



ECONEdNews

Spring 2024

Mark Maier Receives 2023 AEA Distinguished Education Award

The **AEA Distinguished Economic Education Award** acknowledges excellence in economic education at a national level. Recipients are able to demonstrate a sustained and impactful contribution to several areas of economic education. These areas include teaching, the development of curriculum and pedagogy, scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) of economics, mentoring of students and young faculty, and service at the institutional, regional, and state levels. The award is conferred annually at the AEA-CEE's Friends of Economic Education Reception at the ASSA meetings.

Mark Maier, Glendale Community College (California), is the 2023 recipient of the AEA Distinguished Economic Education Award. Mark retired from Glendale Community College as Professor of Economics in June 2023 but continues to remain active in the economic education community.

Mark's impact on economic education over the past 30 years is remarkable in its breadth and depth. His scholarship of teaching and learning in economics is both extensive and wide ranging, promoting evidence-based instructional practices through scholarly publications, grant-funded research, and national economic education workshops. His work with the AEA-CEE (2002–2008), where he initiated an enduring and popular annual ASSA economic education poster session, is emblematic of his pragmatic efforts to improve economic education nationally. In addition, Mark co-facilitated workshops as part of the AEA's Teaching Innovations Program in 2006 and 2007.



Photo: AEA Archive

KimMarie McGoldrick presents Mark Maier with the AEA Distinguished Economic Education Award at the ASSA 2024 Annual Meeting.

Mark has been a tireless champion of efforts to support and enhance economic education at the community college level. His work in this area led to numerous state and national teaching workshops and a national teaching newsletter focused on economics instruction in two-year institutions. He has been an inspiring mentor to scores of economics instructors, who regularly highlight Mark's high-impact teaching practices, support of their careers, and encouragement to participate in national economic education activities. Mark has also been a strong advocate for cross-disciplinary collaborations, which have informed and enhanced teaching practices in economics and led to valuable ideas and strategies on how to effectively include two-year colleges in initiatives to strengthen undergraduate economic education.

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NOTE FROM THE CHAIR

Tisha L. N. Emerson,
East Carolina University

Greetings! On behalf of the American Economic Association's Committee on Economic Education (AEA-CEE), I'm pleased to share the latest issue of *EconEdNews* with you. *EconEdNews* is our biannual newsletter highlighting resources for educators, providing timely information about conferences and events sponsored by the AEA-CEE and sharing economic education activities associated with organizations in the United States and abroad.

As I start my term as chair of the AEA-CEE, I'd like to remind everyone of our mission "to improve the quality of economics education at all levels: pre-college, college, adult, and general education." I'd also like to recognize and express my appreciation for the many dedicated economic educators who have served on the committee since its inception in 1955. They have contributed greatly to bringing our mission to fruition. I especially want to thank recent past chairs KimMarie McGoldrick, Sam Allgood, Michael Watts, Bill Walstad, Michael Salemi, and John Siegfried.

Partnering with other economic education researchers, Mark was the principal investigator or co-principal investigator for five National Science Foundation (NSF) economic education grants totaling more than \$1.26 million, including a project developing the widely recognized **Starting Point: Teaching and Learning Economics** online pedagogic portal. The Starting Point site contains 18 modules, each describing a specific teaching method, how to use it in economics, and a library of free activities that instructors can adopt or adapt for use in their own

courses. Overall, these five projects helped to introduce economics instructors to a variety of evidence-based teaching practices, many originally developed in other disciplines, such as Just-in-Time Teaching and Team-Based Learning. In addition, Mark has led or co-led five additional NSF grants totaling nearly \$400,000 specifically supporting community college economics instructors, with the goals of better integrating these instructors into the American Economic Association's economic education community, improving overall community college economics instruction, and

building community among two-year college economics instructors.

Throughout his career, Mark's broad knowledge, creative ideas, inclusive approach, and willingness to look outside of economics for "what works" have contributed to moving the economics discipline toward more intentional evidence-based teaching practices. Through a collaborative, community-building approach, Mark has connected many two-year college instructors to national economic education efforts and mentored their ongoing engagement in the discipline. ■

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT ...

Who Does and Does Not Take Introductory Economics

Wendy Stock,
Montana State University

The question of which college students take introductory economics is important for departments seeking to adjust enrollments or curricula, faculty members designing and teaching introductory courses, and students considering college majors. Earlier studies found that 40–60 percent of college students take economics (see, e.g., Bosshardt and Walstad 2017; Emerson, McGoldrick, and Mumford 2012; and Siegfried and Walstad 2014, respectively). These samples likely overstate students' exposure to economics because they do not include the 40 percent of students who begin but do not complete their degrees or the 30 percent of students who enroll at two-year institutions, groups less likely to take college economics (NCES 2022).

In new research (Stock 2023), I use the Beginning Postsecondary Survey (BPS) to examine who takes economics. The BPS reports nationally representative transcript data for all students who began their postsecondary studies in 2004 and 2012. Among students who began college in 2004, 38 percent had college-level economics exposure (i.e., postsecondary credits with economics **classification of instructional program (CIP) codes**, including dual-enrollment and advanced placement (AP) credits), while only 26 percent of those who began college in 2012 had college-level economics. A back-of-the-envelope calculation indicates that roughly 2.5



Among students who began college in 2004, 38 percent had college-level economics exposure ... while only 26 percent of those who began college in 2012 had college-level economics.

million fewer college students were exposed to economics in the 2012 versus 2004 BPS cohorts. Stock (2023) shows that some of this decline can be explained by growth in majors that do not require economics, declines in the share of non-economics majors who take economics, and growth in earning college credit through the AP program.

Although STEM- and health-related majors have grown dramatically over time, more than two-thirds of

students in STEM-related majors and nearly nine in ten students in health-related majors never take college economics. Additionally, there have been within-major changes in students' economics exposure. The largest change occurred among engineering majors. Slightly more than half (56 percent) of engineering majors in the 2004 BPS had college economics, but that number declined to only 38 percent of engineering majors in the 2012 BPS. Indeed, across every major, the fraction of students with no economics was higher in the 2012 than 2004 BPS.

A third explanation for the declining rate of postsecondary

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economics exposure is the growing share of students earning college-level economics credit through the AP program. There was a 200 percent (from 0.01 to 0.03) increase in the share of students who earned college economics credit through an AP exam between 2004 and 2012, a larger increase than in other AP disciplines.

Departments and faculty may have more success in growing the field by focusing on attracting a wider set of students into introductory classes. In addition, since the demographic characteristics of students who are “one-and-done” are closer to those of students with more economics than

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students with no economics, one could argue that efforts to diversify economics should focus on factors that impact whether students take

economics at all rather than on factors that impact whether students persist in economics after the introductory course.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING

Creating Inclusive Classrooms by Addressing Microaggressions

Jennifer Imazeki,
San Diego State University

An inclusive classroom is one where *all* students feel welcome, safe to participate, and supported in their learning. Creating such an environment generally requires intentional effort and reflection on the part of the instructor, particularly because we all carry unconscious biases, formed over a lifetime of interactions with other people and the media. Without conscious awareness, these biases can manifest in many ways that make your classroom less welcoming for some students.

One of the ways that unconscious bias can arise is in the form of microaggressions, which are defined as “brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative... slights and insults to the target person or group” (Sue et al. 2007). Although racial microaggressions are probably the most often discussed, microaggressions can arise with any social identity about which people have developed negative associations, such as sexual orientation, religion, or socioeconomic status.

While it is critical that instructors learn about their own biases and avoid committing microaggressions, it is equally important to



recognize when microaggressions are being committed by students against classmates. Addressing such situations can be challenging, and many instructors may prefer to avoid an uncomfortable confrontation. However, if we are truly invested in creating an environment where all students can succeed, we have an obligation to intervene and ensure that marginalized students are supported. Here are some suggestions for managing these situations:

Prepare Yourself: Think ahead. Planning what you might say and how you will say it can help reduce anxiety and keep things from getting too far off track.

Establish Ground Rules: Establishing community agreements for classroom behavior and online interactions can help prevent problems and/or make it easier to address them when they do happen. Ideally, you would co-create these norms with students on the first day of the course; you should also remind everyone of them throughout the term. See Eberly (n.d.) for examples.

Address Harm Immediately: When microaggressions happen, it is important to intervene as soon as you can, to diffuse or avoid escalation, and to repair harm. One framework for this intervention is the R.A.V.E.N.

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framework (Harris and Wood 2020). Note that these steps do not need to be sequential, nor do you need to do them all; this is simply a framework for thinking about the different ways you might disrupt microaggressions when they happen:

- ▶ Redirect: Interrupt or pause the interaction. "I'd like to pause the discussion and address something you just said."
- ▶ Ask questions to get clarity: "I think I heard you say... What did you mean by that?" "I want to make sure I understand what you were saying. Were you saying that...?"
- ▶ Values clarification: "We have all agreed that we want to promote understanding and support each

other's learning; I don't think what you just said is aligned with those goals."

- ▶ Emphasize your own thoughts: "When I hear your comment, I think/feel..." "Many people might take that to mean..." "In my experience..."
- ▶ Next steps: "The next time you encounter this situation, you may want to consider..." "Could we discuss this further?"

As a general rule, intervening with compassionate curiosity and a desire to better understand why a microaggression has occurred will almost always be more effective than accusing, judging, or shaming. Also note that having established group norms and values, and/or practicing what

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you might say ahead of time, can make it easier to respond productively.

ACTIVE LEARNING PEDAGOGIES

Improving Student Preparedness with Just-in-Time Teaching Strategies

Scott P. Simkins,
North Carolina A&T State University

Just-in-Time Teaching (JiTT) is an evidence-based, active learning pedagogical strategy that combines out-of-class, pre-instructional activities with in-class, structured group activities to improve student preparation, motivation, and learning. Out-of-class JiTT exercises promote pre-class preparation, inform the development and implementation of in-class activities, and provide immediate feedback for instructors and students through a structured and systematic process. JiTT was originally developed for use in physics but is now used in a wide variety of disciplines, including economics (Simkins and Maier 2010a; Novak 2011).

The JiTT process includes three steps:

- (1) **Pre-class JiTT exercises:** Students complete and submit short assignments prior to instruction on a topic requiring students to answer questions or complete problems based on readings,



videos, podcasts, or other out-of-class activities. JiTT exercises also often include a reflective question asking students to share what is still unclear to them after completing the assignment.

- (2) **Instructor use of student responses:** Instructors collect and analyze the JiTT responses,

typically less than 24 hours before class, using them to:

- ▶ Identify student learning gaps "just in time." Assignment responses allow the instructor to gauge students' understanding of the material before class.

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- ▶ Inform class activities and instruction. The instructor uses JiTT responses to inform the creation of in-class activities that address areas of misunderstanding, making teaching responsive to learners' needs.

(3) In-class activities: Class time is utilized for collaborative active learning activities that build on the pre-class assignments and address learning gaps. During the activities, students gain immediate feedback on their own learning from their peers and from the instructor. JiTT exercises ensure that class time is efficiently focused on the most important student learning issues.

The JiTT approach incorporates a variety of evidence-based high-efficacy learning techniques identified in the cognitive and educational psychology and learning sciences literature, including practice testing with feedback, deliberate practice, distributed practice, self-explanation, elaborative interrogation, and metacognition (for background on these techniques, see Dunlosky et al. 2013; Weinstein, Sumeracki, and Caviglioli 2019; and Chew and Cerbin 2021). Research across multiple disciplines illustrates the positive impact of JiTT for student success, including biology (Marrs and Novak 2004) and physics (Watkins and Mazur 2010). Simkins and Maier (2004) provide evidence of its impact in economics courses. JiTT pedagogy is particularly helpful when combined with other active learning teaching strategies such as cooperative or team-based learning and peer instruction.

Do You Have a Feature Story Idea for EconEdNews?

Submit ideas for *EconEdNews* content to the newsletter coordinator, **Emily Marshall**, at marshaem@dickinson.edu. Topics may include an overview of a particular area of economic education research; resources on diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging; or other special features.

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Simkins and Maier (2004, 2010b) and Simkins (2011) describe ways to incorporate JiTT in economics courses. Additional information about using JiTT in economics, including class-ready examples, is available at the [Starting Point](#) online pedagogic portal (Maier,

McGoldrick, and Simkins 2012; Starting Point: Teaching and Learning Economics, n.d.). The JiTT strategy is appropriate for use in economics at all levels, all class sizes, all types of institutional settings, and in both synchronous and asynchronous courses. ■

SPECIAL FEATURE

Identifying and Assessing Learning Outcomes

Sam Allgood,
University of Nebraska–Lincoln

A learning outcome is a single sentence combining content a student *should know* with what they *should be able to do* with this content. The practice of identifying learning outcomes is integral to designing a course or class. Learning outcomes

A learning outcome combines an action verb with content. Verbs like *list*, *derive*, and *calculate* clearly express what students should be able to do with content.

guide how to assess student performance and what pedagogy to employ, as well as specify what students

should be able to do with course concepts.

A learning outcome combines an action verb with content. Verbs like *list*, *derive*, and *calculate* clearly express what students should be able to do with content. Other, commonly used verbs, such as *know* and

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understand, are too vague because they fail to identify what students are expected to do. Thus, instead of “understand the economic way of thinking,” instructors provide better guidance by using “provide examples of the sunk cost fallacy.” A student presented with the latter phrasing knows *how* to demonstrate what they know, and the instructor can choose assessments and pedagogy that are appropriate for the outcomes.

Writing learning outcomes can be daunting, but many frameworks support their development. The proficiencies in Hansen (2001) guide thinking on what students should be able to do with content. Allgood and Bayer (2016, 2017) provide a detailed framework for writing learning outcomes that can be adapted to any economics course. Bloom’s

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taxonomy (see Armstrong 2010) and Fink’s taxonomy of significant learning (Fink 2013) provide two non-economics frameworks.

But using a specific framework is not necessary. Once instructors have identified the content students should know and what they should

be able to do, learning outcomes flow naturally. For example, if the relevant content and action are “determinants of wage differences” and “think critically about models,” then an appropriate outcome is “explain how discrimination can persist in a competitive market.” ■

CENTER AND COUNCIL DIRECTOR’S CORNER

Cal State University East Bay Center for Economic Education

The mission of the Cal State University East Bay (CSUEB) Center for Economic Education is to provide and promote quality economic



Jane Lopus

education programs and materials locally, nationally, and internationally. Jane S. Lopus, PhD, is professor emerita of economics and center director. Much of the center outreach focuses on teacher training, curriculum development, and research related to high school economics. Recent activities of the CSUEB Center include economic education research conducted with the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco (e.g., Duzhak, Hoff, and Lopus 2021), teacher training and financial literacy programs conducted with the Bay Area Financial Education Foundation, work on the Council for Economic Education’s National Economics Challenge, and international programs conducted through the Global Economic Education Alliance (GEEA).

The CSUEB Center has been involved in international teacher training programs since shortly after the

References

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The CSUEB Center has been involved in international teacher training programs since shortly after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, responding to a need to train teachers in former communist countries in market-based economics. These programs later expanded to include developing countries in Southeast Asia, Africa, and South America.

dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, responding to a need to train teachers in former communist countries in market-based economics. These programs later expanded to include developing countries in Southeast Asia, Africa, and South America.

In 2011, the CSUEB Center joined with other centers to form GEEA to continue teacher training and other international economic education programs. Recent GEEA programs involving the CSUEB Center include a USAID-funded program to improve financial literacy for poor and vulnerable youth in Indonesia (2016–2021; see Lopus, Grimes, and Amidjono 2019 and Grimes, Lopus, and Amidjono 2022) and a teacher training workshop for Lithuanian economics teachers in 2023 funded by the Baltic-American Freedom Foundation. All of the workshops focus on training teachers in activity-based methodologies while addressing relevant content standards in economics and financial literacy. ■

ECONEVENTS

Information, Calls, Announcements,
and Sessions at Upcoming Meetings

The thirteenth annual **Conference on Teaching and Research in Economic Education (CTREE)** will be held May 29–31 in Atlanta, Georgia. Plenary speakers include Peter Arcidiacono (Duke University), Sarah Turner (University of Virginia), and a representative of the Atlanta Federal Reserve. Registration opened February 15.

The AEA-CEE is pleased to announce the **Expanding Diversity in Undergraduate Classes with Advancements in (the) Teaching (of) Economics (EDUCATE)** workshop to be held in conjunction with the AEA 2024 Conference on Teaching and Research in Economic Education (CTREE) in Atlanta, Georgia. The workshop will be conducted as a face-to-face and Canvas-supported workshop starting on Friday, May 31, and concluding on Sunday, June 2, 2024. The application portal is open and will remain open until all workshop slots are filled. Final decisions will be made by May 1. Participants should expect to develop the abilities to do the following:

- ▶ Apply the scientific process so as to choose between competing evidence-based teaching practices that might have disparate effects on those of different races, genders, and ethnicities.
- ▶ Analyze and evaluate how classroom climate, pedagogy, and assessment impact student behaviors and outcomes, recognizing that these impacts are heterogeneous.
- ▶ Teach students to learn economics using some of the quantitative approaches employed by economists.
- ▶ Think critically about course goals and their relationship to pedagogical choices and assessment, with special attention to enhancing diversity and inclusion.
- ▶ Communicate motivations for, and outcomes of, teaching enhancement to diverse audiences.

Workshop staff include Sam Allgood (University of Nebraska–Lincoln), Gerald Daniels (Howard University), Tisha Emerson (East Carolina University), Gail Hoyt (University of Kentucky), and KimMarie McGoldrick (University of Richmond).

The AEA-CEE will sponsor a poster session at the 2025 ASSA meeting devoted to active learning strategies across the economics curriculum. Instead of papers, session presenters will prepare large visual poster summaries of their work, which will be mounted in an exhibition room to allow presenters to talk directly with session participants. Although the committee encourages presenters to include evidence that their strategy enhances learning, it does not require quantifiable evidence. Presenters should emphasize the originality of their strategy and provide sufficient information so that session participants may apply the technique in their own classrooms. Proposals should describe the teaching strategy and explain how it will be displayed on the poster. Posters marketing textbooks, commercial software, or similar materials will not be considered for the session. Proposals are limited to two pages and are due by April 30. Proposals should include full contact information for all authors. Please send proposals to Irene Foster, George Washington University, at fosterir@gwu.edu.

The **AEA Distinguished Education Award** acknowledges excellence in economic education at a national level. Recipients are able to demonstrate a sustained and impactful contribution to several areas of economic education. These areas include teaching, the development of curriculum and pedagogy, scholarship of teaching and learning of economics, mentoring of students and young faculty, and service at the institutional, regional, and state levels. The award is conferred annually at the Committee on Economic Education's Friends of Economic Education Reception at the ASSA meeting. Please use [this form](#) to submit a nomination by October 1.

Economists at community colleges and anyone interested in community college economics instruction are invited to [subscribe to the newsletter Teaching Resources for Economics at Community Colleges](#). Published twice yearly, it features conference and workshop updates, interviews, teaching ideas, and suggestions for using FRED data. To subscribe, send your

email address to mmaier@glendale.edu. To suggest or submit content, contact Brian Lynch at blynch@lake-landcollege.edu.


The **Southern Economic Association Ninety-Fourth Annual Meeting**, held November 23–25, 2024, in Washington, DC, will include **Presidential Economic Education sessions**. To be considered for participation in a session and/or to submit a paper or panel, please fill out [this form](#) by March 17.

The *Journal of Economics Teaching* will hold its **2024 annual symposium** in Blacksburg, Virginia, August 1–3. The journal is seeking abstracts for presentations and organized sessions on innovative pedagogy for both K–12 and college educators. Those submissions are due by May 1. An early decision will be provided for submissions received before April 1. ■

EDUCATE Workshop

Expanding Diversity in Undergraduate Classes with Advancements in (the) Teaching (of) Economics

May 31–June 2, 2024
Atlanta, GA



EDUCATE is sponsored by the AEA Outreach Task Force and the AEA Committee on Economic Education.



AEA Distinguished Economic Education Award

Nomination Deadline:
October 1, 2024



Economic Education Resources from the Fiscal Challenge

Mike Aguilar,
Fiscal Challenge

The **Fiscal Challenge** is an educational non-profit whose mission is to enhance students' understanding of fiscal policy. We achieve this mission by hosting an annual competition for undergraduates from any major. Over the last 11 years, we've engaged over 600 students across over 40 universities.

Students begin their journey in the fall semester when we reveal the details of the policy problem they are attempting to solve. For example, the competitors might be asked to develop a comprehensive federal budget plan, including taxation and spending, that stabilizes the debt-to-GDP ratio over the next 30 years. Midway through the spring semester, competitors submit a 20-minute video of their proposed solution. The six teams with the best proposals win a trip to Washington, DC for the final round of the competition. Proposals in each round are evaluated via a publicly available rubric that is built upon four criteria: (i) understanding of the current fiscal environment, (ii) depth and breadth of analysis, (iii) creativity, and (iv) presentation skills.

We encourage each team to work with a faculty advisor. We also provide resources from our partners at the Peter G. Peterson Foundation and the Bipartisan Policy Center (BPC), as well as studies and tools



Photo: The Fiscal Challenge

The Fiscal Challenge team from Wheeling University, Southeastern Louisiana University, and University of Maryland-Baltimore County present their plan to judges at the 2022-2023 Fiscal Challenge finals in Washington, DC.

at the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) and various think tanks.

Throughout the process, students deepen their understanding of fiscal policy and the macroeconomy. Moreover, they practice presentation, team-building, and data analysis skills. See Aguilar and Soques (2015) for an evaluation of the pedagogical merits.

During the final round of competition, each team has 15 minutes to present its proposal followed by 15

Reference

Aguilar, Mike, and Daniel Soques. 2015. "Fiscal Challenge: An Experiential Exercise in Policy Making." *Journal of Economic Education* 46 (3): 285-99.

minutes of Q&A. The judging panel typically consists of experts from key government institutions and think tanks, including, for example, the CBO, the BPC, the American Action Forum, and the Concord Coalition. ■

ABOUT THE AEA-CEE



The **Committee on Economic Education (AEA-CEE)** is a standing committee of the American Economic Association that has been in existence in one form or another since 1955. The mission of the committee is to improve the quality of economics education at all levels: precollege, college, adult, and general education.

The committee supports many activities of interest to the community of economic educators. It sponsors paper, panel, and poster sessions and workshops at the annual Allied Social Science Associations (ASSA) Meeting. The committee also organizes the annual CTREE conference and EDUCATE workshop. Resources supporting economic research and teaching are also housed on the committee site and include information about **organizations that support economic education**, **academic journals** publishing economic education research, and resources for **changing course content or curriculum to appeal to a broad range of students**.

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