

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

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My teaching philosophy has evolved through my own experience both as a student and a teacher. It is a reflection of my own lessons learned as a teacher, student critique of my style and approaches, and my own experience and wishes as a student. Before embarking onto pursuing doctoral education, I taught *Economics* and *International trade* to undergraduate students of the Texas A&M-managed Agribusiness Department at the Armenian State Agrarian University (formerly Agribusiness Teaching Center). During my doctoral program, I taught undergraduate *Applied econometrics* and *Economic research methods* and graduate *Econometric applications/programming*. Currently, as a Post-doctoral Fellow at the University of South Carolina (Columbia), I teach *Economic evaluation* course to the graduate students in the School of Public Health.

It is my strong conviction that every teacher has a dual **role to play** in academia and lives of the students. First, I strive to pass the knowledge to the next generation in a manner that ignites curiosity about the subject, challenges creative thinking, and promotes the art of questioning and academic debate. Secondly, I strive to become a trusted advisor and mentor for both professional and personal guidance.

The **key to success** in teaching is to recognize and capitalize on how people learn and what makes learning process fun. While some have the natural grasp for economic concepts, others learn better by illustrations and practical real-life applications and evidence. I have used diagrams to illustrate implications of tariff-rate quotas and asked to test and estimate an economic model and make inferences. I organized field trips and invited industry leaders to discuss real-life economic issues and problems. I organized research teams tasked with real-world market and consumer research projects for the USDA's economic development project in Armenia, where the students applied knowledge into practice.

At my debut as a teacher I simply recalled what helped me to learn better and what I liked in the teaching styles of my own professors. In my Applied econometrics course, I followed Dr. Jeff Dorfman and offered a *recipe* or ordered steps each time we discussed an estimation concept and/or procedure. In my International trade and Microeconomics courses, I followed Dr. Bob Shulstad and offered weekly quizzes to evaluate student progress and identify points that demand additional enforcement. In the Economic research methods class, I used research articles and case studies to illustrate the use of analytical approaches and methods in applied research and put knowledge and skills learned at the class into practice.

I constantly search for new and **innovative teaching approaches**. For example, in the UGA's study abroad in International Business and Relations course, I linked academic learning with cultural immersion and experiential activities that allowed students to engage with leaders of the business, governmental, and international donor communities to discuss, debate, and learn about geopolitics, economic development, and business practices in developing and emerging economies. Currently, I incorporate elements of the Flipped Classroom Model to increase student engagement and learning opportunity.

Teaching is a dynamic and constantly evolving process; quoting John Cotton Dana, "*He who dares to teach must never cease to learn.*" When I started to teach I knew that it is going to take time, efforts, and hard work to succeed. I knew that it takes a trial and error to discover the best approaches to teaching and subsequently developing my own. I was never shy to ask for advice and guidance from my colleagues and students and incorporated formal and informal student and peer evaluations in reviewing and improving my teaching.

The role of the teacher in the students' life does not stop at the classroom. Advice and mentorship are equally important aspects of the academic experience as is learning. I enjoyed being there when students needed guidance on applying to the graduate school, seeking an assistantship, looking for an internship, or a career advice. It is rewarding every time I hear of their accomplishments and it keeps reminding me of the exciting and important role one plays in the lives of the students.

As I embark onto the next chapter of my professional career, I continue to build upon my accomplishments and discoveries as a student, researcher, and teacher. As an assistant professor, capitalizing on my doctoral education in agricultural economics, practical experience in the family farm, and professional experience in agricultural development, agribusiness marketing, and public health, I would enjoy teaching variety of introductory and advanced courses to the agribusiness students as well as those from other disciplines.

I have immensely enjoyed the academic life and career and look forward to continue pursuing it and adding my contribution to achieving an excellence in teaching, research, and public service.