Classroom Observation Summary

Course: ECON 163A
Instructor: Zerin Dong
Format: Zoom (n = 26)
Observation Focus: Dynamic Lecturing
Date: June 15, 2026
Observers: Adriana Signorini & Aizen Baidya

The class was highly organized and structured, beginning with a welcoming atmosphere, reminders, and a poll that immediately engaged students and provided an opportunity to gauge their experiences with the recent exam. Throughout the session, the instructor demonstrated strong content expertise and effectively guided students through complex financial concepts, including book value, liquidation value, holding period return, intrinsic value, dividend discount models, and growth models.

Several effective teaching practices were observed. The instructor regularly incorporated real-world examples, such as Chevron stock, to make abstract concepts more relevant and accessible. Students were actively involved through chat responses, polls, thumbs-up reactions, and opportunities to solve problems alongside the instructor. The use of color-coded annotations and real-time notetaking on slides helped students follow calculations and conceptual connections. Positive reinforcement ("very good," "great question") and intentional wait time encouraged participation and created a supportive learning environment.

The lesson also included multiple opportunities for guided practice. Students first worked through examples collectively with the instructor and later solved problems independently before discussing solutions. The instructor frequently invited student input and connected new concepts to previously covered material, helping students build a coherent understanding of the content.

Suggestions for Enhancement

1. Make learning outcomes more explicit.
At the beginning of class, consider sharing specific learning objectives (e.g., "By the end of today's class, you will be able to calculate holding period returns and evaluate stock investments using dividend discount models."). This can help students understand the purpose of activities and monitor their own learning.

2. Use more frequent checks for understanding.
While the instructor regularly asked, "Does that make sense?", more targeted formative assessment strategies could provide richer information about student understanding since students may not be entirely sure of how well they have grasped what they have just learned. For example, the instructor may consider using:

- Quick polls after major concepts (as instructor did at the beginning of class)
- Multiple-choice concept checks
- Short answer questions in the chat
- Waterfall responses, where students submit answers simultaneously

3. Vary questioning techniques.
Several questions invited general confirmation of understanding. More specific prompts (e.g., "What would happen to the stock value if the required return increased?" or "Why is this investment considered favorable?") could encourage deeper reasoning and provide greater insight into student thinking.

4. Increase opportunities for peer discussion.
Although chat participation was strong, occasional breakout room discussions or paired problem-solving activities could provide additional opportunities for students to articulate their reasoning and learn from one another.

5. Continue leveraging real-world examples and visual annotations.
The use of authentic stock valuation examples, color-coded highlights, and live problem solving was particularly effective and should remain a central feature of the course.

Overall Impression

This was a well-structured and engaging online class that effectively combined dynamic lecturing with interactive elements. The instructor fostered participation through polls, chat responses, guided practice, and positive encouragement while making complex financial concepts accessible through real-world examples. Additional opportunities for explicit learning goals, targeted formative assessment, and deeper student-to-student interaction could further enhance student engagement and understanding.

Supplemental Visualizations

The following two graphs provide a more detailed visual of the teaching strategies that occurred during the observation. The first figure is a timeline that displays the occurrence of different instructor COPUS codes recorded during the 60-minute observation. The second is a pie chart highlighting the three most common observed codes.

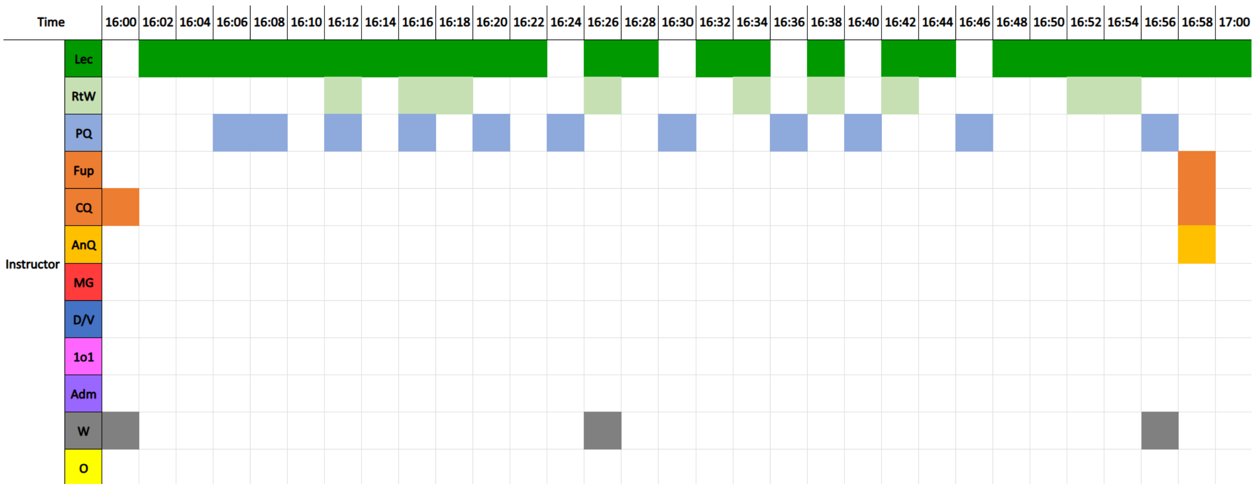

Figure 1: Timeline of instructor COPUS codes observed.

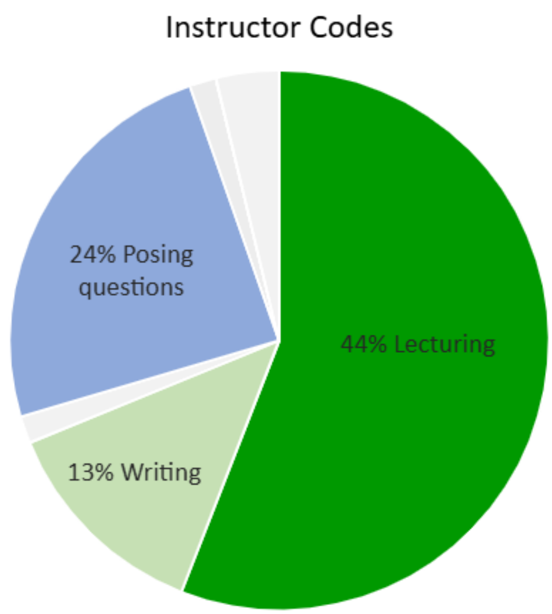

Figure 2: Pie chart of the most common codes observed.