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Pedagogical idea

The seed of my passion for teaching was planted by my favorite teacher back in high school, Mrs. Guo. She made me understand that the best teacher is not necessarily the one with the most knowledge, but the one who truly cares about the students, who can inspire them and motivate them to learn and to explore. In her class, she could attract everyone's attention using relevant examples and interesting questions. Most importantly, she gave us great encouragement. I still remember when she told me, "Huanren, I can see great potential in you. I hope you can try your best and fulfill that potential." After hearing those words, I felt something inside me clicked; I started to work harder and try my best on everything that is worth my effort. That is also the time when I made my decision to be a teacher that makes positive impacts on the lives of my students.

Mrs. Guo has greatly influenced the development of my teaching philosophy and styles. As a teacher, I believe my first and foremost role is to inspire my students. As Plutarch once said, the mind is not a vessel to be filled, but a fire to be kindled. In class, I use the Socratic method, emphasizing the process of inquiry and exploration rather than the answers and results; instead of simply passing on information, I try to stimulate the curiosity of the students and motivate them to think, helping them to actively construct knowledge. This learning skill, which is vital for the success in all occupations, can remain with the students long after they leave the classroom.

As an instructor of economics, I understand that economics is not sermons to be memorized or stylized facts to be recited, but principles to be used. In order to motivate my students to learn these principles, I use various approaches to demonstrate the depth and breadth of economics. Whenever possible, I ask questions to help students see the relevance and importance of corresponding economic concepts. When teaching price elasticity, I ask "If you want to increase the revenue of your convenience store, do you want to increase or decrease the price of candies?" When we discuss market structure, I ask "Why do movie theaters offer student discounts?" These questions invite interesting discussions among students. After reflecting on the questions and expressing their reasoning, they start to appreciate the principles behind these economic phenomena.

To induce student interest, I also include videos when explaining important economic concepts. I use the trailer of *In Time* to help the students understand the prevalence of scarcity and how we face trade-offs all the time; I include a video clip from *It's a Wonderful Life* to introduce our discussion on bank runs; We watch the short video *The Monkey Economy* before talking about money and exchange economy. As some students have told me, these videos not only keep them intrigued in class but deepen their understanding of economic concepts as well.

As an experimental economist, I strive to exploit my expertise in class by introducing economic experiments to facilitate teaching. In a conventional economics class, the teacher would simply write down the mathematical expression of the economic problem, work out the solution, and tell students "This is what rational people will do." Most students fail to understand what is going on in the mathematical deduction. In comparison, students in the experiments have to make decisions as participants in real economic situations. Experiencing the functioning of economic principles helps them to truly understand economics. For example, a student came to me after the experiment on public goods provision and told me that he started to withdraw his contribution to the public good after he felt taken advantage by other group members – only then did he realize the seriousness of the free-riding problem.

Above all the teaching pedagogies, I believe the key to successful learning lies in the teacher's sincere passion for teaching and genuine caring for students. Through years' of teaching experience, I realize teaching provides a great opportunity to make a positive impact on students' lives. Year after year, teaching continues to excite me. When my previous students come back and tell me how my class gives them a new perspective to look at the world, how my encouragement inspires them to achieve their full potential, and how my enthusiasm for economics motivates them to go to graduate school, I feel that my devotion to teaching is worthwhile and rewarding.

Pedagogical competences

2019	SDU Lecturer Training Program
2014	Teaching Academy Graduate Teaching Award, Purdue University
2013	Krannert Distinguished Graduate Student Instructor, Purdue University

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2011	Krannert Distinguished Graduate Student Instructor, Purdue University
2010	Outstanding Graduate Instructor, Purdue University
2010	Graduate Teacher's Certificate, Purdue University
2009	Teaching Training Program, Purdue University