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## Foreword

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**Biographical notes:** Janice Peterson is a Professor of Economics at the California State University, Fresno. Her research interests include institutionalist and feminist economics, labour economics, retirement income security and economics education. Her work is widely published, including articles in the *Journal of Economic Issues*, *Review of Social Economy*, *Forum for Social Economics*, *International Journal of Pluralism and Economics Education*, *International Review of Economics Education*, *Journal of Social Science Education* and the *Social Security Bulletin*. She has served as the President of the Association for Evolutionary Economics and Association for Institutional Thought and she currently serves on the Executive Council of the Association for Social Economics.

Dell Champlin is a retired Professor of Economics from the Eastern Illinois University. Her research interests include labour, institutionalism and public policy. She has served as the President of the Association for Evolutionary Economics and the Association for Institutional Thought. She has co-edited and contributed chapters to books on institutional economics and has published in the *Journal of Economic Issues*, the *Review of Political Economy*, the *Review of Social Economy* and the *International Journal of Social Economics*. She currently teaches courses at the Oregon State University in labour economics, intermediate macro and the economics of inequality.

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Inequality is one of the greatest economic and social problems of our time, manifesting in numerous forms of individual hardships, economic stagnation and weakened democratic processes and institutions. The primary objective of this special issue is to bring together pluralistic work on teaching inequality in its many dimensions and manifestations and to promote further discussion and development of inequality-focused teaching strategies and materials.

While inequality is increasingly recognised as an important and pervasive problem both globally and within countries, this importance is often not reflected in the economics curriculum. It is scarcely addressed in introductory texts – often confined to a single chapter that may or may not be included in an already overloaded introductory course. At the intermediate and advanced level, inequality is often relegated to elective courses that

may or may not be offered on a regular basis. Most important, the problem of inequality is often narrowed to particular aspects such as unemployment, wage inequality or poverty. While these are important issues, the complexity and pervasiveness of inequality are simply omitted and unappreciated by the student. Inequality is a problem that touches on many aspects of life including education, employment, housing, health and even life expectancy.

We suggest that the inadequate coverage of inequality in economics is due in part to the lack of readily available materials and ideas on teaching inequality that are accessible to students. After all, inequality is a topic that is often poorly understood by the general public. Thus, the crucial question is not whether to include inequality in our classes, but how to do it. We also suggest that inequality, as such a multi-faceted topic, is best approached from a pluralistic perspective. Pluralistic approaches to teaching inequality may be historical and interdisciplinary and include those rooted in differing schools of thought within economics; they embrace pluralism in pedagogical approaches as well as content and seek to engage students with the pressing 'real life' concerns of their communities, regions and the world. The papers that follow present ideas and experiences in teaching inequality pluralistically in many different types of institutional settings and to a variety of students. The authors share insights drawn from different disciplines, national contexts and fields of study within economics.

The first three papers of this special issue address the value of framing teaching discussions of inequality in history and/or differing ideological perspectives. Jon D. Wisman argues, "Teaching contemporary inequality can be significantly enriched by being nested in its dynamics over the course of human history", and his paper 'The dynamics of inequality in the human story: a brief sketch' provides instructors with an historical outline dispelling the notion that inequality is inevitable. In 'Beyond left-right: teaching inequality with four ideological lenses', Oliver Cooke, Patrick Dolenc and Kimberly Schmidl-Gagne provide a framework for exposing students to the contemporary debate over inequality that teaches them to "think in ways that move beyond divisive dichotomies that are often framed as mutually exclusive", structuring the discussion of inequality around four political ideologies. Geert L. Dhondt, Mathieu Perron-Dufour and Ian J. Seda-Irizarry approach teaching inequality through its relationship to the concept of alienation; and in 'Behind the masks of total choice: teaching alienation in the age of inequality' develop a framework for conceptualizing and using popular culture to demonstrate this relationship.

The next two papers explore teaching inequality in the context of two sub-fields of economic study in which it is particularly relevant – health economics and development economics. In 'Teaching health in an era of inequality', Iris Buder and Jake Jennings note that the relationship between inequality and health disparities is often disregarded in discussions of both inequality and health and they provide a structure to address the interrelationships between health and socio-economic status in the USA that could be utilised in different economics courses. In 'Challenges and pedagogies for teaching inequality in undergraduate development economics', Sucharita Sinha Mukherjee describes the challenges faced in teaching an economic development course focused on engaging students with the real world; and identifies ways to address these challenges through grounding the course in feminist economics, addressing multiple manifestations of inequality, utilising data collection and analysis projects and emphasising active and experiential learning to keep students engaged with issues that matter to them.

Continuing an emphasis on the importance of experiential learning and student reflection in teaching inequality, the next two papers utilise insights from ‘critical pedagogy’ to frame their discussions. In ‘Teaching about poverty and inequality: critical pedagogy and personal experience in the learner-centred classroom’, Sasha Breger Bush and Roni Kay Marie O’Dell identify three elements of critical pedagogy of particular relevance for teaching poverty and inequality – engaging students in dialogue; building on personal experience and fostering empathy; and helping students to visualize that they may someday ‘do something about inequality and poverty’ – and introduce detailed examples of experiential learning activities to foster development of these qualities.

In ‘Teaching to think: challenges and suitability of teaching inequality topics in a business school’, Danielle Guizzo and Lotta Takala-Greenish draw on insights from critical pedagogy as well as their own teaching experiences (at the University of West England, Bristol) to present and evaluate two case studies addressing different manifestations of inequality – gender inequality (from a ‘Political Economy’ course) and labour inequality (from an ‘International Trade and Multinational Business’ course).

The final three papers provide detailed information on the use of particular simulations, games or datasets to frame teaching inequality, employed in very different environments. In ‘What can teaching economists learn from poverty simulations run by nursing faculty?’, Michelle R. Gierach and Reynold F. Nesiba present the results of a unique collaboration between nursing and economics faculty members at the Augustana University, presenting and evaluating a poverty simulation conducted for nursing students and encouraging economists to consider the methods of other disciplines in teaching poverty and inequality. In ‘Pass GO and collect \$610: modified *Monopoly* for teaching inequality’, Kevin W. Capehart and Va Nee L. Van Vleck explore and evaluate the use of a modified version of the board game *Monopoly* for teaching inequality in a general education economics course at the California State University, Fresno. And in ‘Teaching wealth inequality in the Eurozone: an outline based on HFCS data’, Matthias Schnetzer addresses the value of having students work with data to explore different forms of inequality, in this case, wealth inequality in Eurozone nations. Drawing on his experiences teaching at Austrian universities, Schnetzer defines a set of learning goals for a class focused on wealth inequality utilising the Eurozone household finance and consumption survey (HCFS) and provides examples of how these learning goals can be addressed through students working with this dataset.

While it is not possible for all voices and topics of importance for teaching inequality to be represented in one volume, we hope readers of this special issue will find many valuable ideas, frameworks, resources and activities to incorporate into their teaching; and further, will share their own insights through continuing scholarship on teaching inequality in an age of pluralism.