

# Statement of Teaching Philosophy

Kyle Ross

The United States is often referred to as the land of opportunity. This idea is the essence of my teaching philosophy with one small addition. When teaching I like to make my class one of ample opportunity. Inherent in this statement is an omission of the nature of a student's outcome in a class. I can not control a student's effort outside of class, and can not guarantee that a student will earn the grade he/she desires. I can, however, control the environment in class and on exercises. My goal is to give students as many chances to learn and retain material as I can.

The first step in this is to give students the chance to go over a concept a minimum of three times in the class. Three times is often stated as the minimum number of times a person must go over something in order to retain it. To accomplish this I first go over a concept while lecturing on a chapter. Second, upon completion of a chapter I go through a structured review of the concepts in the chapter. This includes calling on students by name to answer the questions in the review. Third, the major concepts from a chapter are covered on a homework. There is no chapter that is not covered by a homework. By covering ideas a minimum of three times in the structure of a class, I feel I have given students a solid nudge in achieving their desired outcome.

In addition to covering material with students in class, I have always been willing to meet with students whenever they have a question. Whether it is during office hours or in the evening, I strive to make myself as available as possible for students. Another small device I use is to give students a short break from lecturing halfway through class. I have read many times that the human brain can only focus on something for 25 – 30 minutes at a time. After that retention of new material is very low, making the back half of a 50 minute lecture quite unproductive. To combat this I show a 30 second to one minute video of a goal from a soccer match halfway through class to provide a mental break from economics. This gives students' minds a brief respite, and the opportunity to be more focused for the rest of class. I believe this helps to take back the second half of class from boredom, and make it into a viable opportunity to learn.

Another goal I have in teaching is to always demonstrate to students how the concepts and ideas we learn in economics apply to their lives. The recent financial crisis has provided the perfect window to how economics and finance affect every person's life. I prepared a chapter over the crisis for both of the classes I am teaching this semester and have gotten great reviews on it from my students. It was cited as their favorite part of the semester so far on the mid-semester evaluations I give my classes. This kind of timely application and flexibility in course material is something that I hope to be able to continue in my teaching.

I enjoy seeing how much my students can learn throughout a semester. As a result, I try to make learning in my classroom as accessible as possible. I do this is by giving students as many chances to learn as I can and by showing how what we learn applies to their lives. Over the past couple years, I have received a substantial amount of positive feedback on the steps I have taken to achieve this. From the reviews to the videos of soccer goals, my students have appreciated my efforts in giving them ample opportunity to learn.