Making Bank: Ensuring equitable and inclusive education in the *Teach Economics* course at The University of Manchester

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Background - Students

- A-Level Economics is an increasingly popular subject
- BUT not available to all students:
  - 30% are from selective and independent sector
  - 60% are living in London and South East
  - 70% are male (Beynon & Plaister, 2025; JCQ, 2025)

Figure 1: Unbalanced seesaw illustrating unequal access to A-Level Economics.



Background - Teachers

- Scarcity of new economics teachers…
- Number of starts on an Economics PGCE (teacher training) course nationally:
    - *2021/2022*: 20
    - *2020/2021*: 10
    - *2019/2020*: 20
    - *2018/2019*: 10
- Fastest growing subject at A-level in the last 20 years - teacher supply can't keep up with demand.



Background - Course

- Teach Economics course developed to address shortfall, enable diverse range of voices in classrooms and beyond.
- Focus is on free training to existing teachers of related subjects (business/maths/geography) in comprehensive schools, sixth form and FE colleges to teach economics as a second subject.

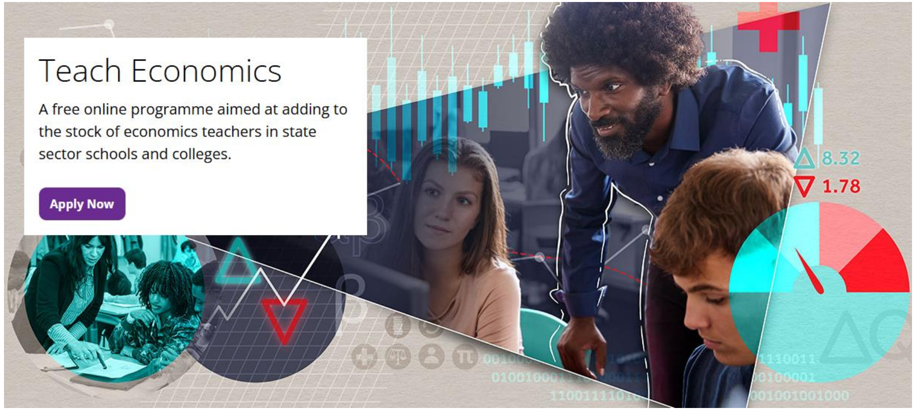


Figure 2: The Teach Economics course aims to address the shortfall of qualified economics teachers.



Source: The University of Manchester (2026). *Teach Economics*. Available from: https://www.manchester.ac.uk/study/online-blended-learning/campaigns/teach-economics/

Course Structure

Unit 1: Teaching Microeconomics
10 weeks (October to December)

Unit 2: Teaching Market Structures
10 weeks (January to March)

Unit 3: Teaching Macroeconomics
10 weeks (March to May)

Unit 4: Developing the Economics Curriculum
10 weeks (June to August)

Assessment: Professional Portfolio
Formative: Quizzes, 1.5hr teaching resource x 3

Summative: 750 word Statement of Intent



Aims

During this presentation we will:

- Discuss how equity and inclusion were fundamental to the design and development of the *Teach Economics* course
- Discuss how our focus on ensuring equitable and inclusive education helped encourage learner engagement and achievement



Design & Development

- Expert Group: ~20 experienced economics teachers (The University of Manchester PGCE Partnership)
- Ensured design was based on:
  - Real-world experience
  - Tried and tested approaches (inclusive, accessible, flexible, equitable education)
  - ‘Powerful Knowledge’ (Young & Muller, 2013)

Figure 3: The course materials were developed by an ‘expert group’.



Powerful Knowledge

- Economics = ‘elitist’ subject?
- Powerful Knowledge (Young & Muller, 2013)
  - Provides more reliable explanations
  - Gives new ways of thinking about the world
  - Must be subject specific
  - Advocated by subject experts
  - Is specialised, systematic and separate

Figure 4: Powerful Knowledge.

- The key challenge as economics teachers is in making knowledge accessible.

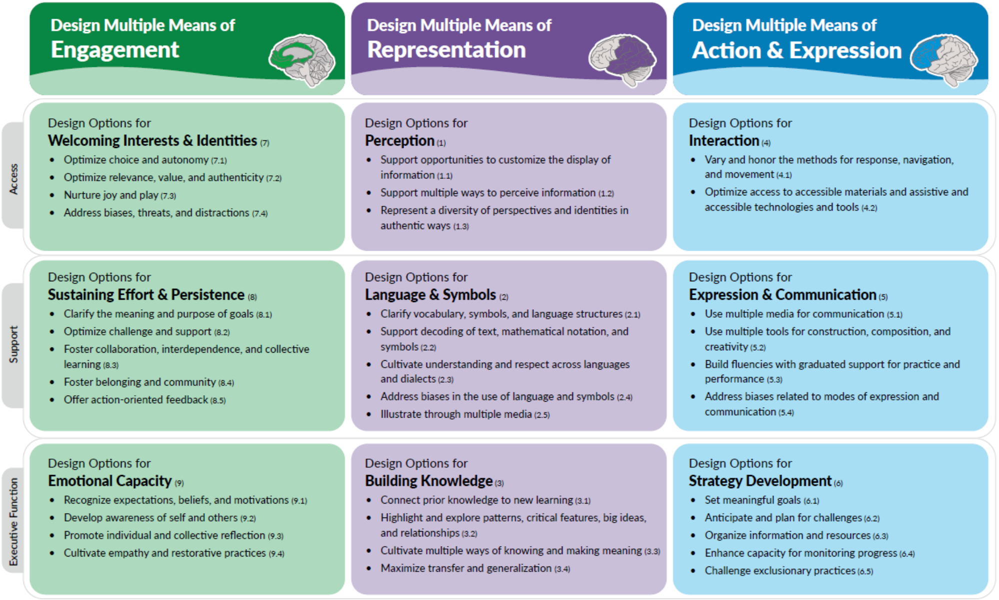
Powerful Knowledge – Expert Group

- Expert group, building on work by Modig (2020), identified:
  - Key topics and threshold concepts
  - What is important about them
  - How to help students to access and understand this knowledge
  - How students access and use this knowledge in their everyday lives



Universal Design for Learning

- UDL is an educational framework designed to make learning accessible and engaging.
- The goal of UDL is **learner agency** that is purposeful & reflective, resourceful & authentic, strategic & action-oriented (CAST, 2024).



	Design Multiple Means of Engagement	Design Multiple Means of Representation	Design Multiple Means of Action & Expression
Access	Design Options for **Welcoming Interests & Identities** (7) • Optimize choice and autonomy (7.1) • Optimize relevance, value, and authenticity (7.2) • Nurture joy and play (7.3) • Address biases, threats, and distractions (7.4)	Design Options for **Perception** (1) • Support opportunities to customize the display of information (1.1) • Support multiple ways to perceive information (1.2) • Represent a diversity of perspectives and identities in authentic ways (1.3)	Design Options for **Interaction** (4) • Vary and honor the methods for response, navigation, and movement (4.1) • Optimize access to accessible materials and assistive and accessible technologies and tools (4.2)
Support	Design Options for **Sustaining Effort & Persistence** (8) • Clarify the meaning and purpose of goals (8.1) • Optimize challenge and support (8.2) • Foster collaboration, interdependence, and collective learning (8.3) • Foster belonging and community (8.4) • Offer action-oriented feedback (8.5)	Design Options for **Language & Symbols** (2) • Clarify vocabulary, symbols, and language structures (2.1) • Support decoding of text, mathematical notation, and symbols (2.2) • Cultivate understanding and respect across languages and dialects (2.3) • Address biases in the use of language and symbols (2.4) • Illustrate through multiple media (2.5)	Design Options for **Expression & Communication** (5) • Use multiple media for communication (5.1) • Use multiple tools for construction, composition, and creativity (5.2) • Build fluencies with graduated support for practice and performance (5.3) • Address biases related to modes of expression and communication (5.4)
Executive Function	Design Options for **Emotional Capacity** (9) • Recognize expectations, beliefs, and motivations (9.1) • Develop awareness of self and others (9.2) • Promote individual and collective reflection (9.3) • Cultivate empathy and restorative practices (9.4)	Design Options for **Building Knowledge** (3) • Connect prior knowledge to new learning (3.1) • Highlight and explore patterns, critical features, big ideas, and relationships (3.2) • Cultivate multiple ways of knowing and making meaning (3.3) • Maximize transfer and generalization (3.4)	Design Options for **Strategy Development** (6) • Set meaningful goals (6.1) • Anticipate and plan for challenges (6.2) • Organize information and resources (6.3) • Enhance capacity for monitoring progress (6.4) • Challenge exclusionary practices (6.5)

Figure 5: CAST Universal Design for Learning Guidelines.

Source: CAST (2024). *CAST Universal Design for Learning Guidelines version 3.0.* Available from: https://udlguidelines.cast.org

Multiple Means of Engagement

UDL Engagement Feature	How the Teach Economics course demonstrates this
Optimise choice and autonomy	Choice of topics and formats within assessments, flexible pacing and pathways, optional readings and activities
Optimise relevance, value, and authenticity	Use of real-world data and case studies, assessments and activities linked to learners’ practice as educators
Foster belonging and community	Social touchpoint activities, individual mentoring, strong instructor presence
Offer action-oriented feedback	Detailed feedback and feedforward, explicit rubrics, formative quizzes with immediate feedback

Multiple Means of Representation

UDL Representation Feature	How the Teach Economics course demonstrates this
Support multiple ways to perceive information	Different content formats, video captions and transcripts, image/diagram descriptions
Illustrate through multiple media	Concepts explained using diagrams and text, videos and written summaries, use of interactive graphics and models
Connect prior knowledge to new learning	Content linking, bridging activities, analogies
Maximise transfer and generalisation	Application to new/unfamiliar contexts, reflection tasks, varied examples, assessments focused on application



Multiple Means of Action/Expression

UDL Action/Expression Feature	How the Teach Economics course demonstrates this
Optimise access to accessible materials	Accessible documents, captions, alt text, screen reader and alternative navigation compatibility
Use multiple media for communication	Use of text, figures, interactive diagrams, online bulletin boards and short videos
Use multiple tools for construction, composition and creativity	Flexible assessments (choice of tools and format), effective use of AI when teaching economics
Organise information and resources	Clear structure, signposting, highlighting of key topics and resources, Self-assessment worksheets



Outcomes – Achievement and Feedback

- 95% of learners are on track to complete the course - High engagement and achievement shown in the assessments, making use of the teaching materials that form part of the programme.
- Positive learner feedback (/5)
  - *Excellent teaching materials and resources*: Unit 1: 4.4; Unit 2: 4.0
  - *Course materials well structured and organised*: Unit 1: 4.6; Unit 2: 4.4
  - *Materials have been useful and helped learning*: Unit 1: 4.1; Unit 2: 4.1
  - *Formative assessment clearly explained and well designed*: Unit 1: 4.0; Unit 2: 4.3

Figure 6: Learner Feedback.



Outcomes - Approaches

UDL Feature	Example Comments
Optimise relevance, value, and authenticity	• *"It is really useful to be designing lessons I can actually use next year for the assignments for the course."* • *"It is great that we are designing content that we can use in the classroom."*
Organise information and resources	• *"The learning takes a logical order and is broken down sufficiently to further independent understanding."* • *"Well structured and easy to use."*
Use multiple media / Use multiple tools	• *"Engaging, range of methods, good use of IT / AI to help improve resources to range of learners."* • *"Mixture of paper based and video tutorials help my own understanding."*



References

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