

Teaching Statement

Chloe N. East
University of California, Davis

The knowledge and skills learned in an economics classroom help us to understand the world outside of the classroom, and this inspires both my research and teaching. As an educator, I highlight this link by discussing real-world applications of economic theory, which creates an engaged classroom and conveys my enthusiastic for economics. I pair this enthusiasm with a well-organized class, both over the entire course and at each class meeting, in order to effectively communicate the material and set students' expectations of themselves and my course high. At the University of California, Davis I had the opportunity to be a teaching assistant for three quarters and teach my own upper division course in Public Finance. As an instructor of Public Finance I was responsible for designing my course, managing a teaching assistant, preparing lectures and developing all course work. These experiences were very informative in shaping my goals and style as an educator.

One of the most effective ways of passing on my passion for economics and helping students engage with the material is to link every topic to real world examples and recent empirical economics research. For example, in homework for my Public Finance class I had my students read an editorial on a proposed reform to the payroll tax and evaluate the merits and weaknesses of the editorial's argument in light of the theory learned in class. Additionally, I included discussions of relevant empirical research papers in class and discussed how my own research relates to the topics in the course. For example, I had my students think about the potential consequences of proposals in California to tax soda, then I discussed recent empirical findings that showed consumers respond as the students had predicted. This helps students engage with the material as well as deepens their understanding of the topics of the course and demonstrates to them how the tools learned in class make them more informed and critical thinkers outside of the classroom:

"Her concrete examples are very helpful and really drive home the material."

"I originally wanted to take this course just to fulfill major requirements but I ended up genuinely enjoying the material. Chloe is a great instructor and would be great to have her again."

Below is a summary of my evaluations as an instructor and the departmental average scores for instructors:

Table 1: Student Evaluation of Teaching as Instructor

	Summer 2014	Dept. Average 2012-2013
	% of students who responded "excellent" or "good"	
Clarity and organization of instructor's presentation	93%	
Responsiveness to difficulties students have in understanding	93%	
Overall educational value of this course	96%	
Overall this instructor did a good job in this course	96%	84%

Regardless of how interesting the material is, unless it is communicated clearly and in an organized manner, students will not come away with a deep understanding of the topics. Therefore I strive to create organized lessons and with each topic I begin with an overview and emphasize the topic's importance by linking it to real-world examples as well as explaining how it fits into the broader course material. Then I explain the theory and work through empirical examples on the black board, which ensures the material is conveyed clearly and at the appropriate pace for the students. I found that students responded positively to this format and it helped them to understand the material:

“Great job teaching! Really answered questions in a simple manner that was helpful and understandable.”

“The TA goes over the material from lecture in a clear, concise way that is easy to understand. She is very patient with the students and shows great interest in the topic when explaining concepts.”

Additionally, as an instructor I create a clearly defined structure and expectations for the course overall from the beginning. I write a detailed syllabus and schedule that I work hard to stick to and that defines all assignments and due dates. Additionally I maintain prompt and responsive communication with students throughout the course. Setting high expectations for myself allows me to also set high expectations of the students that are additionally clear and fair:

“Very straightforward and clear. Makes great use of class time and clears up any material that the students are confused about. Very organized.”

“Her friendly attitude, clear explanations and helpfulness during section and outside of class lead to her being a great TA. She was always very easy to communicate and work with. By far one of the best TAs I've ever had. She definitely helped me understand the material better and I've learned a lot.”

Below is a summary of my evaluations as a teaching assistant and the departmental average scores for teaching assistants:

Table 2: Student Evaluation of Teaching as Teaching Assistant

Overall this TA did a good job in this course (out of 5)				
	Fall 2011	Winter 2012	Spring 2012	Dept. Average 2009-2012
Score	4.3	4.9	4.6	4.3

My experiences as a teaching assistant and instructor have been an important part of my academic career. Through them I have learned about my own strengths and weaknesses as an instructor as well as experienced the delight of imparting my passion for the material on my students. I am proud of the positive response of my students to my teaching style and I am excited for the chance to teach more classes in a variety of topics in applied microeconomics. My teaching interests include introductory and intermediate microeconomics, empirical techniques for applied micro-economists, public economics, labor economics, health economics, public policy, the income distribution and inequality and economics of education.