



## SHALISE SARAH AYROMLOO

### Teaching Statement

I strongly believe that providing differentiated teaching (discussed in detail later) while always maintaining high expectations and outcomes from all students is the cornerstone of effective teaching.

Teaching has always been an integrated part of my studies both in undergraduate and graduate school. As an undergraduate, despite triple majoring in Economics, Mathematics, and Political Science, I actively sought teaching assistantships and tutoring opportunities. As a graduate student, I was an instructor for introductory microeconomics and macroeconomics courses at City Colleges of Chicago, Richard J. Daley College. I was also a teaching assistant for a wide range of undergraduate and graduate level courses.

My approach to providing differentiated teaching has 2 major components.

1. Identifying and teaching through student strengths.
2. Identifying prior knowledge and building new knowledge onto existing knowledge.

#### **Identifying and teaching through student strengths.**

I understand that students have different life experiences, cognitive abilities, and learning styles. In order to cater to students' strengths, I have structured my courses so that students have multiple means of engagement with content. Students are introduced to new concepts through assigned readings and are encouraged to actively engage with the content by answering questions from the reading before coming to class. I then reinforce the concepts through an oral lecture and a visual demonstration in class. To allow students to process and learn at their own pace and adapt the content to their own interests, students are assigned to weekly discussion groups to freely ask questions from their peers and provide feedback to them in an online platform such as Blackboard (used at UIC) or Brightspace (used at Daley College). As appropriate, peer learning is further promoted through group activities in class that requires students to critically evaluate a scenario, apply what they have learned, and provide suggested solutions.

I find it necessary to regularly assess students' understanding of materials to increase the relevance and impact of my instructions. The regular assessments allow me to actively identify students' strengths and areas for improvement to increase the support I provide them if needed. The assessment methods I use in my classes consist of 1-3 question reading quizzes on assigned

readings prior to the beginning of every class, short quizzes at the end of every class to test the retention of materials, 8 problem sets distributed throughout the course to facilitate the application of learned concepts to real world scenarios, discussion participations, and required office hours attendance at least once in a semester. I designed the course structure so that students continuously engage with the materials at an even pace instead of cyclical periods of heightened activity followed by periods of lower activity levels.

### **Identifying prior knowledge and building new knowledge onto existing knowledge.**

How students process and interpret new information, I believe is dependent on their existing skills and knowledge. Even in introductory courses, some students have some familiarity from high school, while for others the course is the first and only economics course that they will take in college. Yet, I believe in helping students transfer knowledge and skills from one context to economics. I often perform an inventory of students' prior courses, experiences, and interests on the first day of class by either having them briefly introduce themselves in smaller classes or write a few things about themselves on a piece of paper that I can collect and read. This practice allows me to draw examples and develop questions from content students are familiar with to connect the dots back to economic concepts. Also, for every example I use in class, I ask students to construct their own examples and draw from their own experiences. I further facilitate integrating of new knowledge with what students already know by always reviewing prior lessons at the beginning of every class.

Helping students transfer their existing skills into economics and build off their prior knowledge boosts students' self-esteem, encourages ownership of their learning by shifting the focus from what they don't know to what they do and recognizing their own strengths and abilities. I also hold open-door policy with all of my students to build a personalized and trusting relationship with each of them. Office hours, I believe are one of the best opportunities outside of classrooms for me to provide one-on-one explanations of economics events based on an individual student's interest and experiences.

### **Conclusion**

Having studied in multiple countries, with different approaches to teaching and learning, has shaped my views on effective teaching methods. My teaching philosophy is centered around students. I prepare lesson content that can be adapted to student's learning styles and interest. I use different modes of instructions and assessment to support all students and allow them to demonstrate their learning through a range of assignments (reading quizzes, in-class quizzes, problem sets, discussions). I foster a learning environment that is safe and inclusive to show students their strengths and areas for improvements.