

Statement of Teaching Philosophy

What have I taught so far, and what are my main goals for this course?

I have been teaching the Intermediate Microeconomic Theory course for the last two years. I recognize that the majority of my students are non-economics majors, and for most of these students this class is only the second economics class they will have taken after Principles of Economics. According to the prerequisites for the Intermediate Microeconomic Theory course, students are expected to already have some understanding of the main microeconomics concepts, such as consumer theory, producer theory, and market structure. However, I realize that after even a short period of time, most students may have forgotten many aspects of what they learned in the prerequisite class. Therefore, I spend at least one class refreshing their basic economics knowledge (i.e. demand, supply, elasticity, market mechanism). Furthermore, in the Intermediate Microeconomic Theory course, students are expected to solve many applied economics problems using mathematical and statistical tools. In the beginning of the semester, I also spend some time reviewing their basic quantitative skills. My main goals for this microeconomics course for non-majors are twofold. The first is to facilitate an appreciation for the science of economics. The second goal is to increase students' fundamental knowledge of the main microeconomics concepts in order to improve their economic reasoning skills.

In my understanding, what does it mean to be a successful teacher?

In my understanding, a successful teacher possesses three major characteristics. First, a successful teacher is always well prepared for lectures. By being well prepared, I mean that a successful teacher has well-structured class notes for each lecture. For students, the absence of well-structured notes leads to difficulties in following the logic of the lecture. As a result, students start losing focus on the topic of the lecture, which may lead to unsatisfactory overall performance in the class. Second, a successful teacher masters the subject matter which he teaches. For instance, all classes consist of heterogeneous groups of students, and there can be cases when some groups of students may fail to understand a concept after the first explanation. If a teacher feels that the concept is not well-understood by several students, he should change his strategy and use a different approach in explaining the same concepts to these students. This is possible if a teacher is very confident with the concept and he has mastered the subject matter. Finally, a successful teacher should be able to actively engage students and bring the course material to life. This characteristic is especially important while leading a class for non-majors. Non-major students are less motivated, and a failure to connect the course material to the real world leads to a lack of interest in the subject matter among these students.

What do I do to become a successful teacher?

After teaching the Intermediate Microeconomic Theory course for two years, I believe that I have already come up with lecture notes which are well-structured. However, after each lecture I leave memos in my lecture notes if something was not clear for students, and if I think something should be added or changed in the future. In the beginning of each semester, I always revise my old lecture notes, taking into consideration all memos from the previous semester. Furthermore, the experience gained from teaching the same course several times allows me to distinguish the concepts which are the most misunderstood among students. To deal in advance with possible questions, I always keep in mind 2-3 different approaches or examples related to the material. Finally, I always use applications from the real world, which are generally different from those mentioned in the textbook. This allows my students to have a wider set of applications for the same concept.

Teaching Summary

TEACHING INTERESTS

Microeconomic Theory, Statistics/Econometrics, Principles of Economics,
Labor Economics, Health Economics, Industrial Organization

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Independent Sections

Intermediate Microeconomic Theory
Consumer Theory, Production Theory,
and Market Structure

Summer 2007, Fall 2007
Spring 2008, Summer 2008
Fall 2008

Summary of Student Course Evaluations, Summer 2008¹

Question	Mean Score	Econ. Dept. Average
Overall... this course was excellent	3.8	3.7
Overall... this instructor was and effective teacher	4.2	4.0
Overall Factor Scores	4.1	3.9
Average of all course/questions	4.2	4.0
The instructor was one of the best I have had at UNC, fully deserving of a teacher award	5 'yes' out of 10	

Teaching Assistant

Intermediate Microeconomic Theory(Grzimek Volker)
Consumer Theory, Production Theory, and Market Structure

Fall 2005, Spring 2006

Intermediate Microeconomic Theory(Charles Braymen) Fall 2006, Spring 2007
Consumer Theory, Production Theory, and Market Structure

Other

ITS Research Computing, UNC-Chapel Hill

Spring 2008-Fall 2008

This course is for graduate students and researchers at UNC to learn how
to login to a Research Computing server, transfer files, submit jobs
through LSF, use Mass Storage, and use Net Scratch space

TRAINING

Teacher Training Program Certificate, UNC-Chapel Hill

Spring 2006

This program outlined strategies for class preparation, active learning
methods, and test writing, and provided observation and feedback on
teaching performance

TEACHING REFERENCE

Dr. Helen Tauchen, Department of Economics, UNC-Chapel Hill, 107 Gardner Hall,
CB 3305, Chapel Hill, NC, 27599, e-mail: tauchen@unc.edu; phone: 919-966-2383

¹Scores are on a 1 to 5 scale, where 1='Strongly Disagree'; 2='Disagree'; 3='Neither Agree nor Disagree'; 4='Agree';
5='Strongly Agree'