

Teaching Statement

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I first learned how to teach economics by training students much younger than the ones I now encounter at the University of Michigan. After completing a Bachelor of Science with Education in Mathematics and Economics, my first job was teaching economics and mathematics in a high-school classroom in Uganda. My undergraduate training equipped me not only with subject knowledge but also with training in teaching methods, lesson planning, assessment, and classroom practice, which prepared me well for the classroom. Yet actual teaching quickly made clear that knowing a subject and teaching it are very different skills. An explanation that seemed obvious to me could leave a student completely lost, while a simple example drawn from everyday life could suddenly make an abstract idea intuitive. That experience taught me that effective teaching requires meeting students where they are and building from familiar intuition toward more formal analysis. This remains the foundation of how I approach teaching today.

That foundation carried naturally into my teaching at the University of Michigan. Because my education in Uganda was conducted entirely in English, as was my prior classroom teaching, the transition to teaching in a U.S. university classroom was smooth. At Michigan, I have taught undergraduate-level Intermediate Macroeconomics (ECON 402) for four semesters and Principles of Economics II: Macroeconomics (ECON 102) for five semesters. Teaching students with different backgrounds and levels of preparation has reinforced a lesson I first learned in Uganda: effective teaching requires not only a strong command of the material, but also the ability to understand how students are reasoning and to adapt explanations accordingly.

I therefore believe that students learn economics best when they develop both clear intuition and a strong understanding of how economic models work, why they are useful, and how they help interpret the world around them. Economics can easily become just a collection of graphs, equations, and technical procedures. My role as an instructor is not simply to explain these tools, but to help students understand the mechanisms behind them, connect them to real-world questions, and become confident applying economic reasoning in unfamiliar settings. For example, when teaching present value and investment decisions in ECON 102, I begin by asking students to think about why receiving \$100 today differs from receiving \$100 several years from now. I then introduce the real interest rate as the opportunity cost of committing resources to an investment: the return that could have been earned on an alternative asset. Framing the concept this way helps students see why higher real interest rates reduce present values and make fewer investment projects worthwhile, rather than simply memorizing the relationship from a formula. Thus, I see teaching not merely as transmitting knowledge, but as creating the structure and opportunities through which students can actively develop this way of thinking.

My teaching style combines structure with active engagement. I believe students benefit from clear

explanations and carefully organized presentations, particularly when encountering technically demanding material, but understanding is deepest when students participate actively in constructing it. I therefore aim to move between the roles of instructor and facilitator. When introducing a new concept, I provide enough structure to establish the economic intuition and analytical framework. I then encourage students to work through the logic themselves by answering questions, solving problems, explaining mechanisms in their own words, or applying a model to a different setting. I also try to create an environment in which students feel comfortable revealing what they do not understand. For example, when I ask students to work through a problem individually before we discuss it as a class, I move around the room and check in with them as they work. I have found that students are often held back by a single point of confusion at the outset, and a small prompt can be enough to help them move forward independently. In other cases, students understand the approach but lack confidence; simply confirming that they are on the right track can help them complete the problem successfully. These interactions are important because they gradually build students' confidence in their own reasoning. Questions and mistakes are therefore valuable because they often reveal precisely where intuition and formal analysis have become disconnected.

In office hours, rather than immediately supplying an answer, I ask students to explain their reasoning and use questions to identify where it breaks down. I also treat assignments, exams, and student questions as feedback on my own teaching. When many students make the same error, I revisit the concept or explain it from another perspective. Formal evaluations and office-hour conversations similarly help me refine my teaching across semesters.

As a result of working with me, I want students to develop three broad capabilities. First, they should acquire a strong command of the fundamental economic concepts relevant to the course and understand the assumptions and mechanisms underlying them. Second, they should learn to apply those concepts rather than merely reproduce them. For example, I want a student who has learned the labor market model to be able to use that framework to reason through new policy questions rather than simply recreate a graph seen in the lecture. Third, I want students to become more confident and independent analytical thinkers who can evaluate economic arguments, interpret evidence, and communicate their reasoning clearly. Ultimately, I want students to leave my courses seeing economics less as a set of formulas to memorize and more as a disciplined way of thinking about individual behavior, markets, policy, and institutions. My responsibility as an instructor is to provide students with the conceptual foundation, analytical tools, feedback, and supportive environment needed to develop that ability.

As I continue to teach, I expect my methods to evolve with experience and feedback, but the underlying objective will remain the same: to help students become more independent, rigorous, and confident thinkers. I look forward to teaching at all levels, including graduate courses, which I have not yet had the opportunity to teach.

Summary of Teaching Evaluations

Pooling student evaluations across all the semesters I have taught at the University of Michigan, 94 percent of students agree or strongly agree that I was well prepared for class, 89 percent that I explained material clearly, 96 percent that I treated students with respect, and 89 percent that I appeared to enjoy teaching. Written comments echo these patterns. Students describe my explanations as “very digestible” and emphasize my ability to “break the material down” and “make difficult concepts easier to understand.” One ECON 102 student wrote that my teaching “totally deepened” their understanding of the course and made discussion section something they “looked forward to attending every week,” while an ECON 402 student noted that my explanations of complex topics helped them feel “well prepared for exams.” Additional student feedback and teaching evaluations are available on my [website](#).