



# Putting yourself in the picture with an ‘ECONSelfie’: Using student-generated photos to enhance introductory economics courses



Abdullah Al-Bahrani<sup>a</sup>, Kim Holder<sup>b</sup>, Rebecca L. Moryl<sup>c,\*</sup>,  
Patrick Ryan Murphy<sup>d</sup>, Darshak Patel<sup>e</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Northern Kentucky University, United States

<sup>b</sup> University of West Georgia, United States

<sup>c</sup> Emmanuel College, 400 Fenway, Boston, MA 02115, United States

<sup>d</sup> Saint Leo University, United States

<sup>e</sup> University of Kentucky, United States

## ARTICLE INFO

### Article history:

Received 4 September 2015

Received in revised form 4 February 2016

Accepted 9 March 2016

Available online 29 March 2016

### JEL codes:

A20

A21

A22

### Keywords:

Economic education

Introductory economics

Media in education

Teaching/learning strategies

## ABSTRACT

Students in economics classrooms are increasingly digital natives, raised in a culture of engagement, expression and learning through online interactions using technological devices. We have turned the concept of a ‘selfie’ into an instructional tool for students to demonstrate their understanding of economic concepts, as well as to engage personally with those concepts. A student self-assessment survey supports the expectations of the literature that our ECONSelfie assignment leverages the power of visuals and narratives to help students link themselves with introductory economics material for improved learning outcomes.

© 2016 Published by Elsevier Ltd.

## 1. Introduction

Students in economics classrooms are increasingly digital natives, raised in a culture of engagement, expression and learning through online interactions using technological devices. Kozma (1991) suggests that students who actively interact with media, such as computers and mobile phones, as part of their learning are able to build knowledge. The learning theory of Connectivism (Siemens, 2005) suggests that, in this digital age, learning occurs through participation in online communities of interest and social networks. We present a structured assignment using student-generated photos, or ‘selfies’, to enhance student learning of foundational economic concepts and to increase their connection with the relevance of these concepts in their daily lives.

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: [morylre@emmanuel.edu](mailto:morylre@emmanuel.edu) (R.L. Moryl).

## 2. What are selfies

Today's students publish a virtual record of their lives online, using mobile phones, tablets and cameras to upload and share items. In 2012, 91% of teenagers posted photos of themselves on a social media profile. By the end of 2012, more than 5.5 million 'selfies' had been posted on social media, and a total of more than 72 million photos posted online were tagged 'me' (Manikandan 2013). A 'selfie', according to Oxford Online Dictionary, is a photograph that one has taken of oneself, typically with a smartphone or webcam, and uploaded to a social media website. We have evolved the concept of a 'selfie' into an educational tool for students to demonstrate their understanding of economic concepts, as well as to engage personally with those concepts. Our ECONSelfie assignment focuses on students taking photos of themselves in ways that relate to, or demonstrate, economic concepts.

## 3. Pedagogical value of an econselfie

The ECONSelfie assignment builds on the power of students creating their own visual narratives to practice the application of economic concepts (Frank 2007). Pedagogical research has demonstrated that, at least for young students, creating this sort of representational imagery will (1) aid comprehension and (2) make it more likely that students understand complex relationships read in text (Pressley et al., 1989). The ECONSelfie assignment also answers student demand for using technology as part of their educational experience (Prensky, 2001) and provides opportunities for differentiated assessment in the classroom (Al-Bahrani et al., 2016). Additionally, the personal nature of the ECONSelfie, along with purposeful subsequent interaction with peers, acts as a motivational device that reaches beyond traditional grading and encourages the building of supportive student learning networks in the classroom (Holder et al., 2015). In fact, the National Survey of Student Engagement polled 17,000 students at 40 different colleges and found that when students are actively engaged on their college campuses beyond the classroom, they "learn more, think more critically, and gain an appreciation for diverse perspectives".

When an ECONSelfie is shared by students through a learning management system (LMS) or in other social media environments, the assignment can further build upon the power of "Connectivism" (Siemens, 2005). Research has demonstrated that student interactions through social media (checking up on friends, viewing photos) are related to positive academic outcomes (Ellison et al., 2011, 2007; Junco 2013). Barczyk and Duncan (2013) found that use of social media (Facebook) as a supplement to face-to-face courses enhanced students' sense of social learning and connectedness. While the ECONSelfie assignment does not need to incorporate an online sharing component, they easily lend themselves to that format as a natural extension which has the potential to bring even more pedagogical value, particularly to hybrid or online course formats.

## 4. The econselfie assignment

As a teaching tool, the ECONSelfie assignment has been purposefully designed by the authors to be simple, instructive, and easy to implement in any classroom. It can be modified to suit the teaching style, mode of instruction (face-to-face, online, hybrid), and learning goals of any course. Students are required to take a photo of themselves (a *selfie*) that illustrates or contains some connection to an economic concept they have experienced. They must also write an explanation of the economic concept(s) demonstrated in their ECONSelfie. See Appendix A for the ECONSelfie assignment instructions and accompanying rubric.

From this basic structure, the ECONSelfie assignment can be extended and modified as desired to meet the needs of individual instructors. For example, the student's completed photos can be submitted as a hard copy in class, online through course management software or via email, or even include a requirement for posting to a social media site for review (see <http://econimages.tumblr.com/for> examples). The photos can contain either a short caption to enhance creative thinking or include a requirement for a longer one-page reflection paper detailing the economics concepts, definitions and the broader application relevant to the ECONSelfie. Additionally, credit can be awarded for accuracy of depiction, inclusion of multiple concepts, difficulty of concepts, and even evaluating the creativity of the photograph submitted. The ECONSelfie exercise can be assigned once during the semester or, if the instructor prefers, it can be offered repeatedly throughout the academic session to cover a variety of different concepts associated with each section of the course. Instructors can choose to randomly assign students to portray a specific concept selected from a set of important or more challenging terms in a module or unit or allow students to choose concepts on their own. One additional option for an expansion on the ECONSelfie assignment is for students to critically review the economic content of their peer's selfies. This adaptation can further assist in improving the clarity of their own understanding of economics, as well as lead to a productive discussion between students of the concepts covered within the course.

The requirements for the sharing of the ECONSelfie photos can range from sharing only in the classroom setting; to an encouraged, but not required, option to share on a closed Facebook group; or even an open posting on a Tumblr page (with disclosure regarding release of copyright and public availability of the image). Based on our own experiences utilizing this assignment in our classrooms, we advise that instructors set boundaries as to the appropriate content of the images to be allowed in the ECONSelfie assignment in advance. For example, explaining that pictures cannot include an illegal activity, even though economic concepts are often found in illegal markets, and that all persons in pictures must be fully clothed helps

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/357484>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/357484>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)