

Sheheryar Banuri
Teaching Statement

According to the Felder-Soloman index of learning styles, the variety of methods individuals employ to absorb information is multi-dimensional. I believe that each student comes in to the classroom with a preferred learning style. While it is difficult to anticipate ex-ante how the classroom as a whole will best absorb the knowledge presented to them, there are a number of methods I employ to make sure I bridge the gap between teaching and learning styles as much as possible. Teaching involves not merely being a guide through the conceptual material in the course, but also providing applications of the knowledge to the environment. With this perspective in mind, my method of teaching puts analytical relevance at the forefront. Perhaps more than other disciplines, social science lends itself well to this method, since students draw on their own personal experiences when applying the concepts presented to them. For example, when teaching game theory to students, I found that constructing a game from suggestions by the students based on their own experiences, allowed them to understand why others made decisions differently from their own. In order to achieve this shared understanding between students and the teacher, a conversational style through discussion and argument is the cornerstone of my teaching technique. One of my favorite teaching methods is the use of classroom interactive games that illustrate key concepts from the course. These provide a direct experience of the decision problem that students may not have faced in their personal lives. Thus, even if prior experience is not available, students can draw on their activities within the experiment in order to contribute to the discussion. Experiments on the median voter theorem allow students to understand the strategic implications behind different policy proposals and why shifting stances on issues occur in politics. I regularly draw on relevant news stories and events in the world as demonstrations of where certain theories fit (or do not fit as the case may be), and routinely ask for suggestions as to how a certain issue may be addressed. I am always impressed with how students arrive at the right answer simply by discussing the problem. I often open my lectures with a current problem and ask for solutions as a way to introduce the lecture material. This results in active class participation right from the outset. The next step is simply a journey to organize the collective responses by applying the relevant theoretical constructs. I have found that students actively engage with the material outside the classroom such that the discussions become precise as the semester continues.

The process of discovery and honing analytical skills is just as important (if not more so) as practical relevance in the classroom. The approach taken to “solve” a particular social issue often determines whether the solution is tractable. Theory helps, since intuition can often be misleading. For example, when discussing corruption, students often argue that corruption is useful in reducing bureaucratic red tape. Using theory as a guide, we see that with entrenched corruption, bureaucratic processes stagnate and political development is inhibited. The problems associated with this form of corruption require a deeper understanding of individual motivations, political processes, and resource constraints. These issues are not immediately apparent and need theory as a guide to hone the analysis in order to provide a “better” solution. Thus, paying close attention to these dimensions necessitates a deeper understanding of theoretical issues as well as methodological constraints, which I strive to impart upon my students.

To date, I have taught an Experimental Economics course during my graduate work at UT-Dallas. This is a senior level course open to all majors in the School of Economic, Political, and Policy Sciences, and is designed to introduce advanced undergraduates to the tools needed to conduct rigorous experimental research in social science. This course covers basic research design as well as methodology for lab and field experiments. It covers experimental applications to Economics, Political Science, and Policy topics. I received an “Excellent” or “Very Good” rating for the course overall, for instructor enthusiasm, and for the confidence in instructor knowledge ratings. I also placed in the 80th percentile in the entire institution on intellectual challenge, and 90th percentile for the same metric on student involvement in the course. In addition to the course evaluations, I also give my students an informal survey on the course in order to evaluate my teaching effectiveness. Below are the data from the course evaluation and excerpts of student comments.

In spring 2010, I co-advised (with Catherine Eckel) a group of four undergraduate students on their independent research project analyzing the impact of punishment on trust and public goods games. In addition, I advised an undergraduate student on the impact of crime on risk-taking behavior, which earned him a grant for presenting his research in the annual undergraduate research competition at UT-Dallas. I have also conducted guest lectures on experimental methods in the Principles of Microeconomics course at UT-Dallas, and to advanced Business Administration undergraduates and graduate students at the Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science and Technology (SZABIST) in Karachi, Pakistan. I have also presented a short seminar on experimental and behavioral economics to the faculty of the Institute of Business Administration (IBA) in Karachi, Pakistan.

**Student Comments from Evaluations of ECON 4334 Experimental Economics, Fall 2009,
University of Texas at Dallas**

“Sheheryar is a great teacher. Passionate, patient, and always in a good mood.”

“Prof. Banuri is great! Always willing to help!”

“This course was well taught. The content that I learned was relevant to real world problems and we got to try and use our abilities to fix these problems.”

“Overall I enjoyed the class and would suggest it to friends.”

“The instructor is enthusiastic and knowledgeable.”

“The content was good and the experiments were good.”

“Enthusiasm, variety of experiments, hands on approach to learning.”

Instructional Assessment System

ECON 4334 001
Social Science
School of Economic, Political and Policy Sciences
The University of Texas at Dallas

Sheheryar Banori
Teaching Assistant
Autumn 2009

STUDENT EVALUATION OF INSTRUCTION

	E=Excellent; VG=Very Good; G=Good; F=Fair; P=Poor; VP=Very Poor	PERCENTAGES ¹						MEDIAN	DECILE RANK Institution College
		E (5)	VG (4)	G (3)	F (2)	P (1)	VP (0)		
1. The course as a whole was:	12	25	75				4.2	5 **** 4 ***	
2. The course content was:	12	33	50	17			4.2	6 ***** 4 ****	
3. The instructor's contribution to the course was:	12	58	33	8			4.6	6 ***** 6 *****	
4. The instructor's effectiveness in teaching the subj. matter was:	12	42	33	25			4.3	4 **** 4 ****	
COMBINED ITEMS 1-4	48	40	48	12			4.3	5 ***** 4 ****	
5. Course organization was:	12	33	50	17			4.2	5 ***** 4 ****	
6. Sequential presentation of concepts was:	12	42	42	17			4.3	6 ***** 5 *****	
7. Explanations by instructor were:	12	42	50	8			4.3	6 ***** 4 ****	
8. Instr's ability to present alternative explan. when needed was:	12	58	25	17			4.6	7 ***** 6 *****	
9. Instructor's use of examples and illustrations was:	12	25	50	25			4.0	3 *** 2 **	
10. Instructor's enhancement of student interest in the material was:	12	25	75				4.2	5 ***** 4 ****	
11. Student confidence in instructor's knowledge was:	12	58	42				4.6	5 ***** 4 ****	
12. Instructor's enthusiasm was:	12	75	25				4.8	8 ***** 7 *****	
13. Clarity of course objectives was:	12	58	42				4.6	8 ***** 7 *****	
14. Interest level of class sessions was:	12	33	58	8			4.2	6 ***** 6 *****	
15. Availability of extra help when needed was:	12	75	17	8			4.8	9 ***** 8 *****	
16. Use of class time was:	12	58	25	17			4.6	7 ***** 7 *****	
17. Instructor's interest in whether students learned was:	12	67	25	8			4.8	8 ***** 7 *****	
18. Amount you learned in the course was:	12	50	33	17			4.5	7 ***** 6 *****	
19. Relevance and usefulness of course content were:	12	50	42	8			4.5	6 ***** 6 *****	
20. Evaluative and grading techniques (tests, papers, etc.) were:	12	33	42	25			4.1	4 **** 4 ****	
21. Reasonableness of assigned work was:	12	33	33	33			4.0	4 **** 3 ***	
22. Clarity of student responsibilities and requirements was:	12	50	33	17			4.5	6 ***** 5 *****	

Relative to other college courses you have taken:

	Respondents	Much Higher (7) (6) (5) (4) (3) (2) (1)							MEDIAN	DECILE RANK Institution College
		(7)	(6)	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)		
23. Do you expect your grade in this course to be:	11	9	18	27	27	18			4.7	2 ** 2 **
24. The intellectual challenge presented was:	11	27	45	18	9				6.0	8 ***** 8 *****
25. The amount of effort you put into this course was:	11	9	55	9	27				5.8	6 ***** 6 *****
26. The amount of effort to succeed in this course was:	11	18	55	9	18				5.9	7 ***** 7 *****
27. Your involvement in course (assignments, attendance, etc.) was:	11	45	36	9	9				6.4	9 ***** 9 *****

<p>28. On average, how many hours per week have you spent on this course?</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Percent</th> <th>Hours Under 2</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>18</td><td>2-3</td></tr> <tr><td>55</td><td>4-5</td></tr> <tr><td>27</td><td>6-7</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>8-9</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>10-11</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>12-13</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>14-15</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>16-17</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>18-19</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>20-21</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>22 or more</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Respondents: 11 Class median: 4.7 Hours per credit: 1.56</p>	Percent	Hours Under 2	18	2-3	55	4-5	27	6-7		8-9		10-11		12-13		14-15		16-17		18-19		20-21		22 or more	<p>29. From the total average hours above, how many do you consider were valuable in advancing your education?</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Percent</th> <th>Hours Under 2</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>36</td><td>2-3</td></tr> <tr><td>55</td><td>4-5</td></tr> <tr><td>9</td><td>6-7</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>8-9</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>10-11</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>12-13</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>14-15</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>16-17</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>18-19</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>20-21</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>22 or more</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Respondents: 11 Class median: 4.0 Hours per credit: 1.33</p>	Percent	Hours Under 2	36	2-3	55	4-5	9	6-7		8-9		10-11		12-13		14-15		16-17		18-19		20-21		22 or more	<p>30. What grade do you expect in this course?</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Percent</th> <th>Grade</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>18</td><td>A (3.9-4.0)</td></tr> <tr><td>27</td><td>A- (3.5-3.8)</td></tr> <tr><td>9</td><td>B+ (3.2-3.4)</td></tr> <tr><td>9</td><td>B (2.9-3.1)</td></tr> <tr><td>18</td><td>B- (2.5-2.8)</td></tr> <tr><td>9</td><td>C+ (2.2-2.4)</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>C (1.9-2.1)</td></tr> <tr><td>9</td><td>C- (1.5-1.8)</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>D+ (1.2-1.4)</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>D (0.9-1.1)</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>D- (0.7-0.8)</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>E (0.0)</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>Pass</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>Credit</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>No Credit</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Respondents: 11 Class median: 3.3</p>	Percent	Grade	18	A (3.9-4.0)	27	A- (3.5-3.8)	9	B+ (3.2-3.4)	9	B (2.9-3.1)	18	B- (2.5-2.8)	9	C+ (2.2-2.4)		C (1.9-2.1)	9	C- (1.5-1.8)		D+ (1.2-1.4)		D (0.9-1.1)		D- (0.7-0.8)		E (0.0)		Pass		Credit		No Credit	<p>31. In regard to your academic program, is this course best described as:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Percent</th> <th>Description</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>100</td><td>In your major</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>A distribution requirement</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>An elective</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>In your minor</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>A program requirement</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>Other</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Challenge & Engagement Index: -</p> <p>Survey Enrollment: 13 Survey Respondents: 12 Evaluation Form Type: B</p>	Percent	Description	100	In your major		A distribution requirement		An elective		In your minor		A program requirement		Other
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IAS SURVEY ID: AU092078

UTD SURVEY ID: ceaazifw

ECON4334.001.09F :: Experimental Economics
Instructor of Record: Sheheryar Banori
Official Enrollment: 13

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1. Percentages are based on the number of students who rated each item.