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Teaching Statement

My teaching journey, deeply intertwined with my research, reflects a commitment to fostering an inclusive and engaging learning environment. Rooted in my research on education, labor markets, inequality, and financial technologies, I bring not only theoretical knowledge to the classroom but also an understanding of real-world applications. My goal is to ensure students develop both critical thinking and quantitative skills they can apply beyond the classroom.

Pedagogical Approach

Drawing from my diverse educational experiences at Urmia University in Iran and the University of South Carolina in the USA, I recognize that effective teaching is not one-size-fits-all. It is an evolving process that requires adaptability, continuous self-assessment, and sensitivity to the diverse backgrounds of students. My teaching incorporates a blend of traditional methods and innovative, technology-driven approaches, ensuring students remain engaged and empowered to learn. I strive to create a dynamic classroom, utilizing discussions, real-world case studies, and interactive tools to connect economic concepts with students' lived experiences.

Adapting to Modern Challenges

The shift to online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic demanded flexibility, and I embraced the challenge with enthusiasm. Whether in-person or online, my teaching philosophy remains anchored in active engagement and inclusivity. As we move into an era where artificial intelligence is becoming increasingly prevalent, I am incorporating AI-based platforms, such as ChatGPT, into my teaching. These tools provide new opportunities for students to enhance their learning, explore concepts, and receive personalized feedback outside of class hours.

I plan to guide my students in the effective and responsible use of these AI tools, helping them to understand both their potential and limitations. By interacting with these tools, students can practice generating their own questions, critically assess AI-generated responses, and compare them with class material to deepen their understanding.

I will also show students how to use AI for brainstorming research topics or structuring arguments in their assignments, while discussing the limitations of relying solely on AI, such as ensuring accuracy and avoiding plagiarism. This helps students develop critical thinking skills by learning when and how to supplement their knowledge with AI without undermining their original work.

By integrating AI into the curriculum, I aim to foster problem-solving and research skills, enabling students to use these emerging technologies in ways that complement traditional learning. This approach not only enhances the learning experience but also prepares students for the evolving digital landscape in both academia and the workforce.

Course Development

One of my proudest accomplishments has been the development of several courses, including Principles of

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Microeconomics, Introduction to Economics, Global Macroeconomics. From crafting the syllabus to designing assessments and materials, I ensured the course provided a thorough overview of foundational economic principles, paired with real-world applications. This approach helps students see how economics can inform their decisions in daily life. For instance, I challenge students to think critically about opportunity cost by examining their own choices, such as attending class or managing their time and resources. Through these exercises, students build a strong foundation in both theoretical concepts and practical analysis.

Student-Centered Learning

Incorporating student-centered learning is central to my teaching approach. In my courses, I blend lectures, group projects, and discussions, always emphasizing the relevance of economic principles to real-world situations. In my Microeconomics course, I assign group work on externalities, encouraging students to analyze social and environmental issues from an economic perspective. This allows them to engage with economics in a practical way, bridging the gap between theory and current global challenges.

My teaching style prioritizes interaction and engagement. I often use think-pair-share exercises, randomized group assignments, and open discussions to ensure all voices are heard. Students are encouraged to apply theoretical concepts to scenarios they encounter in their daily lives, making learning more tangible and relevant.

Mentorship

In addition to classroom teaching, I am dedicated to mentoring students in their independent research projects. At the University of South Carolina, I mentored an honors student through every stage of their research, guiding them from concept development to data analysis. This experience reaffirmed the importance of providing students with the tools to pursue their intellectual curiosities and contribute meaningfully to the field of economics. By supporting students' research endeavors, I hope to inspire them to explore further academic and professional opportunities.

Inclusivity and Equity

Given my research focus on inequality and discrimination, I am highly attuned to the challenges faced by marginalized groups in education. In my classroom, I strive to create a safe and inclusive environment where all students feel valued. Through strategies such as randomized group work and open dialogue, I promote mutual respect and ensure that students from diverse backgrounds can express their ideas freely. As president of the Iranian Student Association at the University of South Carolina, I gained valuable insights into the experiences of international students, which further deepened my commitment to inclusivity in my teaching.

Continuous Growth and Reflection

Teaching is a dynamic and evolving process. I view every interaction with my students as an opportunity for growth. Regular feedback from students (bi-weekly), alongside self-reflection, allows me to refine my methods and ensure my teaching remains relevant and effective. I continuously assess my approach to ensure that it resonates with the diverse needs of my students and fosters an environment of continuous learning.

Future Aspirations

As an international scholar, I understand the unique challenges that students from diverse backgrounds face, and I strive to address these proactively in my teaching. I am committed to staying at the forefront of educational developments, particularly in incorporating digital tools and enhancing online learning environments. I view teaching as a vocation that goes beyond the dissemination of knowledge—it is an opportunity to inspire, challenge, and be challenged in return. As I continue my teaching journey, I aim to create dynamic and inclusive learning environments that empower students to succeed, both academically and beyond.