TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

Galileo once said ‘you cannot teach a person anything; you can only help him find it within himself.’ The cornerstone of my teaching philosophy is to foster a student’s curiosity and enthusiasm for learning. To inspire student learning, I believe an effective teacher has three qualities: 1) to engage student dialogue through Socratic instruction and through class debate and discussion, 2) bringing real world and hands on experiences to the learning environment of the class and 3) students are only enthusiastic of their learning experience if their instructor is passionate about his teaching.

For instance, an integral part of engaging student dialogue has been to encourage each student to question not only their own underlying beliefs and reasoning of economic and business principles but also to express and challenge the beliefs of their peers. In addition, I try to develop a learning environment that is conducive for student questioning and discussion through in class group exercises. I also often rely on ‘real world’ business examples, such as news media, case studies, personal observations, and topical industry issues to kindle a student’s curiosity and desire to bridge the relevancy and applicability of business and economic thinking to real world business events. I encourage student learning through ‘hands on’ experiences, especially experiences that are relevant to advancing their professional and or academic development. For example, in my introductory and applied business management classes, students work in groups to develop and present a business plan in the resource sector. Given the 90% plus failure rates of new ventures, this is a skill with practical benefits. In addition, the applied nature of these projects also introduces students to the complex and multi-dimensional aspects of business planning development; this is an intrinsic facet that business manager face. More over, in my course on agribusiness and strategic management, I have engaged my students in research on the emerging market for functional foods (Omega-3 enriched eggs) and biotechnology industries. These are areas where there is little research development and provides students the opportunity to research frontier issues of topical importance to industry members and policy makers.

In closing, I believe an effective teacher is first and foremost driven by a passion to discover and share knowledge. As a teacher, I believe the sharing of knowledge is not through pouring ideas and concepts into the minds of students but to instill within them the kind of excitement of knowledge discovery that he finds within his research.