



17 The illusion of objectivity

Implications for teaching economics

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Economists seek to measure well-being, to learn how well-being may increase over time, and to evaluate the well-being of the rich and the poor.

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Introduction

One of the first lessons learned by most economics students, and reinforced throughout their curriculum, is the distinction between positive and normative economics. Textbooks define positive analysis as “what is,” while normative analysis is “what should be.” Milton Friedman (1953: 4) states that “positive economics is in principle independent of any particular ethical position or normative judgments.” He goes on to assert that “positive economics is, or can be, an ‘objective’ science” (ibid.). The idea that economics and positive economics are equivalent is central to the dominant paradigm in economics. Any analysis that incorporates ethics, values, or reflects a particular perspective is considered normative and not economic analysis.

In this chapter I argue the falsity of this dichotomy and its implications for economic education. I demonstrate how the unacknowledged bias that exists in the dominant paradigm creates an intellectually and demographically homogeneous curriculum, reinforced by the pedagogical methods chosen, with its implicit assumptions of shared cultural values and heteronormativity that ignore racial and gender differences among students.

The epistemological link between positive economics and scientific objectivity is not directly addressed in the standard textbook definition, but, as discussed in Albelda (1997), positive analysis is in fact a notion of objectivity that is assumed to be value-free. Feminists such as Blau (1981), Harding (1995), Nelson (1996), and Albelda (1997) examine how the assumption of positive economics functions to maintain the existing dominant paradigm and ignores the social, historical, gendered, and racial context within which these “objective truths” are determined. When mainstream economics addresses issues related to gender, sexual orientation, or people of color, they are generally treated as special topics rather than “categories of analysis” (Bartlett and Feiner 1992; Figart 2005).



1 Other economists have challenged the notion of economics as a value-free
2 discipline, arguing that economics can never be completely distinct from ethics.
3 Weston (1994) argues that acknowledging the existence of ethical values is not,
4 in the fears of the positivists, a license to abandon critical scrutiny. Rather, by
5 bringing those biases to the forefront economists can recognize the limitations of
6 their analysis. For example, economists have been long concerned with the
7 equity/efficiency tradeoff; yet, under the guise of objectivity, they tend to address
8 only questions of efficiency. As Davis (2005) points out, the idea that efficiency,
9 particularly Pareto efficiency, is value-free ignores the moral philosophy under-
0 lying those concepts. In addition, the micro/macroeconomic distinction can also
1 reflect different ethical considerations, as, among other things, the positivist
2 microeconomic framework emphasizes individual responsibility while the
3 macro/Keynesian framework stresses the social responsibility of the group (Best
4 and Widmaier 2006).

5 Teaching economics as a positive science implies that the economic theory
6 and analysis students learn are independent of the professor's perspective as
7 well. However, the choice of curriculum and teaching methodology inevitably
8 reflects the values of the professor. For example, when I first taught I was com-
9 mitted to teaching in the positivist tradition because of my experiences as a
0 student. What I failed to realize was that, by choosing to spend a significant
1 amount of class time analyzing the tax cuts of 2001 and 2003 rather than on the
2 Keynesian Cross, I was privileging some topics over others. These decisions
3 reflected my views on what was important for my students to learn. In doing so,
4 I made normative choices about what they *should* learn while holding on to the
5 façade of objectivity. Presumably faculty have the expertise to make these
6 decisions; doing so, however, violates in principle and in spirit the tenet of
7 objectivity, particularly since professors make significantly different curricular
8 choices for the same course. Similarly, how students are evaluated reflects, at
9 least in part, the priorities and values of the professor teaching the course.

0 Students also bring their own experiences, culture, race, and gender identity
1 to the classroom. These students may have worldviews that conflict with the
2 conception of the economic behavior taught in class. Their views, however, are
3 given little credence in an environment where presumably there is only one
4 correct way to understand economic behavior (Amariglio and Ruccio 1999).

5 As a result, my decision to write this chapter in the first person is intentional.
6 My perspective as a teacher is shaped by many factors including my experiences
7 as a student, my colleagues, being a woman in a predominantly male discipline,
8 and growing up Jewish in a bi-racial household in the United States.¹ I share this
9 information with my students because only by acknowledging our own stand-
0 point can we hope to become more objective (Harding 1995). The examples
1 used come from my own teaching experience and so have a U.S. macroeconomic
2 perspective, although the ideas, I hope, are far more broadly applicable. One
3 caveat: I realize that in writing this type of chapter I am guilty of making some
4 of the same generalizations that I observe in the discipline. I recognize that not
5 all women, students of color, or people from working class backgrounds respond

the same, any more than white male students and faculty are guilty of the behavior discussed in the article, but space constraints prevent me from presenting a more finely nuanced argument throughout.

Objectivity in economics

The fundamental behavioral assumptions of the dominant paradigm emphasize competition, individuality, and rationality. Mainstream economists apply the resulting framework to essentially all decisions. Gary Becker exemplified this approach, applying economics to all aspects of human behavior, including fertility decisions and other intrafamily activities.² He assumes a single utility function for the household, ignoring the role of differences in power and social pressures that exist between family members. The effect of this assumption is to privilege the behavior of some groups – those predictably captured in the operating assumptions for the household – over that of everyone else in the household, hardly a value-free notion. These assumptions and the results that follow reflect the world view of those who hold them. As discussed by Nelson (1995: 132), “Traditionally, male activities have taken center stage as subject matter, while models and methods have reflected a historically and psychologically masculine pattern of valuing autonomy and detachment over dependence and connection.”

Positive economics reinforces the emphasis on a single paradigm, as “objective facts” cannot have explanations that are inconsistent with that paradigm. While competing perspectives on particular assumptions may be addressed, they do not challenge the objectivity of the discipline itself: New Keynesians and Neoclassical economists may have different assumptions about price stickiness, but the general paradigm within which they work is the same.³

Although ethics and values are not explicit in the mainstream framework, the idea that the assumptions and analysis are simply assumed to hold true for everyone is itself a normative point of view. Assumptions of universality are particularly problematic for the classroom environment. Under the guise of objectivity, the economics discipline perpetuates a curriculum that excludes a critical analysis of the fundamental assumptions and implications of the dominant paradigm. As a result, topics of particular importance to women and people of color are rarely addressed in the core curriculum, limiting the appeal of the discipline. Issues relating to gender or people of color are often relegated to special topics or only discussed in stereotypical or pejorative ways, for example, illegal immigrants, single mothers, or welfare recipients.⁴ This problem is exacerbated by the limited discussion of gender and race in textbooks. According to Robson (2001), the percentage of pages in which gender and/or race was mentioned in a survey of Principles texts was only 3.5 percent. The contexts in which gender and race were raised, however, were not examined.

Simply raising these topics within a mainstream framework, not surprisingly, is found to have little effect in increasing the discipline’s appeal, unless the professor raising those topics was female (Jenson and Owen 2001). Given that women constitute only 18.6 percent of the economics faculty in Ph.D. granting

institutions and 28.9 percent at liberal arts schools (Lynch 2007), it is perhaps not surprising that Bollinger *et al.* (2006) found that women are more likely to have a more unfavorable view of economics *after* taking an economics course than before. Tellingly, little research has investigated the reasons for the lack of students of color, particularly African-, Hispanic-, and Native American students, in economics.

In addition, the assumption of universality assumes culture is irrelevant, which suggests that students and faculty share the same cultural norms; usually those of the teacher. Thus a professor who uses sports analogies for almost all of her examples alienates students who do not share her frame of reference. Similarly, a professor who speaks colloquially assumes students share a familiarity with a particular cultural and class background. This in turn affects which students succeed in the class and are likely to continue on in economics beyond the introductory level.

Even our terminology reflects the attempt of economists to remove humanity from the discipline. Who does the image of the “economic agent” represent? The individualistic values embedded in the dominant paradigm come out of a specifically European philosophical tradition that excludes people with other values. This approach teaches students to see the economy through the eyes of Western business and financial professionals: a well-functioning system to understand but not challenge if one wants to thrive in the marketplace. This reinforces the current demographics of the economics profession, which remain overwhelmingly male and white.

Acknowledging the role of perspective

Removing the invisibility cloak from the frames of gender, race, and class provides a powerful challenge to the very notion of objectivity in the classroom. A white professor and white students who discuss race in terms of issues facing people of color ignore their own race; instead, race is defined in terms of the “other,” while whiteness and the privilege it confers are unexplored and invisible. Students of color, on the other hand, do not have the same privilege and see whiteness whether or not the professor recognizes it (Maher and Tetreault 1997). If professors do not acknowledge their own point of view, students come to their own conclusions about what that perspective is. Faculty of color and women, particularly when discussing issues related to race and gender, are often assumed to have a particular point of view while a white male faculty member is perceived as neutral. For example, if I, as a white female faculty member, discuss gender and racial discrimination, I am (correctly) identified as a member of a group that has both been discriminated against and the biggest beneficiary of affirmative action (which my African-American students are generally quite aware of). That standpoint, however, is no less subjective than that of a white male colleague who, acknowledged or not, is a member of a group that has historically benefited from that discrimination. This in turn shapes students’ view of what each of us is teaching.

If, as researchers and teachers, we accept that that illusion of objectivity is also relevant to the classroom, we can begin to create a richer learning environment that not only deepens students' understanding of economics, but teaches them how to contextualize economics within a greater world view.

In the classroom

Professors also play a role, however unconscious or unacknowledged, in maintaining the dominant paradigm through not only their choice of content but also via pedagogy, content choice, and evaluation methods used. While the overall content of the core curriculum is fairly standardized across textbooks, professors emphasize different material, and a class rarely covers all the material provided in a textbook. In addition, each professor usually has some discretion over the content included and/or how to teach the material. For example, one macroeconomics professor might emphasize the negative effects of government spending, another professor the role of fiscal policy in reducing the costs of recessions, while a third might hardly talk about fiscal policy at all. Students come away from each of these courses with very different understandings of the desirability of using fiscal policy, having internalized the priorities of their professor without being aware of the beliefs underlying those views. More importantly for the purpose of this paper, each professor's choice reflects their own personal knowledge, experience, interpretations, and values, although students are required to accept the material as universally true.

Alternative curriculum

Bartlett and Feiner (1992), Bartlett (1996), and Rishi (1998) present alternative syllabi for creating a more inclusive one-semester introductory economics class using Peggy McIntosh's feminist approach to curricular transformation. Aerni (1999: 95) creates an alternative syllabus for a macroeconomics principles class emphasizing applicability and context. She argues that a professor should

examine and revise the standards of one's own discipline, recognizing that standards have been set in most disciplines and across disciplines predominantly by white, European, wealthy men ... and that these standards have functioned, whether deliberately or not, partly to exclude women, blacks, and other groups and to exclude certain ideas.

Several excellent pluralistic anthologies offer alternative approaches to teaching economics, including Bartlett (1996), which focuses on race and gender, and Aerni and McGoldrick (1999), which demonstrates ways to incorporate feminist pedagogy into the curriculum.

Even definitions are subjective: what is GDP?

In spite of the increased criticism of mainstream economics, the most frequently used textbooks still reflect the biases inherent in the dominant paradigm. The textbook treatment of gross domestic product (GDP), one of the first macro concepts students learn, exemplifies this approach.⁵ Although GDP is presented as a “positive” definition, the way GDP is defined, measured, and used is hardly value-free and provides an illustration of how economics textbooks discount certain activities and prioritize others. These choices reinforce the dominant paradigm at the expense of more inclusive or critical perspectives.

GDP is the most widely reported economic statistic, often used as a measure of “well-being” and the primary method used to compare the standard of living across countries. Criticisms regarding the measure and use of GDP in this manner are often ignored. GDP, according to the Bureau of Economic Analysis (U.S. Department of Commerce, ~~BEA~~ 2007: 2) “is defined as the market value of the goods and services produced by labor and property located in the United States.” The definition itself does not describe *how* to measure value or what activities should be included in production. For estimating purposes, however, value is defined as equivalent to prices, except when “. . . prices do not fully reflect the value of a good or service or where services are provided without an actual exchange, the value . . . may [then] be ‘imputed’ from similar market transactions” (~~BEA~~ 2007: 3). For example, the rental value of owner-occupied housing is currently included to ensure GDP is “invariant to institutional arrangements.” Thus the actual calculation of GDP depends crucially on the assumptions regarding how value is determined, the institutional arrangements being considered, and which activities are considered “production.”

The primary justification given by the BEA for excluding non-market production is that it has limited effect on the economy and could affect the usefulness of this statistic in understanding business cycle behavior. However, a recent report by the Panel to Study the Design of Nonmarket Accounts (Abraham and MacKie 2005: 1) argues the opposite, stating that “Failure to account for [non-market] activities may significantly distort policy makers’ sense of economic trends.” Clearly the decision of what to include reflects the activities, and sphere in which they are performed, thought to be worth valuing.

Economists working on national accounting issues for at least 40 years (e.g. Kendrick 1967) have discussed the intertwined issues of excluding non-market production and possible ways of redressing the data problem. Projects currently exist worldwide to include productive activities historically characterized as leisure, such as caring labor and other forms of household production, into measures of national output. This would also create more consistency in accounts across countries (see, for example, Jorgenson *et al.* 2006).

Interestingly, even the definition of GDP varies somewhat across textbooks. Most texts define GDP in terms of “market value” rather than prices (e.g. Mankiw 2006; McConnell and Brue 2005), which suggests that some goods and services included are not traded in the formal market since the value is not

equated with price. Baumol and Blinder's text (2006) defines GDP in terms of "the sum of the money values." In addition, their definition specifies that goods and services be "sold on organized markets." This definition explicitly excludes household production, which is not sold in a marketplace. However it also excludes other imputed values in GDP, such as the rental value of an owner-occupied home, which is currently included in GDP.

The degree to which textbooks address important measurement problems and common misuses of GDP varies significantly. Some textbooks simply state the definition of GDP without any discussion of its limitations or its misuse as a measure of social welfare (e.g. Krugman and Wells 2006). Case and Fair (2007) and Mankiw (2006) discuss the limitations of GDP as a measure of social well-being, but do not address the choices made in calculating GDP. A few texts address the exclusion of non-market activities (McConnell and Brue 2005; Baumol and Blinder 2006). Only Colander (2006) presents methods to correct for these exclusions by discussing alternative measures of national output.

In spite of this clear distinction between the measurement of production and the conceptualization of productive activity, most textbooks treat them as equivalent. The distinction is illustrative as it reveals how economists define value, work, and leisure and what activities are considered "appropriate" for economic study. When someone moves from the formal labor market (that is, the taxpaying sector) into the informal one, GDP falls although work effort has not changed. Thus economically valued work only occurs in the formal marketplace. Estimates of the amount of production provided by caring labor range from 30–50 percent of GDP. In addition, Salary.com (2007) estimates the median replacement value of a full-time stay-at-home mother with two children at \$138,095 in 2007. While one can disagree with any particular estimate, the economic value of these activities is considerable.

Students' perceptions and GDP

In the same way that a professor's choice of content is contextual, students also filter the information provided through their own social, historical, gendered, and racial lens. For example, a student who defines work in the same way as the economics discipline is more likely to respond neutrally to the traditional presentation of GDP. On the other hand, those who define value in ways other than price and consider work activities not included in GDP are likely to feel dissatisfied or invisible in the definition of economic activity even if they are unaware why.

Directly addressing these issues in class provides the opportunity to incorporate a more pluralistic view of economics. For instance, a student whose mother quit her job to take care of a family member is taught that his mother is no longer doing economically valuable work. This sends a particularly negative signal to women, who are most likely to take on the role of caregiver, about the values associated with choices they might make; that is, that caring labor is not "real work." This issue is exacerbated by the language economists use to describe this decision: the labor/leisure tradeoff. Thus any activity done outside the legal labor

1 market must be considered some version of a leisure activity which by definition
2 is not productive activity.

3 The exclusion of non-market production also has implications for how stu-
4 dents relate to economics as well. I have taught students whose parents came to
5 the United States illegally and worked as laborers or domestic workers.⁶ Their
5 parents may work extremely hard yet not only are they stigmatized for their
7 illegal status but their work is also excluded from national production. For
3 others, having family members who work illegally may be the result of the
) limited economic options available in their community or country. Not address-
0 ing the reasons for (and effect of) this exclusion can increase the sense of isola-
1 tion for these students in the classroom.

2 The exclusion of some productive activities from GDP can create significant
3 difficulties when trying to make comparisons across countries. For some coun-
4 tries, much of the production is informal, and different social policies may create
5 different preferences for or constraints on working out of the home. The types of
6 economic activity that are legal also differ across countries. For example, prosti-
7 tution and gambling are not legal in many countries, and thus are counted in the
8 GDP of some countries but not others.

9 Production that creates negative environmental externalities also has import-
0 ant race and class implications. Larry Summers, in his infamous World Bank
1 memo in 1991, argued that wealthy countries should encourage the migration of
2 “dirty industries” to poor countries: given that demand for a clean environment
3 is highly income elastic, countries with low wages and low population densities
4 are actually below their optimal levels of pollution. This argument, although
5 morally repulsive to many, is consistent with economic logic and has clearly
6 been used to discuss locational questions within wealthy countries. For example,
7 race and low socioeconomic status remain highly correlated with the location of
8 hazardous waste facilities in the United States (Bullard *et al.* 2007), something
9 students from low-income communities already know.

0 The new text *Macroeconomics in Context* (Goodwin *et al.* 2009) provides an
1 excellent illustration of how these issues can be integrated into a principles of
2 macroeconomics course. By demonstrating alternative ways of valuing externali-
3 ties and caring labor, it raises the conceptual and measurement issues associated
4 with GDP and addresses the subjectivity that exists even in presumably objec-
5 tive definitions. This also creates an opportunity to discuss issues of class privi-
6 lege, as the discussion of formal and informal work inevitably leads to a
7 discussion of economic opportunity and labor market decisions. While these
8 examples of students’ response may seem extreme to some, GDP is just one of
9 many instances during the semester where definitions, theory, and pedagogy
0 privilege some views and experiences over others.

1 *Alternative pedagogy*

2 As discussed by Aerni (1999) and others, changing the curriculum alone is insuf-
3 ficient. Without also changing the way students engage in the material, students
4
5

remain passive participants in the classroom and are still likely to remain disengaged. Mainstream economic educators have long been concerned with changing the emphasis on “chalk and talk” yet economic classes remain overwhelmingly taught in lecture-style format (Becker and Watts 2001). One reason for maintaining the lecture format is the encyclopedic nature of an economics curriculum that seems to favor breadth over depth. That, too, is a disciplinary choice.

Research shows that African-, Hispanic-, and Native-American students tend to learn best when collaborative learning and group activities are emphasized (Anderson and Adams 1992; Bartlett 1996). However, in the traditional classroom, as Gay (2002: 114) observes,

These students have been expected to divorce themselves from their cultures and learn according to European American, male cultural norms. This places them in double jeopardy – having to master the academic tasks while functioning under cultural conditions unnatural (and often unfamiliar) to them.

Women also face unique challenges in an economics class, particularly when “discussion” is actually question/answer. More than two-thirds of college men rate themselves as above average or in the highest 10 percent in terms of intellectual self-confidence, while less than 50 percent of women students do (Sax 2007). As a result, women students often underestimate their own understanding, while overestimating that of the more confident students.⁷ Similarly, research shows that the tone of women’s voices tends to rise at the end of sentence so their statements are often heard as uncertainty by men, rather than as a way to leave room for further discussion. Women students generally perform better in cooperative learning situations, although one study (Jensen and Owen 2001) found that result only held true in classes where men did not dominate the class.

How we as teachers relate to students and how students relate to each other in the classroom can be as important as the choice of curriculum or pedagogy. Part of the conceit of objectivity in much of academia is that all students are treated equally. In economics, one of the justifications for multiple choice and mathematical questions in exams is that they are more objective, yet these privilege certain learning styles over others. A student who visits their professor when they are struggling is often better perceived and more likely to improve than a student who does not. A professor may assume the latter student did not want help because of a lack of commitment to the course (assuming a small enough class for the professor to notice), yet the difference may actually reflect their understanding of appropriate student behavior. I have been told by first-generation college students that they saw I was busy and so did not want to bother me with their problems, something I have rarely heard from students with upper-middle class backgrounds.

A key assumption in the dominant paradigm is that individuals are self-seeking; that idea is reinforced by the incentives in many classes. Students who

1 answer quickly are often rewarded for their behavior, particularly when partici-
2 pation is part of the grade. Doing so ignores the real externalities that these stu-
3 dents may create for other students, who may not be as quick to respond or as
4 confident. Students have told me they do not feel like they have enough time to
5 think and once they know someone else is going to answer, they stop trying.
5 Without addressing this issue, these same students dominate in group work as
7 well.

3 One important aspect of an inclusive classroom is that students need to under-
4 stand that the classroom itself is a community and how they behave affects the
5 learning of other students. When I have talked to students about “excessive par-
6 ticipation” and explain how their participation is affecting others, they acknow-
7 ledge it never occurred to them to be concerned with anyone else in the class.
8 Several commented that they learned a lot by not talking!

4 Given the diversity of students and learning styles, multiple teaching and
5 evaluation strategies should be used to provide all students with an equal oppor-
6 tunity to succeed. I find that if I discuss my reasons for my pedagogical choices
7 with my students, I encounter far less resistance, and I can allow them to be part
8 of the decision-making process.

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1 *Strategies for macroeconomics*

2 Macroeconomics presents a particular challenge to faculty who are trying to
3 create a more diversified curriculum. Given that macroeconomics is traditionally
4 defined as the study of the economy as a whole, issues of race and gender are
5 theoretically not relevant categories of analysis. The very distinction between
6 micro- and macroeconomics is itself an artificial one that leaves many important
7 topics without a place in the curriculum (or the discipline itself). For example,
8 while microeconomics may look at the distributional effects of a particular gov-
9 ernment policy, when fiscal or monetary policy is taught the possible distribu-
0 tional effects are not addressed. This leaves an odd cognitive dissonance when,
1 for example, trying to evaluate the overall macroeconomic effects of the 2001
2 and 2003 tax cuts without addressing the distributional effects of the policies.

3 I believe it is important to have students think critically about perspective and
4 bias in macroeconomics from the beginning, even at the principles level. I begin
5 on the first day of Principles of Macroeconomics by asking students to think
6 about how personal experiences, characteristics, and socioeconomic attributes
7 such as race, gender, or related factors have shaped their political views, particu-
8 larly as they relate to economic issues. I explain that since we are going to be
9 examining issues that have policy implications, the more they are aware of what
0 personal perspective they might bring to the analysis, the better able they might
1 be to step back from those views.⁸ Thus issues of positionality are raised from
2 the very first class.

3 The first day of my Intermediate Macroeconomics class begins by writing all
4 the assumptions they remember from their other economics classes on the board.
5 The students then examine each one, discussing how realistic they think they

are, the importance of that assumption in economic theory, and any racial, cultural, or gendered biases it contains. This raises the artificiality of the positive/normative economics on the first day and shapes the discussion of theory and policy for the rest of the semester.

Conclusion

The assumption of objectivity that underlies mainstream economics creates an artificial distinction between the practice of economics and the perspective of the practitioners. I argue that this distinction further creates a disciplinary and classroom bias that reflects the specific point of view of those working within the dominant paradigm, excluding alternative points of view; in particular those of women and other traditionally under-represented groups. Mainstream textbooks then reinforce the intellectual and cultural narrowness of the discipline. This silences alternative perspectives, alienating students for whom the curriculum does not reflect the realities of their lives.

One of the goals of pluralistic economics is to develop pedagogy that encourages a multiplicity of views, including those that challenge the dominant paradigm. To create a more demographically as well as intellectually inclusive profession, changes need to begin (although certainly not end) in the undergraduate classroom. If students remain invisible in the assumptions of the discipline, not only do they feel excluded from economics as a field, but the invisibility itself denigrates their own life experience. Without their challenging voices, the growth of the discipline remains limited. Historically, the study of caring labor and household production, outside of the Beckerian sense, did not occur until significant numbers of women entered the economics profession. Similarly, the understanding of race as a category of analysis has increased as the diversity in the profession has begun to increase. Still, economics lags far behind other social sciences. Many of the ideas that attract students to economics – such as issues of income inequality, concerns about discrimination, a desire to alleviate poverty, and interest in public policy – are not well served by the models and methods currently used. In addition, the mainstream framework does not reflect the experience of students who are raised in alternative family structures, those for whom the decision to work outside the home reflects more than the wage gained or lost, or the lives of students who experience discrimination and racism in their daily lives. These realities need a new, more inclusive pedagogy and economic theory that explains their experiences as well. By teaching students how to challenge the very ideas they are learning, students gain the critical skills necessary to challenge not only the prevailing paradigm in economics, but to bring new perspectives as well.

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Notes

- 1 I have tried to define my particular standpoint for the readers of this article; however, I discovered that my identity is not easily defined in a sentence.
- 2 See, for example, Becker (1960). The use of the term “fertility” in this context refers to the optimal choice of children, which is quite different from the way women describe fertility; that is, the ability to have children. In a genderless world, the ability to have the desired number of children is simply assumed.
- 3 Feminists, Institutionalists, Marxists, and others continue to challenge this paradigm. Their perspectives are rarely published in the primary journals of the profession or included in the curriculum.
- 4 I use the term “people of color” in this context to include African-American, Asian-American, Latino-American, and Native American.
- 5 Nugent (1997) and Shah (1996) provide alternative approaches to teaching GDP.
- 6 I realize that many illegal immigrants do not work as laborers or domestic workers; however, these jobs take place in the informal marketplace and therefore are not included in GDP.
- 7 See Niederle and Vesterlund (2005) for an analysis of gender and competition.
- 8 This is a simplified version of Harding’s (1995) argument that acknowledging one’s perspective increases the potential for objective analysis.

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