Teaching Philosophy

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The core of my teaching philosophy is the belief that teaching should enable students to think critically and to explore the interconnections between various concepts. They should be able to integrate the new material imparted by the teacher with their preexisting knowledge base, and thereby acquire a more comprehensive understanding of the subject. Students should be able to appreciate that the very formal and abstract definitions and concepts one encounters in economics can be provided very intuitive motivation, and that these concepts actually enable us to acquire a better understanding of human behavior.

I have attempted to conduct my teaching in a way that can do justice to this overall philosophy. I have tried to develop a set of guiding principles that can give a sufficiently precise direction to my teaching. I realize that these principles cannot be very rigid because teaching has to be a dynamic and innovative process that is responsive to the differences in abilities, experience, and interests of different students. I have tried to structure my classroom interaction with students according to the following guidelines.

- Students should appreciate that the main principles of economics have very intuitive grounding based on everyday human behavior. This would enable them to understand the formal structure of the subject relatively easily.

- Students should recognize that economic theories developed on the basis of principles and definitions provide a better understanding of a broad range of social phenomenon that need to be restricted to conventional economic issues. This would make the subject seem more worthwhile for them to study, even if they dont go on to become economists in their later lives.

- Students should feel that their comments and questions are being accorded proper respect by the teacher. This would facilitate healthy classroom interaction creating a

better environment for learning. The classroom environment should be such that the possibility of making a mistake does not deter a student from speaking out.

Beyond these guidelines, I have also sought to emphasize in teaching highly formal courses like Probability and Statistics, or Microeconomic Theory that the concepts that one are learning are important for their own sake. While being invaluable in analyzing economic issues, understanding those concepts can be very helpful in developing their power of abstract thinking. Whatever field of work they may venture into in the future, the power of abstract thinking is critical for success.

Apart from classrooms, I have sought to maintain a sufficient level of interaction with students in office hours. I believe that office hours are critical in creating a healthy learning environment. From my own experience as a student, I realize that some students would be hesitant to ask questions and seek clarifications in a crowded classroom. Without office hours, the learning of such students would be severely impaired. Office hours are also an appropriate forum for some interested students to go deeply into some aspects of the subject matter.

Given such importance of office hours, I have always tried to be available to students at all reasonable time. I believe that students should not feel intimidated in approaching their teacher over any question, howsoever trivial it may seem. Hence, I make it a point to answer students emails conscientiously and not to refuse reasonable requests for appointments.

I believe that such an approach to teaching as I have outlined here, I can create an atmosphere where students would be willing and enthusiastic to learn economics.