

Teaching Resources for Economics at Community Colleges

TRECC NEWSLETTER

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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.

Starting Point: Teaching and Learning Economics



Virtual Coffee and Chat - April 25

Join a group of economics faculty from community colleges around the U.S. for a one-hour virtual coffee and chat to share ideas about teaching on Thursday, 4/25, at 3pm Eastern/ 2pm Central/ 1pm Mountain/ 12pm Pacific
<https://highline.zoom.us/j/83060293331>





The Economics Instructor's Toolbox

Enhance Your Students Learning Experience

The Economics Instructor's Toolbox

If you are looking for an innovative pedagogy for all teaching modalities, please check out the Economics Instructor's Toolbox. This website catalogs the most useful, diverse and current contributions in Economics education for instructors. Some of the tools include videos, games, music, podcasts, life experiences, and Pokemon Go. In-class activities include Kahoots, case studies, experiments, and Think-Pair-Share. You will find multiple ideas for student projects and highlights about confusions in textbooks. Access these resources at: <https://www.theecontoolbox.com/>

Helpful Resources for Online Teaching

Teaching Economics Online Resources by AEA: AEA website has some customized resources like free Q&A system, "how to be a better online teacher" advice guide, teaching online resources from Harvard Business School and much more. Access these resources at: <https://www.aeaweb.org/resources/teachers/online-ed>

Welcome to OERTX Repository

Discover collections of resources. Contribute OER. Collaborate with educators.

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Search

Open Education Course Repository in Economics

OER Course Repository: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board OERTX OER Course Repository has collections of curated resources and zero cost OER courses in Economics. You will find several course shells on Introductory and Principles of Economics.

Helpful search tip: Search by keyword Economics if you do not see "Economics" in the "Subject" dropdown.

<https://oertx.highered.texas.gov/>

Interactives in Economics

Econ Reimagined: This website has customized active learning tables, graphs, and calculation simulations where students can work to demonstrate their mastery of the concepts and component skills in microeconomics. Access the interactives at:

<https://econreimagined.gsu.edu/tools.html>

Marginal Revolution University {MRU): The MRU website provides practice for several interactive graphs in Economics. If you submit your course schedule for MRU's EconInbox, you will get a weekly email on curated resources for that week's topics. Access the interactives at: <https://practice.mru.org/>

Best Practices for Economists

Building a More Diverse, Inclusive, and Productive Profession

Image credit: AEA website

The AEA website presents best practices for economists in the areas of "Serving as Colleagues" and "Working with Students". Check them out at:
<https://www.aeaweb.org/resources/best-practices>

Ethics Curriculum for Introductory Economics

Today's students are interested in justice and equality. "Ethics, Economics, and Social Issues" is a curriculum that uses the economic way of thinking and core economic concepts like scarcity, decision-making (weighing marginal benefits and marginal costs), incentives, and allocation. Then provides a guide for using ethics, the analysis of right and wrong, to help explain human behavior and evaluate policies. Using this curriculum will allow students to apply ethics and economic frameworks to choices in current events, public policies, and other issues. The curriculum does not push a particular viewpoint. Rather, it gives students tools for thinking and discussing on a deeper level.

The curriculum contains 16 lessons at no cost and is available on Econ Ed Link . It was highly-regarded and received a 2024 NAEF Silver Award of Excellence indicating that these lessons are exceptional quality. Some of the lesson titles include:

- How can I apply ethics and economics to any issue?
- Is efficiency ethical?
- Do businesses have a social responsibility?
- Does self-interest prevent economic justice?
- Should private companies operate prisons?

Check this curriculum out at:

<https://econedlink.org/resources/collection/ethics/>





Q&A with Brian O'Roark

*J. Brian O'Roark, PhD
BK Simon Fellow
Editor for the Journal for Economics Teaching
Department of Economics
Robert Morris University*

So would you like to talk a little bit about your background?

I went to Grove City College in Pennsylvania. I was originally a history major. In my junior year, I realized that job opportunities were slim to none in history, even with a Masters degree! So, I took 8 economics classes in 3 semesters. After my undergraduate degree, I went to work in the finance sector. However, one evening I was listening to Walter Williams on the radio (an instructor at George Mason) and decided to apply to graduate school in economics. So a few months later I left finance behind to go to graduate school at George Mason University.

I can definitely relate to that in terms of “stumbling” into teaching, and I am sure a lot of other teachers feel the same way. So part of your economics journey has led you to become editor at JET. Can you tell me what JET is all about?

The Journal of Economics Teaching (JET) was the brainchild of Dirk Mateer and became a reality in 2015 through a generous start-up grant from the Thomas R. Brown Foundation. It is a publication that focuses on effective teaching techniques. It provides readers of the

journal with creative and useful sources for teaching economics. Here is the link to the website.

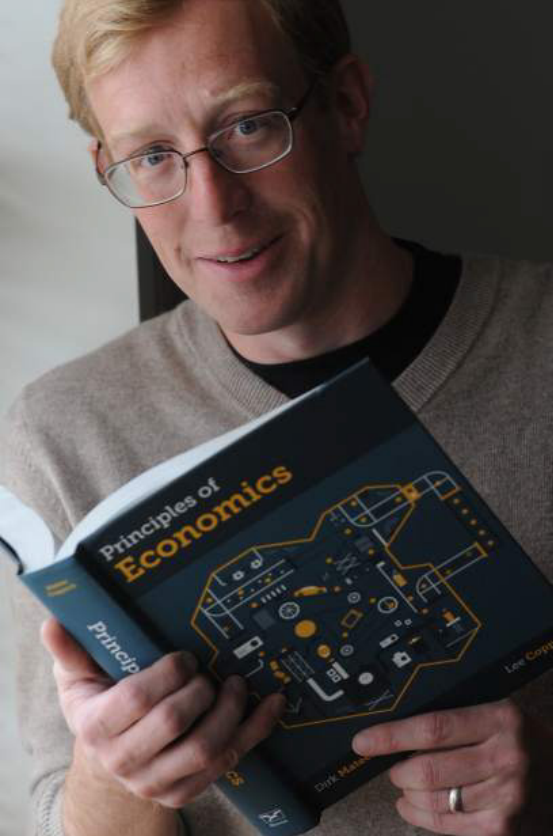
<https://journalofeconomicsteaching.org/>
At the bottom of the JET home page, you can find a link to subscribe to the JET substack issues.

Is it just for four-year college instructors?

I think that might be the initial perception. However, the journal has useful articles for K-12 educators as well as community college instructors. In fact, our Journal encourages lesson plan/ideas submissions from economics educators at every level. I think there is a hesitancy due to the fact that submitting something may not lead to an increase in pay, or the process might seem intimidating. If you were to browse through the issues though, you will find lessons that apply to every economics classroom.

You mentioned the intimidation factor. Does that also apply to publishing papers?

Yes it does. I think it goes along with what I talked about with regards to JET submissions. I know there are a lot of creative educators out there who have really great ideas and topics that should be put into a paper. At JET, we'll work with you to navigate the submission process.



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So, if an instructor wants to publish a paper, why should they submit to JET? If I wanted to write a paper, and go through JET, how would I do that?

A lot of journals do really great work. But we feel that our comparative advantage is communicating with instructors, and we want to guide you and encourage you. Our approach is collaborative as opposed to demonstrative. We want you to see “your name in lights”.

With regards to publishing a paper, feel free to email me at oroark@rmu.edu. I would be more than happy to walk someone through the whole process. In fact as part of our yearly JET SET conference, we have a session on publishing papers, where we try to inform people about the process.

Can you tell me more about the JET SET conference?

It's a fun conference, in the sense if attendees are there to learn how to teach more effectively. It is very low pressure and very collaborative. If you remember the sitcom!

Cheers, I guess you could say that JET SET is the economics version of the place where everybody knows your name. The conference moves around every year, so hopefully we'll be in a town near you soon. We are currently accepting proposals for individual papers for the 2024 JET SET. All the information you need is found at :

<https://journalofeconomicsteaching.org/symposium/>

And finally, some instructors love using food to teach economics. Others like to use Netflix shows or Broadway shows. What is in your arsenal of teaching ideas?

My passion is pop culture with a heavy emphasis on superheroes. What led me to focus on superheroes, was a student conversation about the show Green Arrow. But it looks like we're out of time, so let's leave on a cliffhanger... Dear reader, you will have to wait until the Fall edition of TRECC when we talk about what superheroes have to do with economics, and how that turned into a book about superheroes and teaching economics.

Upcoming Conferences

American Economic Association 13th Annual Conference on Teaching and Research in Economic Education, May 29-31, 2024, Atlanta, GA

TeachECONference 5th Annual Virtual Conference, online video-poster session from June 17, 2024, online live presentations June 24-26, 2024

98th Annual Western Economic Association International Conference, June 29-July 3, 2024, Seattle, WA.

Journal of Economics Teaching Symposium on Economics Teaching, August 1-3, 2024, Blacksburg, VA.

63rd Financial Literacy and Economic Education Conference, September 27-28, 2024, Cleveland, OH.

EDUCAUSE Annual Conference, online November 13-14, 2024, in-person October 21-24, 2024, San Antonio, TX.

22nd Annual St. Louis Fed Professors Conference, November 7-8, 2024, St. Louis, MO.

94th Annual Meeting, Southern Economic Association, November 23-25, 2024, Washington D.C.

20th Annual NETA Economics Teaching Conference, TBD, Check website for updates.

Calling Out Innovators



We would like to feature teaching ideas using Generative AI from our readership in the next newsletter. If you have any Generative AI methodologies/ideas/resources that are working well for you, please share them with Brian Lynch and Meena Beri!