

Teaching Statement

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I view learning as a journey marked by both joy and struggle, and my role as a teacher is to guide students through the difficult moments so they can experience the satisfaction of genuine understanding. Drawing on my experience teaching undergraduate courses in Stata coding, statistics for economics, and econometrics, I've observed that students often face two key challenges: maintaining focus during class and building confidence when approaching unfamiliar concepts. My teaching philosophy centers on dismantling these barriers by designing classes that sustain attention, foster curiosity, and cultivate confidence.

Sustaining Focus and Engagement

Classroom time lays the foundation for independent learning. If students fail to grasp key concepts during class, it becomes much harder for them to reconstruct the logic on their own. I therefore aim to make every minute of class both engaging and efficient through careful design and clear organization.

When I taught an online summer course in computer programming, maintaining students' attention was particularly challenging—especially since coding basics can feel repetitive. To keep them engaged, I incorporated real-time exercises using Zoom's shared whiteboard and a collaborative Google Sheet where each student could enter responses. The tasks were short and closely aligned with lecture examples, illustrating that even simple codes can contain subtle bugs. This setup allowed me to identify students who needed assistance and provide guidance immediately. Feedback later confirmed that these interactive exercises made the material clearer and helped students stay focused throughout the session.

In my statistics and econometrics classes, I rely heavily on the blackboard rather than slides and keep a brief outline in the corner as a "roadmap" for the lecture, helping students track our progress and reorient themselves if they fall behind. During review sessions, I start by outlining the key tools and concepts we have covered, which helps students see how these pieces fit together to address a variety of problems. Writing each step of a proof or derivation helps students follow the logical flow, reinforces note-taking, and naturally slows the pace so that everyone can process the material. I have found that a well-organized and deliberate presentation style not only keeps students attentive but also strengthens their grasp of analytical reasoning—a core skill in economics.

Building Confidence and Overcoming Fear

Focus alone is not enough; students also need confidence to engage with new material—especially when it involves mathematics.

To build that confidence, I connect mathematical formulas to everyday intuition. Whenever we encounter a new expression, I restate it in plain English and use simple illustrations to make its logic transparent. I emphasize that mathematics formalizes intuition rather than replacing it. Over time, students begin to see formulas not as intimidating symbols but as a way to reason systematically about familiar ideas. Midway through the semester, when I ask, “Would you like to see the math behind this result?” I often see enthusiastic nods.

Confidence also grows through individualized support and feedback. I use office hours and problem-set feedback to identify each student’s specific challenges and help them master a few key concepts, equations, or theorems that unlock broader understanding. Once students experience how grasping these foundational ideas transforms their comprehension, they gain the momentum and self-assurance to explore the surrounding material independently.

Connecting Teaching to Economics and Inspiring Students

An essential part of effective teaching is passion. When a teacher is genuinely enthusiastic about the material, that energy becomes contagious and transforms the classroom into an inspiring space. I truly enjoy economics and see it as a powerful way of thinking—a framework for analyzing and understanding the world around us. In every class, I strive to convey this enthusiasm, maintaining a positive and engaging atmosphere that encourages curiosity. I move fluidly between real-world examples and formal economic models to help students see how intuitive stories can be translated into analytical frameworks. Rather than treating models as abstract obstacles, I show that they are concise representations of the mechanisms they already observe in life—and that this translation between intuition and theory is what makes economics powerful. My goal is for students to leave my class with stronger analytical skills, a clearer grasp of economic reasoning, and lasting curiosity about the forces shaping the world.

Reflection

Through these experiences, I have come to see teaching not just as the transmission of knowledge, but as the process of helping students build structure, confidence, and curiosity. A good teacher creates focus and organization in the classroom, but also inspires students to think independently and believe in their own ability to learn and explore.

Although I am still early in my teaching career, I have been encouraged by how students respond to this approach. Across the three undergraduate courses I have taught—each with two sections—every course included one section rated 5.0 out of 5, while the other sections ranged from 3.7 to 4.9. I have also received thoughtful written feedback such as “She will be a great professor” and “I feel lucky to have had her as a tutor.” These reflections remind me that good teaching lies not in how much I can say, but in how much my students grow—when they become comfortable with ideas that once seemed daunting and discover the genuine joy of understanding.

Selected Student Feedback

Representative comments from my Spring 2025 *Econometrics Tutorial* courses at the University of Notre Dame illustrate my teaching style and impact:

- *“Ge is a very strong lecturer—well prepared and providing clear, structured examples for what we need to know.”*
- *“Her tutorial lectures were especially valuable; she explained complex ideas in a clear, accessible way that made a huge impact.”*
- *“She went above and beyond during office hours, walking through difficult concepts with patience and clarity.”*
- *“She clearly cared about our class and encouraged us to think critically and arrive at solutions ourselves.”*
- *“Her teaching is clear, organized, and easy to follow—especially important when dealing with challenging material.”*
- *“She is energetic and passionate, and you can tell she really wants to help us learn.”*
- *“She made the things we learned digestible, which is impressive because Econometrics is known to be difficult.”*
- *“This instructor has been the best I’ve had for economics at Notre Dame—she genuinely cares about her students and goes above and beyond to make sure we succeed.”*