

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

ERIC CARDELLA

My teaching philosophy is largely inspired by my own collegiate experiences and pursuit of education. As an undergraduate, I was uncertain about what career path I wanted to pursue. This was in large part to my overall lack of information and understanding regarding employment opportunities and graduate programs. Thankfully, I had several very influential professors that provided me with valuable insights and mentored me through the process of deciding to pursue a Ph. D., and the subsequent preparation. Through this process, I realized that the responsibilities of a teacher go far beyond educating students in a classroom. While this is certainly a critical element, mentoring students and helping with career preparation is also important in providing students with a valuable collegiate experience. I take these responsibilities seriously and embrace them fully in every course I teach.

I believe that successful teaching begins by creating a classroom environment that provides the best possible opportunity for effective learning. As a first step, I insist on treating students with the utmost respect, and I expect that they reciprocate that respect to me and their fellow classmates. This mutual respect is essential for creating a class environment where students feel comfortable and confident to participate and engage in discussions with me and fellow classmates. At the same time, it is important to me that students look forward to class and enjoy the learning process. As an integral component, I try to create a classroom environment that is relaxed, comfortable, and, at the same time, academically challenging. I place a high priority on the interests of my students, and I always try to relate to them and connect with them on a personal level. This approach makes students more receptive to my teaching, which, consequently, increases the effectiveness of my teaching.

In terms of style, I approach teaching as an interactive exchange with students. Engaging students in an interactive manner creates a stimulating intellectual environment that facilitates learning. To do so, I frequently ask questions and encourage students to contribute their questions, thoughts and insights while I lecture. I have found that this open forum style lecture promotes valuable discussion and fosters economic thought. Additionally, I complement the lecture material with classroom experiments whenever appropriate. I think this is especially important when teaching topics relating to game theory, industrial organization, and business strategy. Operationalizing the material covered in class via the use of experiments provides students with tangible exposure to economic concepts and mechanisms that can often appear to be quite abstract. I have found that students respond very positively to these experiments and, more importantly, they are an effective tool for increasing the students' understanding.

My ultimate goal when teaching a course is for students to learn the material, key concepts, and main methodology of the course. This will provide students with a sound economic foundation for future academic and/or professional success. Hence, it is imperative that my teaching style facilitate successful learning. One of the ways I do this is by providing students with ample study materials throughout the class, e.g. study guides, practice problems, and old exams. Since learning-by-doing is an exceptionally effective mechanism and I promote this type of learning by assigning regular problem sets. I encourage students to work on these problem sets in groups as a means of fostering economic thought, encouraging the exchange of ideas, and allowing students to learn from each other. I make sure to allocate sufficient class time to go over examples and problems in class, which provides students with important feedback regarding their current understanding of the material. I make myself available to students outside of class through ample availability of office hours. This provides an opportunity for students to receive one-on-one instruction on topics where they might lack the necessary understanding, or to further examine topics on which they wish to reach a deeper understanding.

Without question, teaching an effective course requires a well-constructed, well-developed, and organized curriculum. Thus, I pride myself in diligent and thorough course preparation. This always begins with having a strong foundation of the course content and command of the material being covered. This preparedness and command of the material becomes transparent to the students and gives them confidence in me as a teacher. The students' confidence helps me become a more effective teacher, which in turn, enhances the students' learning experience. I always aim to develop a multi-faceted curriculum that can benefit students of varying educational ambitions and career interests. Specifically, my goal is to provide a curriculum that conveys economic insights, improves analytic reasoning ability, and develops critical thinking skills.

Teaching is a dynamic process. As a result, successful teaching requires an unbridled enthusiasm, an unceasing commitment to the education and development of students, and an unwavering pursuit of continued learning. As I continue my career as a professor, I remain committed to embracing these challenges with great fervor.