Starting Point: Pedagogical Resources for Teaching and Learning Economics

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How did Starting Point get Started?

- Earlier work by Simkins and Maier
  - Focused on adapting innovations across disciplines

- Need for readily accessible, easy-to-use set of resources
What is Starting Point?

An economic pedagogic portal that seeks to:

- **Introduce economists** to innovative teaching strategies – within and beyond the disciplines
- **Provide tools** to integrate and assess research-based teaching strategies in classroom settings
- **Promote sharing** of teaching innovations and examples implementing these innovations
What is Starting Point?

Pedagogic Modules under development (16):

- Context-Rich Problems
- Just-in-Time Teaching
- Quantitative Writing
- Teaching with Cases
- Cooperative Learning
- Classroom Experiments
- Teaching with Computer Simulations
- Effective use of Personal Response Systems
- Interactive Demonstrations
- Undergraduate Research
- Interdisciplinary Approaches to Teaching
- Service Learning
- Spreadsheets Across the Curriculum
- Documented Problem Solving
- Using Media to Enhance Teaching and Learning
- Interactive Lectures
Why use Starting Point?

- Central location for comprehensive set of pedagogical resources
- Promoting the concept of a “teaching commons”
How can Instructors use Starting Point?

- Learning about specific pedagogic techniques

- Browsing the teaching examples library
What’s Different about Starting Point?

- Central location for resources
- Extensive pedagogic topic coverage
- Developed in interdisciplinary teams
- Intentionally adapting innovations across disciplines
- Dynamic library of examples
- Content management system framework (modular and shareable)
Starting Point – An Example

Cooperative Learning in Economics

Original module on economics developed by [link](/con/project/participants/kimmarie_mccgoldrick.html) 'KimMarie McGoldrick'

With assistance from Jim Cooper, Dan Marburger, Jennifer Rhoads, Karl Smith

In What Economics Courses can Cooperative Learning be Integrated?

Cooperative learning is "one of the most thoroughly researched of all instructional methods" in part because of the many forms it can take (Slavin, 1990, p. 52). Research suggests that cooperative learning exercises enhance both academic achievement, motivation for learning and retention. Cooperative learning exercises range from quick and informal (such as the think-pair-share technique) to encompassing entire class periods with very formal components (such as the send-a-problem technique). Thus, exercises can be developed for any economics class from introductory to senior experience courses as well as survey, mathematical, and theoretically oriented courses.

The key to developing successful cooperative learning exercises is to recognize that it entails much more than putting students into groups to complete a task. Cooperative learning advocates stress a number of critical components and understanding these components will have a significant impact on the success of any planned exercise.

- five key elements that suggest cooperative learning is more than just working in groups
- different types of commonly used group structures
- five key steps for developing and implementing a cooperative learning that guide instructors in how to use cooperative learning

Choosing the Appropriate Form of Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning exercises can be loosely categorized by the skill that each enhances including (Berkley, Cross and Major, 2005):

- discussion: learning the language of the discipline
- application of the discipline: learning to use the discipline
- critical thinking: learning and flexibility with alternative perspectives