

## **Teaching Philosophy**

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My goal as a teacher is to make students want to learn. The cornerstone of my teaching philosophy is to cultivate curiosity, help students develop critical thinking skills, bring them to a point where they ask questions and look for answers, and guide them to enjoy the process of learning. To achieve this goal, I make sure that the course material is appropriate for the level of preparedness of the students, the concepts are presented clearly using more than one vehicle, and the usefulness of the theory is demonstrated through real life applications.

I start with designing the course according to its level. In this process, my student career helps me to empathize with the students. I think about how I would want the material to be introduced if I were learning it for the first time. What would be the best sequence of topics? What are the challenges the students will face, and how can I introduce these challenging topics in a clear and logical manner? I review the topics covered in related textbooks to determine what is especially important. I start with the basics and slowly add layers of complexity through lectures, readings, examples and applications, homework, and project assignments.

Next, I write down a clearly stated and detailed syllabus where I define my goals, standards, and expectations. The syllabus is the main guide for me and for my students. It includes everything the students need to know about the mechanics of the course. I attach a tentative class-by-class schedule so that students can keep track of the topics that we will be covering in class. Although the syllabus is a binding contract in many ways, it remains flexible and subject to adjustment according to the needs of the students.

In the first class, I take time to explain everything written on the syllabus and why specific standards are in place. I ask them if they have any suggestions to make the class more interesting for them and let them know that their suggestions are always welcome throughout the semester. Once I make sure that we are on the same page and agree on the terms and conditions of the syllabus, I go to the next stage: in-class teaching.

I like to make lectures enjoyable for the students, as well as, for me. Being well prepared, energized, enthusiastic, and ready to engage with the students in the classroom is essential. Starting from the very first class, I keep in mind that students possess different learning strategies/abilities. Thus, it is important to present class materials in a variety of formats to enhance understanding and to interest students about current economic events. I use lectures, articles from newspapers and magazines (and established journals depending on the level of the course), diagrams, and organized notes to present course material. When measuring students' aptitudes, I use a variety of formats as well. I assess student abilities using tests that include multiple choice and short-answer questions, creative and formal writing assignments, and finally formal discussions. I assign practice and graded homework from Aplia (an online product to help interactive teaching) about the materials we cover that week.

Moreover, being a good communicator with my students is one important standard that I set for myself. Active learning, maintaining a lively and interactive classroom, is indispensable for my teaching. From the very first day, I encourage my students to ask questions and to participate in discussions. To motivate their class participation, I give extra credit to the most participant students. This practice stimulates active learning, teaches them to appreciate the

art of questioning, and comfort them with the idea that being wrong is a part of learning.

Because I generally teach to freshmen, the students tend to be shy the very first week of the classes, thus, hesitant to ask questions or make comments. Addressing the students by their names, making eye-contact, walking around the room help students feel more comfortable in class. Hence, I ask them to place a paper name tag in front of them for the first week. Having the advantage of teaching small classes, I was able to address most of my students by their name at the end of the first week. It is always a pleasure for me to see those quiet students in the beginning start to ask more and more questions, express interesting ideas throughout the semester.

After leaving the classroom, I like my students to think and analyze the material they learn during the class. Hence, I work to influence learning that occurs outside the classroom by supplementing class time with a wide range of learning activities including reading, writing assignments, etc. Providing access to my expertise is also a priority in my teaching. I actively encourage dialogue with students during office hours, meetings by appointments, and via e-mail. Additionally, I regularly strive to improve my teaching by seeking student feedback, talking with peers, and reading and experimenting with new methods. Through this evaluative and informative process I am continually refining my teaching practices and growing as a teacher/scholar.