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## Teaching Philosophy

One of the essential elements of being a good teacher is being genuinely passionate about the subject matter. The teacher's excitement about the class topics nurtures students' interest and motivation towards the learning process. Being involved in teaching Introductory and Intermediate Economics classes, I realized that mastering economic concepts can be a challenging endeavor for many students. However, economic concepts can be extended to every aspect of our lives, and, for every decision we make, there is an economic foundation. I would like my students to see economics as something they have been applying all their lives possibly without even realizing it. For every new topic, I start by asking them to think how they have been implementing the relevant concepts in their decision making or how the topic is applicable to real-world situations in general. Such an approach engages students from the first minute of the class and transforms a new topic from an abstract economic concept to a useful tool for analyzing their choices or their surroundings.

A successful instructor must be well-organized regarding all aspects of teaching process, including planning class time efficiently, developing relevant illustrative examples, organizing black board presentation of the material, and designing home work assignments that reinforce understanding and retention of the covered economic concepts. Also, the class structure must be clearly communicated to the students. When preparing for a lecture, I always try to put myself in the position of a student in my class. What would better motivate the subject matter of the class? What would be the most challenging concepts for students to comprehend? I find it very effective to break the material into subtopics with a logical and clear transition between them.

I perceive active learning as an efficient way to help students internalize new concepts. To initiate a successful discussion, the class is divided into smaller groups of four or five students to work on assigned problems, so every member of the group is actively engaged in the discussion process. From my experience, a small group environment encourages students to share and sharpen their understanding of the studied concepts and to work as a group on developing the best argument to support their stand. Moreover, during their presentation to the class, the students have a chance to deepen their understanding by explaining their approach to the general audience and addressing arising concerns. Every active learning exercise is finalized by debriefing the mastered material.

Also, teaching is not merely a transfer of knowledge from the instructor to a student – it involves continuous communication between the instructor and the students. I welcome relevant questions from the class and encourage participation in the class discussions. When an interesting question is raised, I readdress it to the class and lead them to an answer by carefully directing their economic analysis. After the introduction of a new economic concept, I continue with questions to the class requiring application (and not mere restatement) of the new material. Such questions allow me to isolate challenging topics for additional discussion.

Self-improvement is an important element of teaching process. In my opinion, an effective instructor must be responsive to students' needs and build her lectures around student's background. After every class, I make a note of the effectiveness of a particular visual aid, explanation approach, or real-world application to convey a given concept. These notes serve as a useful guideline for planning future lectures and revising the course notes for the next semester. Overall, teaching is a dynamic process of mutual growth and development.