

Statement of Teaching Philosophy

Teaching is a value-laden activity. This value, usually leaves a wide latitude for possible definitions. In my understanding, it is measured not by the knowledge conveyed *per se*, but the insights and creativity that the students gained eventually. Teaching is my passion; whether it'd be lecturing to freshmen in economics and senior business majors, inspiring them for a game-theoretical model, or working on calculus or tricky combinatorics problems with an undergraduate during office hours. Each presents challenges, but offers many rewards including rejuvenating myself.

I have had the opportunity to have a variety of teaching experiences. At Northwest (China) University as a graduate assistant I taught courses in Microeconomics and International Economics. During my four years in the Economics department at Concordia University as a teaching assistant/associate, I taught courses in Microeconomics, Statistics, tutored Introductory Econometrics, Microeconomics, Industrial Organization, Macroeconomics, in undergraduate and graduate level. I served as the primary instructor for one or two sections of each course in a semester, normally under the monitoring of a senior faculty member. I was responsible for preparing lectures, syllabi, writing my own exams, grading assignments, holding office hours and assigning final grades.

Besides the traditional lecturing, I was responsible to prepare sample codes, instruct the students in the use of TSP for all sections, and as a requirement for Introductory Statistics. During the last two years of my teaching career, I had the opportunity to have one-on-one mentoring from Professor Gordon Fisher, a senior faculty member with distinguished credentials in teaching and scholarship.

My general style of teaching is a traditional knowledge oriented lecture format; although, at various circumstances I experimented with interactive format and other techniques. While at Concordia, I worked at incorporating the use of computers in Statistics by using TSP as a tool for students' exploration of sampling and understanding Central Limit Theorem. I also used the digital projector during lectures and lab sessions as a demonstration tool. By visualizing the abstract theorems via the use of overheads, students could have an efficient and quick digestion on the material presented.

In teaching game theory related courses like Micro or IO, I see my role in the classroom as three-fold: to introduce students the models, ideas, and technical derivations, to invite students to think critically about the existing theory, and to encourage students to develop their own theory.

Teaching goes beyond working with students in the classroom; it is also important to be available to students outside of class. While teaching Statistics I hold weekly tutorial sessions other than class time. I find this particularly helpful in probability, since the students can be exposed to different solutions to the same problem. In addition, it gives the students a chance to develop presentation skills and gain confidence presenting their ideas before their peers. I also find it important to foster a relationship with my students. For instance if I notify that I have a hockey fan in class, I may try to talk about last night's game during the break of the lectures. I also attempt to invite the students for lunch. It has been my experience that if one takes an interest in a student, the students

becomes more interested in the class and more readily seeks help for topics with which he/she is struggling.

Teaching is a dynamic profession. Consequently, I find it important to remain professionally active by participating in seminars and conferences in my research areas, maintaining an active research agenda, and developing consulting relationships both within and outside of the academic community. This provides me with the opportunity to return to the classroom with new ideas and vibrancy for the discipline. It also provides me with better skills to be a mentor and facilitator, and potentially incorporate students into the research and consulting process.

On Preparation and Prerequisites

Much of economics is cumulative and cross disciplinary. Students are expected to meet course prerequisites, or be prepared to learn such material or skills on their own in a timely fashion. However according to my experience on various courses, many students who took prerequisites or even similar course before are poor in the prerequisite materials, therefore I used to cover those materials in a couple of dense lectures at the beginning of the courses.

On Grading

Grading is one of the toughest but necessary aspects of a professor's duties. For essay or term paper assignments, to obtain an A, superior analysis, conception or insight must be demonstrated. Creativity and originality beyond this will merit an A+, which I regard very rare. Structure and writing are not the essential criteria as they are not the main objectives to be achieved through my classes. As the courses I taught are all core courses and prerequisites for possible later courses for senior or graduate studies, I do not mark on a curve, that is, I do not have a preconceived distribution of grades.

On Deadlines

Firm deadlines are executed. Students who receive extensions gain an advantage over their classmates who adhere to the course requirements. This is unfair. Further, deadlines are a feature of real life; an economist assigned to prepare an analysis for the Finance Minister cannot simply ask that the budget be delayed until they finish their assignment. Meeting deadlines is a discipline associated with professional responsibility.

On Teaching Evaluations

My overall teaching evaluation results turned out not good, therefore there is no point of reviewing it. I do not compromise my goals in trade for moderate teaching evaluations. University education must be distinguished by Philosophy led, rather than pragmatism, therefore theoretical materials must be presented and tested. Canadian university students tend to be more and more diversified today, more and more rich kids from all of the world register. I say register, not sit in, because some of them just show up in the first day and final exam and score 0 out of 100 even with 20 points on multiple choices. A strict teacher's teaching evaluation would be driven to the biased negative zone by the increasing proportion of frustrated slackers, making it uninformative. However I am not afraid because teaching skills can be always examined *vis-a-vis* during the interview and I am confident on a faculties' evaluation rather than students' evaluation.