

Teaching Statement

Sungoh Kwon

In my teaching, I try to convey to students the rigorous nature of economics and its applicability to real life problems. In particular, I have used controversial topics explored in my research, such as marijuana legalization and dowry payment, as examples in my classrooms with great success. For instance, students get excited when they are asked to discuss why marijuana and alcohol can be either substitutes or complements.

I have over five years of teaching experience at the Korea Development Institute School of Public Policy and Management (KDI School) and at the University of Connecticut. At the KDI School, I gained valuable experience in interacting with students from diverse backgrounds. The student body of the KDI School consists of mid-career professionals in government, international organizations, and private corporations from more than 70 countries. At the University of Connecticut, I taught discussion sections with class sizes varying from 10 to 50 for undergraduate or graduate students. These include Microeconomic Theory and Contemporary Problems in Economics. In addition, I am teaching Mathematical Economics as an instructor this spring semester.

These experiences have taught me an important lesson in interactive communication and adaptable teaching style. I believe that instructors should be aware of why students are enrolled in the course as well as their academic backgrounds, interests, and expectation about the course. Although instructors set the course objective and curriculum in advance, this information should be continuously updated and reflected in the course to maximize education effectiveness. To practice this belief, I often use short surveys and pop-up quizzes, and I try to treat students with respect and be open to their feedback.

I also seek to contribute to diversity through my teaching. In my class, I encourage students to share different views and experience with respect. This not only increases education effectiveness but also helps students to form tolerant and positive attitudes toward diversity. Recent study by Gautam Rao at Harvard University provides rigorous evidence that “*diversity in schools benefits society by positively influencing inter-group attitudes and social behavior.*”