
Foreword

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Biographical notes: Jack Reardon teaches economics in the School of Business at Hamline University. His research interests include economics education, energy and the environment, and labour economics. He has published in a wide variety of journals including the *Journal of Economic Issues*, *Monthly Labor Review* and *International Journal of Green Economics*. His most recent book, *A Handbook for Pluralist Economics Education* was published by Routledge in July 2009.

1 Introduction

Alfred Marshall, in the preface to the 8th edition of his *Principles of Economics*, wrote that ‘economic conditions are constantly changing, and each generation looks at its own problems in its own way’ [Marshall, (1920), p.v]. If economics is to help solve our generation’s growing set of interconnected and complex problems, we must cooperate amongst ourselves and with other social scientists. Solutions to the daunting problems of our generation will require innovative thinking and unprecedented cooperation. Rather than instruct students to think like economists (as if all economists think alike), economics pedagogy must encourage and enable students to learn from the myriad disciplines within economics and from other social sciences.

The idea for a new journal in economics education has had a long gestation period. Encouraged by the enthusiasm of numerous colleagues for a new journal dedicated to pluralist education and open to all economic perspectives, I was inspired by Deni de Sallo, founder and editor of the *Journal des Scavans*, the world’s first literary journal. In the inaugural issue published in January 1665, de Sallo warned readers to expect opinions different from his own, while refusing to endorse or validate any one view [Brown, (1972), p.369]. De Sallo juxtaposed articles of different ideology in the same issue, allowing readers to decide their worth.

Today, many journals – mainstream and heterodox – proselytise and protect readers from challenging and iconoclastic ideas, rather than educate and inform. Journals have become citadels and fortresses.

The *International Journal of Pluralism and Economics Education (IJPEE)* will foster and encourage inquisitive cooperation among economists and between economics and other disciplines. No subject is off limits and all issues that elucidate pluralism and improve economic education will be considered. The *IJPEE* will provide a forum for economists, policy makers, students and social scientists to discuss, assess and improve

economics education from a pluralist perspective. The objective of the *IJPEE* is to change economics pedagogy so that it educates, informs and engages rather than proselytises.

2 Definition of pluralism

While a universally accepted definition of pluralism is elusive (if not, would it be pluralism?), the essence of pluralism is the recognition of the legitimate existence of alternative ideologies, frameworks and references. Pluralism is a rich, multi-faceted concept existing on several levels: epistemological – how we construct knowledge about reality; ontological – how we understand reality; theoretical – how theories of reality are developed; methodological – how we approach the study of reality; and pedagogical – how we teach knowledge constructed about reality. Pluralism, if done right, should ‘instil humility and a respectful curiosity about alternative views’ [Reardon, (2009), p.7].

While heterodoxy is usually lauded for espousing pluralism, and the mainstream noted for espousing anti-pluralism or monism, the truth is more complicated. All economic disciplines are guilty of anti-pluralism to some degree; since ‘disciplines are like tribes, they have a specific culture and specific habits, norms and rules, and they do not easily accept outsiders’ [Weehuizen, (2007), p.165]. Partly, this is due to a Kuhnian us-versus-them mentality, which has characterised much of heterodox economics (Garnett, 2006).

In moving economics education forward, it is necessary to instil in our students a love of learning and respectful curiosity for different ideologies, which I believe can be achieved ‘by an egalitarian pluralism that is committed to intellectual tolerance and diversity as well as to capabilities-enhancing reforms in economic education, scholarship and professional development’ [Garnett, (2006), p.522].

To promote and foster an egalitarian pluralism, with a concomitant respectful desire to learn and communicate, is the objective of the *IJPEE*. Simply put, pluralism is necessary ‘to bring life back into economics’ [Groenewegen, (2007), p.7] and to rescue economics education.

3 Editorial policy

The Editorial Board of the *IJPEE* is comprised of educators passionately committed to pluralism and reforming economics education. Our Board members represent a wide range of economic knowledge spanning all economic disciplines – necessary for a well-functioning economics education journal. In addition, our Board members represent a wide geographical range, necessary to articulate issues of regional concern and to forge a global dialogue on reforming economics education.

The *IJPEE* will never reject a paper solely on ideology. We welcome papers written from any ideological perspective. The editorial policy for submitted manuscripts involves three steps. First, I will read every submitted manuscript. Second, I will ask at least one member of the Editorial Board and one outside referee to read the article. Third, ideally a decision will be made within five weeks of submission.

Any topic on pluralism or economics education is welcome. The following partial list is only suggestive:

- Defining pluralism.
- Incorporating pluralism into the classroom.
- The rhetoric of pluralism: communicating within and across disciplines.
- The theory of the firm from a pluralist perspective.
- Teaching pluralism in developing countries.
- What can pluralists learn from the classical economists?
- Incorporating pluralism into online courses.
- Using pluralism to construct a framework for solving global problems.
- Limits to extending pluralism.
- Pluralism and the individual.
- Pluralism and the honours course.
- Pluralism at the community college.
- Encouraging pluralism at the high school level.
- Necessary mathematics for pluralism.
- Reaching out to other social sciences.
- Teaching ecology from a pluralist perspective.
- Understanding the financial crisis from a pluralist perspective.
- Pluralism and system dynamics.

At least one issue per year of the *IJPEE* will be devoted to an in-depth discussion of a particular area of interest. Special issues for 2010 will be announced in the Fall 2009 issue of the *IJPEE*.

4 The structure of the *IJPEE*

The inaugural issue of the *IJPEE* has three sections. The first section, 'General Articles on Pluralism and Economics' publishes articles on any aspect of the content, parameters and boundaries of pluralism. In addition, this section publishes provocative and challenging ideas on economics in general. The second section, 'Incorporating Pluralism into the Classroom', offers hands-on suggestions to implement pluralism in the classroom in a wide variety of contexts. The third section, 'Global Dialogue on Teaching Economics' publishes articles on any aspect of pluralism or economics education from the vantage of a specific region or country. Our objective is to raise pressing and provocative issues to foster a continuing global dialogue on reforming economics education.

The second issue of the *IJPEE* will introduce two additional sections. First, 'Short Notes on Pedagogy', edited by Maria Madi of the UNICAMP in Sao Paulo, Brazil, will publish short notes, ideas and suggestions to improve economics pedagogy. While many

professors implement spur-of-the-moment ideas in the classroom, they often do not pursue publication thinking that the idea cannot be lengthened into a journal-length article. We want these ideas and suggestions, no matter how short.

Second, a book review section will review books on pedagogy and economics that challenge traditional thinking.

5 Contents of the current issue

Ioana Negru of Anglia Ruskin University leads off the inaugural issue with an informative article on the historical development of pluralism. She notes recent contributions to the debate and offers fruitful research suggestions. We hope her article will stimulate debate and further research.

Probably the book that most influenced me (for the best) is Strunk and White's *Elements of Style*, which I first read in high school while taking a break from Fyodor Dostevsky's *Brothers Karamozov* – still my favourite novel. Strunk and White offer many useful lessons. Among the best is the following,

“The surest way to arouse and hold the attention of the reader is by being specific, definite and concrete. The greatest writers – Homer, Dante, Shakespeare – are effective largely because they deal in particulars and report the details that matter. Their words call up pictures. A sentence should contain no unnecessary words ...[requiring] not that the writer make all ...sentences short or that he [sic] avoid all detail and treat his subjects only in outline, but that every word tell” (1979, pp.21, 23).

Enter haiku, a 17th century Japanese type of writing constricted to 17 syllables, thus forcing the author to maximise meaning and excise prolixity. Steve Ziliak, from Roosevelt University in Chicago, introduces a new field of inquiry, haiku economics, offering suggestions for learning and writing haiku in a pluralist context.

I continue to be perplexed by the willingness of many professors to teach David Ricardo's principle of comparative advantage without examining its constrictive assumptions or questioning its current applicability. Ricardo's motivation, clear at the time, was to redistribute income 'to the advantage of the industrial capitalist and to the disadvantage of the landed gentry' [Dowd, (2004), p.88]. Yet, the Principle has ossified into dogma.

Professor Fu-Lai Tony Yu of Shue Yan University in Hong Kong reminds us that Ricardo's principle, along with the Principle of Absolute Advantage, is a vestige of nationalist mercantilism and thus misleading today when in fact, nations do not trade with each other, individuals do. So to understand why trade occurs, we have to understand why individuals trade, which Professor Yu explains deftly within the context of human agency theory. He concludes by advocating reform of the IMF and other global institutions from a human agency perspective.

The next three papers by Yanis Varoufakis of the University of Athens, Tim Engartner of the University of Cologne, and John Davis and Zohreh Emami of the University of Amsterdam and Alverno College in Milwaukee, respectively, strengthen the argument for pluralism from a global perspective. An interesting theme is that pluralism enhances student-based learning,

“Developing the ability to ask probing questions is empowering. It draws upon the students’ analytic, global perspective taking, and valuing abilities. The assumption inherent in this approach is that students are entitled to inquire and to explore and that economic phenomena are subject to continual investigation” (Davis and Emami).

Enhancing student-based learning is an important objective for me and the *IJPEE* since it fosters ‘critical curiosity about society, power, inequality and change’ [Shor, (1992), p.15]. Three such articles appear in the inaugural issue. The first by David Wheat of the University of Bergen in Norway offers a causal mapping technique to translate narrative accounts into a common framework. Students will learn to map an author’s argument and ideology and to ascertain existence of positive and negative reinforcing loops. Professor Wheat demonstrates the usefulness of this technique by comparing three accounts of the recent US housing bubble.

The next two articles are written by first-time teachers with good advice for fellow novices as well as seasoned veterans. The first, by Sean Mallin, a first-year graduate student in anthropology at the University of California-Irvine, offers suggestions for teaching a pluralist theory of the firm. The second by Tonia Warnecke of Rollins College in Florida offers suggestions for teaching a globalisation course from a feminist perspective. Both articles include suggested readings and course syllabi.

The failure of the economics profession to predict and understand the recent financial crisis is well-known (Fullbrook, 2009). William Buiter, former member of the Monetary Policy Committee of The Bank of England recently wrote,

“The Bank of England in 2007 faced the onset of the credit crunch with too much Robert Lucas, Michael Woodford and Robert Merton in its intellectual cupboard. A drastic but chaotic re-education took place and is continuing. ...the Bank has by now shed the conventional wisdom of the typical macroeconomics training of the past few decades. In its place is an intellectual potpourri of factoids, partial theories, empirical regularities without firm theoretical foundations, hunches, intuitions and half-developed insights” (Buiter, 2009).

Indeed, monetary policy is in a state of flux. Giuseppe Fontana, University of Leeds (Leeds, UK) and Università del Sannio (Benevento, Italy) and Mark Setterfield of Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut develop a short-run macroeconomic model that transcends shortcomings of both the IS-LM and new consensus frameworks that is much more realistic. Fontana and Setterfield demonstrate its pedagogical effectiveness in elucidating the current crisis.

In the third section of the current issue of the *IJPEE*, Marie Dohnalová of Charles University in Prague and author of *Sociální Ekonomika v Evropeizaci České Houspodářství* (*Social Economy Within the Europeanization of Czech Economy*) not yet translated into English, highlights the growing importance of the non-profit sector, ignored or only briefly discussed by most texts, leaving students with a palpable omission in their economic knowledge. If we are to build the necessary institutions for a market system, students must learn and understand this important sector.

Robert Garnett and Michael Butler of Texas Christian University write that student academic rights provide a fruitful context in which economic educators can discuss, define, and develop distinct learning goals for undergraduate courses and curricula. Although written from the vantage of the USA, this issue resonates across all nations. How to move forward from a pluralist perspective?

Finally, Valentin Cojanu of the Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies (and Editor of the *Journal of Philosophical Economics*) along with Mircea Maniu of Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, and Mariana Nicolae, also of the Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies, discuss the effects of the fall of the iron curtain on pluralist economics education, with special attention to career advancement, research output, and teaching experiences for the economics community in Romania.

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I thank my wonderful wife Laurie for her continued love and support. I hope that when my two children Elizabeth (13 years old) and Patrick (12) study economics, it will be more amenable to understanding and solving our interconnected problems.

Launching a journal is exciting because its exact direction cannot be predicted in advance, but only gradually takes shape with impetus and interaction from our readers. We at the *IJPEE* hope to educate and reform with a high-quality journal, which can only be done if we learn from and listen to you, our readers.

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