

## Teaching Statement

Name: Xi Qu Apply for academic job in Economics



*A teacher affects eternity: he can never tell where his influence stops.*

—Henry Brooks Adams, American journalist, historian, academic and novelist

Sometimes I am curious and ask myself, why do I want to teach? The thought of becoming a teacher can track back to seventeen years ago. At that time, I was in the elementary school and skipped a grade. As a stranger and “challenger” in the new class, I felt lonely and almost diffident about everything. A nice teacher helped me out of it, not only teaching me knowledge from the textbook but more importantly, the critical way of thinking and optimistic attitudes facing troubles. It was the first time I was touched by the effects of teaching and determined to become a teacher in the future. Now I can answer the beginning question: I want to teach because I would like to make good influence and therefore help people.

I have been a grader and a recitation leader for various courses at the Ohio State University, including Principle of Microeconomics, Principle of Macroeconomics, Elementary Econometrics, and Advanced Econometrics, among others. I am grateful to this valuable opportunity provided by the university that I can achieve my goal by balancing my courses between lecturing to students and asking them to make critical thinking that they can benefit in the economics field as well as in their personal life.

My first goal is to help student efficiently master key concepts in class. I believe interest is the best teacher. Hence, I give examples in our daily life to illustrate principles and rules in economics; I prefer using real economic data and cases to design assignments. In this way, I naturally build a bridge between abstract concepts and the real, vivid world, which helps students understand the implications and significance of what they are learning. But occasionally, they have to memorize some definitions or facts. For example, in the course of principle of microeconomics we need to know four factors in production: natural source (land), physical capital, labor, and entrepreneurship. I tell students I memorize it by using a simple word “cell”, where “c” stands for capital; “e” is entrepreneurship; double “l” means land and labor. This method is simple but I know it works pretty well because several years after my undergraduate study, I can still remember these four factors. Then I ask them to make some innovation or create their own abbreviations when they have to memorize things.

My second goal is more important. I inspire students not to merely accept knowledge but to have independent thinking. One way to do this is encouraging students to ask questions, no matter how trivial it sounds. I always tell them, each time raising your hand, you may actually help someone else in this classroom because it is unlikely you are the only people who have this question. So you are doing a favor to those classmates who cannot understand this part of material but are not as brave as you. Another way is encouraging students to answer questions, especially when there are multiple methods to solve a problem or open questions with various answers. Then I

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will change the question a little bit to test if they fully understand the concepts. To inspire students thinking independently, it is important to set myself as an example. Therefore as an instructor, if I cannot answer a question in class, I will not walk them through by saying “this is not covered in the class or it will never appear in the exam.” I prefer first asking their opinions and then telling them it is really a good question, so I need more time to think about it comprehensively and will email you the after class.. Once making promise like that, I do.

The teaching benefits my own understanding and research, so I genuinely enjoy the lives of my students. I try to express my interest and care to them. For instance, I like to arrive to class ten minutes early and prepare everything well. I check my email at least five times a day and reply to my students within 24 hours. I usually tell a joke in the afternoon class to keep sleepy students awake. After each class, I always wait for a while to leave the classroom to help students who may have some remaining questions but hesitate to ask in front of the class.

One student emailed me that he found economics really interesting after taking my principle of microeconomics class, and decided to choose economics as his major. Another student once asked me as a foreigner how to efficiently learn English. This is beyond the class but I recommended him several books and told him the most important thing is confidence. Later on, he becomes an English teacher in China. He tells me every time he uses that book to teach his students, he always recalls my class because I recommended that book to him. These examples give me great confidence and incentives to devote myself to a lifetime of teaching because I can actually offer help and influence people.