1 Kevin Allen: Teaching Philosophy

Technology has been changing the learning process for years, but this is especially true now that classes have moved to a completely online format and may remain there for some time. I have always felt that it is important to recognize that in any class, especially large lectures where computers and devices are necessary parts of the course, you are competing with the whole internet for student's attention. It is even more important now to study and learn how people can learn from a screen, and the best practices for reaching students through that medium.

Through working with the Center for Faculty Excellence at UNC I have learned the value of backwards engineering courses. Instead of starting with material and then generating questions about the material, I try to generate the list of skills, lessons and abilities that I want the students to have by the end of the course and then moving back. From those goals, I develop tests that will evaluate how well students achieve or understand those goals. Then from the tests I design homework and practice problems, and then I develop the material for individual lessons to feed into those homework and practice problems. It is a work in progress, but as I shifted my course to this format I have found that student response has been excellent in those parts.

Another shift has been toward prerecorded, scripted and edited videos posted alongside a transcript of my spoken words and any materials used to produce the video. This maximizes the outreach of each lesson to students based on their specific learning style. I label each video about the specific topic covered, and try to keep each video to 3-5 minutes when I can so that each individual topic video can be consumed without becoming overwhelming while facilitating re-watching later for study purposes. I also embed what I call "engagement questions" into these videos, so that students must watch the video and then give the appropriate answers in Sakai.

This consistent, low stakes evaluation gives students immediate feedback into how well they understood the content of the video, so that confusion can be addressed at the point of learning before higher stakes evaluations such as the the homeworks and exams. I plan to continue to use this structure as a flipped classroom in more in-person settings, where I can deliver information and monitor engagement with the material before we get to class and then work through issues, do practice problems and develop understanding of that material collaboratively in both student-teacher and student-student interactions.

The core of my teaching philosophy is therefor to take the research and best practices that I learn, advice from my teaching mentors and student feedback to produce a course that is flexible, accessible and able to reach students where they are and reward them for engaging with myself and the material. Though I haven't been able to see the understanding dawn on many faces this semester, I have received several emails thanking me for my teaching which is a bright spot in a difficult time, especially for someone that has been nicknamed 'professor' my whole life because of how much I enjoy helping people learn.

2 Teaching Evaluations

Table 1: Teaching Evaluation Summary

			Evaluation	
	Class Size	Response Rate	Course	Teaching
University of Kentucky				
ECO 201 (Fall 2015)	53	0.47	3.58/4	3.63/4
ECO 201 (Spring 2016)	39	0.53	3.24/4	3.31/4
ECO 391-001 (Fall 2016)	40	0.53	4.15/5	4.24/5
ECO 391-002 (Fall 2016)	43	0.33	3.64/5	3.86/5
ECO 402 (Summer 2016)	16	0.50	4.6/5	4.25/5
ECO 202-004 (Spring 2017)	52	0.48	4.39/5	4.55/5
ECO 202-006 (Spring 2017)	52	0.63	4.44/5	4.54/5
ECO 402 (Summer 2017)	8	0.75	4.64/5	4.81/5
ECO 391-009 (Fall 2018)	43	0.35	3.2/5	3.5/5
ECO 391-402 (Fall 2018)	40	0.2	4.2/5	4.4/5
University of North Carolina Chapel Hill				
ECON 400-001 (Fall 2019)	239	0.24	3.58/5	3.38/5
ECON 400-002 (Fall 2019)	95	0.22	2.95/5	3.15/4
ECON 400-001 (Spring 2020*)	246	0.26	3.56/5	3.77/5
ECON 400H-001 (Spring 2020*)	25	0.2	3.8/5	4/5
ECON 400-001 (Fall 2020)	218	0.36	3.85/5	N/A
ECON 400-002 (Fall 2020)	114	0.33	3.92/5	N/A

Full teaching evaluations are available upon request. Classes indicated with an asterix transitioned to fully online part of the way through the semester due to COVID-19 and so evaluation questions focused more on the transition than the class as a whole.

3 Course Descriptions

- **ECO 201: Principles of Eco I (Microeconomics)**

  The study of the allocation of scarce resources from the viewpoint of individual economic units. Topics include household and firm behavior, competitive pricing of goods and resources, and monopoly power.

- **ECO 202: Principles of Eco II (Macroeconomics)**

  A study of how societys needs are satisfied with the limited resources available. Topics include contemporary issues such as inflation, unemployment, economic growth, international dependencies, and how public policy deals with them. A critical understanding

of the U.S. and global economies will enhance your value as a manager or executive of a business (whether for-profit or non-profit), as a family member dealing with jobs and financial decisions, and as a voter in a democracy. The course will allow you to become knowledgeable of, and able to critically think about, the major macroeconomic issues of unemployment, jobs, recessions, economic growth, inflation, deflation, oil prices, monetary policy, the Federal Reserve, fiscal policy, budget deficits, the national debt, international trade, international finance, and the financial system. Prereq: ECO 201.

- **ECO 391: Economics and Business Statistics**

  A survey of statistical techniques relevant to modern economics and business, with major emphasis on correlation and regression, Bayesian decision theory, index numbers, time series analysis, and forecasting models.

- **ECO 402: Intermediate Macroeconomic Theory**

  National income concepts, the determination of aggregate income and employment, the theory of money and inflation and problems of economic growth.

- **ECON 400: Introduction to Statistics and Econometrics**

  Comprehensive introduction to statistics, including descriptive statistics and statistical graphics, probability theory, distributions, parameter estimation, hypothesis testing, simple and multiple regression, and use of powerful statistical estimation software. This course includes a substantial introduction to basic econometrics. Honors version available.

4 Select Student Comments

- Dr. Allen is a great professor and I really enjoyed taking his course. His enthusiasm was evident and he always worked hard to make sure the content was relevant to us as economics (and for me also as a policy) majors and so it made learning the content much more engaging and interesting. His reallife experience added a lot of detail to the course and he was also always willing to share with us.
- Professor Allen is the first person who has been able to accurately teach statistics to me. He organizes his thoughts clearly and concisely so that everything makes sense. He 100% WANTS his students to succeed. Online finals were more difficult, only because math is easier on paper, in my opinion, but other than that the class was excellent and transferred online smoothly.
- Kevin Allen made the transition to remote instruction doable. I found that the instructional videos were most helpful as well as the abundance of resources Professor Allen created for us he provided multiple testing times and was flexible with students. Learning definitely became a lot more concise.

- Very good teacher. Clear that he thinks from the perspective of a student when creating course material. Easily one of the most fair professors I have ever had. Very clear that he has a real passion for making sure students understand the material. Really like personal examples he includes in class, they help my understanding
- Kevin Allen was very knowledgable on the subject field and helped give me real world context by discussing possible and previous applications of the course material,
- He is a great storyteller, for that he made understanding of the material much easier, giving excellent examples in class for needed clarity. He was always understanding of conflicts, since it is a summer class, which allowed me to better prepare for the class given my very busy work schedule.
- He explains things in ways that are easily understood by students, rather than talking to us as if we are already professionals. He relates topics to real world scenarios, and it makes understanding and applying concepts far easier.
- when he explain something he make sure that everyone in class understand the material before he proceed to the next one. On top of that, always offer help to anyone that needed. GREAT LECTURER
- Mr. Allen is an outstanding economics teacher. I have taken econ courses before and have never had someone break it down and make the concepts so relative. It is easy to learn and understand when he makes comparisons.
- Best teacher I have had at UK.
- His entire style is extremely entertaining with the material. People actually want to come to class because we feel like we actually learn something when he teaches. He does not require us to learn the entire subject on our own. His level of respect, expectations of the students, and teaching style are something that I wish more of my professors had.
- He is always very friendly to help. I like asking him questions.
- Good guy, cares about his students, makes a clear effort to promote actual understanding over rote memorization.
- I wouldn't. I have yet to have a professor that was so engaged, and had such a depth of knowledge with the ability to teach it on an underclassman level. [In response to "Which aspects of the course would you change? How and Why?"]
- Great lectures! Really good real life examples. Love the way he teaches. wonderful exam reviews that were really helpful. Cares that the students understand the material and always willing to slow down if people need help.
- Nothing the man is a G [In response to "Which aspects of the instructor would you change? How and Why?"]