

Teaching Philosophy

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"A teacher is someone who could propagate the doctrine, impart professional knowledge, and resolve doubts." So wrote Yu Han, a great Chinese Philosopher, in his work, *On Teaching*. A good educator should design a relevant course to each group of students, should motivate students to conduct their own understandings and thinking processes, and should be warm, accessible, enthusiastic, and caring. I have had the opportunities to teach both Principles and Intermediate levels of Economics as the primary instructor at Kansas State University since the fall of 2017.

What should I, as a college teacher, do in teaching Economics? There are three points of my thoughts.

A class that is of interest and useful to students needs to be designed according to their profile. I believe every group of students is unique. Students of business major taking economics class often are intrigued by the application of economics principles, while those of economics major need to be equipped with more theoretical fundamentals, and students from other general majors are more interested by the knowledge to connect with their fields. To maximize the "utility function" of a class, I intend to make the course relevant to the majors and career goals of different groups of students. To create an engaging, individualized environment, I ask my students to complete short personal information surveys on the first day of class to learn about their majors and minors, if they are taking my economics class as a requirement or elective, any relevant previous coursework, as well as their interests, aspirations, and backgrounds. Therefore, I can adjust the examples and case studies accordingly, so that everyone can be engaged and comfortable to connect what they learned to real life.

"Students in the 21st century should think like economists," said Dr. Gregory Mankiw. Students should learn from an economics class for not only equations, terminologies, and theories in books; instead, my job is to equip them with tools to conduct self-directed learning and to inspire them to view the world through the lens of an economist. In class, I teach students to read literature and understand the principles from different angles. I like to use case studies and guide students to transform theoretical knowledge to decision making. After class, students are encouraged and rewarded to attend economist talks, and I challenge them to detect and explain the application of economics in movies and news. Overall, I hope students to obtain the skills that fit them the best to solve problems in reality.

Keep learning from teaching experts and peers as well as analyzing feedback from students, are effective routes to improve my teaching skill. I sit in the classes of senior instructors and observe how do effective teachers do. I took the Effective Teaching Practices course to enhance my teaching skills further. I conduct mid- and end-of-semester feedback from students and peers to identify the pace of lecturing, the productivity of class, and the effectiveness of assignments. After each exam, I identify students whose performances were below the class average and send emails inquiring about their performance and provide personal meeting opportunities to assist. Learning from peers and students keeps my brain young, allows me to continue my own journey as a student and a lifelong learner.

The art of teaching happens from the head and the heart. It's a journey that revolves around your ability to connect, inspire, and enable both your learners and your colleagues. It's also a journey that fulfills pride, challenges, and happiness. I can't find the words to express how proud I'm when I meet a student after their classroom days and discover that student has always remembered how well and with how much compassion they were taught. Ineluctably, there are comments, as impartial as: "she makes me confused about" ... brings me challenge and inspirations to change. At the same time, the sweet praises, as simple as, "she cares" encourage me to devote myself more into my beloved teaching career.