
Foreword

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1 Economics

All great thinkers are paradoxical in their writing, saying different things with a different emphasis within the same body of work. Sometimes they introduce dead-ends, and sometimes flash-in-the pan nuggets that profound later-day readers. This is the way great minds work. We see this in Keynes, in Marshall, in Marx, and of course, Adam Smith.

In ‘Adam Smith’s money problem’, Reynold F. Nesiba juxtaposes the contradiction between Smith’s espousal of the fictional barter-begets-money argument (which has since been empirically proved erroneous, yet stubbornly remains in our textbooks) with a more sophisticated taxes-drive-money approach (which appeals to advocates of modern monetary theory). An interesting discussion, which gels nicely with Dommerholt (2023).

Alas, as Nesiba concludes, “my paper, and this debate, is part of the ongoing assessment and reassessment of Smith’s ideas on political economy that has been [ongoing] for at least 248 years.” That is fine, for this is how knowledge progresses. And we hope that Nesiba’s article has clarified some of Smith’s thinking.

2 Economics pedagogy

In ‘A job guarantee: student ideas’, Zdravka Todorova, Shannon Parisi, Patrick Lockhart, Brad Kerry, Jeremy A. Ocampo, Divya Sharma, James Curlis and Tristan Walters (students from her master’s level course, ‘Economic social and ecological systems’), develop and present interesting ideas for job guarantees. As Todorova explains, a job guarantee is,

“A commitment to full employment through centrally funded permanent public service job programs at living wages, administered and designed locally through democratic participation, where anybody who wants to work could obtain a socially beneficial public service job with benefits, after relatively short on-the-job training.”

Todorova’s course adeptly evidences a hands-on approach to teaching, while tackling a problem/issue that will only assume greater importance (especially with artificial intelligence). A job guarantee goes to the heart of the discipline of economics: if economics is all about provisioning, providing a job for all (even those unable to attain one) becomes paramount.

The job guarantees devised by Todorova and her students are practicable and efficacious and can be easily implemented. They also effectively foment thinking about job guarantees in other sectors of the economy¹,

“There is no shortage of possibilities for meaningful and useful public service jobs that can be created locally. Engaging students in thinking about the types of public service jobs that could be created is one way forward – learning from students’ interests, experiences, from their existing knowledge, and the issues that are dear to students. As demonstrated by all [our] ideas... a job guarantee is about a broader view of the economy and of people with their social, artistic, and spiritual lives that constitute the economy. The public service projects address a gap in social cost remediation which is left by markets, government, and public procurement... In terms of pedagogy, this assignment is an effort to begin with what students know and with students’ interests and localities, and then engage with the theory and policy debates.”

One of our objectives at the *IJPEE* is to serve as a forum for ideas on economics and economics education from all over the world, as I announced in our inaugural issue,

“The *IJPEE* publishes articles on any aspect of pluralism or economics education from the vantage of a specific region or country. Our objective is to raise pressing and provocative issues to foster a continuing global dialogue on reforming economics education.” [Reardon, (2009), p.4]

In her paper, ‘Student decision-making through classroom simulation-based learning: preference and effectiveness’, Ibtisam Al Abri, describes/discusses a classroom simulation in her ‘economics of fisheries management’, course at Sultan Qaboos University in Oman. In addition, and quite helpful, she examined the teaching methods that students prefer along with the factors that affect such preferences. Her paper is a very good case study focusing on a particular region; and like all good case studies, it offers an eye to the particular along with general observations, that all can learn from. Al Abri writes,

“Implementing simulation-based learning in undergraduate courses can be highly effective in providing students with a realistic, active, and safe learning experience. This approach helps students develop practical skills and knowledge relevant to their future careers, and it encourages collaboration and teamwork. Simulation-based learning is also time and cost-effective and can be integrated into the curriculum purposefully and intentionally. By encouraging simulation-based learning, educational institutions can provide students with an innovative and engaging learning experience that prepares them for future success... [However] further studies are needed in this context to provide a more detailed and comprehensive analysis, especially for developing countries, such as exploring the effectiveness of interactive learning methods in improving academic outcomes, investigating cultural factors that impact the effectiveness of interactive learning methods, identifying barriers to implementing interactive learning methods specific to the developing countries, and examining the scalability of interactive learning methods as such methods may be more difficult to implement at scale than traditional teaching methods.”

Very well said; and I second her call.

Kladiola Gjini in her article ‘Alternative teaching approaches: economics for future generations’, after cogently arguing for alternative methods of economics education, offers a literature typology, which readers will find quite useful, especially with a bevy of references. She writes,

“Furthermore, developing an understanding of the field of economics has broader benefits, as it can contribute to expanding students’ knowledge and improving their overall academic performance. By comprehending economic principles and concepts, students gain insights into the workings of various economic phenomena. This knowledge equips them with valuable analytical and problem-solving skills that can be applied across different subjects and disciplines.”

In addition to these broad-based benefits, Gjini notes that,

“A practical contribution of this paper is the emphasis on active learning and student engagement. Alternative teaching approaches, such as experiential learning and project-based learning, offer opportunities for students to actively participate in their own learning process. By integrating real-world applications and interactive learning activities, educators can enhance student motivation, participation, and overall understanding of economic concepts. This shift towards active learning can lead to improved learning outcomes and better prepare students for the challenges they will face in the real world.”

2.1 *Pedagogy and pop culture*

Economists have (slowly but surely) moved away from traditional chalk and talk, engaging in a wide variety of non-lecture formats. The *IJPEE* has from the beginning offered an open forum for such pedagogical articles focusing on the arts, including fiction, music, poetry, and film.² Indeed,

“Pop culture helps us connect with our students because it serves as a learning hook to pique their interest and to help them understand complex ideas in a fun and accessible way. If we succeed, more students will study economics and help advance the discipline” [Dahlberg et al., (2024), p.71].

Daniel Diaz Vidal, Ashley Salaiz and Robert Beekman continue the *IJPEE*’s long tradition on the arts in their article ‘Harmonising economic history: exploring pedagogical strategies through the integration of country music in economic education’. This article is one of the first to connect popular culture with the study of economic history. Diaz writes,

“The use of song in the classroom transforms passive student listening (i.e., chalk and talk) into an active learning experience, enabling students to juxtapose theoretical knowledge with practical, artistic expressions of economic phenomena. Additionally, the country music genre allows for broader classroom conversations around diversity, cultural differences, and pluralism at various historical moments in the US. The songs not only aid in comprehending economic theories, but also cultivate higher order thinking skills. Further, the accessibility of songs allows students of different skill levels (e.g., language, culture) to better participate in the active learning of economic history concepts.”

2.2 *Book review*

Rounding out this issue, Junaid B. Jahangir reviews the interesting book, *The Coming Wave: Technology, Power, and the Twenty-first Century’s Greatest Dilemma*, by Mustafa Suleyman and Michael Bhaskar (Crown, New York, 2023). Our reviewer notes that “it is an excellent complement to the literature on the economics of automation and is a user-friendly book on the subject for instructors and students alike.”

References

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- Dommerholt, B. (2023) 'Revisiting the origin of money: from precious metals to work: alternative pathways on the origin of currency and its impact on modern economics', *International Journal of Pluralism and Economics Education*, Vol. 14, Nos. 3/4, pp.219–233.
- Kelton, S. (2020) *The Deficit Myth: Modern Monetary Theory and the Birth of the People's Economy*, Public Affairs, New York.
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Notes

- 1 Kelton (2020) discusses the rationale for a federal job guarantee, which in addition to helping workers provision, can help “stabilize inflation by anchoring a key price in the economy – the price paid to workers... and stabilize employment over the business cycle” (p.67, p.247).
- 2 For a listing/discussion of such articles published in the IJPPE, please see Reardon (2021).