

Summary of Teaching Evaluations

Brittany Bass

University of California, Irvine

Introduction

While completing my M.A. in Economics at San Diego State University, I taught two semesters of Principles of Economics. As an instructor, I held weekly lectures and office hours. I have also been a teaching assistant for three other courses while completing my Ph.D. in Economics at UC-Irvine: Introductory Macroeconomics, Introductory Microeconomics, and the Economics of Accounting (four times). As a teaching assistant, I led weekly discussion sections to go over course material and answer students' questions.

Below, I summarize the teaching evaluations I received in my courses taught at San Diego State University and my Economics of Accounting teaching assistant assignment at UC-Irvine, and discuss some common themes. The full set of teaching evaluations for all courses is available on my website. I am consistently given high marks for being an effective instructor. The main area that I need to improve on is engaging the students in my lectures. By developing more in-class activities and more hands on learning techniques, I plan to find new ways to engage my students.

Principles of Economics courses at San Diego State University:

I taught Principles of Economics for two semesters, three times a week for 50 minutes. I also held weekly office hours for 2.5 hours, and also by appointment. The classes were relatively large, both with over 60 students. I prepared each lecture well in advance, and would attempt to adjust the lectures when certain lecturing techniques did not seem to be working. While the students seemed to understand the course material through my lectures, which were typically delivered via a combination of PowerPoint slides and the whiteboard, some evaluations suggested that more interaction between myself and the students in the course would have been helpful to further emphasize the material. Based on this feedback from students, I plan to incorporate more in-class activities, such as worksheets, group work, and a Q&A session to facilitate more student engagement.

Economics of Accounting courses at UC-Irvine:

I have been a teaching assistant for the Economics of Accounting for four quarters at UC-Irvine. It is by far my best-reviewed course as a teaching assistant. I lead at least one, 50 minute discussion per week, and held office hours for at least 2 hours per week (and by appointment). I structure each discussion section to spend the first half going over the key ideas covered in lecture that week before applying them to an example from the homework or textbook. I make sure to set aside time at the end of the discussion section for students to discuss the issues they have encountered with the lectures and/or homework. To facilitate interaction among the students, instead of simply giving them the answers to particularly difficult homework problems, I split the students into groups to have them work through problems together. Students typically like this activity since it allows them to work with others who may approach the problem in a different manner. Oftentimes, students are able to arrive at the correct answer by working together without guidance from me.

Summary of Teaching Evaluations

- **Principles of Economics, Fall 2013**

- Response rate: 25/62 (40%)

- Effectiveness Scores

- 28% Average
 - 44% Above Average
 - 28% Outstanding

- Strongest points when teaching Principles of Economics

- “I personally liked how Ms. Bass was able to make the material feel more down to earth. She was able to take economics and make it fun to learn.”
 - “She was very easy to talk to, which made it easy for students to come to her for help. She was able to teach the material in a manner that kept students engaged and motivated students to want to come to class.”
 - “I really enjoyed Ms. Bass's instructing because she explained the content of the course as a great tutor would. She broke down complicated concepts into easily understandable ideas. Her lectures were easy to follow and well organized.”
 - “She makes a great effort to connect with her students as much as possible.”
 - “The material was easier to understand since I am specifically interested in this subject and it related a lot to the real world.”
 - “Her ability to instill the major concepts of the course in you.”

- Suggested improvements when teaching Principles of Economics

- “I cannot really think about anything different she could do. However, maybe she could make the class a little more interactive, as that in my opinion would help make the students more likely to get a better grade on tests.”
 - “The lectures for the subject were boring because all we did was take notes the whole time. She should switch up the lectures to make a more interesting learning environment.”
 - “The course would be better if she found a way to incorporate more engaging activities such as projects or handouts in addition to the lectures, just to change it up a bit.”
 - “Overall she was a great teacher. I do wish she gave us study guides before the test but other than that, I really liked her”
 - “Use more relatable examples”

- **Principles of Economics, Spring 2014**

- Response rate: 49/70 (70%)

- Effectiveness Scores

- 2.04% Poor
 - 4.08% Below Average
 - 22.45% Average
 - 24.49% Above Average
 - 42.86% Outstanding

- Strongest points when teaching Principles of Economics

- “I think she did a great job of making confusing concepts very easy to understand. I definitely understood a lot more of the subject matter than I originally thought I would.”
 - “I liked the connections made to real life and how they affected us directly.”
 - “My instructor tried to engage all the students in the course by asking them questions.”
 - “I loved that she was able to answer all of my questions and assist me whenever I was confused. Her office hours were always great and helped me a lot.”
 - “Instructor was very knowledgeable in the topic. Also, being able to recognize when the class was lost and being able to go over a certain area.”
 - Suggested improvements when teaching Principles of Economics
 - “More in class activities (worksheets or other material)”
 - “I believe we should have been given more examples from the textboom because the homework assignments involved such problems.”
 - “She could have gone slower and explained some of the material a little more.”
 - “She can improve on going over material somewhat better and getting the class involved more.”
 - “Sometimes I found that we were going through the course material rather quickly, but otherwise I think she did a great job teaching our class.”
- **Economics of Accounting (Spring 2015, Summer 2015, Summer 2016, Summer 2017)**
 - Spring 2015:
 - Response rate: 47/291 (16.15%)
 - Effectiveness Scores ((Range 1 (Poor) to 7 (Excellent))
 - Average = 5.83
 - Median = 6.00
 - Summer 2015:
 - Response rate: 22/49 (44.9%)
 - Effectiveness Scores ((Range 1 (Barely Satisfactory) to 9 (Excellent))¹
 - Average = 7.90
 - Median = 8.00
 - Summer 2016:
 - Response rate: 15/42 (35.71%)
 - Effectiveness Scores
 - Average = 8.29
 - Median = 9.00
 - Summer 2017
 - Response rate: 21/45 (46.67%)
 - Effectiveness Scores
 - Average = 7.71

¹ Note: Range of responses for teaching effectiveness changed in the Summer of 2015 from a range of 1 (Poor) to 7 (Excellent) to a range of 1 (Barely Satisfactory) to 9 (Excellent)

- Median = 8.00

- Strongest points when teaching Economics of Accounting
 - “The TA was very helpful and clarified every topic covered in class. She came to discussion sections prepared and ready to teach and answer any questions we had about the course. She made the course easy to understand and made complex concepts easy to grasp.”
 - “I really appreciated that Brittany would meet with me outside of class in order to go over the material. Originally, I had signed up for a section that was cancelled and moved to a time that interfered with my work schedule. It left me unable to attend any discussion by her or any other TA so she was more than willing to meet up with me privately and review every single question on the quiz. I am forever grateful for her.”
 - “She can simplify the concepts we learned from lectures and get us well prepared for exams.”
 - “Shows expertise in the subject, clear explanation skills, good display of notes, and very organized.”
 - “Brittany Bass is very knowledgeable. She understands the material very well, so she is able to provide clear and understandable explanations of the concepts covered in class. She has shown an exceptional ability to develop multi-faceted examples, which cover various topics, during discussion. She is also very good at providing clear and concise answers to any questions that students have.”

- Suggested improvements when teaching Economics of Accounting
 - “The TA could try to integrate activities in to section there’d be more interaction.”
 - “Hopefully, more communication among students. like sending study guide via emails before exams to help students better understand the material.”
 - “I think that she could give us 1-2 minutes, if time allows, to attempt the example problems/calculations during class.”
 - “Speak slower”