

## Teaching Statement

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During my graduate studies at the University of Pittsburgh, I had the opportunity to teach Introduction to Microeconomics both as an independent instructor and as a teaching assistant over several semesters. The teaching assistant role involved leading four weekly recitation sessions each semester. I also have experience teaching students in various settings, including in-person and virtual environments. Specifically for remote teaching, I have conducted both synchronous and asynchronous online lectures.

As an instructor, my primary goals are: (1) to create an inclusive learning environment where students feel comfortable asking questions, and (2) to ensure students fully understand the concepts and course materials, especially in their own words. I believe the key to achieving these goals begins with understanding my students better. In order to do this, I started my Introduction to Microeconomics course in Summer 2022 by distributing a poll to learn the students' prior math knowledge and their experiences with economic courses. The results from the poll allowed me to tailor my lectures to better fit a diverse student body, which ranged from freshmen to seniors across various majors. The poll also revealed that many students were balancing other courses and summer jobs at the same time, so I scheduled additional evening office hours to better accommodate the students.

When I served as a teaching assistant, it was important to me to be very patient and allow students ample time to achieve their potential. While students worked on problem sets in groups, I constantly walked around the classroom so that I was easily accessible to students. I felt that this approach made students feel more comfortable when asking questions or seeking help. Moreover, to make the learning environment inclusive even beyond the classroom, I regularly communicated with my students via email. I believe this was especially beneficial for international students who often prefer written explanations to verbal discussions, especially during office hours. As an international student myself, I deeply understood and related to the challenges faced by students who were not native speakers of English.

During my teaching, I have also observed many students easily lose sight of the broader context when diving into specifics. For example, students would routinely try to find the triangle without thinking about the meaning of deadweight loss or why they are calculating the area. To avoid this, I started every lecture with the big picture - why are we learning these topics and how will they be connected to the past and future class materials. For instance, I constantly reminded students to remember the underlying meaning of opportunity costs when they had to calculate comparative advantages. This method was often combined with real-world examples, which allowed students to relate and develop a deeper interest in economics. Consequently, I often received emails from students expressing their interest in advanced economic classes and working opportunities as undergraduate teaching assistants for upcoming semesters.

Most importantly, I believe the most effective way for students to internalize concepts is to articulate them in everyday language. I always tried my best to explain concepts in plain English, prioritizing their essence over the jargon in textbooks, which sometimes can be ambiguous. For example, I asked my students to imagine shopping for a pair of jeans without a price tag when explaining willingness to pay. During lectures and office hours, I observed that students grasped complicated definitions and concepts more readily once

they were relatable to their daily lives. The effectiveness of all these strategies is showcased in the students' comments provided below.

In addition to teaching microeconomics at both the introductory and intermediate levels, I have a keen interest in teaching and designing courses in political economy, economic history, and public economics. Given my extensive research experiences using advanced econometrics, text analysis, and web scraping, I am also well-equipped to teach courses in econometrics, causal inference, and data analysis.

### **Average Teaching Effectiveness Scores**

- Introduction to Microeconomics (Instructor, Asynchronous), Summer 2022: 4.4/5
- Introduction to Microeconomics (TA, In-person), Spring 2022: 4.5/5
- Introduction to Microeconomics (TA, Synchronous), Fall 2021: 4.4/5
- Introduction to Microeconomics (TA, Synchronous), Fall 2020: 4.5/5

### **Selected Comments from Students**

*“He gives plenty of room for questions in class, is always available when you need help and has plenty of resources and office hours, and is supportive and helpful when I misunderstand the material. He also goes through the assignments with us so it is always clear what topics we need to work more on.”*

*“I liked how he was always willing to answer questions and walking around as we were doing the worksheets made him much more approachable for questions. He is also just a good teacher in general and makes the topics very easy to understand.”*

*“Very nice and I always felt okay and comfortable asking questions <3”*

*“I really appreciate how he explained the answer to each question in depth and would make sure we understood the question before moving on.”*

*“I never left a class still confused on a topic. Mr. Ha did an exceptional job teaching this class.”*

*“EXTREMELY practical and straight forward. I knew exactly what to do and what to expect every recitation. I also liked how he went over the problem after we did our best to complete it.”*

*“The class really helped reinforce the material when I didn't understand something in the lecture. Mr. Ha really went above and beyond to make sure we understood the material.”*