

The Economics Network's annual prize for '*Outstanding Contribution to Economics Education*'

Nomination: Dimitra Petropoulou

I am delighted to nominate Dimitra Petropoulou for this award, in recognition of her sustained and inspired impact on economics education nationally, largely through and with the Economics Network.

Though Dimitra is only half-way to consideration for a life-time achievement award, her work in this capacity spans 18 years; from the very start of her teaching as a LSE PhD student and, importantly, from almost the dawn of the Network itself, to the present, where she is currently a very active Associate (and I hope soon a Senior Associate) providing teacher training, for example. Her very first case study for the Network can be found [online](#) from October 2001. Thus her best work- thinking deeply about and codifying best practice in microeconomics, beginning and advanced, clearly, thoughtfully and with insight- is almost as old as the century. She has always understood the importance of presenting these or Economics Network Handbooks.

If some of her advice and innovations now seem "obvious", I think it clear that this is precisely because of the measurable impact Dimitra and other pioneers for the Network had on the way we teach Economics. This is particularly true of her early and consistent emphasis on gamification and on classroom experiments, not just for beginning students but for advanced courses too. She understands and thinks about the way we learn. She does not just identify what works but ponders deeply on why it works. I have read with pleasure, presentations she has given on innovations at Sussex and Surrey, as well as at the DEE. One feature which is all too unusual is that she can communicate what she does well in a practical and helpful way. She can put her practice into readable bullet points. She does this in a way which, to borrow from a letter of praise I have read from a former head of School, "Dimitra brings to all these roles, and to her teaching, a unique combination of intelligence, creativity, efficiency, precision, energy, passion, commitment, and congeniality".

More of her contribution is chronicled by the Network [here](#). There you will also see that she is always ready to edit and adapt, to codify and make precise, her innovations and good uncommon common sense.

I first met Dimitra through the Network in 2007, when she was a Stipendiary Lecturer in Oxford, so I have obtained information from John Sloman, Inna Pomorina and others about her earliest work. They wrote me to confirm and add detail to her earliest roles and though I must be careful not to suggest they would choose her over other unknown competitors in this round, they agreed that her role as a creator of new methods and then, critically, a generous sharer of her enthusiasm and results, makes her memorable and exceptional.

As the contents of each contribution can be consulted, I will be parsimonious and not repeat each example but emphasise the demonstrable impact on students' learning and interest in Economics and, especially, on the teaching community. A secondary theme which runs through her work is the ability to identify with students having difficulties, and thus to be a

pioneer in enabling dyslexic students, and students whose English is not native, to participate fully in the life of the economist. She has authored reports on this which changed practice.

Alas my 600 words are almost up. If I had more time I would try to crowd in more detail but instead must refer the judging panel to the documented written record the Network has, to which I can easily add slides and detail. With no more spare words, I will conclude with the response of our Head of Department, Steve Pischke, when I canvassed the idea that I would put Dimitra forward:

“Yes, excellent idea. While this award is for persistent and broad impact on economics education, which she has had, I have seen mostly how Dimitra has transformed education in the LSE Economics Department since her arrival. Her impact goes far beyond her own superb teaching. To single out one innovation she has made as Deputy Undergraduate Programme Director, I would pick the individual mentoring of promising GTAs, beyond our long-standing support for those needing improvement, including the GTA Forum and better subject-specific training for GTAs. Dimitra’s contribution has had a measurable impact on the morale of students, faculty and professional services staff alike.”

Dimitra’s canvas has always been broader than one Department and even one country. Her painting on this, in both bright colours and precise strokes, has been inspirational and it has always been an integral part of our Network. I realise there are others I know who are equally unstinting in their efforts for us, in Bristol, Warwick, UCL particularly, but none I know has been so innovative on methods, so empathetic and so energetic as a single person over such a long period of time.