



The Learning Curve

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Economics gets a makeover in Georgia's schools

The secret: helping teachers get creative

Should the Atlanta Braves have stayed at Turner Field?

It's a question that still ignites debate. It's also a question that opens the door to a novel lesson in economics.

In classrooms all over Georgia, high school students take on the role of upper management for the Braves organization. They study market forces and incentives

from three fictional communities and then make the decision of whether to stay downtown or move elsewhere.

They get to do this because their teacher took a workshop on how to bring principles of economics to life – a workshop created by the Georgia Council on Economic Education.

"Teaching from a textbook alone just doesn't cut it anymore," says Mike Raymer,

Executive Director of the Georgia Council. "Teachers of economics have to be able to engage and inspire their students, no matter what grade they're teaching. We show them many different ways to do that."

The Atlanta Braves is a good example; the team has inspired a whole series of teacher

"You have inspired me to learn more and improve my instruction to bring econ "out of the text" and into a more "real world" type of approach to teaching."

– Tom B., sixth grade teacher

workshops centered around the economics of major league baseball.

Teachers learn how to impart lessons in money management by having students come up with a long-term investment plan using a Braves player's salary. They also teach personal finance by getting students to develop a budget for a family of four going to see a Braves game.

Georgia's fast-growing film industry is also fertile ground for lessons. In "Lights, Camera, Econ!" teachers in grades 8-12 give students a list of films made in Georgia and a map. Using online resources, the students find something filmed in each of Georgia's geographic regions and/or near a major Georgia geographical feature. They then have to explain how these regions or features may have an impact on a movie.

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THE GEORGIA COUNCIL: A SNAPSHOT

Founded: 1972

Status: Nonprofit supported through the generosity of organizations, foundations and individuals

Mission: Help teachers teach economics and personal finance in the public and independent schools of Georgia

Reach: 1 million Georgia students (more than 70% of enrolled students)

Teacher workshops: 109 across Georgia during the 2017-2018 school year.

Sample programs: Georgia Stock Market Game™, Econ Challenge, Personal Finance Challenge, Econ Games

WORTH NOTING:

- More than 10,000 students play the Georgia Stock Market Game each fall and spring
- Chattahoochee High School took home 2nd place in the 2017 National Economics Challenge
- The vast majority of GCEE's services are provided to teachers and schools at no financial cost

GET INVOLVED!

Help us help teachers teach economics creatively. Contact Mike Raymer (404.413.7826 / mraymer@gcee.org).

GCEE ANNUAL MEETING • MAY 14, 2018



Dr. Raphael Bostic, President and CEO of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, will be the keynote speaker at the Georgia Council's annual meeting on May 14. He will participate in a Q&A discussion with GCEE Executive Director Mike Raymer.



Georgia teachers from the 2017 tour

Manufacturing in Georgia: A Tour

Zippers. Ice Makers. Toilets. Jets. Turbines. Bread. These are just some of the products that are manufactured in Georgia, and a few of the stops on a three-day bus tour sponsored by the Georgia Council that takes teachers to manufacturing plants around the state.

Over three days, middle and high school teachers learn real-life lessons on manufacturing and economics to take back to the classroom.

For the third year, the Georgia Council will take teachers on its annual bus tour this summer where they will tour several manufacturing facilities and speak with industry professionals about manufacturing, the labor market and issues facing their particular industries. Teachers on the past two tours have said the experience was extremely valuable in helping them understand how to teach various economic concepts to students and relay real-life opportunities to those students who may not choose a traditional college path in life.

"The teachers get a firsthand perspective on modern manufacturing," says Chris Cannon, Georgia Council's Associate Director and Chief Program Officer. "They are able to talk directly to plant managers, machinists, floor supervisors, line workers and other personnel about topics ranging from supply chains to skill gaps in the workforce to opportunities offered to high school and technical college students. All of the facilities said they enjoy giving tours like this because they are proud of what they do and want the public to see it as much as possible."

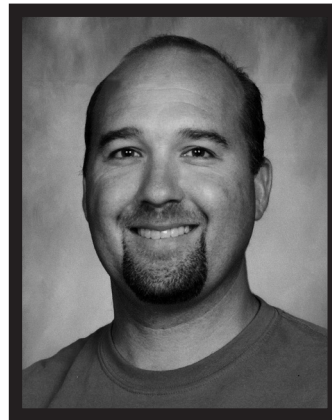
The tour, which was introduced in 2016, is an extension of "American Made Movie," a workshop created for high school economics teachers by the Georgia Council that examines the state of manufacturing in America. The workshops and the bus tour are both funded by a grant from the Georgia Foundation for Public Education.

Over the three days, the group – a mix of middle and high school teachers – learn real-life lessons on manufacturing and economics to take back to the classroom.

This year's tour is scheduled for June 26 – 28 and is already full. Stops will include the Duracell Battery facility in LaGrange, Lockheed Martin in Marietta, and others.

2018 ECONOMICS TEACHERS OF THE YEAR

Tim Reeder makes economics personal



Tim Reeder, an economics teacher at Chattahoochee High School in Fulton County, has a pretty good track record when it comes to getting students to master economics.

Over the last three years, his students' pass rates on the Advanced Placement (AP) Micro- and Macroeconomics exams have been nearly 100 percent, with average scores ranging from 4.5 to 4.94 out of a score of 5.

His teams have dominated the Georgia Economics Challenge, earning the title of State Champions four times. In 2017, he led a team to the National Finals in New York City, placing second in the country.

He also discovered that of 150,000 students worldwide who took the AP Macroeconomics exam in spring 2017, only 60 received perfect scores. Three of those students were from his class.

Such accomplishments are pretty impressive, given that Reeder never planned to teach economics.

After working in the business world for several years, he decided to become a teacher and got a provisional certificate. When he was looking for a job teaching social studies, he got a call from his former AP Government teacher at his alma mater, Chattahoochee High School. The teacher was going on medical leave and wondered if Reeder would like to take over his classes. Thinking he'd be teaching AP Government and U.S. History, Reeder agreed.

It wasn't until later that he found out his teacher was no longer teaching the same classes he did when Reeder was a student. Instead, he had all economics classes.

"I had agreed to something I couldn't back out of," Reeder says.

Luckily for his students, Reeder didn't back out. He embraced the subject, attended some GCEE workshops – and has never looked back.

Reeder, who has headed Chattahoochee High's Social Studies Department since 2014, says he tries to find real-world examples that will help his students better grasp economic concepts.

"I make the economic theory connect to these personal matters that the students care about," he says. "When they see how the topic relates to them and how their lives are shaped by it, they are more interested and work harder to master the information."

"It's exciting for me to see students start the year with nearly no economic knowledge and then finish equipped as educated economic citizens."

Reeder strives to find creative ways to engage his students, such as using "Market in Wheat" and "Econoland" simulations from the Georgia Council that help demonstrate the economic concepts.

"Simulations take the theory curriculum and put it into practice," Reeder says. "During simulations, students are up and moving around, engaging in the activity. It's often not until the debrief at the end of the lesson that they realize what they were making economic decisions and learning new concepts."

Although he has been teaching for more than a decade and has had great success in the classroom, Reeder continues to strive to be what he calls a "student of economics." He regularly attends GCEE workshops, stays up to date on the latest technology and is always pursuing new opportunities to widen his experiences.

"I feel that teaching is such an important profession because it shapes the next generation," he says, "so I want to give my students my best so they can go on and achieve their best. That is what motivates me to come to work every day."

For Josh Sailers, creativity knows no bounds



Two years ago, Josh Sailers, an economics teacher at Woodstock High School in Cherokee County, read a statistic that bothered him: Of all the college students majoring in economics, only 27 percent are women.

He decided to do something about that. So in 2016, he started “Sophie’s Club: Women in Economics,” a club for female seniors at his school to help them learn about the economics profession. The club meets twice a year, and he brings in former

students who are majoring in economics as well as women currently working in the field.

“When I went to the first workshop, it was a game changer.”

“I wanted the young women I teach to learn about all the opportunities that exist for female economics majors,” says Sailers, who’s been teaching economics at Woodstock High since 2005. “It’s opening their eyes to the possibilities.” He currently has 59 students in the club and hopes to expand it to other schools in the county within the next year.

This is just one example of how Sailers takes on a challenge to benefit his students. Another is when he built the Advanced Placement (AP) program in Micro- and Macroeconomics at Woodstock High in 2008 and 2009, respectively. At the time, students did not have the opportunity to take AP economics classes. In fact, he was the first teacher in Cherokee County to teach both AP Micro- and AP Macroeconomics. He calls himself a “tireless” advocate for increasing the numbers of students who take AP economics and now his classes are full every semester.

At the heart of everything he does is this mantra: “How can I make every student successful?”

He strives to keep his students engaged and show them how economics is relevant in their lives every day. He created an economics Twitter account that he uses to tweet out articles of interest and invites his students to tweet examples of economics from their lives. These include price discrimination at a restaurant; pictures of diminishing returns while cooking with their families; and pandas at the zoo as an example of a monopoly.

He uses simulations in classroom to make the material more hands on for his students and to explain multiple concepts at once. In one simulation, Eatonomics, students must make a food product and sell it to the class. He charges them to rent the room, and they must track the expenses used in making the product.

“They learn about fixed and variable costs, profit, profit margins and even globalization,” he says.

Although he’s been teaching for 13 years, Sailers strives to keep his content fresh and continues to develop his teaching skills. He estimates he’s taken 15 workshops from the Georgia Council over the course of his teaching career, and he finds he still benefits from each workshop he takes.

“When I went to the first workshop, it was a game changer,” he says. “They teach you everything you need to know about how to teach economics and make your students successful. Continuing to attend workshops makes me a better teacher every time I go.”



High school teachers learn about sustainability in a Georgia Council workshop

Creative teaching

(continued from page 1)

The “big” lesson of the workshop is “The Marvel of the Georgia Tax Credit.” Teachers learn how to help students explore why Georgia offers the credit and how it works.

History has proven to be a great teacher as well, and no period is as rich in lessons as the Great Depression and World War II.

“Economics is such a difficult concept for students to understand. I’m grateful to the Georgia Council for providing lessons and strategies to help teach these concepts.”

– Andrea L., 12th grade teacher

In “Economic Turmoil: The Great Depression and WW II” teachers of fifth and eighth grade students are trained in a wide range of interactive instruction during that period and the impact it had on Georgia. In one activity, students are assigned roles as “savers” and “borrowers,” then make decisions as the Bank Panic of the 1930s unfolds. By role-playing, they learn how banks function and what happens when there’s a run on the local Savings and Loan.

Raymer emphasizes that for all of the creativity in the workshops, they’re built on a clear and coherent architecture.

“The lesson plans we teach are in line with the Georgia Standards of Excellence in economics and personal finance,” he says. “We provide teachers with all of the materials needed for activities and we consistently stay abreast of changes made to the required state standards.”

As an example, he points to a workshop last fall that provided teachers with six new lessons designed to help them implement standards for economic history. They also created a similar workshop for fifth grade teachers in response to the revised standards.

Thanks to the contributions of businesses, foundations and individuals, most of these workshops are provided at no financial cost to teachers or school systems. The Council even reimburses systems for the cost of substitute teachers!

In serving thousands of teachers every year, the Georgia Council fills a crucial gap in economics education: Preparing teachers to engage their students in effective ways.

“We offer a different approach by giving teachers hands-on activities on topics students can easily relate to,” Raymer says. “And they walk out the door with effective lessons they can use the very next day.”

Joy Berry: A role model for all

The educator and human rights champion is celebrated by the Georgia Council

On a June day in 1976, Joy Berry closed the doors of the high school where she had served as principal and boarded a plane for Atlanta. After dedicating her life to serving children in New York City Public Schools, she was leaving the fast-paced world of Manhattan to retire to a quieter life in Atlanta.

That lasted only for the summer.

"I got antsy," she recalls. "That summer was enough for me to realize I couldn't stay still. I had to go back to work."

So in the fall, she returned to the classroom, teaching eighth grade English at Tucker High School in DeKalb County. The next year, she moved to Frederick Douglass High School in Atlanta.

"Joy is an intelligent visionary who gets the big picture while not losing sight of why we are doing our work, which is for the students of Georgia."

*Paige Pushkin, Executive Director,
Georgia Foundation for Public Education*

Those jobs sparked an illustrative second career that would span another three decades, serving on commissions and boards that shape policy in Georgia and championing the needs of children and underserved populations.

For her dedication to education, the Georgia Council on Economic Education is honoring Joy Berry with its 2018 William J. VanLandingham Commitment to Education award.

"Joy Berry is the kind of person who just commands respect," says Ann Cramer, Senior Consultant at Coxe Curry & Associates, who served with Berry on a nonprofit board. "She brings credibility and authority to everything she does, and that comes out of her grace, wisdom and experience."

Berry's passion for teaching was sparked when she was just four years old. Back before houses were air conditioned, people in her Harlem neighborhood would head outdoors to seek refuge from the summer heat, setting up chairs on the sidewalk. Berry's older sister would play "school" with the other children, teaching them how to read. As she got older, Berry took over the role of "teacher" with her younger neighbors.



Her love of learning deepened while in school. "I had four teachers along the way whom I highly respected," Berry remembers. "I wanted to be just like them."

After earning an education degree at Hunter College, Berry was assigned to teach fifth grade in Queens. She later moved on to administration, eventually taking a job in the late 1960s as principal of a high school for pregnant teenagers.

"It was very cutting edge at the time," she says. "The district was trying to create a way for these girls to stay in school and reduce the dropout rate. There were so many forces in the school itself – outside services that were not under my domain. I had to work and interact and cooperate with all of them. It was challenging."

It was from that school that Berry retired, thinking she would begin a more relaxed life in Atlanta. At the same time, the experience of working with different stakeholders prepared her for the next 25 years of her career.

In 1978, Berry went to work for Gov. George Busbee's Office of Planning and Budget, serving as liaison with the state Department of Education. In 1988, she was appointed Executive Director of the Human Relations Commission created by then-Gov. Joe Frank Harris. The group worked with local communities and law enforcement, as well as faith leaders across the state to prevent discrimination and promote civil and human rights.

"It was the greatest challenge in my life, yet also the most rewarding," she says, "We were championing human rights, and I think we really made a difference."

While she retired from the commission in 1999, Joy Berry wasn't done yet.

She served two terms on the State Board of Education; as a board member of the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education (GPEE); and as a founding board member of the Georgia Foundation for Public Education, for which she also chaired the board from 2010 to 2017.

After serving on the GPEE Board for several years, Berry received the distinguished status of Sustaining Board Member. "This was not just for her years of service," says Steve Dolinger, GPEE President, "but for her consistent exemplary leadership, for always seeking common ground on tough policy issues, and for consistently keeping the focus on children."

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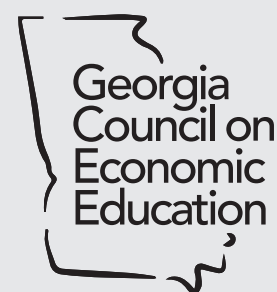
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P.O. Box 1619
Atlanta, GA 30301-1619
404-413-7820

www.GCEE.org