Starting Point: Teaching and Learning Economics

A Pedagogic Portal for Economists

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In partnership with:
How did Starting Point get Started?

- Origins in earlier work by Simkins/Maier focused on adapting pedagogic innovations across disciplines

- Need for comprehensive, readily accessible, easy-to-use set of pedagogical resources for classroom teaching
PART 3  CHANGING THE WAY WE TEACH ECONOMICS

8 Using pedagogical change to improve student learning in the economics major
   Scott Simkins and Mark Maier

9 Providing incentives for change: evaluating teaching
   Ann L. Owen

10 Reflections on introductory course structures
    Paul W. Grimes

11 Economics and liberal education: why, where, and how
    Michael K. Salemi

12 Reinvigorating liberal education with an expected proficiencies approach to the academic major
    W. Lee Hansen
What is Starting Point?

An economic pedagogic portal that seeks to:

- **Introduce economists** to innovative teaching strategies – within and beyond the disciplines
- **Provide tools** to integrate and assess research-based teaching strategies in classroom settings
- **Promote sharing** of teaching innovations and examples implementing these innovations
Welcome
This site introduces economists to innovative teaching strategies developed both within and beyond the discipline of economics. It provides instructors with the tools to begin integrating and assessing these teaching strategies in their own classrooms and promotes the sharing of teaching innovations among instructors.

Teaching Methods
The what, why and how of teaching methods that will engage and motivate your students.

Modules Currently Available:
- Context-Rich Problems
- Teaching with Cases
- Cooperative Learning

Currently in Development:
- Documented Problem Solving
- Effective Use of Classroom Response Systems
- Experiments
- Interactive Lectures
- Interactive Lecture Demonstrations
- Interdisciplinary Approaches to Teaching
- Just-in-Time Teaching
- Quantitative Writing
- Service-Learning
- Spreadsheets Across the Curriculum
- Teaching with Computer Simulations
- Undergraduate Student Research
- Using Media to Enhance Teaching and Learning

Activities
Classroom-tested activities covering important topics in economics. Coming soon.

Join Us
Contribute an activity, join economics educators who are coming together to share their expertise on effective teaching. Coming soon.

About this project
*Starting Point: Teaching and Learning Economics* is a National Science Foundation funded project developed in collaboration with the Science Education Resource Center (SERC) at Carleton College. [Learn more]

Papers and Presentations
[Access papers, presentations, and handouts](#) related to the *Starting Point* project.
What is Starting Point?

Pedagogic Modules under development (16):

- Context-Rich Problems
- Teaching with Cases
- Cooperative Learning
- Documented Problem Solving
- Effective Use of Classroom Response Systems
- Experiments
- Interactive Lectures
- Interactive Lecture Demonstrations
- Interdisciplinary Approaches to Teaching
- Just-in-Time Teaching
- Quantitative Writing
- Service-Learning
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Why use Starting Point?

- Central location for comprehensive set of pedagogical resources

- Promoting the concept of a “teaching commons”
How can Instructors use Starting Point?

- Learning about specific **pedagogic techniques** and their use in economics courses
- Browsing the **teaching examples** library

### Teaching Methods
Each pedagogic approach is described succinctly so you can quickly understand how the technique may be used. These descriptions include tips for effectively using each technique, related research, and a set of example activities.

This list is by no means comprehensive. It reflects the interests and priorities of the partners and program directors. If you'd like to contribute to the library and help this list grow, we'd love to hear from you.

- **Assessment** provides educators with a better understanding of what students are learning in the process of learning content. Compiled by: William Slattery at Departments of Geology and Earth Science, Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio.
- **Calibrated Peer Review™** (CPR) is a web-based management tool that enables discipline-specific assessment of student work. Compiled by: William Slattery at Departments of Geology and Earth Science, Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio.
- **Campus-Based Learning** uses the campus environment itself as a teaching tool. Compiled by: William Slattery at Departments of Geology and Earth Science, Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio.
- **ConceptTests** are conceptual multiple-choice questions that focus on key topics of a lesson. Compiled by: J. P. Byrd, Jacksonville State University, Jacksonville, Alabama.
- **Cooperative Learning** involves students working in groups to accomplish learning goals. Compiled by: John McDaniels (SBIC), and Cary Roseth (UMN).

### Cooperative Exercises and Examples
There are lots of ways to use cooperative learning in your classroom. These links will take you to other areas of the Starting Point site with resources that can be adapted using the techniques of cooperative learning:

- **Indoor Labs**: especially if a written report is involved
- **Outdoor Labs**: again, especially if they do a written report
- **Independent Research Projects**: works well with jigsaw, can involve data or models
- **Peer Review**: works well with pairs
- **Jigsaw**: this structured format lets each team member prepare separate but related assignments, then share their work with peer teaching
- **Interactive Cases**: these open-ended investigations require cooperation
- **Team Games**: you may want to add individual accountability
- **Interactive Role-Playing**: scenarios and roles can be written to ensure that all students are part of cooperative teams
- **Reviewing Journal Articles**: You may want to create interdependence by assigning several articles and give different ones to different group members
- **Studio Courses**: Traditional courses can be reorganized into a more student-centered model (see also Williamson and Rowe, 2002 and Savanise, 1988).
How can Instructors use Starting Point?

Contribute to the site by submitting activities
What’s Different about Starting Point?

- Central location for pedagogical resources
- Extensive pedagogic topic coverage
- Grounded in the learning sciences
- Intentionally adapting innovations across disciplines
- Developed in interdisciplinary teams
- Dynamic, growing library of examples
- Content management system framework (modular and shareable)
When we **Build it, will (you) they Come?**

- **Web-survey** (Paul Grimes, November 2009)

- **Results**
  - Distribution of reported “teaching styles” - leaning toward lecture
  - 20% “not satisfied” with current approach to teaching
  - 46% experimented “extensively” with teaching practices in last five years
  - Varying degrees of familiarity with *Starting Point* pedagogies
  - Disciplinary colleagues and workshops reported as best sources of pedagogical knowledge

- **Summary:** Significant potential for increasing pedagogical innovation through comprehensive web-based portal
Starting Point – An Example

Cooperative Learning

What is Cooperative Learning?
Cooperative Learning involves structuring classes around small groups that work together in such a way that each group member’s success is dependent on the group’s success.

There are different kinds of groups for different situations, but they all balance some key elements that distinguish cooperative learning from competitive or individualistic learning.

Cooperative learning can also be contrasted with what it is not. Cooperation is not having students sit side-by-side at the same table to talk with each other as they do their individual assignments. Cooperation is not assigning a report to a group of students where one student does all the work and the others put their names on the product as well. Cooperation involves much more than being physically near other students, discussing material, helping, or sharing material with other students. There is a crucial difference between simply putting students into groups to learn and in structuring cooperative interdependence among students.

Why Use Cooperative Learning?
Extensive research has compared cooperative learning with traditional classroom instruction using the same teachers, curriculum, and assessments. On the average:

- Students who engage in cooperative learning learn significantly more, remember it longer, and develop better critical-thinking skills than their counterparts in traditional lecture classes.
- Students enjoy cooperative learning more than traditional lecture classes, so they are more likely to attend classes and finish the course.
- Students are going to go on to jobs that require teamwork. Cooperative learning helps students develop the skills necessary to work on projects too difficult and complex for any one person to do in a reasonable amount of time.
- Cooperative learning processes prepare students to assess outcomes linked to accreditation.

Learn more about reasons to use cooperative learning.