



ECONEdNEWS

Fall 2024

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT ...

Deliberate Practice and Expertise

William L. Goffe,
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In foundational work, Ericsson, Krampe, and Tesch-Römer (1993) explore how experts become so. They identify deliberate practice as an important practice in experts' development. The definition of deliberate practice has evolved over the years, and the most recent one can be summarized by the following points (Ericsson and Pool 2017, 98–100):

1. The tasks take students out of their comfort zone.
2. There are well-defined goals.
3. It takes students' full attention.
4. There is extensive feedback.
5. Feedback uses and produces “effective mental representations.”

6. Often, the skills to be developed are elaborations of simpler skills. Thus, the instructor must carefully plan the sequence of needed skills and the practices necessary to master them.

The focus of this article is on the least straightforward parts of this definition: points 4, 5, and 6. Points 1, 2, and 3 are fairly straightforward and likely do not require further elaboration. Point 4 suggests that “effective mental representations” be part of feedback (point 5), which suggests more extensive feedback than what might occur in other pedagogical approaches. “Effective mental representations” can be taken as connections between ideas, which cognitive scientists refer to as “schemas.” Thus, points 4 and 5 suggest

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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.

We enjoyed a wonderful CTREE in Atlanta in May. We had record-breaking program submission numbers, conference registration over 300, and a delightful night at the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta hosted by President Raphael Bostic. Planning for CTREE 2025 is already under way. The submission portal is now open and will close on December 1. We hope you will plan on joining us in Denver in May 2025!

Do You Have a Feature or Story Idea for *EconEdNews*?

Submit ideas for *EconEdNews* content to the newsletter coordinator, **Emily Marshall**, at marshalle@denison.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.



that instructors help students make connections to related ideas and concepts as part of their feedback.

By way of example, consider a skill that microeconomics principles students often have difficulty with: understanding, using, and distinguishing between a change in demand and a change in quantity demanded. Deliberate practice would involve directly addressing this skill in a task for students (point 6), as opposed to embedding these skills in a “typical” supply and demand question that asks what happens to market outcomes when there is an exogenous change. That is, students might be given ten events involving a demand curve and asked to identify which are changes in demand, which are changes in quantity demanded, which are both, and which are neither. Note that this exercise also addresses point 6;

students are asked to develop a simple skill before moving on to what for them is the fairly complex supply and demand model.

A final way to think of deliberate practice is this: Is there a concept that your students have difficulty with semester after semester? Instead of explaining the concept more carefully, identify the specific difficulty. This might be done by the instructor debriefing students after a homework or exam or the instructor recording common exam or homework errors. For example, I found that my macroeconomics principles students had trouble distinguishing real from nominal GDP. Given a chart of US real and nominal GDP, along with knowledge of the base year for real GDP and given the fact that there was inflation over the period in question, the students could not identify which was real and

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Ericsson, Anders, and Robert Pool. 2017. *Peak: Secrets from the New Science of Expertise*. Reprint edition. Boston: Mariner Books.

which was nominal GDP. As a result, challenging questions were created for students to answer in class. This was done with clicker questions paired with think-pair-share along with extensive instructor feedback that emphasized connections to previously studied topics. Note how this process of identifying common student difficulties and addressing them with challenging tasks and then giving extensive feedback employs the points above that define deliberate practice. ■

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING

A Legacy of Improving Representation in the Profession

Gerald E. Daniels Jr.,
Howard University

This year, 2024, marks the fiftieth anniversary of the American Economic Association Summer Training Program (AEASP), renowned for training students who identify as underrepresented in the economics discipline with the skills and preparation needed for doctoral programs in economics and related fields. The AEASP’s mission is to increase the number of PhD economists from underrepresented backgrounds. A recent article by 2023 program alumnus Sarafina Bee-Martinelli outlines the AEASP’s history (Bee-Martinelli 2024).

All who are enrolled in or are recent graduates of a degree-granting program are eligible to participate in the AEASP and are encouraged to apply. Additional eligibility requirements are available on the program’s [frequently asked questions](#) page (American Economic Association 2024). Applicants who are selected and enrolled in the program (referred to as “AEASP scholars”) are immersed in graduate-level coursework at the master’s or doctoral levels. AEASP scholars are from a wide range of institutions (Howard University 2024).



Scenes from the 2024 American Economic Association Summer Training Program held May 22 to July 20 at Howard University.

The current host of the program is Howard University, in collaboration with the Women’s Institute for Science, Equity and Race and economics faculty collaborator the US Federal Reserve Board. The program at Howard is under the leadership of Gerald E. Daniels Jr., codirector; Jevay Grooms, speaker coordinator; Rhonda V. Sharpe, assistant director;

and Omari H. Swinton, director, with support from a range of generous sponsors and experiential learning partners (American Economic Association 2024; Howard University 2024).

In the program’s current iteration, AEASP scholars take four graduate-level courses for two months and

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are taught and mentored by academic and nonacademic PhD economists. Innovative components of the program while at Howard University include an experiential learning partners program with organizations in the public and private sectors; research guidance from Nobel laureate David Card; an inclusive, peer, on-site, and distance (IPOD) mentoring program; and an emphasis on encouraging scholars to consider “rank versus fit” when selecting a doctoral program. Our experiential learning partnerships support the program by providing scholars with a guided research experience for three to four hours a week, complemented by additional guidance from David Card. Research projects explore a wide range of issues based on a scholar’s area of interest. Examples include studies on the impact of monetary policy shocks on inflation expectations and the impact of the Family and Medical Leave Act on single-parent household income. The results of the guided research experience are presented at the annual AEA Summer Mentoring Pipeline Conference (SMPC) and on the penultimate day of the summer program. Our IPOD mentoring program, led by the Women’s Institute for Science, Equity and Race, provides scholars with up to three years of peer mentoring to support their transition to doctoral programs. Finally, scholars are matched with doctoral programs that best coincide with their research and career objectives.

Researchers have estimated that between 1995 and 2011, 20 percent of the doctoral degrees in economics awarded to minorities were summer program alumni (Federal Reserve Board 2014; Becker, Rouse, and Chen 2016). Based on programmatic analyses, the AEASP has had a substantial

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positive impact on diversifying the profession as well as improving the professional outcomes of its scholars (Price 2005; Becker, Rouse, and Chen 2016). Despite the AEASP’s success in influencing the field, the proportion of total PhDs granted to women or underrepresented minorities who are US citizens or permanent residents remains relatively low, at 34 percent and 3 percent, respectively (National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics 2024). These earned doctorate statistics are not outliers; instead, they reflect typical trends, indicating the necessity for substantial efforts and enhanced support for the summer program to continue its work of increasing representation within economics.

As codirector of the AEASP, I recommend the following to increase the representation of those who identify as being underrepresented in the

profession at the doctoral level: (1) more economists supporting those with an interest in the economics profession by sharing information about the AEASP with their students and networks; (2) universities developing direct pathways for AEASP scholars to gain admission to their doctoral programs; (3) universities providing transparent criteria for securing admission to their doctoral programs; and (4) more organizations and individuals sponsoring the AEASP and similar programs to help maximize the number of individuals who could benefit. By implementing these strategies, we can create a more inclusive and diverse pipeline for future economists, ensuring that talent and perspectives from all backgrounds have the opportunity to shape the field of economics. Together, we can drive meaningful change and foster a richer, more equitable profession for generations to come. ■

ACTIVE LEARNING PEDAGOGIES

Using Social Media to Enhance Teaching and Learning

Brandon Sheridan,
Elon University

Social media is pervasive in today’s culture, and that extends to our courses and classrooms. As such, some instructors have tried to leverage social media to engage students and possibly improve learning

outcomes. One up-front consideration is that social media is continually evolving, and there are many different platforms to consider using with varying prior exposure from students and instructors (Al-Bahrani, Patel, and Sheridan 2015; Al-Bahrani, Patel, and Sheridan 2017b). However, research suggests that some

applications, such as Instagram, have some staying power (Al-Bahrani, Patel, and Sheridan 2015). Students seem to show a preference for platforms where they can consume media in multiple formats, with short videos overlaid with captions being

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the most popular (e.g., Instagram, YouTube). Even on the same platform, students may have distinctly different experiences.

Many articles provide instruction on ways to incorporate social media into economics courses (Al-Bahrani and Patel 2015; Al-Bahrani, Patel, and Sheridan 2023; Enz and Kassens 2016; Jones and Baltzersen 2017; Kassens 2014; Middleditch, Moindrot, and Rudkin 2022). The purpose and objectives of using social media need to be clear to create buy-in. A common practice is to use social media as a communication tool or a transmission mechanism for another evidence-based form of teaching, such as discussion or elaboration. Assignments with a social media component will likely work best when leveraging students' existing social media knowledge and habits. Students may be more invested if they are allowed to be creative and generate a multimodal product, akin to something they might create for a social media post. However, using social media as a required part of a course can be polarizing as some students may be enthusiastic, while others may see it as pandering or "forced fun." Another important consideration relates to privacy for both students and instructors, who must be cognizant of the fact that using social media can blur the lines between professional and personal lives (Al-Bahrani, Patel, and Sheridan 2017b).

There does not appear to be evidence of social media improving learning outcomes, with a couple of studies finding no effect (Al-Bahrani,

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Patel, and Sheridan 2017a; Middleditch, Moindrot, and Rudkin 2022). One of the biggest challenges of quantifying the effect of social media is constructing treatment and comparison groups. Social media, by its nature, lends itself to spillovers where control groups are likely to be influenced in some way by treatment groups. The field could benefit from more research in this area, giving special attention to identification of effects.

Despite these challenges, social media may promote engagement

and demonstrate relevance of economic concepts in a relatable way to students. For example, Al-Bahrani et al. (2016) use "selfies" to connect economic theory to the real world by posting economics-related content to social media platforms. Recent research shows that helping students create personal connection to the material and experience real-life scenarios may aid efforts to diversify the economics major (Bayer et al. 2020). This suggests that social media has the potential to complement those efforts when used appropriately. ■

SPECIAL FEATURE

Addressing Student Anxiety and Test Taking Challenges

Colin Cannonier,
Belmont University

Monica Galloway Burke,
Western Kentucky University

The pursuit of academic success and personal growth during college often triggers anxiety for students, accentuating the challenges they face in their coursework and developmental journeys. In fact, anxiety continues to be a top concern

Tests can magnify anxiety, transforming them into a barrier to student achievement and persistence (Sawka-Miller 2011). Such challenges can be particularly pronounced in economics courses, which often evoke apprehension, fear, and anxiety in students (Benedict and Hoag 2002).

for college students (Center for Collegiate Mental Health 2024), with one in three college students reporting that anxiety has negatively impacted their academic performance (American College Health Association 2024). Anxiety can significantly hinder a student's mental, emotional,

and physical well-being; alter their cognitive capacity and perception; and diminish their creativity and problem-solving abilities (Dye, Burke, and Mason 2021), which can negatively impact their performance in the

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classroom and persistence (England et al. 2019).

Tests can magnify anxiety, transforming them into a barrier to student achievement and persistence (Sawka-Miller 2011). Such challenges can be particularly pronounced in economics courses, which often evoke apprehension, fear, and anxiety in students (Benedict and Hoag 2002). Given the impact of test-taking anxiety, educators may want to consider implementing strategies that can effectively address these emotional challenges in the classroom.

One such strategy is the use of cheat sheets—a concise set of notes for quick reference to summarize and recall key information during tests—as test aids. This approach can potentially mitigate test-related anxiety, offering a pathway to not only enhance academic performance but also improve overall student well-being. Cannonier and Burke (2023) measure the impact of cheat sheets as a test aid on students' anxiety and exam performance, utilizing treatment and control groups and a pre-exam survey to quantify

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student anxiety levels in a macroeconomics course. They find that the percentage of students experiencing above-average anxiety levels is notably higher among those in the control group (without test aid) compared to the treatment group (those utilizing test aids). Additionally, employing either group or individually created test aids correlates positively with exam scores.

The strategic integration of test aids offers a potential dual benefit for economics education: it is associated with lower levels of student anxiety, which often hampers performance, and may improve exam performance. By carefully employing these aids, educators can balance rigorous academic demands with student well-being, supporting both their academic success and mental health. ■

SPECIAL FEATURE

Establishing Learning Goals with Backward Course Design

Janine L. F. Wilson,
University of California, Davis

Backward design is a framework for planning a lesson, unit, or course that aligns learning goals, assessment tools, and instructional strategies. Establishing learning goals before assessments or assignments are built is critical. Learning goals serve as the anchor for the course elements. Wiggins and McTighe (2005) order the steps as follows:

1. Identify desired goals.
2. Determine acceptable evidence that goals have been achieved.
3. Design learning activities to prepare students to illustrate evidence that goals have been achieved.

When an instructor begins their course design by constructing desired learning objectives, they provide clarity of purpose and prioritization



When an instructor begins their course design by constructing desired learning objectives, they provide clarity of purpose and prioritization for all activities.

for all activities. One perspective on core competencies in economics that can be used to develop learning objectives can be found in Allgood and Bayer (2017). Fink (2013) provides

guidance for developing "significant learning" objectives that are interactive and can stimulate other types of learning. Fink's taxonomy is grounded in six categories of significant learning: foundational knowledge, application, integration, human dimension, caring, and learning how to learn.

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As an example, an instructor may include externalities in their course. They may build a learning objective with both a core competency, “think critically about economic methods and their application,” and an element of significant learning, “incorporate a student’s lived experiences.” The resulting learning objective for students is “demonstrate how surplus can be lost when private and social costs are not aligned while exploring a topic that is important to you.” This completes step 1 of the backward design process, which identifies the desired goals and is grounded in action verbs, like “demonstrate,” that provide a basis for measuring learning gains. A complete list of action verbs associated with core competencies can be found in Barkley and Major (2016).

With learning goals of the course established, assessments are designed to provide evidence that students have achieved these objectives as part of step 2. In the externality case, students could be assigned a paper in which they are asked to demonstrate the impact of the misalignment of private and social costs in a market of their choice and propose a solution to the market failure.

At the final step, instructional strategies (e.g., in-class activities and out-of-class assignments) are designed to give students practice and prepare them for assessment. An in-class exercise for the topic of externalities could require students

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to practice demonstrating scenarios where private and social costs are not aligned. Students could also be asked to explore their own experiences with externalities and the impact of various market-correcting interventions. Wilson (2023) provides additional backward design topic examples that incorporate students’ sense of belonging and inclusion. Of particular note, Wilson uses research, researchers, and examples relevant to diverse students in instructional strategies, which Bayer et al. (2020) have found encourage underrepresented students in

economics to take additional economics courses.

The backward design process has benefits for both students and instructors. Winkelmes et al. (2016) find that transparent connections between learning objectives, assessments, and instructional strategies improve the learning experience for students, particularly for underserved students. Reynolds and Kearns (2017) find that the backward design framework improves the lecture preparation experience for instructors, with reduced anxiety and a more creative flow of ideas.

Resources from the Centre for Teaching and Learning Economics

Cloda Jenkins,

Imperial College Business School
and CTaLE associate director

Parama Chaudhury,

University College London
and CTaLE director

Established in 2015, the Centre for Teaching and Learning Economics (CTaLE) aims to bring together the global community of economics educators to share experiences and research through low-cost online initiatives.

Our flagship annual event is the online TeachECONference. With global attendance near 100, the conference addresses topics of international interest. At TeachECONference2024,

sessions covered collaborative learning, optimizing feedback, using AI in education, and innovative ways to teach difficult concepts. No registration fees are charged.

We complement the conference with a regular series of online EconTEaching seminars, an informal chat with presenters and time for attendees to ask questions and share insights. Recent topics have included how to write a proposal for an economics education conference, how to successfully integrate research into your teaching, and what to consider when working with student data.

In fall 2023, we also launched our Communities of Practice initiative, inviting colleagues to discuss

themes of general interest. The first two Communities are considering the impact of genAI on economics education and effective design of group work to facilitate cooperation. We welcome ideas on further Communities from anyone interested in taking the lead on one. Those involved with the Communities engage with each other online through our Ed Discussion Board and meet online for small-group discussions, with presenters where appropriate.

If you want to know more about CTaLE events and our wider work, please sign up for our mailing list. You can also find recordings of prior events and subscribe to updates on YouTube.

CENTER AND COUNCIL DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Georgia Council on Economic Education

The Georgia Council on Economic Education (GCEE) was founded in 1972 by Atlanta's business community and educational leaders. Since



Mike Raymer

its founding, the GCEE has supported tens of thousands of public and independent K-12 teachers as they teach economics and personal finance. Each year, the GCEE conducts approximately

150 workshops for more than 3,500 Georgia teachers to assist them in effectively teaching state-mandated economics and personal finance standards.

Throughout the year, GCEE offers professional development workshops and experiential learning opportunities at no financial cost to teachers or their school systems. GCEE workshops are specifically designed to strengthen the economics and personal financial literacy knowledge and classroom readiness of attendees. Teachers attending GCEE workshops learn innovative teaching strategies and receive grade-specific interactive

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Throughout the year, GCEE offers professional development workshops and experiential learning opportunities at no financial cost to teachers or their school systems.

lessons and materials designed to help them teach state-mandated standards in engaging ways. Research has shown that students of teachers attending GCEE workshops scored significantly higher on required state tests in economics and personal finance than students of teachers who had not attended GCEE workshops (Swinton and

Scafidi 2012; Swinton, Scafidi, and Woodard 2012; Swinton et al. 2010; Swinton et al. 2007).

GCEE also coordinates special programs designed to help teachers engage students in the economic way of thinking, including the Stock Market Game, the National Economics Challenge, the National Personal Finance Challenge, and the Econ Games. Additionally, GCEE has recently partnered with Georgia Public Broadcasting to create three online resources to help students better understand economics and personal finance: [Lights, Camera, Budget!](#), [Start It Up!](#), and [Econ Express](#). ■

ECONEVENTS

Information, Calls, Announcements, and Sessions at Upcoming Meetings

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@glen-dale.edu. To suggest or submit content, contact Brian Lynch at blynch@lakelandcollege.edu.

The twenty-first annual University of North Carolina Wilmington (UNCW) Economics Teaching Workshop is devoted to the teaching of economics and focuses on applicable ideas and information that can quickly be put

to use in the classroom. The one-day workshop will include presentation and networking sessions during lunch and a happy hour. The 2024 workshop will be held on October 26.

At the Southern Economic Association Ninety-Fourth Annual Meeting, to be held **November 23-25, 2024**, in Washington, DC, the Presidential Economic Education sessions will include topics such as research in economic education; experiments and activities; mathematics, statistics, and data literacy; assessment and grading; and skills, experience, failure, and learning. Three panels will also be conducted on the experiences of nontenure track faculty in economics; diversity, equity, inclusiveness, justice, and belonging in economics classrooms; and the

growth of philosophy, politics, and economics programs.

The AEA-CEE is sponsoring seven sessions at the ASSA Annual Meeting on January 3-5, 2025, in San Francisco, California. They are The Evolving Role of Test-Optional Admissions in Higher Education; Relevance, Belonging, and Growth in Economic Education; A Fresh Look at the Future of the Intermediate Microeconomics Course; Promoting Diversity in Economics: Exploring the Effects of Introductory Economics Course Experiences on Students' Continuation in the Discipline; Supporting Better Research in Economic Education; Research in Economic Education; and a poster session.

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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 annual ASSA meetings.

The fourteenth annual Conference on Teaching and Research in Economic Education (CTREE) will be held May 28–30, 2025, in Denver, Colorado. Plenary speakers include Danila Serra (Texas A&M University) and Tim Cason (Purdue University). Submissions will be accepted via the AEA online submission system; the portal is now open and will close on December 1.

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 2025 CTREE in Denver, Colorado. The workshop will

be conducted as a face-to-face and Canvas-supported workshop starting on Friday, May 30, and concluding on Sunday, June 1. The application portal will open in January 2025 with a rolling acceptance procedure that continues 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 learning outcomes 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).



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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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