

## Teaching Philosophy – Brandon Brice

Experiences that I had as a student directly influence my teaching. I recall lectures that were nothing more than that, just lectures. An instructor talking at me, telling me what definitions I needed to know on exams was the norm. I was often bored, and seldom pushed to think critically and apply my knowledge towards challenging activities and questions. Since I have had the honor of instructing my own classes; I have vowed to do everything in my capacity to (1) **Make learning in my classroom engaging**, (2) **Make myself as available as possible for students**, and (3) **Foster critical thinking in an environment where learning is fun!**

In order to achieve these goals, **I am always pushing myself to improve**. I often ask my students for feedback, and make serious efforts to address their suggestions and concerns. In response to student feedback I have made many alternations including offering more practice questions, holding optional review sessions before classes, providing supplemental readings, and adjusting the pace of my instruction. I feel it is always possible to evolve, and make my classroom experience better.

(1) I believe it is important to discover new and better ways to present important information in an interactive and engaging way. Many students are easily distracted, and quickly become uninterested with lectures. I feel it is my obligation to overcome this challenge and get every student involved in the learning process. I utilize media, music, classroom experiments, activities, discussions, and games to reinforce material and get students actively participating. I am always discovering new ways to present class concepts in an engaging way. Rather than telling students what is typically included in indices of economic institutions, I'll have students construct their own indices and defend why they feel their selections belong in the index. Rather than tell students the difference between direct and indirect costs, I have them plan a party to discover indirect costs themselves such as the opportunity cost of their time spent planning. Learning never has to be boring!

(2) Being available for my current, and former, students is very important. Often former instructors of mine were unavailable, or uninterested in assisting me. I never want one of my students to feel that way. I hold office hours every day, and make it very clear that I am willing to meet outside of those hours. I have frequently met with students late at night, or during the weekends. I put my phone number on my syllabus, and encourage students to message me if their situation is urgent. I have counseled and worked with students while they are going through stressful situations ranging from medical emergencies to decisions regarding future course selections. I have written letters of recommendation and made calls on behalf of my best students who are applying to graduate school or internships, successfully assisting many in achieving their goals. I sincerely make every attempt to be available and assist my students with their courses, their futures, and even life in general.

(3) While providing an economic education is important, my most important job is to foster critical thinking. Critical-thinking is an ability that needs to be developed, and I find that many of my students haven't had the proper instruction to adequately develop these skills. I push my students to answer challenging questions and to participate in games and activities that require them to apply the skills that they've learned. I ask them to find examples of economic concepts in the news and pop culture, and explain how these concepts relate to their findings. By the end of each of my courses, I document real growth in their ability to answer challenging questions, write about economic concepts, strategically play in economic experiments, and relate class concepts to real-world examples. This expansion of their ability to think critically is a skill that will allow them to not just be better economists; but also to be better citizens, employees, entrepreneurs, and decision-makers. I do my best to accomplish this, while expanding their love of learning in a fun and interactive environment. **It is amazing how positively students respond when you believe in them and challenge them to think critically!**