

TEACHING STATEMENT

My first instructor constantly reminded us that economics was everywhere. This is true because all people and organizations have to make decisions with limited resources. The challenge then, is not to convince the audience that economics should or could matter, but that it permeates every sphere of life. We have to demonstrate that economics is beneficial, both in and beyond the classroom, and that understanding it better allows one to make better decisions. I see myself as a coach. Rather than trying to prove that exercise works, I advise the students in a race which they are already running.

So how do we capture people's attention with something they do every day? An effective way to make a lasting impact on students is to ask questions and provide the safe space to make mistakes and subsequently improve. I believe that our economics classrooms need this balance of rigor and relevance to create excitement and deliver a valuable education to the students we meet. To succeed, I lead my classroom with a threefold approach.

First, I strive to understand the audience. I do it by listening to students and reading their non-verbal cues. It takes a lot of listening to get students interested in what one has to say because each person can be different both in background and learning style. Also, I consider class discussions as a chance to be engaged and often use these talks as an introduction to technical concepts like elasticity in layman's terms. Depending on the class size, I make an effort to remember the students' names and send personal emails to ask for feedback about the class throughout the semester.

Second, I pay attention to how I communicate by removing obstacles related to mathematical challenges and preconceived notions before getting to the material itself. When one is a student, it can be hard for the teacher to realize how certain "trivial things" are still new. I always explain concepts in plain English before applying them to complex situations. I also use plenty of illustrations. Most students do not know what the OECD is for example. A good example involving this term would confuse more than help. I would rather refer to the OECD later. Organizations come and go but the economic principles they genuinely understand will remain. Instead, I could speak of Iowa and California trading corn and oranges to introduce the mutual benefits created by trade.

Lastly, I encourage students to succeed by rewarding consistent attendance and by highlighting the tutoring, mental health resources, and student events offered on campus. At the beginning of the semester I give all of my students full attendance points that only decrease if they miss class. This motivates students to keep their perfect record rather than slowly gain points throughout the semester. I also give at least one quiz or test per week so that students come regularly. To help students access campus resources, I include events and services on campus in my class emails.