

Teaching Statement

I have taught various courses in different settings during my career. I have experienced teaching to large undergraduate classes as well as to small MBA and PhD classes. I have taught a broad spectrum of subjects that include managerial and economic content. I had my first teaching experience at the University of Udine, Udine, Italy where I acted as a teaching assistant for the course “Strategic Management”. I was an active lecture for the first time while I was a graduate student in the Department of Economics at the University of Venice, Ca’ Foscari, Italy. At this time, I taught “Principles of Economics”, which was a core course for undergraduates. At the University of Lugano, in Lugano, Switzerland, I taught PhD classes on specific topics in Network Analysis, as well as Econometrics. At the same institution, I gave an MBA course on Entrepreneurship. Currently, at the École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne, Lausanne, Switzerland, I am leading PhD reading seminars in Organizational Economics. Within the EuroTech doctoral program, I am one of the lecturers for the “Economics of Innovation and Technological Change” course.

My experience goes beyond traditional “front-of-the-room” teaching. Within the context of the Strategic Management course that I co-taught in Udine, I had the experience of coaching students for the “Start-Cup Friuli-Venezia-Giulia”, a regional business plan competition organized by the University of Udine, which gives awards to the best business technology- based ideas developed by students and researchers. I acted as a mentor, helping students to develop their business ideas and concretize them in a business plan.

I include several approaches in my teaching that students generally appreciate. First, I make certain that what I am teaching is what my students need in order to progress. This process begins with knowing my students’ backgrounds, abilities, and motivations. For instance, the MBA students who attended my course on Entrepreneurship had little or no prior knowledge on economics and management topics. The course was part of the program in Embedded Systems Design at the Faculty of Informatics, in Lugano. Students had a technical background in applied sciences such as engineering, mathematics and computer science. My course was designed to complement their technical skills with the basic knowledge of entrepreneurial topics applicable to everyday business life. During my lessons, I frequently referenced everyday economic examples to help them relate better to the concepts I was teaching. In addition, as homework, I asked students to read and analyze articles selected from economic reviews. They were then asked to critically comment on these readings in front of their colleagues in the next class. After their graduation, several of them opened their own startups. They reported great appreciation for having been exposed to entrepreneurial practices.

Second, I make certain that students participate actively in the learning process, rather than merely being passive observers. For instance, in my classes on Network Analysis and Econometrics, I made students play with a real dataset in specific lab classes. With the same spirit, during the Entrepreneurship course, I used a role-play simulation called the ‘Beergame’ (or beer distribution game) to let students experience typical supply chain problems.

Third, because I do not see teaching as a unidirectional activity, I make myself available to all of my students. I have an open door policy, especially for PhD students. They know that they can drop by at any time. In my experience, an exciting source of new ideas has come from the interactions I have had with my students.

Fourth, I work constantly in order to improve my teaching skills. For example, in the coming months I am planning to attend the course “Effective Teaching in Higher Education Programme” offered by EPFL.