

Before the semester starts, I wanted to introduce myself. I am Liesel Mitchell (you may call me Professor Mitchell or Mrs. Mitchell). I am both a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) and a Certified Management Accountant (CMA). I've been teaching at ISU for the past six years where I've taught management accounting at the introductory level (Acc 132) and the junior-level for accounting majors (Acc 230) as well as financial accounting at the introductory level (Acc 131). I have also taught financial and managerial accounting for MBA students (Acc 401 and 450). I have also been teaching introductory financial accounting for the past three years and introductory managerial accounting for one year at Illinois Wesleyan. This summer I taught introductory managerial accounting in a condensed format for Lincoln College's Accelerated Bridge to Education (ABE) program.

Biographical Information

I received my B.S. in Business with a major in accounting and my MBA from the University of TN at Martin (UTM). I also received my commission through the ROTC program as an Army officer and joined the TN Army National Guard where I spent 10 years as an Engineer officer. After graduation, I went to work for a small CPA firm in Dyersburg, TN. While there, I worked on individual and partnership tax returns and a few small governmental audits. After about a year, I left there and went to work for Jimmy Dean Foods at their manufacturing plant in Newbern, TN. All Jimmy Dean brand meat products are made at this facility. I worked as the senior accountant, reporting directly to the controller of the plant. I performed a variety of managerial and financial accounting functions, including monthly performance reporting, inventory, and fixed asset accounting. After several years, I had the opportunity to move and purchase a small tax practice. I operated my CPA practice for several years, focusing on individual taxes. At this point in my career, I had a couple of opportunities to teach, first an Excel class at the local technical college and then accounting at UTM where I had received my degrees.

In addition to teaching, I am a site coordinator for a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) site. During tax season (January through April), volunteer tax preparers, many of whom are students, provide free tax preparation for lower-income families in the Bloomington-Normal community. I find it very rewarding to work with students outside the classroom in a setting where they are getting to use their accounting knowledge in a practical, real-world setting while helping other people. I also prepare payroll for a local church and help with their financials. I feel it is important to stay involved in the accounting profession so I can bring that experience into the classroom.

While teaching intro accounting at UTM I discovered my passion: working with students! Out of all the various accounting positions I'd worked in, I found that I enjoyed teaching accounting the most. This led me to move to Illinois to start the Ph.D. program in accounting at the University of Illinois (UIUC). Although I did not finish my Ph.D., I gained a great deal during my years in the program. My interest in management accounting, specifically strategy, performance measurement/management, and the balanced scorecard (BSC) concept really developed during this time. I had the opportunity to serve as a teaching assistant and to independently teach a variety of accounting classes. This let me observe various teaching styles and to practice, reflect, and improve on my own teaching skills. The coursework was challenging and some of the areas (economics in particular) did not come easily for me. Being back in the role of a student has helped me in my teaching to be able to relate to students who may be

struggling with the material we are covering. While accounting makes sense to me, I can put myself in your shoes if you find that mastering the material does not come easily for you.

Teaching Approach

Now that I've given you some background information about me, let me share my views on teaching and learning. Teaching and learning are both action verbs. This means that I must take certain actions to be an effective teacher. It also means that you, as the student, must be actively engaged (both in and out of the classroom) and take certain actions in order to learn the material. The following quote is consistent with this perspective.

"All genuine learning is active, not passive. It is a process of discovery in which the student is the main agent, not the teacher." – Mortimer J. Adler

I see my teaching role as a combination of a tour guide and coach. Like a tour guide, I lay out the path we will take through the material. I identify what topics/chapters we will cover, when we will cover each topic, and the assignments related to each topic. You will find this information in the class schedule and assignment list. As we go through the material, I highlight key concepts and point you towards resources to help you understand the material. As a coach, I give assignments (i.e. practice) to help you develop your skills. I provide feedback to help you figure out how you're doing and where you may need to spend more time practicing. We work together to help you identify what's working and what's not, and we come up with a game plan to help you be successful. I give you encouragement as you work to improve. However, as your coach, I can't do the practice for you. As the player (student), in order to perform well, you must put in the time and effort (practice) to master the material. Practice is necessary to perform well during games (exams, future classes, your career).

"Learning is not a spectator sport. Students [...] must talk about what they are learning, write about it, relate it to past experiences, apply it to their daily lives. They must make what they learn part of themselves." – Chickering & Gamson

I am passionate about teaching and helping students understand accounting. I find reading, thinking, and talking about how businesses function and the role of accounting in their operations fascinating. Regardless of your major, accounting will play a role in your future. The effort you put into understanding accounting this semester will help you be successful in the future.

"You have to understand accounting and you have to understand the nuances of accounting. It's the language of business and it's an imperfect language, but unless you are willing to put in the effort to learn accounting – how to read and interpret financial statements – you really shouldn't select stocks yourself." – Warren Buffet (CEO of Berkshire Hathaway and the third wealthiest person in the world as of 2010)

I look forward to working with you this semester and hope that you will come to share some of my passion and fascination with business and accounting.