

Teaching Statement

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Teaching had become a passion for me before my academic career started as a graduate student in economics. When I was an undergraduate student, I believed that if I can teach in an effective way that everyone can understand, then I am knowledgeable enough to be successful in a course. At a really early stage of academic career, I started tutoring my peers and I felt honored to see them succeed. The positive feedback that I got from my peers led me to a path where I taught a variety of courses as a teaching assistant and an adjunct professor.

I believe that effective teaching should ignite the imagination of students while making them curious about the subject. Many of the students come to classroom with the pressure of grades, which often prevents them from thinking critically about the subject. My main objective as an instructor is to make students more productive and less grade-oriented by appreciating all of their efforts. I try to spark the interest of students by providing lots of real-world examples and asking them questions that they can relate to. This not only makes the class more engaging, but also helps students understand the intuition behind concepts. Throughout the years, I observed that less memorization and more intuition make the class a better experience for students. More importantly, this approach allows students to apply these concepts later in their careers rather than forgetting what is being memorized.

Students are often heterogeneous with respect to learning skills. I always try to identify and reach out to students who fall behind or do not feel comfortable about the class. I have seen that, in most cases, even a little help improves the performance significantly. Thus, I always hold extra office hours to those who need help. This approach allows students to gain more confidence and devote more time on learning the material. I also use problem sets and quizzes as a tool to evaluate the performance of a student before it is too late to intervene. I found my approach to be effective as I was one of the two recipients of the *Teaching Assistant of the Year Award*, an award nominated by undergraduate students, in 2017 at Lehigh University, PA. I also received an honorable mention for the same award in 2016.

Over the past few years, I have taught eight semesters of *Principles of Economics*, including *Principles of Microeconomics* and *Principles of Macroeconomics*, as a teaching assistant at Bilkent University, Turkey; University of New Hampshire; and Lehigh University. I also taught *Money, Banking, and Financial Markets* for one semester at Lehigh University. In these classes, my responsibilities included, but not limited to, reviewing the assigned chapters (or problem sets) and holding office hours every week. I have also contributed to the grading of homework assignments, quizzes, and exams. I taught wide variety of courses to a diverse group of students using different delivery methods.

I was selected twice by the Economics Department to teach *Economics* as an independent instructor for the Lehigh University Students Scholars Institute. This

program runs three weeks over the summer for the incoming first year students who are identified as first generation and/or low income. I really enjoyed teaching this course because the students had the willingness to be exposed to academic and college life before the semester starts. Moreover, I was selected by the Economics Department to teach an online *Principles of Economics* class as an adjunct professor. This was rather a different but fascinating experience since I learned new technologies regarding distance education and how to effectively communicate online. Finally, I am teaching *Applied Microeconomic Analysis* in the Fall 2017 semester and scheduled to teach *Statistical Methods* in the Spring 2018 semester. I am looking forward to teaching these semester-long classes as an adjunct professor. Please find the evaluation summary and selected comments below.

Table 1: Teaching Assistant Evaluation Summary

Questions are on a 5 point scale: (1) strongly disagree - (5) agree strongly	Principles of Economics (Eco 001)				Money & Banking (Eco 29)
	Fall 2014	Spring 2015	Fall 2015	Spring 2017	Spring 2016
Discussions clarified the lecture material	4.21 [4.06]	4.45 [4.19]	4.82 [4.23]	4.94 [4.47]	4.53 [4.35]
The recitation instructor was an effective discussion leader	4.29 [3.77]	4.40 [3.98]	4.90 [3.99]	4.92 [4.47]	4.51 [4.16]
The recitation instructor was well prepared	4.75 [4.45]	4.79 [4.46]	4.94 [4.62]	4.95 [4.75]	4.83 [4.62]
The recitation instructor was able to explain the material	4.45 [3.99]	4.65 [4.23]	4.87 [4.28]	4.91 [4.57]	4.63 [4.39]
The recitation added to the overall value of the course	4.15 [3.81]	4.53 [4.07]	4.82 [4.11]	4.93 [4.51]	4.39 [4.26]

Notes: This evaluation summary is for the courses taught at Lehigh University. The questions listed are all the questions asked for the TA evaluation. Evaluation scores are averaged across 4 sections. Mean department scores are given in brackets.

Table 2: Instructor Evaluation Summary

Questions are on a 5 point scale: (1) strongly disagree - (5) agree strongly	Principles of Economics (Online) Summer 2017
Overall, the instructor's teaching was effective	4.55 [4.32]
Overall, the quality of the course was good	4.55 [4.27]
I learned a great deal in this course	4.55 [4.31]
I would recommend this course to other students	4.69 [4.30]

Notes: This evaluation summary is for the courses taught at Lehigh University. The questions are selected out of 21 questions and reflect the quality of the course. Evaluation scores are averaged across 2 sections. Mean department scores are given in brackets.

Selected Student Comments

“Erkmen was a fantastic TA. He went out of his way to give us extra review materials that he prepared and arranged himself to help us study for exams. I went to his office hours frequently since he was very thorough at explaining concepts and graphs, and clarifying my confusion. Not only was he extremely knowledgeable about the subject but he was a great teacher as well.” (Eco 001, Fall 2014)

“Erkmen was amazing! Always so enthusiastic to teach and very knowledgeable. Very helpful and approachable.” (Eco 001, Fall 2014)

“Erkmen is by far the best Eco 001 TA. He is always well prepared for class and always explains the material in a way that I can clearly understand.” (Eco 001, Spring 2015)

“Erkmen was a very knowledgeable TA that, I could tell, genuinely cared about our success in the course. I definitely learned a lot by attending the recitation.” (Eco 001, Spring 2015)

“I loved Erkmen. He was a great teacher and a great guy who was always prepared. His teaching style is very effective and in my opinion his recitations really helped me in this course. Also has a sense of humor at the appropriate times.” (Eco 001, Spring 2015)

“Erkmen was by far the best TA I have had at Lehigh. He seems like he genuinely wants us to exceed and clearly puts in a lot of preparation into his class. This is the only recitation section I have ever found helpful at Lehigh. I could not have scored as highly without his help.” (Eco 001, Spring 2015)

“He is very helpful to his students. He gives out additional study packets and notes that the other TA’s do not provide to their students. He is clearly passionate about his position, and cares about the students in his class.” (Eco 001, Spring 2015)

“I like the amount of clear examples done in class. Thank you for making this semester enjoyable and feasible!” (Eco 001, Fall 2015)

“Recitation taught me everything I learned from the class. Thanks Erkmen.” (Eco 29, Spring 2016)

“Very patient, good at encouraging participation.” (Eco 29, Spring 2016)