

A Voluntary Testimonial

Adjusting to retirement, I just discarded four storage boxes jam-packed with materials I used in teaching economics and personal finance. I had to chuckle as I culled the overhead transparencies and crude reproductions that dated back to the 1980s. The nostalgia was overwhelming.

I've retired from classroom teaching following a thirty-year career in high school social studies. One of my fondest assignments was to teach economics and personal finance to students. These are among the most pragmatic of the social sciences, providing insight into so many fundamental questions. These disciplines pursue the kind of inquiry that all informed citizens should be aware of:

How do we generate wealth? What is money? What gives it value? How stable is the financial system? What sort of future income should I aspire to? How can I grow my personal wealth?

Economics and personal finance help answer these and countless other questions that we'd expect our students to know as they transition into the next phase of their adult lives.

When I entered the profession I was not prepared to teach these disciplines, to address these topics. Few are. Most social studies teachers are history majors. There are a few civics majors. Fewer geographers. And even fewer still who are well trained in economics.

I was rescued from ignorance and lack of preparation by the Colorado Council for Economic Education (CCEE), now Economic Literacy Colorado (ELC). Hundreds of other teachers share a similar story. ELC offered me the professional development I never received in college. I learned from a stable of accomplished PhD economists and seasoned mentor teachers. I acquired both the content knowledge and the pedagogical techniques that enabled me to bring economics and personal finance to life – to pique the interest of students and, I'm confident, help prepare them to be informed citizens.

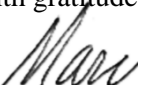
It's hard to convey to those not in the teaching profession what a crucial role ELC has served in the realms of economic education and personal financial literacy in the state of Colorado. The hundreds of teachers trained by ELC has easily translated into the tens of thousands of students who became the beneficiaries of that guidance.

It doesn't happen automatically. The educational establishment is not equipped to provide such training. And, as I said, few enter the profession prepared. The role of ELC, this agile little nonprofit, is absolutely critical in offering professional development to teachers. I reflected on this as I prepared my well-worn files for shredding. But it was with pride and a real sense of accomplishment that I poured over those old lessons.

It's up to the next generation of teachers to carry on the tradition. Many are willing. Most all need the helping hand of ELC and the programs it offers. But ELC cannot carry the torch without financial support.

It is the somber request of this old teacher to open your hearts and your wallets, to help maintain a vibrant ELC, the lifeblood of economic education and personal financial literacy in Colorado. ELC helped shape my greatest skills as a teacher. With your financial assistance, many teachers will follow. And an understanding of economic principles and our financial institutions will be shared with the next generation of students. Please contribute, generously, to this vitally important organization.

With gratitude and sincerity,


Marc A. Johnson