



Reflective Teaching Portfolio

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March 4, 2019

1. Define your teaching philosophy.

My teaching philosophy is to empower students by helping them to apply critical thinking skills as well as to acquire complex quantitative methods that will enable them to enhance their decision-making strategies. I provide for my students a supportive learning environment that respects diversity of opinions and enables students to understand a wide variety of viewpoints about economic phenomena. I believe that students learn best when multiple modalities are provided—for example, visual, analytical, and conceptual approaches to illustrate models and theories.

2. Have you ever observed a master teacher? If the answer is yes, what do you recall most from the experience?

I had the pleasure and honor of observing several master teachers in economics. Although the topics they covered were different, they all had traits in common. They were all experts in their fields and were able to present complex problems in a simple way so that non-experts could easily understand the issues that concerned the phenomena they presented. Their lectures all had a logical flow and great organization: starting with background information, presenting the main ideas and new material, and then providing a summary of key points. They all posed provocative questions for students to think about and highlighted the flaws in students' answers to them, when their answers were flawed. They all encouraged students to participate, and they all summarized students' answers in a context that

helped them understand the topic on a deeper level. They all promoted the free exchange of ideas, and everyone felt welcome to present his or her views even if such views were in opposition to those of the teachers.

3. Give an example of your most successful lesson. Why do you feel it was successful?

One of my successful lessons was about supply and demand and finding the equilibrium price and quantity and showing the results on a graph. Typically students are apprehensive of math, and initially my students told me they may not have the skills to solve these problems. After I showed them a detailed approach about how to solve these types of problems, they felt good about their math skills and were able to solve similar problems with ease. That was when I saw smiles on their faces indicating that they really understood the material and were able to master a complicated topic. I feel it was successful because I encouraged my students to tell me the areas in which they felt they needed improvement. I took their feedback seriously and presented material with their concerns in mind. I spent extra time working on the areas that my students felt they needed to work on. When they demonstrated that they could solve similar problems easily, I felt the lesson was successful and they learned new things in my class that were helpful to them.

4. Do you have an example of an unsuccessful lesson? How did you address the challenges?

An unsuccessful class was the day I attempted to explain the benefits of trade through the concepts of opportunity costs and specialization. I think it was unsuccessful because the concepts were too abstract for my students to grasp (e.g., trade did not occur through the exchange of money, but opportunity cost was used instead to illustrate the concept of comparative advantage). In this case, students were unable to understand who is better off with trade if they used the concept of opportunity cost only. To address the challenge, I started to present many examples that have real-life applications to illustrate the concepts discussed in the trade lecture. However, I think this is still my most difficult lecture for students to grasp.

5. Why are you introducing and/or expanding the use of technology into your teaching?

I think using technology in economics classes is extremely beneficial. Technology enables students to have extra practice problems at home to reinforce their skills outside of the classroom. Technology also helps students to visualize abstract problems so that they are able to understand the main ideas and propose solutions. Technology may also present a new dimension to learning and enhance students' learning experience.

6. How do you feel these technology innovations will affect the student experience? How do you think it will affect your experience?

Technological innovations will help students be more involved in the learning process. Whether it is through the use of VR experiences or simple voice thread, technology provides additional possibilities for students to learn and succeed in the course. Technology also makes my experience as an educator exciting and rewarding, because I can liven up material that is technical and I can also present concrete examples to illustrate abstract ideas. I like the idea of virtual experiences, where students do not need to travel abroad to see how people in other countries live and what their economic standards of living are, and how their institutional framework functions. This experience will significantly improve their understanding of international economics issues.

For me as a teacher, technology represents both opportunities and threats. With respect to opportunities, I am always striving to improve my teaching and make lectures interesting. Technology can aid in this endeavor by opening new realms in course development and design. In addition, technology facilitates my continuous improvement and learning as a teacher, to strive always to become the best teacher I can be. Yet technology can also provide threats to the teaching process. First, some functions that teachers used to perform are available online and students can have access to videos rather than attending classes in person. This in turn forces me to evaluate my role as a teacher and to expand my skills to adjust to these changes. Moreover, new technology constantly forces me to attain new skills in technology to stay abreast of new advancements. However, such training requires a significant involvement of my time, and some technologies are complicated and the learning curve may be slow, if I have not had experience using these technologies in the past. Thus I understand that my role as a teacher is much broader with the introduction of technology. Not only will I have to reevaluate my

role and responsibilities as an instructor (e.g., preparing lecture, facilitating discussions online, developing new methods of teaching, etc.), but also become a student myself and constantly learn about new technology and how to use it in the classroom.

7. Please describe new teaching ideas you plan to implement as a result of this technology certificate program.

I am very much intrigued to implement virtual reality in economics classes. There are two areas in which I would like to implement VR. First, it would be interesting to learn methods of data visualization so that students appreciate the mathematical underpinnings of the discipline of economics. Considering the fact that many of my students have creative backgrounds, this approach will be exciting and educational for them. Second, I would like to implement a VR experience when explaining the supply curve and its function. Many students have not had working experience, and it is difficult for them to put themselves in the shoes of an entrepreneur if they have never been one. If there is a VR experience that shows them how even a small company conducts its operations, how costs are calculated, and how this information reflects the dynamics of supply and demand as depicted in graphs or presented algebraically, this will be a significant enhancement of students' learning experience. I will seek opportunities to learn more about VR capabilities in this realm.