

The object of teaching is to create a desire inside students to learn for themselves. The reason this is so important is that, in order to succeed in life, students will need to be able to teach themselves new skills. The primary strategies for accomplishing this in the classroom are to motivate the material with as many real-world examples as possible, and to cultivate a personal relationship with students and encourage them to do the same with each other.

While it can be difficult to motivate theoretical concepts with real-world examples, I was able to do this successfully by relating such concepts to real-world objects. As an example, when teaching an introductory [Matlab](#) course which was geared towards improving the quantitative skills of rising second-year PhD students (see syllabus [here](#); evaluations [here](#)), I needed to explain how maximum likelihood estimation (MLE) works. The way that I related this abstract concept was to show students a picture of a low-dimensional likelihood function (which looked like a hill) to drive home that MLE is as simple as finding the top of a hill. This example helped keep students interested in what would otherwise have been a very dry and technical lecture.

Along with providing real-world motivation for concepts, it is also important to develop personal relationships. My own experience as a student and a teacher have confirmed the importance of this. One successful example of this was when I worked as a TA for the honors section of the principles of economics course at my undergraduate institution. During weekly recitation, I encouraged students to come to the board and explain concepts to their classmates. This had the double advantage of helping the students learn better by being thrust into a teaching role, and strengthening their relationships with each other. As evidence of this success, the students named me outstanding principles of economics TA.

In addition to being personable with students, it is also important for teachers to serve as mentors to students. This allows students to see the long-term value of the engaging with others. Furthermore, students who see that their instructor is both academically and personally invested in them are more likely to remember what they were taught. One specific example of this came a couple of years after teaching the Matlab introductory course. I received a message from a student who wanted to include some of my materials into lectures for her class. Because I had taken the time to invest in this student, she remembered what I had taught her, and reached out long after the class had finished.

To conclude, I am dedicated to instilling in students a lifelong desire to apply economic principles in their daily lives. By learning through real-world examples, students see the value of economics. By interacting with other students, they learn at a deeper level by teaching others. By interacting with the instructor, they see the value of interpersonal relationships in the learning process. These ingredients are essential to a lifelong pattern of learning.