

Teaching Economics in Context: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach for Utah High School Educators



UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY



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Background

In 2021, Utah Valley University (UVU) received funding through House Bill 327, establishing the Civic Thought and Leadership Initiative (CTLI). This initiative was designed to bolster civil and economic education. During the 2021-2022 academic year, multiple programs were launched under the auspices of this grant, one of which was the "Focus on Economics" workshop series.

The primary goal of these workshops was to strengthen the expertise of high school instructors in integrating economic principles into their social studies, US history, and US government curricula. Recognizing that many educators lacked formal training in economics, these workshops aimed to fill those knowledge gaps, enabling teachers to effectively explain complex economic concepts to their students.

The initiative was a joint venture among several departments at UVU. Professor Axel Ramirez from the School of Education spearheaded the selection of the inaugural cohort of fifteen teachers. Budgetary matters were managed by the Center for Constitutional Studies, while Professors Lowell Glenn and Maritza Sotomayor from the Finance and Economics Department were responsible for delivering the instructional content.

The participating instructors actively contributed to the workshop's curriculum by selecting topics aligned with their school's existing courses. The sessions focused on basic economic principles, providing educators with the tools needed to incorporate this knowledge into their existing social sciences lessons. Additionally, the workshops were designed to foster a community of shared learning, encouraging participants to disseminate their newfound expertise among their colleagues. Due to resource constraints, it was not feasible to include all local educators in this first cohort, but the hope is that the workshops' positive impact will ripple through educational communities.

New Program: Teaching Economics in Context: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach for Utah High School Educators

After a joint review by the Center for Constitutional Studies and the Finance and Economics Department, we concluded that while the workshops have been beneficial, they could be further refined to better meet the needs of educators and their students. Leveraging expertise from both departments, we've pinpointed areas in middle/junior high and high school curricula, as well as state standards, that require a foundational understanding of economics. Based on this collaborative analysis, we have developed a targeted teaching plan that is more closely aligned with educational needs and standards.

Course Description

"Teaching Economics in Context: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach for Utah High School Educators Economics Across the American Curriculum" equips secondary school educators with the tools to integrate essential economic concepts into U.S. History, U.S. Government, and Utah Studies courses. This workshop series addresses targeted topics and standards within these subjects and offers specialized pedagogical training to enhance the effectiveness of teaching these critical concepts.

Learning Objectives

Upon completing this workshop series, participants will be able to:

- 1) Articulate key economic concepts within the context of U.S. History, U.S. Government, and Utah Studies courses.
- 2) Utilize lesson resources from the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis's Econ Lowdown website for classroom instruction.
- 3) Develop comprehensive lesson plans that incorporate economic principles.
- 4) Compile a portfolio of these lesson plans for sharing and collaboration within their educational cohort.

Identified Courses and Standards

The tables below detail courses requiring economic concepts to clarify their Utah High School standards, organized by themes for clarity.

U.S. History I

Theme Description	Standard Number	Standard Description
European Exploration and Colonization	1.2	Evaluate differing historians' perspectives on the motivations and conditions that spurred European exploration.
	2.2	Analyze the economic, political, and social frameworks that shaped the 13 English colonies.
Colonial Period and its Legacy	2.4	Trace the origins of historic and contemporary regional differences, including the impact of slavery, urban-rural patterns, and influences from the French, Spanish, and English colonial regions.
American Revolution	Strand 3 (3.1.-3.4)	Analyze the American Revolutionary movement through primary sources and historians' perspectives, identifying significant events, ideas, and key contributors. Evaluate factors contributing to American victory and assess the enduring impact of the Revolution on American identity.
Expansion and Industrial Revolution	6.1	Assess varying interpretations by historians regarding the motivations behind U.S. territorial expansion.
	6.2	Interpret conflicts arising during American expansion using primary sources from multiple perspectives.
	6.3	Examine the economic and geographic implications of early Industrial Revolution inventions and transportation innovations.
Significance of Expansion and Industrialization	6.4	Argue the most significant cultural, political, and economic impacts of either territorial expansion or industrialization.
Civil War and Reconstruction	7.1	Identify the factors, including slavery, that led to the Civil War, considering geographical, social, economic, and political disparities between the North, South, and West.
	7.2	Evaluate the key determinants of the Civil War's course and Union victory using evidence-based arguments.
Relevance to Contemporary Issues	7.4	Analyze current events to understand the ongoing impact of the Civil War and Reconstruction on contemporary American society.

U.S. History II

Theme Description	Standard Number	Standard Description
Industrial Transformation	1.1	Assess how innovations in multiple sectors transformed America in the 19th and early 20th centuries.
	1.2	Explain the links between industrial growth and population movements within the U.S.
	1.3	Analyze the challenges faced by the working classes due to industrialization in urban settings.
Reform Movements	2.4	Evaluate the short- and long-term effectiveness of social, economic, and political reform movements.
U.S. Imperialism	3.3	Assess the positive and negative impacts of U.S. imperialism on both the U.S. and its territorial interests.
The Great Depression	5.1	Investigate the individual and institutional decisions that led to the Great Depression.
	5.2	Evaluate the effectiveness of the New Deal in response to economic crises.
	5.3	Explain how economic and environmental conditions affected daily life during the Great Depression.
	5.4	Argue the role of government in economic conditions, specifically post-learning about capitalism.
Post-War Economics and Diplomacy	6.5	Evaluate the impact of international economic aid and diplomacy on securing national interests.
Modern U.S. Policies	7.4	Explain how Reagan's neo-conservatism differed from previous policies like Johnson's Great Society.
Contemporary Issues and Future Challenges	8.2	Apply historical thinking to propose solutions to current economic, environmental, or social issues.
	8.3	Use recent and historical evidence to argue for the most significant future opportunities for the country.

U.S. Government & Citizenship

Theme	Standard Number	Description of Standard
Structure of Government	1.2	Describe the structure of the United States form of government, including the ideas of federalism, checks and balances, separation of powers, and others.
Fiscal Policy & Economics	4.1	Examine the fiscal decisions made by governmental agencies and the philosophies that guide these decisions.
	4.2	Explain how government services and budget priorities are funded through various forms of revenue, such as fees and taxes.
	4.3	Propose and defend budget priorities at different levels of government and share these findings with stakeholders.
Global Relations & Economics	5.3	Evaluate how global economic interdependence and international trade policies affect the U.S. economy.
	5.4	Craft an argument for an appropriate role for the U.S. in addressing global economic, environmental, or social issues.

Utah Studies

Theme Description	Standard Number	Description of Standard
Indigenous Economies	1.3	Explain the economic activity of a prehistoric and/or historic American Indian tribal community using basic economic concepts like supply, demand, trade, and scarcity.
Migration & Settlement	2.2	Compare the causes and lasting effects of various non-Mormon groups' migrations to Utah.
	2.5	Construct an evidence-based argument to explain how the development of transportation and communication networks changed Utah's economy and human geography.
	2.6	Explain how agriculture, railroads, mining, and industrialization created new communities and economies throughout the state.
Historical Economic Impact	3.3	Describe the effects of events, movements, and innovations on Utah's economic development.
	3.4	Identify the causes and effects of the Progressive movement in Utah, such as the organized labor movement, tax reform, and child labor reforms.
Government & Economics	4.2	Make an evidence-based argument regarding the appropriate roles of local, state, and federal governments in resolving a current and/or historical issue.
	4.3	Describe the economic ties between Utah communities, the nation, and the world.
	4.6	Evaluate the impact of tourism on Utah's economy and geography.
Modern Policy & Economy	5.3	Use data to make recommendations for sustainable development in Utah.
	5.4	Use recent population growth and demographic trends to make predictions and create public policy.
	5.5	Research civic issues and develop a policy proposal for the appropriate governmental entity.

Educators will gain a comprehensive understanding of economic principles to teach the outlined standards more effectively. For example, a firm grasp of fiscal policy is essential for effectively explaining public budget allocation to students. Through workshops, high school instructors create lesson plans that weave relevant economic concepts, enriching the educational experience. These lesson plans will be collaboratively discussed, revised, and refined during subsequent cohort meetings. The updated lesson plans will be shared on a learning platform for collective review and further feedback. By the end of the semester, it is anticipated that each instructor will have integrated at least three of these collaboratively crafted lesson plans into their teaching regimen to secure a certification of completion.

We plan to complete the following workshops based on the different standards during the 2024 spring semester.

1. Basic economic foundations.
2. Economic systems.
3. Allocation of resources.
4. Land economics.
5. Economics of the American Revolution.
6. Economics of Slavery.
7. Economic development and growth.
8. Fiscal and monetary policy.
9. Public budget.
10. International trade indicators.
11. Sustainable development goals.
12. Innovation and technology as economic resources.

Curriculum Matrix – Economic Concepts and Curriculum Standards

Workshops/Courses	U.S. Government	U.S. History I	U.S. History II	Utah Studies
1. Basic Economics Foundations				1.3
2. Economic Systems		1.2; 2.2; 7.4	2.4; 3.3; 5.3; 5.4; 6.5	
3. Allocation of Resources		6.4		2.2
4. Land Economics		6.1; 6.2		
5. Economics of the American Revolution		Strand 3		
6. Economics of Slavery		2.4; 7.1; 7.2		
7. Economic Development & Growth	5.4		8.3	3.3, 3.4, 4.6, 5.4, 5.5
8. Fiscal & Monetary Policy			5.1; 5.2; 7.4	
9. Public Budget	1.2, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3			4.2
10. International Trade Indicators	5.3			4.3
11. Sustainable Development Goals			8.2	5.3
12. Innovation & Technology as Economic Resources		6.3	1.1, 1.2, 1.3	2.5, 2.6

Tentative Calendar

Workshops are 1.5 hours long and meet F2F on Wednesdays from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Lehi or Orem campus (TBC). Remember to bring your laptop or Tablet for each session.

January 17th – Introductions – Syllabus – Presentation LMS – Registration EconLow

January 24th – Basic economic foundations

January 31st - Economic systems

February 7th - Allocation of resources

February 14th Land economics

February 21st and 28th - Economics of the American Revolution

March 6th - Economics of Slavery

March 13th – Work on Midterm project

March 20 - Economic development and growth

March 27th - Fiscal and monetary policy

April 3rd – Spring Break

April 10th - Public Budget

April 17th - International trade indicators

April 24th – Sustainable Development Goals

May 1st - Innovation and technology as economic resources

May 8th – Final Dinner and Presentation of Portfolio

Workshops are conducted in a face-to-face format rather than online. The reason is multi-faceted and centers on the unique goals of this program. While online sessions could suffice for disseminating conceptual knowledge in economics, our face-to-face meetings offer the indispensable benefit of applied, collaborative learning. In these in-person sessions, instructors can work closely in groups, aligning economic concepts directly with specific curriculum standards. This enables the creation and refining of lesson plans in real-time. Please note that in order to receive a certification of completion, attendance is crucial; you may not miss more than three sessions. These workshops are more than just a learning experience; they're an investment in your professional development. You'll receive financial compensation and educational credit through the Utah education system. There's an expectation for dedication and active

involvement. The workshops will culminate in a final dinner, during which each instructor will present a portfolio of the lesson plans developed throughout the semester. This hands-on, collaborative approach allows for a deeper, more practical understanding of how economics can be seamlessly integrated into various subjects.

Description of Assignments

Lesson Plan Development

The cornerstone assignment for each workshop session is developing a lesson plan that integrates the economic concepts discussed into your specific teaching subject—be it U.S. History, Government, or Utah Studies. The aim is to create a comprehensive, yet flexible, lesson plan that not only meets the curriculum standards but also incorporates economics in a way that enhances students' understanding of the material.

Each lesson plan should contain:

Objective: A clear statement of what students should know or be able to do by the end of the lesson.

Economic Concept Integration: An explanation of how the economic concept discussed in the workshop relates to the lesson's objective.

Activities: A list of interactive tasks, questions, or discussions that will engage students in the lesson and facilitate their understanding of both the core subject and the integrated economic concept.

Assessment: A brief outline of how student understanding will be measured, whether through written assignments, quizzes, or class discussions.

Materials: A list of required materials, including any multimedia resources, readings, or handouts.

Duration: An estimate of the time required to complete the lesson.

Modifications: Optional adaptations for students with special needs or for different classroom settings.

During the workshops, you will have time to collaborate with your peers, refining and aligning lesson plans with Utah's educational standards. We expect each instructor to upload the final version of their lesson plan to our learning platform for collective

review and feedback. At the end of the semester, these lesson plans will form part of your portfolio, which will be presented at our final dinner and celebration.

Midterm Portfolio

Objective:

The midterm portfolio is a checkpoint to assess your progress in understanding and integrating economic concepts into your lesson planning.

Components:

Lesson Plans: Include at least three lesson plans developed during the first half of the workshop series (at least one used in the classroom). Each should be refined based on feedback received during cohort meetings.

Reflections: For each lesson plan, write a brief reflection on what worked, what didn't, and what you would do differently next time.

Peer Feedback: Include a summary of the feedback you've provided to others and the feedback you've received during the workshop sessions.

Action Plan: A statement detailing what you aim to achieve in the second half of the workshop series, focusing on areas for improvement and subjects or economic concepts you plan to tackle.

Final Portfolio Presentation

Objective:

The final portfolio will be a comprehensive showcase of your work throughout the workshop series. It will include all lesson plans you've developed and refined, as well as additional materials that demonstrate your grasp of economic concepts and how they integrate into your teaching practice.

Components:

Lesson Plans: Your complete set of lesson plans, each updated based on the feedback received over the course of the workshop series.

Reflections: Individual reflections on each lesson plan emphasize what was learned through success and failure.

Peer and Mentor Feedback: A compilation of received and given feedback, highlighting how it informed your teaching approach and refinement of the lesson plan.

Implementation Log: An account of instances where you used these lesson plans in your classroom (at least three during the semester), including any student feedback or outcomes.

Professional Development: A brief essay outlining how your teaching practice has evolved as a result of the workshop series and how you plan to continue integrating economics into your teaching in the future.

Workshop Instructor



Dr. Maritza Sotomayor is an Associate Professor of Economics at Utah Valley University's Woodbury School of Business. She earned her Ph.D. from the Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona in Spain, her M.A. from the Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas in Mexico City, and her B.A. from the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú in Lima.

With a career at Utah Valley University since 2009, Dr. Sotomayor has taught a wide range of courses at both undergraduate and graduate levels. Her classes vary in format and size, from face-to-face and online to hybrid settings. She has received awards for her teaching, including the 2017 Excellence in Teaching Award and the 2022 Dean's Award for Scholarship.

Dr. Sotomayor is a Senior Fellow for the Higher Education Academy (HEA) and a Research Fellow for the Utah Women & Leadership Project. Her research interests include international trade issues such as regional integration in developing countries, intra-industry trade measurement, and global value chains. During the spring semester of 2023, she was a visiting professor at the Universidad Nacional de Moreno in Buenos Aires, Argentina.