

Teaching Philosophy

A teacher is one who makes himself progressively unnecessary.

- Thomas Carruthers.

In contrast to traditional “teacher-centered” teaching mode, I pursue to create a “student-centered” learning environment, in which students play a leading role throughout the whole teaching and learning process.

To create a “student-centered” environment, I believe that one top priority is to prepare students with independent learning abilities. For example, instead of providing students with well-made review guidelines, I would divide the contents among students and ask them to present their own summaries in an exam review class. Not only does it strengthen students’ self-learning and information-organizing abilities, but students also benefit from the knowledge sharing process. What’s more, since many college students lack public speaking skills, this kind of presentation creates valuable opportunities for them to develop public speaking skills. At the same time, it helps me assess their learning progress.

Self-disciplined learning habit is another critical element in determining the success of “student-centered” teaching approach. Time-management is a common challenge for many college students. Although I cannot directly teach students how to manage their time, a reasonable workload can guide them on how many hours they should spend on the course. More specifically, in my class, basic “preview” and “review” are required and will be randomly checked by “pop-up” quiz questions. Also, I would cut a big project into several pieces and ask for a semi-report or progress presentation at some midpoint to ensure that students could have enough time to catch-up and modify their work based on my feedbacks. All of these efforts are designed to arm students with self-disciplined learning abilities and habits.

Even within the same course, students are diversified in their learning motivations and expectations. Therefore, it is necessary to develop “student-customized” multilevel achievement goals, which allow students to select the one closest to their expectations. Usually, the base level goal is to build up students’ interest in Economics. While, a higher level could be to encourage students to do their own economic research. An effective tool that could achieve both goals is to share my course-related research projects with students. On one hand, I find that the passion I have in my own research can be contagious to students in developing their curiosity towards the world of Economics. On the other hand, the way that I do research could serve as a guiding example for students on how to do their own economic analyses in the future.

Chinese have an old saying: “give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach him how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.” I have devoted myself to continuously improving my teaching quality, creating a “student-centered” learning environment, and more importantly equipping students with these essential abilities and skills that could potentially benefit them in the long run.