Teaching Statement

I firmly believe that students learn new material best in an environment that encourages them to engage during classes. In the three classes that I have taught so far at Emory University, I have tried to provide such an environment. From day one on, I told students that participation is an important part of their overall performance in the course and that I prefer them giving false answers instead of not contributing to class discussions. To create this environment, I work on connecting economic principles with decisions that people and firms face daily, promoting creative thinking in open discussions, and being easily accessible to my students.

Connecting economic principles with real world examples of choices that people and firms face on a daily basis helps motivate students to participate more freely in class discussions. It is easier for students to grasp economic principles that they can relate to. By drawing these connections, they become more animated and develop a stronger understanding of the course material. When introducing supply and demand as well as reservation prices, I tell the student to imagine that they are willing to buy pizza slices from me and to write down the maximum price they would be willing to pay. I found that students enjoy learning new concepts this way and remember them throughout the class period.

Another way I encourage class participation is to ask open questions while introducing new concepts allowing students to brainstorm ideas and to provide many practice problems. For example, in my ECON 101 course, I ask them to name potential sources of comparative advantage or which events would make them increase the demand for a certain good. I have found that students come up with the majority of correct answers on their own. Furthermore, I have realized that providing practice questions to work on in class after we have completed a certain chapter or concept is a useful strategy in keeping students engaged and allowing them to gain confidence in the material. After letting the students work on the questions for several minutes, we discuss the solutions together on the board. This gives them applied practice as well as instant feedback on how they performed. I additionally assign homework at the end of each chapter as well as practice exams which cover topics discussed in class and let students know what type of questions they could face on the exams.

Consistent with my belief that class participation is an integral component of learning, I find it essential to be accessible for students. This includes encouraging them to ask questions during class when a concept we discussed does not appear clear or to come see me after class so we can address any concerns right away. When students come to office hours, I spend much time going over concepts that they are struggling with, while assisting them in finding the solutions to their questions themselves. Responses to my class evaluations have shown me that students appreciate me being accessible to them. My scores for “accessibility for individual discussions” have so far been 8.70/9.00 and 8.61/9.00. In the class period before the exam, I provide a review sessions where questions from practice exams as well any other questions that students might have are discussed. For one of my courses, I additionally offered another voluntary review session the evening before the exam for which I asked students to come with specific questions about concepts or practice problems. From my experience, students are thankful about these review sessions. Both attendance and active participation have been great in my previous courses during these sessions and I have received positive feedback from students.

I am excited to begin my career in academia and I look forward to teaching again soon. Given my teaching experience, I feel comfortable with the idea of teaching applied microeconomics to both undergraduate and graduate students. Furthermore, I would be interested in more specialized courses focusing on health economics, labor economics, public economics, or sports economics.