



# THE GEORGIA COUNCIL ON ECONOMIC EDUCATION

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## Using Creative Approaches to Teach Teachers Economics

A ball of yarn. Miniature candy bars. Paper chains. Origami cups. What do all of these things have in common? These are items used in Georgia Council on Economic Education workshops. They are tools in an arsenal of creative approaches that the Georgia Council takes in teaching teachers economics, so they in turn can not only teach the economic principles, but also do it in a way that their students understand.

In a "Biographies of Great Americans" workshop aimed at third grade teachers, each teacher gets a nametag that bears a profession, such as "doctor" or "pharmacist" or "newspaper writer." The teachers gather in a circle and determine how their profession might be related to another. And to visually demonstrate that point, they use a ball of yarn.

For example, the pharmacist needs the doctor to write prescriptions, so he or she would throw the ball of yarn across the circle to the doctor. The doctor, in turn, would throw the ball of yarn to an ambulance driver, and so forth.

"At the end of the activity, you have an interconnected web of yarn," says Mike Raymer, GCEE Program Manager. "This shows interdependence, and we use it as an example for Paul Revere. A lot of what he did relied on what other people in his community were doing at the time."

To demonstrate productivity to fourth and fifth grade teachers in the U.S. Economic History workshop, a teacher is given materials to make a paper chain, and timed on how many she can produce by herself in three minutes. Then, teachers are divided into groups to work together to make paper chains. Teachers

divide responsibilities, ultimately becoming more productive in the same amount of time. "They learn about productivity, human capital and specialization in this exercise," Raymer says.

At the end of the day, teachers leave with lesson plans and activities for everything covered in the workshop. Teachers can then take these exact same activities back to their classrooms and have their students do them to learn economic concepts.

"They walk out the door with effective lessons that they can use the next day," Raymer says. "The purpose of our workshops is to give teachers lessons and resources that can make economics come alive while teaching the Georgia Performance Standards."

Glen Blankenship, Ph.D., the Council's Associate Director and Chief Program Officer, oversees the development of new materials and workshops, and along with Mike Raymer, conducts teacher workshops throughout the state.

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## Lockheed Martin's Shan Cooper to Be Keynote Speaker



Shan Cooper

Shan Cooper, Vice President of Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company and General Manager of the company's Marietta, Ga., facility, will be the keynote speaker at the Georgia Council's annual meeting on May 8. Marie Gooding, GCEE Outgoing Chair and First Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, will facilitate a Q&A format with Cooper.

As General Manager, Cooper is responsible for the more than 6,300-employee Marietta operation, which designs, produces, modifies and maintains military aircraft for the U.S. and countries around the world. She is also responsible for the company's subassembly sites in Meridian, Miss., and Clarksburg, W.Va. In addition, she serves as the company's Vice President of Business Ethics. She was named to her current position in January 2011.

She joined Lockheed Martin in 2002 as Senior Manager, Diversity Workforce Management. While at corporate headquarters, she progressed through positions of increasing responsibility before being named Vice President, Diversity and Equal Opportunity Programs in 2004. Earlier, Cooper held leadership positions with Lucent Technologies and has consulted with other Fortune 500 companies.

She holds an MBA from the Roberto C. Goizueta Business School at Emory University and is a graduate of the Rutgers Global Executive Masters in Human Resource Leadership Program.

## Georgia Stock Market Game: 35 Years of Winning, Losing and Learning



GEORGIA  
STOCK MARKET GAME™

In the Fall 2014 Stock Market Game, the same three to four teams jockeyed for the top three slots in the weekly standings. But in the tenth and final week, things took a dramatic turn. Parkview High School in Gwinnett County came out of nowhere to take home first place. After week nine, they were in 59th place with

\$117,976. They ended up taking the top spot with a portfolio of \$256,885.

Thus is the unpredictability of the stock market – and the Game that students have been playing in Georgia since 1980.

The basics of the Stock Market Game are pretty simple – teams of students invest a hypothetical \$100,000 in stocks, bonds and mutual funds listed on the major exchanges over a ten-week period. They can buy on margin, sell short, and they pay commission fees. Students research publicly traded companies on the Internet, read business publications and crunch numbers to select their stocks. The Game is played in the fall and spring, and the team from each public school district or independent school region with the highest portfolio value at the end of the term wins.

The way students play today – using computers and hand-held devices – shows how far the Game has come. When the Georgia Council first rolled out the Stock Market Game 35 years ago, students used computer punch cards to make transactions and mailed them in by a pre-determined deadline. Today, the game is entirely Web-based.

But while the technology has evolved, the fundamental lessons have stayed the same.

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Pat Willis

## GCEE honors Pat Willis with its VanLandingham Award

Pat Willis will receive the award at the Council's Annual Meeting on May 8. Read more about Willis on page 4.

# 2015 GEORGIA ECONOMICS TEACHERS OF THE YEAR

## Craig Ellis: Connecting Economics to Real Life

What does a pizza made out of a paper plate and construction paper have to do with productivity and specialization?

It's an activity that Craig Ellis, an economics teacher at Oglethorpe County High School, uses to teach his students these concepts. It is one of the ways his students learn by doing, rather than listening to a lecture.

For this activity, students are divided into groups and given paper plates, markers, paper and scissors and told to make a "pizza." At the beginning of the activity, each person in the group has to make his or her own pizza. "Not surprisingly, few pizzas are made and productivity is low," says Ellis. Then, he instructs them to work together to come up with a way to speed up production.

At this point, students divide duties, with each group member taking on a certain responsibility. "By the end of the round, productivity has greatly increased, and the students are able to credit this to specialization and division of labor," Ellis explains.

For the last eight years, Ellis has worked hard to motivate his students and help them understand the importance of economics. He does this in several ways, including making it relevant and putting it in terms they can understand. For example, one student was struggling with the concept of supply and demand. He tied it to cosmetics and had her name all of the factors that could affect demand when considering that product.

"By using something she could relate to, she could make the connection," he explains. "When we were done, she said 'oh, now I get it.' That is really gratifying to me."

He uses the Stock Market Game™ to teach students about investing, risk and return, and the basic workings of the stock market. Through the 10-week game, his "investors" learn about mutual funds and index funds and the role these funds play in retirement savings. "This is often the first time many of my students are exposed to the world of investing," says Ellis, "and it really opens their eyes as to how they can make money for retirement even on a moderate salary."

To motivate his students to succeed, he has a "Wall of Fame" in his classroom filled with the names of every student who has exceeded the state mandated End-

of-Course Assessment and/or earned a four or five on the Advanced Placement Economics exam.

Craig Ellis didn't plan to be a teacher. In fact, since both of his parents were high school teachers, he tried to get as far away as he could from the profession, instead majoring in business in college.

But one history class at the University of Georgia changed everything.

"That class reminded me of how much I enjoyed history," Ellis says, "and I decided then that I wanted to be a history teacher."

After earning his degree from the University of Georgia, Ellis began teaching at Oglethorpe County High School in the only area available: economics. Unlike many teachers who get assigned economics unexpectedly, Ellis was happy to teach the subject. "I had been a bank teller during the summers," he says, "and with my interest in business, it was a good fit."

Ellis, who is a past president of the Georgia Association of Economic Educators (GAEE), has been attending GCEE workshops since he began teaching. "At first it was more for survival and learning ways to teach economics," he says. "Now I go to refresh and enrich my knowledge." Since he is the only economics teacher at his high school, he says he also appreciates the fact that he can network with other teachers at the workshops and share ideas.

"One of my main goals in teaching economics is to get my students thinking about economics even when they are not in my classroom," he says. "If I can achieve this goal, then I know I am motivating my students and generating enthusiasm for the study of economics."



## Sally Meyer: Cultivating Good Decision Makers

Sally Meyer believes that the most effective way for students to learn economics is to participate in activities that require them to take on economic roles, make choices and analyze the results of those choices. As a teacher of gifted students at Crabapple Lane Elementary School in Fayette County, she provides many opportunities for her first through fifth grade students to do just that.

For example, her fifth grade students negotiate stock trades and calculate net worth in a unit called "This Stock Market's the Bee's

Knees." After researching inventions and inventors of the Industrial Era, they work in groups to choose an invention, create a corporate name, and determine an Initial Public Offering (IPO) price for their shares. Each student is given a fictional \$100 to spend on stocks, with the freedom to buy as many or few as they'd like. Each week they negotiate trades in an effort to have the highest net worth and become the "Big Cheese." The "Crabapple Lane Community Bank" makes stock-secured loans, just like in the 1920s, and students learn about the risks and rewards of borrowing. The market does crash, like in 1929, and students learn the downside of investing.



"The goal of this unit is to teach students about supply and demand, opportunity cost, risks and rewards, and the investment marketplace," says Meyer. That's a tall order for most 10-year-olds, but Meyer says her students learn by making personal connections through the activities.

"The best way to engage students in learning about economics is to help them make connections between economics and the things they understand and enjoy," Meyer says. "Hands on learning is also

critical to generating enthusiasm." To teach third graders about the techniques used by advertisers to convince consumers to buy a certain brand, Meyer sets up a "taste test" in which the students choose their favorite kind of soda and cheese puffs, based solely on the brand name. Then they taste each of the three brands and select which one tastes the best.

"To help them understand the importance of brand names, I trick them," admits Meyer. She prepares the samples before the students come into her classroom, and switches the brand names around. "It is fun to watch their astonished faces when they realize that they have selected a product

based on the name they see, rather than the product's taste."

Meyer says she always wanted to be a teacher, but instead chose banking as a career, capitalizing on her skills in math and logical thinking. She worked in San Francisco for Bank of America for nearly 20 years before transferring to Atlanta. When she discovered that the job was not a good fit, she decided to make a career change. She returned to school to become a teacher, and considers it to be one of the best decisions she has ever made.

She's been teaching since 1998 – starting out teaching fourth and fifth grades. In 2007, she began teaching gifted students exclusively. Along the way, Meyer earned a master's degree and a Ph.D.

Meyer keeps her ideas fresh by constantly tweaking the activities she introduces and discovering new ones to keep her students engaged. She also attends GCEE workshops to learn creative ways to infuse economics into her classes. She is highly motivated to make sure that her students have a good understanding of economics.

"Economics is going to have an impact on every aspect of my students' lives from the beginning of our time together until the end of fifth grade and beyond," Meyer says. "Ensuring that they have the knowledge and understanding of economic principles that will help them make good decisions is the best gift I can give them."

## Using Creative Approaches

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“The Georgia Council has the strongest menu of materials, programs, and workshops for teachers in the country,” says Dr. Blankenship.

### We teach teachers how to teach economics

Since 1972, the Georgia Council has introduced thousands of K-12 teachers in Georgia’s public and independent schools to economic education through workshops, materials and special programs focusing on lessons that meet the Georgia Performance Standards. Through these efforts, the Georgia Council reaches students in virtually every school system in Georgia.

“The ways in which lessons are taught to students have changed,” says Dr. David Martin, the Georgia Council’s Executive Director, “but we’ve stayed focused on our mission. We’ve always been a resource that teachers can count on to help them build an understanding and appreciation of economics.”

The demand for the Council’s workshops has grown over the years as the curriculum has changed. In 1976, the state required that all students take and

pass an economics course, beginning with the class of 1981. Later in the 1980s, the state strengthened the economics objectives in the Quality Core Curriculum.

In 2004, economics was introduced on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) for third through eighth graders, personal finance standards were developed, and the state also required all high school students to take the End-of-Course assessment in economics. Georgia is only one of 22 states that require students to take an Economics course.

For teachers who need to prepare themselves to teach the mandated course – especially teachers who took few or no economics courses in college – the Georgia Council has become a valuable partner.

Georgia’s teachers have benefited from the generosity of businesses, foundations and individuals who support the Georgia Council. While teachers in other states might pay for an instructional resource, nearly all of the Georgia Council’s materials and workshops are available at no financial charge to Georgia teachers. This enduring support from the private sector as well as our partners in business and education affirms the vision and value of the Georgia Council.

## Georgia Stock Market Game

*Continued from page 1*

“The Stock Market Game involves analyzing cause-and-effect relationships, encourages teamwork, relies on research, and most importantly, is based on sound decision-making,” says Dr. David Martin, Executive Director of the Georgia Council. “It gives teachers a tool for helping students develop a solid understanding of how our market economy works.”

The Georgia Council introduced the Game in Georgia after learning about it from a presentation at the Southeast Regional Economic Education Conference in May 1980. At the time, only 11 states were using the Game. The first competition in Georgia started that fall with 252 teams competing. Now more than 35,000 students play each year, and since its introduction in 1980, more than one million Georgia students have played the Game, making it one of largest state-run competitions.

Over the years, SIFMA (Securities Industry and Financial Markets Association) Foundation for Investor Education, which runs the game nationally, has added two new elements of the Stock Market Game: InvestWrite, a writing competition; and the Capitol Hill Challenge, a longer version of the Game where students compete nationally on behalf of their Congressman or Senator. Georgia has had national winners in both of these competitions.

Winning teams are celebrated each year at the annual Stock Market Game Awards Luncheon in May, held in recent years at the Georgia Freight Depot, a venue large enough to accommodate up to 1,000 attendees.

Aside from the SIFMA Foundation for Investor Education, Georgia’s Stock Market Game is supported by the Atlanta Society of Finance and Investment Professionals, Bank of America Foundation, Deloitte LLP, Georgia Securities Association, Invesco and The Primerica Foundation.

## A Workshop for Everybody

GCEE offers a variety of workshops for K-12 teachers that are available to Georgia’s teachers at little or no cost. Here are just a few:

**Stock Market Game™** – Teachers learn how to help students learn from the stock market. In the 10-week Web-based stock trading simulation, students apply research and math skills, practice group decision-making and analyze cause-and-effect relationships.

**VE4.5** – a CD-ROM containing a wealth of resources just for teachers, including 51 key economics concepts with both print and video explanations and more than 1,400 reproducible activity-based lessons correlated to the GPS economics and personal finance standards.

**Biographies of Great Americans (1st - 3rd grade)** – Basic economic concepts are presented through the lives of great Americans identified in the GPS. Lesson plans specific to each great American highlight economic and personal finance concepts from the life of that person.

**U.S. Economic History (4th and 5th grades)** – Teachers apply economic analysis to the events covered in traditional history courses. These lessons are designed specifically to address the GPS in grades 4 and 5 while preparing students for the End-of-Grade (formerly the CRCT) state assessment.

**Economies in Transition (6th/7th grade)** – Teachers explore economic challenges faced by nations in various world regions (Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East). Attention is given to topics such as command vs. market economies, currency exchange, economic and political freedom indices, and other factors relevant to the region.

**Georgia Economic History (8th grade)** – Teachers are given interactive lessons that apply both contemporary and historic examples of economic concepts to build enduring understandings regarding Georgia economic history and the economic concepts found within the GPS.

**Focus: High School Economics** – Built around discussions of economic content and interactive demonstration lessons, this workshop focuses on the most basic concepts and skills, which are the building blocks for studying and understanding economics.

**Advanced Placement (AP) Economics** – A five-day workshop for high school AP teachers led by experienced AP economics teachers and exam readers. The Council also offers a one-day “refresher” course for AP teachers twice during the school year.

### Special Thanks

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The **MISSION** of the Georgia Council on Economic Education is to help teachers teach economics in the public and independent schools of Georgia.

The **VISION** of the Georgia Council on Economic Education is of students leaving school prepared for their economic roles as workers, consumers, citizens and lifelong decision makers in a globally interdependent world.

# Celebrating a Collaborator

## The Georgia Council honors Pat Willis with its VanLandingham Award

When Pat Willis was looking to start a new chapter in her career after leaving the BellSouth Corporation in 2002, a friend told her to think of three moments in her life when she couldn't wait to get up in the morning – and then determine what those moments have in common.

"After taking a look back, I realized that I really enjoyed starting new things," Willis says.

A review of Willis' career validates her point: She was instrumental in launching a community service program at Southern Bell, an education-centric foundation at BellSouth Corporation and a nonprofit advocacy group, Voices for Georgia's Children.

In all three cases, Willis proved to be more than a cause-based entrepreneur. She's demonstrated a remarkable ability to connect and leverage people and organizations, most notably to improve how children learn and develop.

In celebration of her dedication to improving the lives of children through education, the Georgia Council on Economic Education is recognizing Pat Willis with its highest annual honor, the William J. VanLandingham Commitment to Education Award.

"The name Pat Willis is synonymous with improving education and advancing the interests of children in the community," says David Martin, Executive Director of the Georgia Council. "Her ability to shape a vision and forge collaboration has sparked initiatives that have benefited the lives of untold numbers of teachers and children."

The story of how Willis became a force for education in Georgia and beyond begins with earning a mathematics degree from Marietta College in Ohio, an education that bestowed sharp analytical skills. She and a roommate chose to move to Atlanta in 1970 after seeing ads for the city in *Atlantic Monthly* and *The New Yorker*.

Arriving in Atlanta, Willis' first job was as a statistician in Atlanta Public Schools. Later, she took a position helping to start a community service program for Southern Bell. The opportunity afforded her an up-close look at the economic and social pressures on teenagers in Atlanta's housing projects, for whom she organized a summer job program weatherizing housing.

In 1987, Willis' general manager told her, "I think I have the job of your dreams." He went on to say that the company – now BellSouth – was starting a foundation devoted to education. Would she be interested in heading it up?

"I didn't know anything about running a foundation," Willis recalls, "but I knew it would be a wonderful experience to apply what I knew to help improve education. And it was an honor to have the confidence of these executives to do this."

Having led the BellSouth Foundation for nearly two decades, Willis became widely known



Pat Willis with Pete the Cat, the mascot for Georgia Pre-K week.

as a bridge builder and astute investor in initiatives that made a difference, both in the Southeast and in Latin America. She takes great pride in the fact that several of those initiatives are still going strong today. So are the side ventures that Willis helped shape, such as the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education (GPEE), a public education advocacy nonprofit with broad corporate involvement. Willis served on the task force that created the organization and today serves on its board.

"Pat Willis has done more to keep the business community informed and at the table for educational reform than anyone I know," says Tom Upchurch, former president of GPEE. "Her lifetime commitment to improve opportunities for children is unprecedented."

Most would assume the BellSouth Foundation would be Pat Willis' legacy, but that's only partly true. When a group of leaders was looking for someone to head up the newly repurposed Voices for Georgia's Children, she decided to once again, start something new to improve how kids grow and learn.

"Our mission is to be a powerful unifying voice for a public agenda that ensures the well-being of all Georgia children," Willis says. "This agenda is not something you do alone – the word 'unifying' really is the driving force."

Policy and advocacy are the heart of the organization, and its focal points are early childhood development, child health, and vulnerable and disconnected youth.

"One of the things that's really distinctive about Voices is that we are comprehensive, rather than devoted to one aspect of child well being," she says. "We bring people together who aren't currently working together, who aren't talking. It's a joy to connect people who really care about the same issues, but might have become too silo-ed in their work."

In June, Pat Willis will retire. She says this time it's for good. But her legacy of improving education and the lives of children will live on.

## Georgia Council's Leaders



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## The VanLandingham Award

The William J. VanLandingham Commitment to Education Award was created in 1993 to recognize the long-time commitment of Bill VanLandingham (1937-1993) to education in general and to the Georgia Council on Economic Education in particular.

Award criteria include a long-term commitment to education in a variety of settings. Past winners include John E. and Susan W. Wieland, John L. Clendenin, Charles D. Hudson, Oz Nelson, Zell Miller, Michael H. Mescon, Ann Wilson Cramer, Elridge McMillan, Lee Burge, Johnny Isakson, Herman Russell, H.G. "Pat" Pattillo, James Blanchard, David Ratcliffe, Sunny Park, Barbara King, Frank Troutman, Phil Jacobs, Tom Upchurch, Neil Shorthouse and Curley Dossman, Jr.