, such as case studies in “Consumer Behavior” and reading notes and independent research in “Research and Methods” to help them improve their professional and academic writing skills. A student mentioned that “Loved the course and really appreciated the constructive feedback Jav always gives on the case studies.” In the Research and Methods class, master’s students work on their research projects as a team on various topics using a wide range of techniques. Although I was not required to provide comments, I gave feedback on ten projects with topics of international and development economics and I had a continuing engagement with a team on their project. In the student evaluation, students in this class mentioned that “Met some great minds and learned a whole lot from this course!” and “Very knowledgeable.”

Third, I am committed to creating a welcoming environment where students can be comfortable challenging themselves, asking clarifying questions, and thinking about the materials. I first try to create an environment where students can trust and not be judged by their thought process while learning but rather encouraged for their efforts of pushing themselves. Although challenging themselves can make some students vulnerable, insecure, and nervous at first, allowing them to express their understanding and correct themselves helps them to master the material. Additionally, homework assignments are crucial in learning. I had numerous experiences that made me value learning by doing. Providing an opportunity for students to push their boundaries and grow in the presence of a support system via offering assignments and challenging materials not only enables them to master the materials but also prepares them for challenges in life. Due to this belief, I consider myself a challenging but fair instructor.

My experience as a teaching assistant (TA) and a mentor at Cornell has prepared me well to be an effective professor. My primary teaching experience comes from serving as a TA for eight semesters and four courses. For all these courses, I guided students through homework assignments, quizzes, and course materials that students had trouble grasping. As a TA, I prepared meticulously detailed solutions and notes on each homework and held weekly office hours. I thoroughly answered students' questions until they completely understood the materials. In the student evaluations, one student noted that "Only attended his office hours once, but he was very helpful and eager to help me learn." I also made myself available for extra office hours per request before exams and offered flexibility by enabling them to ask questions in different ways. Partly due to my performance as a TA, I was assigned to be a head TA for International Trade and Finance for the last two years. The position required coordinating 2-3 other TAs and managing nearly 200 students each year in addition to my usual TA responsibilities. The work demanded effective communication and interpersonal skills. For my performance in teaching, I was awarded the Graduate Teaching Assistant Award for Outstanding Services.

Beyond the classroom, I highly value mentoring and encouraging students to pursue their research goals. I view mentoring as a way to help students build self-confidence in their educational journey and motivate them to challenge themselves. For example, I had a chance to mentor two students starting a master's and a PhD program in the same department at Cornell through a buddy system. We discussed questions in economics, coursework, and research. The master's student at that time is now doing her PhD in the same program, and the PhD student is now a senior who I continue mentoring throughout her journey. I also mentored visiting students who asked for advice. I actively communicated with them to answer their questions and discuss their research to make their time at Cornell as valuable as possible. Although my mentorship and suggestions hopefully help them succeed in achieving their academic goals, I also benefit from them by learning how to be a good mentor, which guides me to serve as a mentor and advisor in the future.

My teaching and research experience makes me qualified to teach applied econometrics, trade, managerial economics, labor economics, and development economics classes at an undergraduate and master's level. At the Ph.D. level, I would be well suited to teach courses in applied economics, causal empirical methods, topics in labor economics, and microeconomics in the context of international development. For the topics in labor economics, I would be particularly excited to teach a class that covers some of the main contributions of the field (e.g., monopsony models and empirics, labor market policies such as unemployment benefits and job search, and interaction between technological change and the labor market). The course would include theoretical foundations and show students applications of these ideas. For the microeconomics of international development, I would be eager to teach a class that covers foundational topics, such as household models, consumption smoothing, coinsurance, microfinance, and labor markets. The course would combine seminal theoretical papers with recent empirical evidence. Finally, I would be happy to teach introductory and intermediate-level courses in microeconomics, macroeconomics, and empirical methods. I would also welcome the opportunity to teach other classes to help meet university needs.