TEACHING STATEMENT

Structure: *introduction - experience - philosophy - implementation -looking forward*

The concept of teaching and disseminating knowledge is as fundamental to the academic discourse as producing knowledge. I developed my core ideals around this notion, perhaps inspired by my parents' career as professors in physics. As a result, I have taken every opportunity to develop my teaching skills and contribute to scholastic research over the course of my fledgling academic life. In the paragraphs below, I provide a brief idea of my teaching experience and touch upon the core philosophical ideals that I base my teaching on. I also briefly talk about some steps that I have taken in the classroom to implement these ideals and conclude with a couple of projects that I have in the pipeline.

I have been fortunate to be affiliated to exceptional universities in India, USA and England over the past decade, and have gained experience in teaching at each of these places. Most recently I have been employed as a fixed-term lecturer in economics at the University of Manchester where I am the Module Leader in Mathematical Economics as well as a small-group teacher in Microeconomics. As a module leader, I design the course curriculum in mathematical economics for undergraduate students, structure assessment methods for the course as well as conduct small group tutorial sessions along with a group of Teaching Associates. This has been a vastly engaging experience in constructing my own module as well as getting acquainted with the UK education system. The lectures I conduct for this course involves a large classroom of 250 students, something that complements well with the small group (of 15 students) teaching that I conduct in the Microeconomics module. I've also taught a multitude of courses ranging from Intermediate Macroeconomics to Economics of the Corporation, and designed data analysis courses using Stata/MATLAB. Along with these teaching experiences, I have undertaken a number of training courses to develop my scholastic abilities. I qualified the National Eligibility Test in Economics that allows me to teach in any accredited university in India. Moreover, I gained the online teaching certificate from Penn State, whose training was an invaluable asset to me when we had to move to online learning during the covid-19 pandemic. As a Teaching & Scholarship lecturer at the University of Manchester, I have been fortunate to get access to a wide array of training programs/workshops to develop my skills in general as well as for the UK higher education sector in particular. I have enrolled into the training program that will allow me to become a Fellow of the HEA. Moreover, Ive taken part and conducted workshops on small group teaching in the department. All of these trainings and workshops have helped develop my philosophy and my classroom activities.

My teaching experiences and training has shaped the basic principles that govern my teaching ideals. These may be broadly categorised under two headings– "**inclusive academic development**" and "**simplicity in complex problems**". I believe both these ideals are essential for developing a good combination of technical and employability skills in economics. As economists, we are dealing with increasingly complex theoretical and empirical models. Consequently, the classroom training has become increasingly technical in nature and thus it is essential to develop among students the ability to convey these technical concepts to a wide audience. This ability can be developed by focusing on an intuitive approach to complement the mathematical rigour that is typically taught in the classroom. This may involve utilising visual aids (e.g. by using graphs to explain complex mathematical proofs), encouraging students to explain mathematical statements in English, and asking students to come up with simple examples and counter-examples to the models that we teach them. Training students to come up with simple explanations for complex phenomenon can help develop these skills throughout their time in university. The ability to simplify complex issue has a direct impact on fostering an

inclusive environment and a collaborative approach. It allows students to reach out to students in other disciplines, allowing them to venture into new inter-disciplinary projects. Moreover this skill becomes essential in the workplace where students would typically be working in a team consisting of engineers, physicists, computer scientists and business analysts. In fact, there is recent evidence that employers think that recent economics graduates have been falling behind in these core soft-skills (*Employability skill in UK Economics Degrees*, *Report of the Economics Networks*).

Even though my teaching philosophy guides me in the classroom on a day-to-day basis, teaching is an inherently dynamic exercise. Each subject and cohort of students brings new challenges to us. I actively try to incorporate successful scholastic endeavours and have a couple of new initiatives in the pipeline. For instance, the covid-19 pandemic brought wide-scale changes to teaching and learning – specifically bringing online learning to the forefront. As we return to in-person classes, I have retained aspects of online learning that I believe (and corroborated with empirical evidence) are beneficial to students. To give a concrete example, although I conduct regular in-person office hours, I encourage students to engage in discussions and post questions in online forums. This has three important benefits: (a) by allowing anonymous posts, they encourage usually introverted students a safe space to ask questions that they wouldn't typically ask during a lecture or during a one-one meeting, (b) response to a question asked by a student may be beneficial to the entire class – perhaps it's a query that many students had or the response provided a different way to look at a concept than was covered in the lecture, and (c) the online forum allows students to engage in conversations and answer each other's questions. The latter is a very important skill for students to develop over their time in university. This idea of having a digital copy can also help students to revise the material at their preferred pace, which is very useful in large classes that have students with varying degree of technical skills. I often utilise this by uploading videos of solved examples for my courses and undertake online "coffee hours" where we have informal discussion groups about the materials we covered in the lectures. In my microeconomics course, these discussions typically entailed critically evaluating a model and trying to figure out how they may be applied in real world scenarios. While we don't expect these discussions to always lead to novel research, it gives students an opportunity to develop their communication skills. They are allowed a space to think about connecting classroom materials to real-life and understand the limitations of the approach that we typically learn in our textbooks.

Along with these day-to-day practices, I hope to engage in several projects aimed at developing the scholastic methods that are currently employed in economics. My interests lie mainly in small-group teaching and implementing a collaborative approach to teaching economics at the undergraduate and postgraduate level. My colleague and I are working to develop a short-term project to foster self-study and research students, something that is an essential tenet of university learning. This could be especially beneficial for newly admitted students who find it difficult to transition from high school to the more independent nature of the studying that the university curriculum demands. The project, although in its nascent stage, would involve conducting workshops guiding students how to understand and focus on important areas of a subject. Simultaneously, we will run a regular "peer tutoring" framework where senior year students can help juniors to guide them in developing self-study skills (e.g. How to "google" a topic? What alternate resources helped them? etc) In a longer term project, I am interested in developing a flipped-learning system where lectures are disseminated in small groups and tutorials held in large groups. Small groups have an advantage of fostering more group work and material retention. Developing such a curriculum, with appropriate incentives, and analysing the long-run academic outcomes of this system is a long term project in the pipeline.