I was initially nervous the first time I stood in front of a silent classroom, as an instructor. I asked a question and no student made eye contact with me or raised their hand. However, over the seven semesters that I have served as a course instructor or teaching assistant at the University of Illinois, I went from being nervous to being on the university's list of *Teachers Ranked as Excellent* in both 2018 and 2019. As an experienced instructor, I am involved in training new Teaching Assistants in campus-wide teaching programs. I am prepared to teach courses in a wide range of areas, including advanced courses in Natural Resources and Environmental Policy, Environmental Justice, and Microeconomics, Big Data Analysis, and Urban Economics.
My core goals as an instructor are to help students learn course content and to provide students with curiosity and the capacity for lifelong development. I follow four main teaching strategies to achieve those goals.

Teaching Strategy 1: Utilize hands-on activities

I like to implement hands-on activities in the classroom to explain complicated concepts and increase students' engagement. When I was responsible for independently leading weekly discussion sections of an environmental economics course, I used a simplified game to help students understand how a tradable permit program works. Students were grouped into four firms, while each firm had its own marginal abatement cost function and received uniform initial permits. I allowed permits to be bought and sold among firms and asked students to predict the market equilibrium price. After being highly engaged in the game, students understood how their expected equilibrium prices affect the trading process and the role of information in understanding how a market functions. Moreover, I shared with students the methods of using charts and diagrams to compare uniform standards, tradable permits, and taxes and encouraged them to apply this method to analyze other concepts taught in the class. When I was teaching the topic of hedging in an agricultural marketing class, students struggled with the relationship among the concepts of cash, future, and basis. Instead of repeating the definition of the concepts, I grouped students as wheat producers and flour mills and asked them to make their hedging decisions and calculate the profit/loss on futures under different scenarios. After a step-by-step demonstration of several simplified scenarios, students intuitively understood the definition of concepts and could make hedging decisions confidently.

Teaching Strategy 2: Acknowledge student diversity

I acknowledge that students have diverse levels of academic preparedness, and I work to promote a positive learning environment for all my students. When I taught undergraduate level classes at the University of Illinois, my classes always included students from different majors, such as economics, engineering, and music. The course materials were more challenging to some students with weaker math backgrounds. Thus, I provided review sessions and extra office hours to review the math tools that were required by the course. For instance, I reviewed the methods to solve linear systems with two variables before teaching the topic of analyzing cost-effective resource allocations. Moreover, I also included highly advanced questions on each homework that could be done for extra credit, which provide an incentive for self-motivated students to explore the topics further.

It is also critical to understand that students' backgrounds and experiences vary widely with race, ethnicity, and socio-economic status, and provide support tailored to their needs. I serve as a mentor in the I Promise mentoring program at the University of Illinois to provide holistic support to undergraduate students from low-income families. This one-to-one mentoring experience not only helps students from the underrepresented groups succeed in college and be prepared for life after graduation, but it also helped me understand how to be a better mentor for such students. For instance, I learned the obstacles my mentees have faced as first-generation college students and the types of support they need to be successful professionally. Many first-generation college students need to manage the demands of family and work full time because of their financial responsibility. Some of them are not familiar with academic resources and need additional support to develop computer and writing skills. As I also attempt to integrate online teaching methods into my classroom, I provide clear and detailed assignment instructions without assuming all students know how to turn in their works online. I try to identify students who may need extra help and provide resources. I encourage them to ask questions, discuss time management strategies with them, and refer them to resources on campus like the writing center and career services.

Teaching Strategy 3: Prepare a well-organized course

Course content is essential, but so are logistics. A well-organized course with proper course management helps students learn more efficiently. I try to be clear and consistent about deadlines, course expectations, and assignment instructions. I prepare students a weekly schedule at the beginning of the semester with listed exercises and remind students of important due dates using a simple tool like Google calendar. Thus, students can be clear about the objectives in each week and make study plans that take into account their other courses easily. I start each class with a specific learning objective for the day and end the lecture with a two-minute summary of the contents covered in the class.

Teaching Strategy 4: Utilize feedback for course improvement.

Teaching is a learning process, and I am willing to continue improving myself to be a better teacher. To prepare myself for different teaching challenges, I attended teaching courses and workshops offered at my university to learn fundamental theories on enhancing teaching effectiveness. Also, I invited consultants from UIUC's Teaching Center to observe my teaching and to discuss their observations with me. The comments from the consultants helped to determine positive aspects of my teaching and areas that need improvement. I also improved my teaching skills through gathering feedback from students. I have collected informal early feedback every semester after the first midterm since it is a useful tool to obtain students' opinions about the course during the semester. For instance, students suggested that I add more practical problems in a data management class. Responding to students' comments from the informal early feedback gave me the chance to make appropriate changes in my classes for the rest of the semester and led to increased motivation and better learning.

I care about my students. I want them to learn how to make connections between economic theories and real-world situations, think critically about policies, and use economic concepts to

make wise daily life decisions. These four strategies help me to ensure my course is a productive learning experience, and help the students to become independent learners.

ILLINOIS

CENTER FOR INNOVATION IN TEACHING & LEARNING

249 Armory Building, MC-528
505 E. Armory Ave
Champaign, IL 61820

Instructor name: LIQING LI
Department name: AGRICULTURAL AND CONSUMER ECONOMICS

Instructor GLOBAL ITEM 1: Rate the instructor's overall teaching effectiveness
Course GLOBAL ITEM 2: Rate the overall quality of this course

Prior to 1987 (Rating Range 1-6):

Semester	Course No.	No. of Forms	Elective Mixed Required	Mean Item 1	Mean Item 2	Norm Group Item 1	Norm Group Item 2
FALL2018	161	18	R	4.5	4.6	AVG	HI AVG
FALL2018	161	16	R	4.1	4.4	AVG	AVG
SPNG2019	161	16	R	4.4	4.4	AVG	AVG

Longitudinal Summary of ICES Student Ratings
***** Interpretive Guide *****

Prior to 1987:

Item 2: Rate the Instructor.
Item 3: Rate the Course in General.

Scoring: 6=Excellent.....1=Very Poor

1987 to present:

Item 1: Rate the Instructor's Overall Teaching Effectiveness.
Item 2: Rate the Overall Quality of This Course.

Scoring: 5=Exceptionally High.....1=Exceptionally Low

The cutoff scores for the norm categories are based on the student designation of the course as required (r), mixed (m), or elective (e) and instructor rank from university-wide data records.

The norm categories are:

High	**Top 10%**
High Avg	**Next 20%**
Avg	**Middle 40%**
Low Avg	**Next 20%**
Low	**Bottom 10%**

"N/A" appears in the mean *and* norm columns for any item when fewer than 50% of the responses to the item are valid. "N/A" will also appear in the norm columns, but not mean columns, if the course used Evaluation Online (EON) instead of ICES for the official course evaluation (this last case is typical for online courses). For data reported before 1987, cutoff scores are based on the six-position response norms established in 1986.

This document was prepared from Instructor and Course Evaluation System data collected and processed by Measurement and Evaluation in the Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning, 247 Armory Building. Call 333-3490 for more information.