As an educator in economics, I have two goals that I look to accomplish whenever I teach a class. Firstly, I aim to provide a solid foundational understanding of what economics means, what it can say, and what it doesn't say. Secondly, I seek to equip my students with a basic toolkit for understanding the socio-economic world, and for making informed decisions as it relates to real world economic decisions. I aim for my students to leave with a clear understanding of what a specific economic model of interest says, and how the student could analyze real world problems critically with this specific model.

My approach to achieving these goals take a three pronged approach.

1. **Teaching critical thinking**

   In general, I avoid presenting economic models as an absolute depiction of the world, as I do not wish students to view these concepts as a given fact. Instead, I always make a clear statement with regards to the strengths and weakness of the model or theory in question, and challenge students to critically discuss these models in class. For instance, in teaching the concept of a wage floor to my students in Econ 101, I do not simply present the results from the book as a given fact. Instead, I first poll the students regarding their thoughts on a minimum wage. I then write down a “pro's and con's” table, using their heuristics and preconceptions as a guide. For instance, some students might have read in the Wall Street Journal that it is bad, and repeat their ideas that a wage floor creates unemployment. Other students might argue that it is good, because people get richer. After listing down all these pro's and con's, I don't tell the students whether they are right or wrong. Instead, I keep their argument on the board, and proceed to explain the classic labor supply / demand model. I then revisit their propositions, and ask them, if in light of this model, they are “wrong” or “correct”. I discuss their arguments using the model paradigm, making a point to emphasize on the assumptions made in order to arrive at the result.

2. **Bring theoretical economics into real life**

   I enjoy helping students connect economic theory to real world applications (for instance, connecting the estimation of demand elasticities to inference on market power), and where possible, provide opportunities for students to conduct their own economic analysis. For instance, in my Econ 101 class, student assignments usually include a discussion of talking points from the Economist or the Wall Street Journal. I believe that this method makes students more likely to accept economics as being relevant to their life, as opposed to simply an abstract concept.

   I also believe that the study of economics is best done with hands-on work. While we can learn much about economics through simply reading about the work of others (theoretical or empirical), the best learning comes from getting your hands dirty. This belief stems primarily from my own introduction into economics. As an undergraduate student, I was introduced to
economics research by two professors who did important research. Their guidance motivated me to prove myself as an economist, which in turn introduced me to the broad range of economic research that are both interesting and relevant to real life. As such, as a faculty, I look forward to providing guidance to aspiring undergraduates with respect to undergraduate research.

3. Self-evaluation ex-post

How do I know that I have been successful at my goals? Primarily through active feedback. As an instructor, I made it clear that we are all students in this class. My students are learning economics from me; in turn, I am learning how to be a better teacher from them. I found that I have convinced them that I indeed care about their feedback. For instance, during the first week of class, I received feedback from a student who quoted psychology studies regarding how instructors tended to over-estimate the abilities of their students, and ended up teaching too fast. As such, I adapted my teaching, and over the course of the semester, my students would occasionally send me personal emails thanking me for using certain teaching methods. At the end of the course, one of my happiest moments was when I received an email from a student telling me that, based on the entire semester's teaching, he would not have thought that I was completely new at this.

At the end of the day, my goal in college teaching is to convince students that the economics classes they take matter, both in everyday life issues, as well as in their professional careers. I hope that students can take the concepts we teach them, and look at the world critically.