

Teaching Statement
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My love for teaching has always been the propeller in advancing myself in the academic world. As a graduate student and a primary instructor of record at Kansas State University, I have taught introductory and intermediate economics courses at the undergraduate level. As a result of my teaching abilities, I was awarded the *Thomas Graduate Student Teaching Award in Economics* for excellence in undergraduate teaching in 2022. It is a fact that students are the building blocks of any academic institution; thus, the onus is on us as stewards of higher education to promote the success of students irrespective of the career path they choose. To this end, my pedagogical strategies focus on actively engaging students in a supportive learning environment to ensure punctuality and a successful completion rate of the classes I teach. My pedagogic approach to teaching rests on four fundamentals.

First, I create a stimulating, inclusive, and diverse learning environment where students feel confident and comfortable participating and interacting with their peers in the classroom. At the beginning of the semester, I ask students to describe themselves and their expectations for the class. To build a strong interpersonal relationship with my students, I try to learn and use their first names in and outside class sessions. Before I begin lectures, I ask my students to share with the class how their week is going and what they did for fun during the weekend. I also share my week with them to promote the teacher-student cordial relationship. To ensure inclusiveness and diversity, I identify and engage international students in my classes by strongly encouraging them to share their opinions, experiences, and examples from their countries on course concepts and discussion topics. Discussion topics include: Should China and the United States continue to trade? Why is the United States rich while others have stayed mired in poverty? How do European labor market experiences compare to those in the United States? A byproduct of this strategy is that students become aware and learn to embrace diverse viewpoints and perspectives, which aids them in becoming well-informed citizens. In addition, I create think-pair-share groups to facilitate discussions. Each group selects, reviews, and shares an academic article that relates to the material(s) covered in class. This activity allows students to develop critical thinking and decision-making skills in small and diverse groups. In my experience, small group discussions further foster an awareness and respect for differing viewpoints and experiences.

Second, I promote active learning in a fun way. Many students (especially students from the engineering, natural, and physical sciences) hold a common notion that economic philosophies and theoretical models are abstract, technical, and difficult to assimilate. To break this jinx, I design my class to integrate practical exercises to help my students connect with the material rather than making the course recitational. For example, from the FRED database, I obtain data on macroeconomic variables like GDP, Unemployment rate, and CPI during class. As a class, we compare the movement of these variables over the business cycle and how shocks (for example,

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COVID-19) affected some key macro indicators. I also play video clips (such as “EcoBus Updates” and “Economics Explained”) that build on concepts taught in the class. My classes also use an interactive learning tool called *Packback Questions* to make learning more fun. The *Packback Questions* platform is an online community where students can be fearlessly curious and ask open-ended questions to build on top of what they covered in class. This platform allows critical thinking of students through inquiry-driven discussion in a low stake environment. There is nothing like a right or wrong answer on the platform since questions are conceptually open, allowing students to give the best of both worlds’ scenarios. At the end of each week, I highlight and discuss posts with a high curiosity score and response rate. Students enjoy this interactive medium as they track their progress in real-time and relate questions to their personal experiences. I have also found a strong positive correlation between students’ test performance and their level of engagement with this online resource.

Third, I involve students in the structure and operations of the class over the semester. My experience as a teacher has taught me that students are very heterogeneous in their needs and demands. What might work for one class cohort might not necessarily work for the others. To make the classes dynamic, I administer surveys at periodic intervals asking students to anonymously provide feedback on the class’s progress and the challenges they face. I highlight the recurring comments and adjust the class to accommodate their needs. Additionally, I keep track of and reach out to underperforming students to find ways to assist them in performing better in the course – one well-appreciated way is having personalized tutoring sessions.

Lastly, I meticulously prepare my lecture materials. I firmly believe that a potent input in the production function for effective teaching is class preparation. Before each lecture, I carefully consider how to present important assumptions and theoretical models, how to break the models down in a sequential manner, how to explain each of these in a simple and unambiguous way, and how to incorporate relatable examples and applications. I provide detailed and precise solutions to problem sets and exams to help students in their learning process. The product of my conscious effort in preparing well for the class is evidenced by my consistently high TEVAL scores for the item “*Well prepared for class*” (4.7/5, on average) on the teaching evaluations.

I have served as an honors student mentor at K-State. To stimulate intellectual curiosity and add relevance and meaning to learning, I guide honors students to creatively develop a research idea that will allow them to employ the tools and theoretical models I taught in class to address important macroeconomic problems. For example, in Fall 2020, I supervised an honors student to investigate her research titled “Exploratory Analysis of COVID-19 on U.S. Labor Market.” Honors students present their research to the class at the end of the semester. The presentations culminate their experiences and help them showcase their public speaking abilities and growing skills as scholars. The positive feedback I get from my honors students indicates that they feel a sense of accomplishment and a deeper understanding of economics.

My teaching philosophy has proven to be effective in helping students. When COVID-19 disrupted the mid-Spring 2020 semester, I was challenged to learn and adapt to a virtual learning environment quickly. To maintain the in-classroom feel, I used tools such as *notability* to serve as

a whiteboard for solving mathematical and graphical problems online. In Fall 2020, I switched to a hybrid/blended delivery method. For each lecture day, one group attended the class in person while the rest joined the class virtually via ZOOM. After each class meeting, I posted the live session recording on Canvas to ensure a rich mix of synchronous and asynchronous modalities. As the teaching field keeps evolving, I hope to keep learning and improving as an instructor. I am optimistic that I will remain as zealous and committed to my teaching responsibilities.