



The University of Georgia

Terry College of Business
Department of Economics

TO: REVIEW COMMITTEE, GRADUATE SCHOOL PORTFOLIO CERTIFICATE PROGRAM
FROM: DR. KATHERINE MCCLAIN, GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANT COORDINATOR
SUBJECT: GRADUATE TEACHING PORTFOLIO NOMINATION FOR SANJUKTA DAS
DATE: 10/27/2016

Sanjukta Das has been the instructor of record for an economics course on two separate occasions. I like attending her classes. She creates a comfortable learning environment where students are willing to ask and answer questions and discussions are not uncommon. I always pick up an interesting new fact or approach to a concept.

Teaching principles of economics courses presents a special challenge. Most students taking an introductory economics course do so to fulfill a requirement for their major (e.g. journalism) or as pre-requisite for admission to the business school. Few have ever taken economics before or even thought about situations from an economic point of view. This means we must not only introduce key precepts and methods of economics, but also motivate to a wide range of students why economics is relevant to their chosen course of study and to their life in general. Teachers of economics have to balance theory and content with application and applicability. Sanjukta has made a great start on this and it has not gone unnoticed by students. One student writes,

“[...] you achieved your goal of expressing the larger picture that economics is all about trade-offs and that very little is so clear cut. For me, this class will be very valuable in that I will be a more civic-minded citizen and participant in voting in a way that I never did before.”

Sanjukta has many good classroom habits. She comes out from behind the podium to be closer and more engaging with the students. She uses both the whiteboard and the projector. Her lecture is organized and flows well. She introduces topics by asking questions. She explains concepts well and has interesting examples. But what I particularly noticed was the very peaceful, non-threatening atmosphere of her class. Sanjukta has a quiet approach and presence, and while some students may interpret that as boring and dull, it actually creates a place where students feel very comfortable asking

questions and asking for clarity about concepts. I think students feel they can persist in asking questions until they have really grasped a concept. After answering a student question, she also asked them whether her answer clarified the issue for them, an excellent practice. It sets a very encouraging atmosphere in the classroom and makes the students willing to participate and ask questions.

Sanjukta is very well received by our students, who find her both approachable and effective. In the words of a student,

“Essentially, the point of me showing you a bit of what I learned is to show you that you were an overall effective instructor. Anytime I can look back at a course and realize that has impacted my understanding of the world, I know that it was money well-spent to the University. [...] I am quite satisfied with your ability to explain content, and it did seem like you made the content more from 'you' rather than the textbook toward the end. I can tell you know a lot about economics from a higher level of thinking which is awesome!”

While the classroom has a very low key atmosphere, Sanjukta is very responsive to the students, explains concepts well and has interesting examples. Sanjukta knows her material very well and definitely has a passion for it. It's also very clear that she likes students and enjoys teaching. She will become an excellent and popular instructor. The Economics department is very pleased with Sanjukta's teaching. We see in her great potential as a teacher and mentor and appreciate her commitment to teaching economics well, making students a priority, and always striving for excellence.

Teaching Portfolio
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1. TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

Teaching involves engaging in multiple activities inside and outside the classroom. Once a course is designed with certain learning goals in mind, how much students retain 2 or 3 years down the road depends critically on how effectively the teacher uses the classroom environment to engage students in active learning. For this, the teacher must put in time outside of the class to adequately prepare how to structure the lessons. So teaching is a continuous process of designing each class and then interacting with students in class. Economics is a social science and presents unique opportunities and challenges in terms of teaching. For students not majoring in the subject, it can be quite intimidating. Yet, since economics is about the problems of the people, it is applicable to everyone in their daily lives. It is my job as an instructor to make economics easily accessible and as relevant and interesting in the students' lives as possible, no matter what the background, so that even after considerable time has passed they can apply the theories of economics to be productive and responsible members of society.

There is a long standing debate in academia regarding the relative merits of lectures versus discussion-based pedagogical styles. I try to employ features of both in my classroom. I find the Hunter and Gagné models particularly useful for structuring my lessons. In essence, my lessons have an anticipatory set to gain attention at the beginning, an overview or road map, some lecture with discussions, some activity, and a closing summary. Like Steven A. Greenlaw, author of the book *Doing Economics*, says, "The best way to learn economics is not to hear about it, or to read about it, but to do it". This involves giving students real world problems to analyze and come up with solutions to in the classroom through activities using their own intuition and knowledge. However, the first step towards enabling students with the power to process such problems is to convey the 'facts' they need to know to understand the topic thoroughly. It is in this step of the learning process that lectures become important because this is where the teacher equips the students with the tools needed to critically evaluate policies and issues in the world around them. My lectures are based around vital concepts of Economics rather than teaching students facts that they can pick up through reading, as that is not the best use of class time. I go through my lectures at a leisurely pace, repeatedly checking for understanding, and interacting and questioning. Once I feel that students have the tools they need to apply to real world problems, I assign class activities to further check for understanding. Think-Pair-Share is an activity I commonly use as discussion with their peers and the following class discussions enhance critical thinking. Diversification in teaching methods is also necessary to meet the needs of different students with different learning styles. Apart from lectures and activities, I also use guided discussions of case studies drawn from media articles. Some of my assignments require independent work, while others encourage team based learning.

Research is an integral part of Economics, as it is an ever changing field, and it is the teacher's duty to instill some of the skills of a researcher into students as many of them will go on to become researchers themselves. I assign students 'cutting-edge' readings

from the topic they're studying and keep track that they're actually reading through the minute paper in class. A good starting point of doing research is to test the basic principles of Economics using data and I encourage my students to think about the possibilities of that. I inform them about the various websites where data are freely available, like the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Census Bureau and so on, and encourage them to dig through the data, make summary statistics, and devise research questions they could use the data for. I keep aside some class time for discussions on such data related topics.

Finally, paying attention to details in the classroom increases the effectiveness of teaching. In a medium sized classroom of about 35-40 students, I make it a point to memorize all the students' names and faces, and during class discussions address them by their names. If I find some students falling behind, I meet with them outside of class to understand the problem areas and discuss strategies.

Further down the road, I would like to include more technology in my teaching. I center my lessons around a PowerPoint presentations as I feel that helps to organize one's thoughts during teaching and keep to the schedule. I spend considerable amount of time preparing lucid PowerPoints, with a lot of diagrams to make it attractive and easy to understand. But technology in the classroom has advanced beyond such simple tools. For instance, the use of clickers in the classroom has several benefits. Not only does it give students the opportunity to critically examine the material covered in class, it aids in shy students participating more in class discussions, and also provides instant feedback about the general level of understanding in the classroom. This would be an especially helpful tool in larger sized classes, and I hope to incorporate similar means into my teaching in the future.

2. DESCRIPTION OF COURSES TAUGHT

Course Title: Principles of Macroeconomics

Semesters taught: Spring 2015, Fall 2016 (ongoing)

Enrolment: 35-40 undergraduate students

Course Outline: Macroeconomics is the study of the overall economy. This class is an introduction to the study of how choices made by people, firms, and governments affect the aggregate national and global economies. Topics covered include savings, consumption, unemployment, money, inflation, international trade, economic growth, business cycles, and monetary and fiscal policy. The purpose of this course is to provide students with the ability to apply the core principles of macroeconomics to their everyday life, understand and analyze many important contemporary macroeconomic policy debates, and to provide a foundation for more advanced study in the field. After completing this course, students should be able to:

1. Understand and apply economic reasoning.
2. Calculate and interpret a number of macroeconomic indicators.

3. Understand the effects of fiscal and monetary policy on the economy.
4. Explain how various markets (e.g. financial and labor markets) affect each other and the economy as a whole.
5. Use economics to become an informed voter and responsible citizen.

Teaching Responsibilities: My responsibilities as an instructor of record for this course includes designing the syllabus, choosing the textbook and online platform, all teaching, writing/grading tests, holding office hours and assigning grades. The final grade is determined according to weekly homework assignments (35%), 2 midterm exams (20% each) and a final exam (25%).

Course Materials: I use Mankiw's Principles of Macroeconomics, 7th edition as the principal textbook for the course. In addition, I also recommend students to refer to Krugman and Well's Macroeconomics, 3rd edition textbook as a secondary resource. I use the online student companion website, Aplia, for weekly assignments.

3. Teaching Interests

I am interested in teaching Principles of Macroeconomics, Principles of Microeconomics, Intermediate Macroeconomics, Intermediate Microeconomics, Development Economics, Economics of Growth, and International Economics at the Undergraduate Level. Further, I am interested in teaching Graduate Level Courses, especially in the field of Development Economics.

4. Sample Teaching Materials

From powerpoints used in class:

Calculating GDP

2. Aggregate spending on domestically produced final goods and services = \$21,500

	American Ore, Inc	American Steel, Inc.	American Motors, Inc	Total factor income
Value of sales	\$4,200 (ore)	\$9,000 (steel)	\$21,500 (car)	
Intermediate goods	0	4,200 (iron ore)	9,000 (steel)	
Wages	2,000	3,700	10,000	\$15,700
Interest payments	1,000	600	1,000	2,600
Rent	200	300	500	1,000
Profit	1,000	200	1,000	2,200
Total expenditure by firm	4,200	9,000	21,500	
Value added per firm = Value of sales – Cost of intermediate goods	4,200	4,800	12,500	

1. Value of production of final goods and services, sum of value added = \$21,500

3. Total payments to factors = \$21,500

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From study guides circulated before exams:

ECON2105: Midterm 2 Review Questions

1. One way to boost productivity and raise living standards is to increase capital stock through saving and investment. Over 1960-1990, the U.S. and S. Korea devoted a similar share of GDP to investment, so you might expect they would have similar growth performance. But growth was >6% in Korea and only 2% in the U.S. What is the explanation?

Ans.: Explanation: the catch-up effect - the property whereby poor countries tend to grow more rapidly than rich ones. Rising K causes productivity and living standards to rise. But this faster growth is temporary, due to diminishing returns to capital: As K rises, the extra output from an additional unit of K falls. (Draw prodn func) If workers have little K, giving them more increases their productivity a lot; If workers already have a lot of K, giving them more increases productivity fairly little. In 1960, K/L was far smaller in Korea than in the U.S., hence Korea grew faster.

2. Which people does the unemployed comprise? What does the natural rate of unemployment consist of? What are the causes of each?

Ans.: Unemployed: people not working who have looked for work during previous 4 weeks. Does not include: discouraged workers, those not interested in working, retired workers. Part time workers are counted as employed.

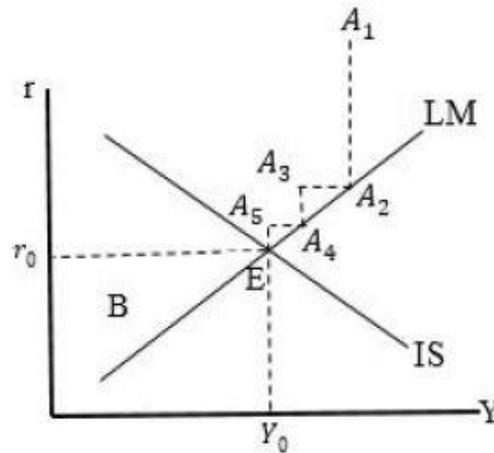
Natural rate of unemployment: the normal rate of unemployment around which the actual unemployment rate fluctuates. The natural rate of unemployment consists of: a) frictional unemployment: It takes time to search for the right jobs. occurs when workers spend time searching for the jobs that best suit their skills and tastes. Occurs even if there are enough jobs to go around. short-term for most workers. Reasons: Job search, Sectoral shifts, public policies like Unemployment Insurance. b) Structural unemployment: occurs when there are fewer jobs than workers. When wage is above equilibrium, not enough jobs. usually longer-term. Due to min. wages laws, labor unions, efficiency wages.

3. Do credit cards form a part of money supply? Why or why not?

Ans.: No. Credit cards are not a form of money; when a person uses a credit card, he or she is simply deferring payment for the item. Because using a debit card is like writing a check, the account balances that lie behind debit cards are included in the measures of money. credit cards actually lead to a drop in the quantity of money people need to carry because they allow households to consolidate bills for payment once a month.

From class notes circulated:

Figure 5: Equilibrium in the IS-LM Model



At point A_1 , there is ESS in money market and ESS in goods market. Thus r falls immediately (Y unchanged) to a point on the LM (A_2) and clears the money market (that is, so that equation (2) holds). At A_2 , money market is in equilibrium. But since this point lies to the right of the IS curve, there is ESS in the goods market. Hence Y starts falling (r held constant) in an attempt to clear the goods market. But the minute Y falls to A_3 , this point is again off the LM and hence there is ESS in money market. Thus, r falls immediately to a point on the LM (A_4) and clears the money market. This iterative process continues till equilibrium is reached in both markets at point E .

5. Sample of Student Work

Question 16: Money Growth and Inflation.

The accompanying table provides the inflation rate in the year 2000 and the average inflation rate over the period 2001-2010 for seven different countries.

Country	Inflation rate in 2000	Average inflation rate in 2001-2010
Brazil	7.06	6.70
China	0.4	2.16
France	1.83	1.86
Indonesia	3.77	8.55
Japan	-0.78	-0.25
Turkey	55.03	18.51
United States	3.37	2.40

a. (5 p) Given the expected relationship between average inflation and shoeleather costs, rank the countries in descending order (high to low) of shoeleather costs using average inflation over the period 2001-2010.

5

- Turkey
- Indonesia
- Brazil
- United States
- China
- France
- Japan

Nothing below this line will be graded.

8

(5 p) Rank the countries in order of inflation rates that most favored borrowers with ten-year loans that were taken out in 2000. Assume that the loans were agreed upon with the expectation that the inflation rate for 2001 to 2010 would be the same as the inflation rate in 2000.

Borrower wins if I take on a contract

Most Favored borrowers

- Indonesia
- China
- Japan
- France
- Brazil
- United States
- Turkey

c. (10 p) Did borrowers who took out ten-year loans in Japan gain or lose versus lenders? What about the government? And also, a union worker in a ten-year labor contract? Explain.

10

Borrowers gained versus lenders because the inflation was higher than expected therefore decreasing the rate they had to pay back. Government also gained because inflation was higher than expected, meaning higher prices and higher taxes for government. A union worker loses because they get paid based on nominal rates, which would decrease with higher than expected inflation.

Nothing below this line will be graded.

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6. Innovative Teaching Roles and Projects

6.1 Economics in Action

To stimulate further student interest in the course, I use the discussion board on Aplaia and engage students in offline discussions about applications of economic principles in the real world. I post topics of discussion and encourage students to comment and also create their own discussion posts. I also reply to student responses. An example of a typical post and a couple of student responses are given below.

Post: *Rational people respond to incentives - but sometimes in unpredictable ways!*

Instructor: *“Because rational people make decisions by weighing costs and benefits, their decisions may change in response to incentives. Many public policies change the costs and benefits that people face. Sometimes policymakers fail to understand how policies alter incentives and behavior and a policy may lead to unintended consequences. Can you think of real world examples?”*

I will start off with 2:

1) Seat belt laws increase the use of seat belts but lower the incentives of individuals to drive safely. This leads to an increase in the number of car accidents. This also leads to an increased risk for pedestrians.

2) China's "one-child policy" reduced the average number of births for a woman from more than 5 to less than 2. But the program also had an unfortunate unintended consequence. Because son preference in China is high, due to this policy China soon had too many "unwanted girls", and all too many simply "disappeared" during the first year of life due to neglect and mistreatment.

Let's hear your thoughts!”

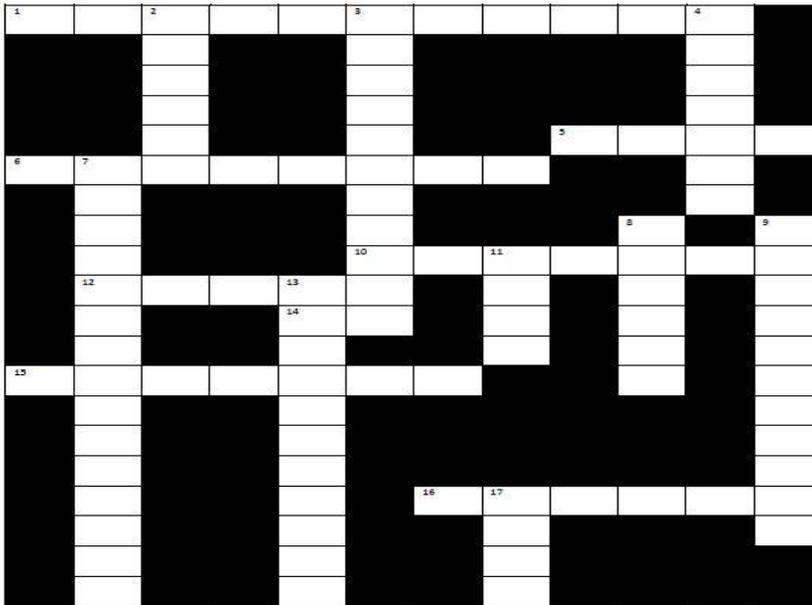
Student Responses:

Student 1: *“One example I thought of is Gun Control Laws. The purpose of the law is to keep crime down but the drawback is that criminals will most likely get guns regardless because they're criminals, leaving victims of society without anyway to defend themselves due to public policy.”*

Student 2: *“One example I've heard that's all to relevant to this class is that when the Hope Scholarship was implemented in the 1990s in Georgia, UGA noticed that there was significant grade inflation to A's and Bs because students were putting pressure on their professors not to lose their scholarships, and that students chose not to pursue more difficult majors because it is easier for most people to maintain a 3.0 in “easier” majors than in harder majors where you might make a lower grade because you have a much harder work to do. [.....] My point being, the forces of economics appear to constantly be at play between policies and the reactions people have to them [....]”*

6.2 Economics Crosswords

Although a number of educators in different fields have shown that crossword puzzles can enhance student learning, this exercise has not been broadly used by Economics instructors. As Lin and Dunphy (2013) show, crossword puzzles aid student learning of economics terms and improve their grades on quizzes. They propose using crossword puzzles for the purpose of assisting students in their efforts to learn economics as the exercise provides students with a lively, creative, and challenging learning method. I employ crossword puzzles as a Think- Pair -Share activity for the purpose of review once I have covered 3 – 4 chapters, to gauge student understanding and motivate them to work harder. An example of a typical crossword is given below.



<u>ACROSS:</u>	<u>DOWN:</u>
1. 2 goods for which an increase in the price of one leads to an increase in the demand for the other.	2. Households in the market for goods and services.
5. If the opportunity cost of a pen to me is 10 pencils, then I will not _____ a pen for 8 pencils.	3. A point inside the production possibility frontier.
6. What type of statement is this? "Law X will reduce national income."	4. A state of the market when price is above equilibrium price.
10. An Ethiopian worker can produce 100 shirts or 20 computers, while an Estonian worker can produce 100 shirts or 10 computers. Then, _____ has the comparative advantage in shirts.	7. Whatever must be given up to obtain some item.
12. Price would have had to have _____ for quantity supplied to rise.	8. An increase in this causes demand to shift right generally.
14. Let there be 2 goods, A and B, and 2 countries X and T. Plot A on the horizontal axis and B on the vertical axis. T has higher opportunity cost of A than X. Let the PPF of each country be linear. Then the	9. The claim that, other things being equal, the quantity demanded of a good falls when the price of the good rises.
	11. True or false? "There are situations where there are no gains from trade."

<p>slope of the PPF of _____ will not be as steep as that of _____.</p> <p>15. A fall in the price of CDs causes the demand for music downloads to shift left. Simultaneously, the supply also shifts right due to lower input costs. What is the effect on quantity?</p> <p>16. Rational people weigh costs and benefits at the _____.</p>	<p>13. A situation where government intervention can improve market outcomes.</p> <p>17. The name of the pioneer of the concept of absolute advantage.</p>
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6.3 Interactive Learning

I use a combination of methods to teach, so as not to let monotony set in. I center my lessons around a powerpoint presentation as I feel that helps to organize one’s thoughts during teaching and keep to the schedule. My lessons have an anticipatory set to gain attention at the beginning. For instance, in the chapter on ‘Measuring a Nation’s Income’, I start my lesson with a newspaper clipping from The New York Times (“*China Passes Japan as Second Largest Economy*”, August 2010), and ask my class how is it possible to compare 2 economies which differ so widely in terms of goods they produce, and technological capabilities. Students offer many answers and I gently nudge them towards the correct answer, that is, GDP. This naturally initiates a discussion on what GDP is and why it is important. I also intersperse my lessons with appropriate video clippings, to make learning more fun. For instance, in the chapter on ‘The Ten Principles of Economics’, I show my students a video of a talk on how a free market works by Nobel Laureate Milton Friedman. He introduces the concept of why markets are usually a good way to organize economic activity using a very famous, simple, effective story on the lesson of making a pencil. Before showing the video, I ask my students to think on which principle of economics underlies his talk while they listen and also whether they can think of circumstances when what he’s talking about may not be the best outcome. This naturally leads to a lively discussion after the video is shown. In the chapter on ‘The Monetary System’, I show my students a video clipping from the movie ‘*The Shawshank Redemption*’. This short scene shows how cigarettes are used as money a lot in prison. I use this scene to explain the concepts of money as a medium of exchange, commodity money, bartering, etc. I also use active learning exercises in class, like ‘Think - Pair - Share’ activities. I pose a question or problem and ask students to work on the problem in pairs. After a certain amount of time has lapsed, I ask for volunteers to answer the question or solve it on the white board if required. I also use crossword puzzles in class as a ‘Think - Pair - Share’ activity after I have covered substantial ground as review. I typically use the white board for mathematical derivations, to elaborate on concepts and for solving practice problems from Aplia at the end of each chapter (with student participation).

7. Professional Activities Related to Teaching

I served as Teaching Assistant (TA) for the following courses:

- Principles of Macroeconomics
- Public Economics
- Urban Economics
- Game Theory
- Industrial Organization
- International Trade
- Econometrics

While working as a teaching assistant, my responsibilities included grading (exams and homework), holding office hours, solving student queries on the subject matter, and guest lecturing when the professor was unavailable.

8. Special Training and Teaching Related Experiences

8.1 GRSC 7770

University policy requires that all new graduate teaching and laboratory assistants receive support for their instructional roles. The policy states that all TAs must attend TA orientation and complete GRSC 7770 or departmental equivalent before teaching as instructor of record. GRSC 7770 is a teaching seminar which covers various teaching related subjects such as how to write a syllabus, teaching tips for effective communication, conflict resolution, proper faculty etiquette and other teaching policies. I completed this course in Fall 2014 with Dr. Paul S. Quick, Coordinator of TA Development and Recognition, Center for Teaching and Learning, Adjunct Instructor, Department of English, University of Georgia. As a part of the course, we completed several assignments related to teaching (case studies, teaching reflections, etc), created lessons plans, took mock classes and engaged in group discussions. This course acquainted me with the teaching policies in United States and helped me develop my teaching skills through constructive feedback.

8.2 Professional Development Teaching Workshop

The TA workshop I attended was “How Re-thinking Power Distributions in the College Classroom Can Revolutionize Teaching and Learning”. It was a part of a Pedagogy Workshops series and the presenter was Dr. Thomas Chase Hagood, Assistant Director of Faculty Development and Recognition, Center for Teaching and Learning, University of Georgia. The workshop interested me because, this interactive session invited participants to envision their classrooms as shared spaces that have the potential to empower both students and faculty as learners, where students are offered alternatives for expressing their valuing of the learning process; for demonstrating

what they've learned; for challenging their peers as well as the instructor as life-long learners; and, finally, for students to take ownership of their learning. I hoped to learn what power sharing in the classroom meant, how effective it is in the process of active learning and how to practically implement it in my teaching. I learned about the dimensions of power sharing and how to apply it in the classroom. As per Doyle (2011), power sharing involves two aspects. The first is providing students with meaningful choices, for instance, regarding policies and procedures like attendance, tardiness, late work, etc. This could be implemented by grouping students and letting them vote on different options. This optimizes their opportunity to choose, engage, participate, share and work hard at the learning process. Secondly, it involves giving students more control over what they learn, how they learn and how they demonstrate that they've learned it. This could be implemented by shaping the syllabus accordingly. There was a student activity which involved rating myself on 16 metrics regarding how much power sharing I engage in with students in my present course, on things like course textbook, attendance policy, office hours, paper due dates, exam dates, grading scale, etc. I scored average. I learned there are a lot more ways I can involve students in the decision making process of my course than I had thought possible. For instance, even in the content to be taught or the textbook to be used, students could be given a say in it. I would like to try this out in my classroom. I intend to keep aside some time in the first day of class to discuss these things with my students and take their feedback on these policies, procedures and organizational issues of the course, so that I can empower students to be better active learners.

9. Summary of Teaching Evaluations

9.1 Spring 2015

Following is an excerpt from a student email:

“Good morning,

I just wanted to directly share some opinions about the course through an email as well as say my goodbyes. I want to start off by saying that I enjoyed your course. Though I can't quite say I entirely grasped everything at the end, it certainly pushed me to put in a good bit of studying and reading. Having done so, I'm fairly certain you achieved your goal of expressing the larger picture that Economics is all about trade-offs and that very little is so clear cut. For me, this class will be very valuable in that I will be a more civic-minded citizen and participate in voting in a way that I never did before. I have been raised in a Republican household, and so I always viewed an increase in Taxes as a bad thing and an increase in Government as a bad thing... But now I know the effects of these two things work in opposite directions in the economy's overall Aggregate Demand. [...] Thus, I feel like the idea of Macroeconomics is that we are drastically simplifying the economy so that we can create a 'Science' to it that otherwise would be near impossible to define in our complex world.

Essentially, the point of me showing you a bit of what I learned is to show you that you were an overall effective instructor. Anytime I can look back at a course and realize that has impacted my understanding of the world, I know that it was money well-spent to the University. [...] I am quite satisfied with your ability to explain content, and it did seem like you made the content more from 'you' rather than the textbook toward the end. I can tell you know a lot about economics from a higher level of thinking which is awesome!

[...]Your class wasn't 'easy' per se but honestly, If I took a class where I had really easy full multiple choice exams that I could do well on by cramming right before the exam, then I would definitely be less engaged and not retain as much information. [...]

Regardless, thanks for being so engaging and awesome!"

Other Qualitative Feedback:

"She was passionate about the course material and encouraged class participation."

"I liked the course and the freedom it allowed. It was fair."

"She is incredibly knowledgeable and kind, and always willing to help out when you need it."

"She definitely knew what she was talking about and could always find ways to explain it a little better if her first try wasn't getting through."

"The wealth of information she has and shares is wonderful! She has created her own spin on the class and while it can be hit or miss she is ALWAYS willing to talk about the material."

"The teacher was very knowledgeable about the subject and was prepared every day for class. She was respectful to the students and made sure we got the most out of the course. Overall this teacher helped me become a better student, and I would recommend her to future students."

"I think the class was helpful. I learned a lot about the subject. The homework assignments helped me a lot when it came time to study for the tests. I think that the tests were very challenging but they were fair. Overall this was a good course."