

TRECC: Teaching Resources For Economics at Community Colleges

Supported by the [Economics in Context Initiative](#), National Science Foundation (NSF #1522234), and [Starting Point: Teaching and Learning Economics](#). Edited by [Brian Lynch](#), Editor & W. Edward Chi, Interim Co-Editor



What is TRECC?

TRECC is an economics newsletter focused on teaching economics at the community college level. We seek to provide resources that will help instructors provide a dynamic and meaningful experience for their students. We also seek to unite instructors from across the country and open the lines of communication between us all.



Special Announcement: Community College Econ Faculty Virtual "Coffee" & Chat"

Are you trying some great teaching ideas, but don't have anyone to share them with? Or do you want to hear about what others are doing in the classroom? Or even if you just want to get together with some fellow Community College Econ faculty, please join us via Zoom to discuss what you are trying this semester in your classroom and why you are trying it. We will be meeting via Zoom on Thursday, January 25 for an hour (3 pm ET, 2 pm CT, 1 pm MT, and noon Pacific) to enjoy a warm (or cold) drink from where ever is convenient and a chance to meet and chat with colleagues around the country. <https://frederick-edu.zoom.us/j/82169806043>

Interview With Megan Kirts: Econiful



Megan is a passionate economics educator with 17 years of classroom experience. She holds master's degrees

in Teaching and Teacher Education as well as Economics and Entrepreneurship for Educators. When she's not serving fellow educators, Megan spends her time cooking (and eating), puzzling, and enjoying the beautiful Sonoran desert.

Can you tell me about your background as an educator? I taught high school social studies (mostly economics and U.S. history) in Tucson, AZ for 17 years. Since fall 2020 I have worked for TRBF full-time, directing Econiful and the University of Arizona Office of Economic

Education.

Can you tell me how Econiful came about and how long it has been in operation? Econiful was launched in July 2022, but it is really a continuation of TRBF's nearly 20 year history of supporting economic educators with professional development workshops. Like educators everywhere, we began teaching online during the pandemic. Delivering professional development programs via Zoom meant we could serve educators everywhere, not just here in Southern Arizona. TRBF trustees rec-

ommended we develop a new brand for a national audience, and Econiful was born. Thanks to Kathleen Cusack, our Curriculum Specialist, and Michela Wilson, our Operations and Marketing Specialist, Econiful has been able to accomplish a lot in a short period of time.

Can you tell me what projects and features you offer to educators who sign up for Econiful? Anyone can attend our synchronous professional development programs and lesson plans. The former are usually 60-minute workshops offered at 4:00 pm PT. In each of these programs we aim to offer educators ready-to-use instructional resources. The latter are part of an ongoing project to develop a full one-semester, on-level high school economics curriculum focused on a literacy approach to economics education as well as learning for transfer and teaching practices grounded in cognitive science. Econiful members—Grade 6-13+ instructors, instructional coaches, administrators, and staff at economic education organizations who fill out a short form on our website—can access our on-demand professional development modules and our curriculum’s summative assessments. I should mention that there are no fees to access any of our offerings.

In terms of the workshops that you offer, how do you go about choosing them? There are some programs we offer every semester, such as “Six ‘Secret’ Econ Resources,” “Economics Book Club,” and “6 Econ Books in 60 Minutes.” Others are offered annually like, “The Economics of Love and Romance” (in early February), “Turkey-nomics,” and “Econ Expo.” Still others are one-off programs related to recent developments or focused on topics requested by members. For example, in October we are working with a Texas economics teacher to offer “Swiftonomics: Using Taylor Swift to Teach Economics.”

Do you just use high school instructors to be workshop presenters? No, we work with a wide variety of economic educators to bring

diverse programs to our audience. In addition to excellent high school educators, we look to college-level instructors, and others within the economic education network to deliver engaging workshops. For example, Rebecca Chambers from the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia will be presenting for us in October and in January next year Wayne Geerling from the University of Texas at Austin will be leading a program.

Can you tell me more about the Econ Expo that took place this summer and do you know the date for 2024 Econ Expo? Econ Expo is our free, 1-day, virtual economic education conference. Participants hear from a keynote speaker (Dirk Ma-teer, Carlos Asarta, and Stacey Vanek Smith have appeared) and choose from a menu of six other 45-minute presentations. We include sessions relevant to on-level and AP economics as well as personal finance. Econ Expo 2024 is scheduled for Tuesday, July 16.

Is there a “dream” presenter you would like to have? We are big fans of Betsey Stevenson and Justin Wolfers, so I would include both of them at the top of our wish list.

Should only high school instructors sign up for Econiful? High school educators are our primary audience, but we are also thrilled to serve middle school and college-level instructors as well! While the pacing of high school economics and college-level principles courses is quite different, the content is very similar. I’m confident that economics educators across the Grade 6-13+ spectrum will find value in Econiful programs and lesson plans.

Links:

- [Econiful homepage.](#)
- [Become a member.](#)

Interview With Brandon Sheridan: Economic Education network

by BRIAN LYNCH



The Economic Education Network for Experiments is a new initiative led by several economics instructors including Brandon Sheridan at Elon University. I had a chance to sit down with Brandon recently and talk about it.

Tell me about this Economic Education Network for Experiments that you are putting together. We are creating a network of college economics instructors from around the world that collaborate on research aimed at improving the learning by our students.

What kinds of things might we learn from this research? Generally speaking, we can pool together very large samples to get precise estimates of the effects of different course interventions. These large samples will also let us identify how the impacts vary across different types of institutions and kinds of students. We believe this will be transformative for teaching and learning economics. Economists love data, and one thing we need is better data on the efficacy of various teaching methods.

Why is it important for community colleges to be involved? Around 35-40% of undergraduate students are enrolled at community colleges, so a large portion of students taking economics are doing so at a community college. These students are more likely to be low-

income and underrepresented within the field of economics. A priority of the economics profession is increasing representation, so teaching and learning at community colleges are important for those efforts.

How can someone join the network? Brandon: They can sign up at our website (<https://www.eene.org/>) to express interest and receive future updates.

What are the costs and benefits of signing up? The primary cost of signing up is occasional emails from the leadership team providing updates on progress. One major benefit is the opportunity to be a coauthor on a future study. We want to recognize the efforts of people who help col-

lect and analyze data, and we think coauthorship will be a strong incentive to do so. In addition, we think the opportunity to network with others in the discipline is a big benefit, especially for those in a small department or who are not able to regularly attend conferences where networking may typically happen. Of course, many instructors are intrinsically motivated to be their best, and we think the research conducted through EENE will enhance those efforts.

What is your first study about and when will it take place? Our first study is about academic mindset and we are going to begin it this spring. Depending on their teaching

schedules and IRB approval, some instructors will join in Fall 2024, and that's totally fine. We are fielding a simple observational study where we survey students at the beginning and end of the semester on their attitudes and beliefs about learning. The primary goals are to see if initial mindset is related to demographic characteristics, how mindset changes during a semester, and whether pedagogy choices are related to any observed changes in mindset. Given that some literature shows mindset can be important for learning and persisting, we want to investigate this in a higher education setting across multiple institutions.

Featured Economics Lesson: Do You Pickle?



by SUSANNA MCCONNELL

This lesson allows students to discover the causes for the rise of pickleball and the resulting impacts on markets. In the first assignment, students watch a video that outlines the reason for the growth, the impacts on resulting markets, and the challenges in the future. Students then select articles to learn more about the background, bene-

fits, and costs associated with the growth of the sport. As they read, they add key data about a benefit or cost, a takeaway, and a question.

The second day, students meet with groups to complete a policy proposal. They combine their research and then decide as a group the optimal decision for the city - to build new pickleball courts, resurface courts, or not build any pickleball courts, based on cost-benefit analysis.

The lesson is engaging, relevant, and involves creative and critical thinking. It provides students with many real world connections to economics through articles, videos, and podcasts.

Links:

- [Webinar](#)
- [Webinar Slides](#)
- [Cost-Benefit Analysis Prep Activity](#)
- [Cost-Benefit Analysis Group Activity](#)

New Newsletter from the Committee on Economic Education



EconEdNews, a Committee on Economic Education newsletter that provides timely information about conferences and events sponsored by the AEA-CEE, highlights resources for educators (including those focused on enhancing diversity, equity, and inclusion), and shares economic education activities associated with organizations around the world. Each issue includes special features written by guest contributors that detail "What we know about..." topics of interest to the community; a Diver-

sity, Equity, and Inclusion resource; and a specific pedagogic practice. <https://www.aeaweb.org/about-aea/committees/economic-education/econednews>



Upcoming Conferences, Meetings, and Workshops

- American Economic Association Annual Meeting, January 5-7, 2024, San Antonio, TX <https://www.aeaweb.org/conference/about>
- National Association for Business Economic Policy Conference, February 14-16, 2024, Washington, DC <https://www.nabe.com/>
- 36th Annual Teaching Economics Conference, February 23, 2024, Robert Morris University, Pittsburgh <https://www.rmu.edu/academics/schools/sihss/tec>
- Midwest Economics Association 88th Annual Meeting, March 22-April 24, 2024, Chicago, IL <https://mea.sites.grinnell.edu/annual-meetings/2023-24announcements/>
- Online Learning Innovation Conference, online April 23-25, 2024, in-person April 10-13, 2024, Denver, CO <https://onlinelearningconsortium.org/attend-2024/innovate/>
- American Economic Association 13th Annual Conference on Teaching and Research in Economic Education, May 29-31, 2024, Atlanta, GA <https://www.aeaweb.org/about-aea/committees/economic-education/ctree/2024>
- TeachECONference 5th Annual Virtual Conference, online video-poster session from June 17, 2024, online live presentations June 24-26, 2025 <https://ctale.org/teacheconference2024/>
- Journal of Economics Teaching Symposium on Economics Teaching, August 1-3, 2024, Blacksburg, VA <https://journalofeconomicsteaching.org/symposium/>
- 63rd Financial Literacy and Economic Education Conference, September 27-28, 2024, Cleveland, OH <https://www.councilforeconed.org/events/cee-educator-conference/>
- EDUCAUSE Annual Conference, in-person October 21-24, 2024, San Antonio, TX, online November 13-14, 2024 <https://events.educause.edu/annual-conference/2024>
- 22nd Annual St. Louis Fed Professors Conference, TBD, 2024
- SEA 94th Annual Meeting, TBD