Teaching Economic Communication Through Data Visualization: A Scaffolded Assignment with Peer Grading

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Abstract

Economics students learn to analyze data but rarely to communicate findings visually to non-specialist audiences. This paper presents the design and implementation of a Data Visualization Project (DVP)—a scaffolded, team-based assignment for undergraduate economics courses. Student teams source real-world economic data, create an original visualization, and present it to classmates who evaluate it using a structured rubric, with peer grades constituting half the score. The paper contributes a complete, portable assignment package—rubric, instructional materials, and four-phase scaffolding—together with reflective evidence from five iterations at the Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas (CIDE) in Mexico City (2021–2023, 32 student teams). It does not claim causal effects on learning; rather, it documents a feasible assignment design and illustrates how it functions in practice through teaching evaluations, student comments, and student-produced visualizations.

Keywords: data visualization, economics education, communication skills, peer assessment, active learning, assignment design

JEL codes: A22, A20

Highlights

- Students produce original visualizations from self-sourced economic data
- Peer grading at 50% weight creates accountability to the audience
- Four-phase scaffolding moves from critique to production to revision
- Complete rubric and assignment materials provided for adoption
- Reflective evidence from five course editions across two subjects

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1 Introduction

Economics training emphasizes analytical methods (optimization, equilibrium, econometrics) but largely neglects how to communicate quantitative findings to diverse audiences. Yet the ability to present data clearly is a core professional skill. Economists in central banks produce charts for press conferences. Policy analysts in international organizations distill complex datasets into visual briefs for high-ranking officials. Economic journalists translate statistics into graphics that inform public debate. As Schwabish (2014, p. 209) observed, "with online news, blogs, and social media, a good picture can now be worth so much more" than the proverbial thousand words. His call for economists to invest in creating effective graphics, however, was directed at researchers. What would a student-facing version of this argument look like?

A growing literature addresses data visualization in economics teaching, but most interventions target one of two skills: tool proficiency (learning Tableau or FRED) or data interpretation (reading and analyzing existing graphs). What almost none of them ask students to do is *produce* an original visualization from self-sourced economic data for a real audience. That gap matters because choosing whether to show nominal or real values, how to handle seasonal adjustment, whether to index to a base year, or how to contextualize a time series against policy events are economic reasoning tasks, not design tasks. A student who only interprets a pre-made chart never confronts these choices. A student who builds a visualization from scratch must confront all of them, and must then decide how to present the result so that a non-specialist can understand it.

This paper documents the design of a four-phase assignment—the Data Visualization Project (DVP)—in which student teams source real-world economic data, create an original visualization, and present it to peers who evaluate it using a structured rubric, with peer grades constituting half the assignment score. The primary contribution is the assignment itself: a complete, portable package—rubric, instructional materials, and implementation reflections from five runs—for economics instructors seeking to integrate visualization into their courses. The paper provides reflective evidence on how the assignment functions in practice but does not attempt to measure causal effects on student learning.

2 Related Work

Schwabish (2014) articulated three principles for effective economic visualization: show the data, reduce clutter, and integrate text and graph. Working through eight examples from the *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, he demonstrated that even simple redesigns using nothing more than Excel could dramatically improve the clarity of economic

graphics. His contribution provides the conceptual foundation for the DVP: if professional economists need to learn these principles, so do students—and they learn them by applying them, not by memorizing rules.

Several interventions teach students to *use* visualization tools. Batt et al. (2020) developed a Tableau-based exercise for upper-level economics courses, guiding students through the software to create charts and dashboards. Mendez-Carbajo & Dellachiesa (2023) conducted a randomized experiment comparing FRED and Google Sheets for data visualization in undergraduate statistics, finding higher completion rates with FRED but lower student confidence. Both improve tool proficiency. Neither asks students to design a visualization that communicates an economic argument to an audience.

Other work moves closer to student production but remains oriented toward comprehension rather than communication. Halliday et al. (2024) showed that interactive EconGraphs exercises improved understanding of economic models, particularly for students with weaker mathematical foundations. Calimeris & Kosack (2024) found that students who created infographics in microeconomics principles scored modestly higher on related exam questions. In both cases, visualization helps students understand course content. The target is comprehension, not communication.

A separate strand of the literature targets communication skills through non-visual media. Trendafilov & Mihal (2025) reported that podcast assignments in upper-level economics and finance courses developed communication skills and increased student engagement. Rouse (2025) described a semester-long policy writing project in intermediate microeconomics that fostered public-facing communication through real-world policy briefs. Both share the DVP's focus on audience-facing output but work through verbal and written channels, not visual ones.

The closest structural parallel to the DVP comes from statistics education. Hudiburgh & Garbinsky (2020) implemented a semester-long Data Visualization Group Project in which student teams created original visualizations from self-chosen datasets, scaffolded through multiple feedback iterations. The DVP shares their emphasis on team-based production, self-sourced data, and iterative revision. It diverges in that the data are economics-specific (requiring interpretive choices about deflation, indexing, and policy context), peer grading constitutes half the score, and the rubric includes an audience-impact criterion.

No existing assignment combines all three: students produce original visualizations, the data are economic and require interpretive judgment, and the audience evaluates the result. The DVP fills that space. The rest of this paper documents its design, describes five implementations, and reflects on what the experience reveals.

3 Assignment Design

3.1 Objective and Framing

The DVP objective is: "Visualize important data concerning [economic topic] in [geographic or thematic scope]." In Monetary Theory and Policy, the topic is "liquidity in Mexico in the widest sense"; in International Trade, the scope is adapted accordingly. The assignment document unpacks this objective word by word, discussing what makes data "important," what constitutes a "visualization" (following Cairo's (2016) definition: "any visual display intended to reveal evidence, making the invisible visible"), and why communicating economic data to a broad audience matters.

The framing matters because economic data carries interpretive choices that generic design training ignores. A time series of Mexico's inflation rate requires decisions about headline versus core measures, monthly versus annual frequency, and whether to annotate Banxico policy rate changes. These are acts of economic reasoning embedded in the visualization process.

The instructional presentation—a 94-slide Beamer document—opens with two historical masterpieces: Minard's visualization of Napoleon's 1812 Russian campaign and Snow's cholera map of London. These establish that good visualization has a long history of revealing patterns that raw numbers obscure. The presentation then systematically walks through Schwabish's (2014) three principles, using his original-critique-revision examples from the *JEP*. Each example follows the sequence: original figure, critical analysis of what fails, redesigned version, and explanation of what improved. This critique-revision cycle runs through the entire DVP.

3.2 Four-Phase Scaffolding

The DVP unfolds over four phases, each with a distinct deliverable:

Phase 1: Good Viz / Bad Viz / Ugly Viz. Student teams find one good, one bad, and one ugly example of a data visualization from any source. For each, they write three to four sentences explaining why it succeeds or fails, applying the principles from the presentation. Teams present their selections in class, generating immediate discussion and calibrating shared standards. Starting with critique rather than production mattered because students initially fixated on aesthetics (color, font, layout) rather than whether the graph told a clear economic story. The Good/Bad/Ugly exercise forced the vocabulary of "message" and "audience" before anyone opened a data file.

Phase 2: Topic and Data Submission. Teams discuss potential topics in class, verify data availability, and submit a title, outline, and data source. Recommended sources

include Banxico (Mexico's central bank), INEGI (national statistics agency), IMF, World Bank, BIS, and OECD. The instructor reviews submissions to ensure feasibility and encourages teams to think about their narrative before touching their tools.

Phase 3: Rough Draft. Teams transform their data into a preliminary visualization and present it in class with five elements: title, display, message, intended audience, and design rationale. Classmates and the instructor provide feedback. In most semesters, the Phase 3 presentations revealed a common failure: teams had data and a chart but no narrative. The most frequent feedback—from both the instructor and peers—was "what is this chart trying to tell me?" That question, asked early, is the point of the rough draft.

Phase 4: Final Submission. Teams submit a single PNG image by email. The visualization is then graded by classmates.

In terms of learning objectives, the four phases progressively target higher-order cognitive skills. Phases 1 and 2 operate at the levels of analysis and evaluation in Bloom's revised taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001): students analyze existing visualizations against design principles and evaluate data sources for narrative potential. Phases 3 and 4 move to creation: students synthesize economic data, interpretive judgment, and design choices into an original visual argument. The peer-grading component adds a second pass through evaluation, this time applied to classmates' work. The DVP thus engages the top three levels of the taxonomy—analyze, evaluate, create—through a single scaffolded assignment.

3.3 Grading Rubric and Peer Evaluation

The DVP is assessed using a seven-dimension rubric (Table 1).

Each criterion is scored from 10 (exemplary) to 6 (unsatisfactory). The Impact criterion is deliberately demanding: could this visualization reach a non-specialist audience at the level of a major publication? Students find this question both hard and clarifying.

Classmates determine 50 percent of the final DVP grade. Each student individually evaluates all other teams' submissions using the rubric; the instructor provides the other half. Because students must score every team on every criterion, they internalize the rubric through repeated use. They also face a real audience: their grade depends partly on whether classmates find their visualization convincing.

The 50 percent peer weight was chosen to make the audience-accountability mechanism credible. Below 50%, the rubric-as-evaluator mechanism loses teeth. Above it, the grade depends too heavily on peer scores that may not be reliable. Strategic grading

Table 1: DVP grading rubric

Criterion	Weight	Description
Title	10%	Describes the data and attracts the reader's attention
Description	10%	Methodological note with necessary context
Clarity	10%	Clear labels, no unnecessary information
Support	20%	Data supports the story told by the title
Accuracy	10%	Graph types and data representation are correct
Appropriateness	20%	Chosen graph type fits the data and message
Impact	20%	"Could it headline an article in a major economics publication?"

(teams scoring competitors low to improve their own relative standing) is a theoretical concern. In practice, the small class sizes (10–14 students) and the fact that students evaluate all teams, not just direct competitors, limit the payoff from strategic behavior.

3.4 Instructional Materials

The 94-slide presentation serves as the primary instructional scaffold. Beyond the Schwabish examples, it includes five design principles: tell a story, declutter, use color by function (not decoration), graph for the reader (not the author), and override software defaults. A brief section on cognitive science (pre-attentive processing, the Picture Superiority Effect) grounds the design advice in evidence.

The presentation also includes the instructor's own "bad" and "good" versions of charts about Mexico's financial system, modeling the same critique-revision process students are expected to follow. Showing the instructor's own failed drafts alongside improved versions reinforces the message that revision is normal, not a sign of failure.

4 Implementation Context

The DVP was implemented at the Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas (CIDE), a public research university in Mexico City, in the Licenciatura en Economía. CIDE's economics program is selective and small, with class sizes typically between 10 and 14 students. The DVP was part of 6th-semester courses—approximately equivalent to the third year of a four-year program—meaning students had already completed foundational coursework in microeconomics, macroeconomics, and statistics.

Table 2 summarizes the five course editions in which the DVP was used.

Table 2: DVP implementations

	Course	Year	Student Groups
1	Monetary Theory and Policy	2021	7
2	International Trade	2021	7
3	Monetary Theory and Policy	2022	5
4	International Trade	2022	5
5	International Trade	2023	8
	Total		**32**

Courses were taught in English to a predominantly Spanish-speaking student body. This added a layer to the communication challenge. Students wrote titles, labels, and descriptions in English, which was the language of instruction, but the economic phenomena they visualized—Mexico's inflation, trade patterns, financial inclusion—were rooted in Spanish-language data sources. Navigating Banxico and INEGI databases often meant working with Spanish-language metadata before producing English-language visualizations. Whether writing in a second language affects visualization choices (shorter titles? simpler labels?) was not tracked, but instructors adapting the DVP should be aware of the bilingual dimension.

The assignment design remained stable across all five editions—the rubric, scaffolding, and timeline proved workable from the start, and consistency allowed for meaningful comparison across semesters. The DVP was tool-agnostic by design: students were free to use any programming language or software. Excel was formally permitted, but no team ever submitted an Excel-generated visualization. All teams used programmatic tools (R, Python, Stata, or MATLAB), likely reflecting prior training in these tools—6th-semester students at a selective research university have taken econometrics—rather than a DVP-specific effect. The assignment's tool-agnosticism means it does not depend on software access, which supports portability to institutions where students may have different technical backgrounds.

5 Classroom Experience and Evidence

5.1 Implementation Observations

The Good Viz / Bad Viz / Ugly Viz phase consistently generated substantive classroom discussion. Students arrived with examples ranging from government statistical reports to social media infographics, and the exercise of applying Schwabish's principles to real visualizations established a shared vocabulary ("message," "audience,"

"clutter") before teams began their own projects. In one semester, a team brought a Banxico press release chart as their "ugly" example and identified that it plotted twelve overlapping series with a detached legend, making it impossible to follow any single trend. Several teams would repeat the same mistake in their own rough drafts.

Data sourcing turned out to be one of the more instructive steps in the process. Students navigated central bank databases, international statistical platforms, and national statistical agencies—often encountering for the first time the friction of working with real economic data: missing variable descriptions, difficult-to-navigate interfaces, inconsistent units across sources, and series that required transformation before they could be plotted. Beyond the interface difficulties, the data themselves demanded economic judgment. A team visualizing Mexico's trade balance had to choose between nominal and real values and decide which deflator to use. A team plotting inflation had to decide whether to overlay Banxico's target band as a benchmark—a choice that transforms a time series into a policy narrative. Others confronted whether to normalize GDP to per-capita units to sharpen intuition about possible policy effects, whether to first-difference panel data to separate the correlation between trade openness and innovation from underlying institutional differences, or how to choose a base year for indexing that would not distort the visual story. Even the choice of time window matters: starting a chart in 2008 rather than 2005 frames the same data as a crisis narrative rather than a growth story. These are economic reasoning tasks—not design decisions—and they are invisible in exercises that hand students pre-processed data.

5.2 Student Visualizations

Quality varied widely across the 32 teams. Three final submissions illustrate the range (Figures 1–3), and one rough-draft-to-final pair shows how the scaffolding process can reshape a visualization (Figures 4–5).

A strong example: "The Missing Half" (Trade 2023, Figure 1). A team visualizing gender disparity in corporate leadership produced a paired bar chart comparing the share of board seats and CEO positions held by women across 16 countries, sorted by board-seat share. The title—"The Missing Half: A Visual Representation of Gender Disparity in Corporate Leadership Positions"—immediately communicates the message. The visualization scores well on most rubric dimensions: the title is informative and attention-grabbing (Title: high), the chart includes a "gender parity ceiling" reference line that contextualizes the data (Support: high), and the country ordering creates a clear narrative from more to less equal (Appropriateness: high). The bottom section adds pictogram summaries of global averages (19% of board seats, 5% of CEOs), reinforcing the message through a second visual register. Where it falls short is De-

scription: the source line ("Deloitte 2021") is minimal, and no methodological note explains how countries were selected or what "board seats" includes. On the Impact criterion, the visualization could plausibly appear in a business publication—it tells a complete story at a glance.

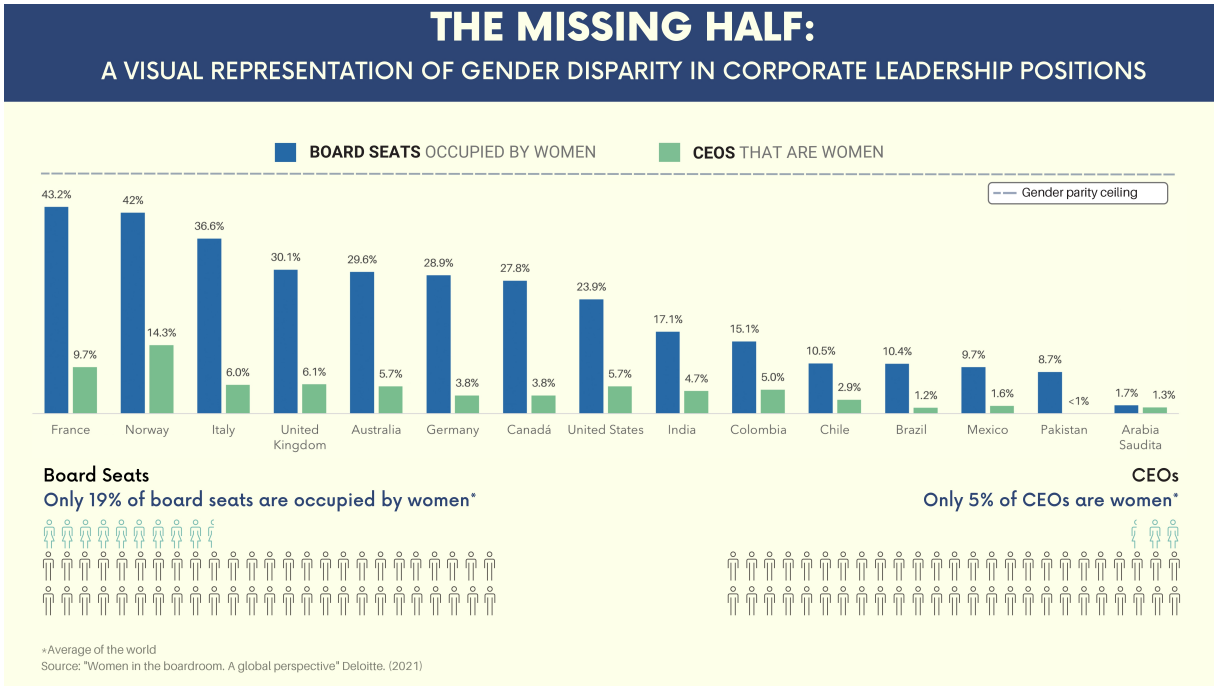

Figure 1: "The Missing Half" (Trade 2023). A strong example: narrative title, sorted bar chart, reference line for gender parity, pictogram summaries. Weak on Description (minimal source attribution).

A weaker example: "Estimation Model of the Unemployment Rate with respect to the Inflation Rate in Mexico" (Money 2022, Figure 2). A team plotted gender-disaggregated unemployment estimates alongside inflation on a dual y-axis chart. The title reads as a technical label rather than a narrative hook (Title: low). The three series (red, blue, gray) use default plotting colors with a small, detached legend (Clarity: low). The dual y-axis makes it difficult to assess the relationship between variables, and the subtitle ("Differentiated impact of percentage change on inflation per sex") is ambiguous about what the chart actually shows (Support: low). This example illustrates a failure mode the DVP is designed to surface: the team had data and a technique (dual-axis time series) but no clear message for a non-specialist audience. On the Impact criterion, a reader encountering this chart would need to study it for several minutes to extract any conclusion—the opposite of what the rubric demands.

An economics-specific success: "The role of inflation targeting regime in the disinflation process: The Mexican case" (Money 2022, Figure 3). A team plotted Mex-

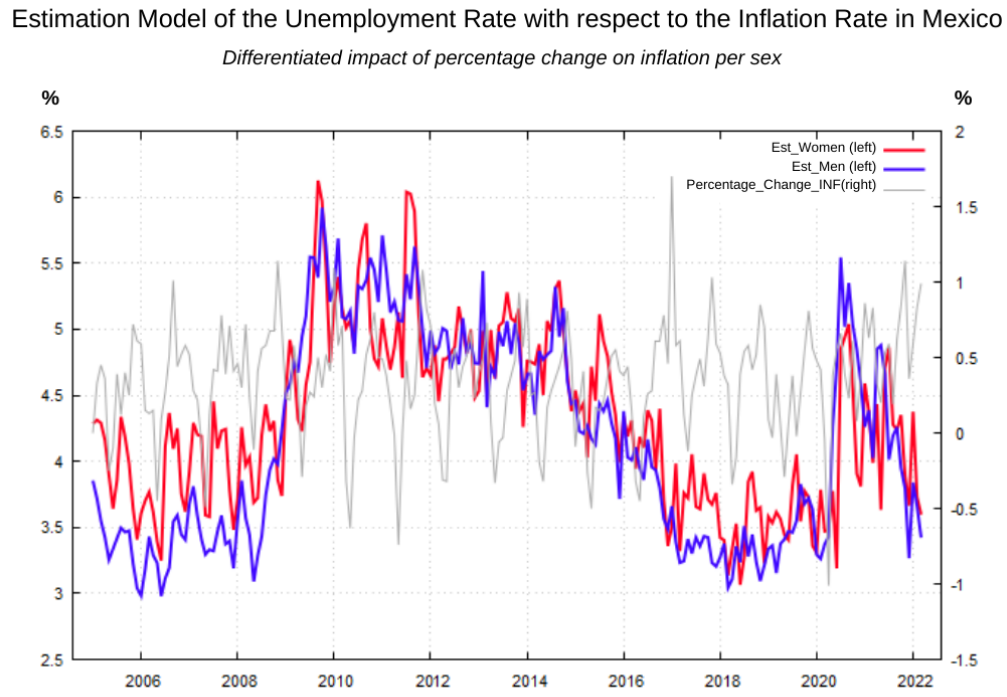

Figure 2: "Estimation Model of the Unemployment Rate" (Money 2022). A weaker example: technical title, dual y-axis, default colors, detached legend. The chart has data but no message for a non-specialist.

ico's 12-month inflation rate from 1994 to 2011, annotating three policy milestones—Banxico's short-term (1995), medium-term (1999), and long-term (2001) inflation objectives—with vertical dashed lines and text labels. A shaded band shows the formal inflation target after 2001. This visualization demonstrates the kind of economic reasoning the DVP targets: the interpretive choice to overlay policy events on a macroeconomic time series transforms a simple line chart into an argument about institutional credibility. Deciding which events to mark, how to label them, and where to place the target band is economics, not graphic design. The visualization scores well on Support and Appropriateness. Its weakness is visual polish: the font is small, the annotations are somewhat crowded, and the title, while accurate, reads more like a working paper heading than a headline (Impact: moderate).

The scaffolding does not guarantee uniformly strong output, and that is fine. Variation gives the instructor and peers something concrete to discuss, and it exposes where economic reasoning and communication skills diverge within a class.

A before-and-after: "Cheap or affordable?" (Trade 2023, Figures 4–5). One pair from the 2023 International Trade course illustrates what the Phase 3 to Phase 4 transition can look like. The rough draft (Figure 4) presents the team's argument across three

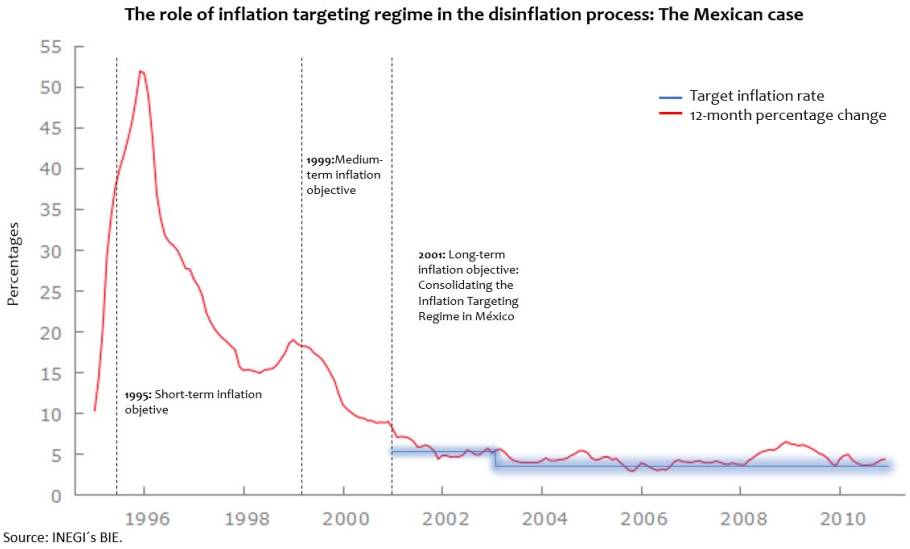

Figure 3: "The role of inflation targeting regime in the disinflation process" (Money 2022). Policy milestones annotated on a macroeconomic time series—an act of economic interpretation, not just design.

separate panels—imports of Chinese phones, smartphone ownership by brand origin, and a text block with interpretation—in a cluttered dashboard layout with inconsistent fonts and scales. The data are there, but the reader has to assemble the story. The final submission (Figure 5) collapses everything into a single stacked bar chart with a narrative title: "Cheap or affordable? How Chinese brands have increased access to smartphones in Mexico." The "No smartphones" category at the top shrinks visibly from 2017 to 2021 while the Chinese share (red) grows, so the chart makes its argument without explanation. Phase 3 feedback at work: cut the clutter, pick one display, let the title do the talking.

5.3 Teaching Evaluation Evidence

CIDE administers official semester-long teaching evaluations. Question 15 asks students to rate, on a scale of 0 to 10, the extent to which the course contributed to developing their abilities to "pose and solve problems as well as communicate their ideas"—the closest available proxy for the communication skills the DVP targets. Table 3 reports Q15 scores alongside overall teaching scores (Q18) and the departmental average.

These scores capture course-level perceptions and cannot be attributed to the DVP specifically. Q15 reflects the entire course experience—lectures, problem sets, and other assignments—not the visualization assignment alone. The 2019 courses are included for reference but do not constitute a clean baseline: the data visualization component existed in nascent form that year, and multiple other course elements changed between

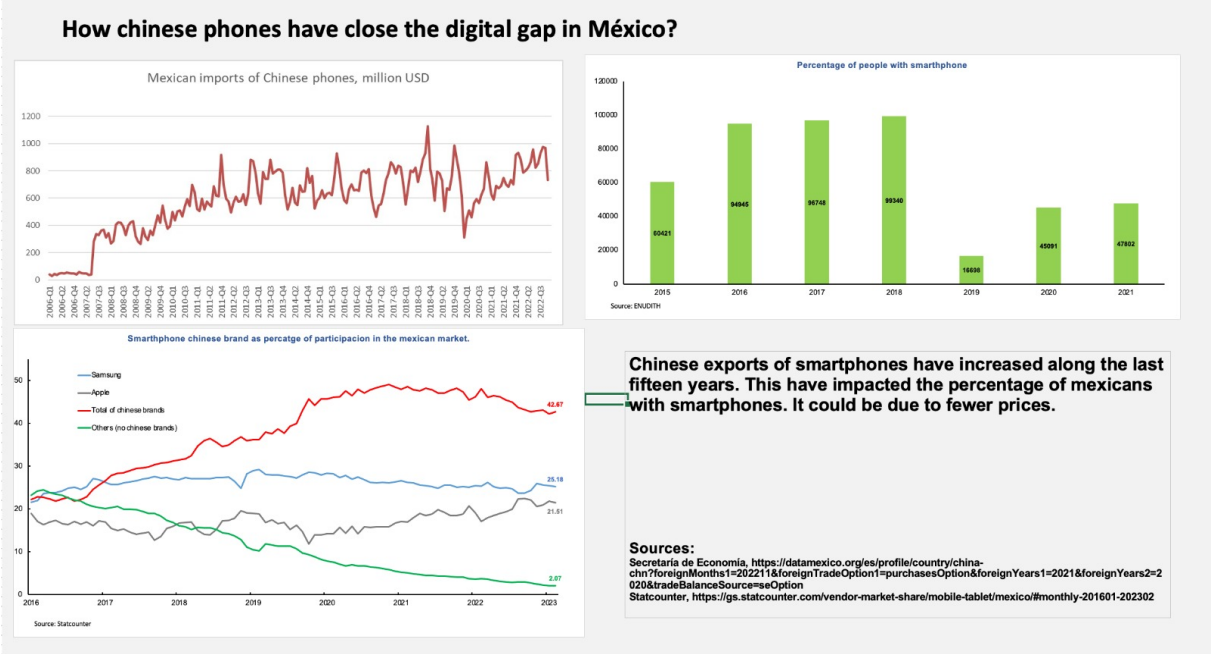

Figure 4: Rough draft (Phase 3): "How Chinese phones have close the digital gap in México." Multiple panels, inconsistent scales, text block competing with the charts.

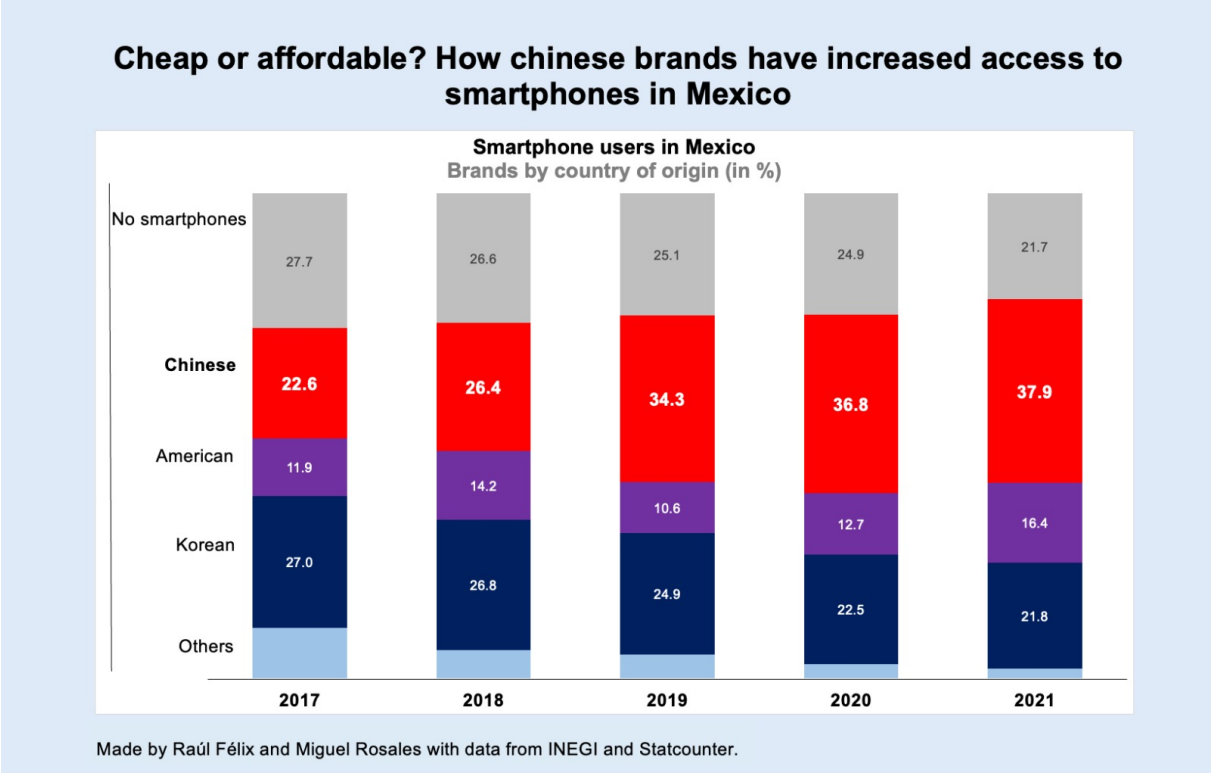

Figure 5: Final submission (Phase 4): "Cheap or affordable?" Single stacked bar chart, narrative title, consistent color scheme. The story is visible without reading a text block.

Table 3: Teaching evaluation scores

Course	Year	N	Q15 (Comm.)	Q18 (Overall)	Dept. Avg. (Q18)
Trade	2019	11	8.8	9.3	9.6
Money	2019	10	8.8	9.0	9.0
Trade	2021	11	8.6	8.4	8.7
Money	2021	10	8.3	8.1	8.8
Trade	2022	14	9.5	9.6	8.9
Money	2022	14	9.4	9.5	8.9
Trade	2023	12	9.6	9.2	9.2

2019 and 2021. Q15 scores are consistently high, and in 2022 and 2023 they exceed the departmental average for Q18, but these patterns are descriptive and should not be interpreted as evidence of DVP-specific impact.

5.4 Student Voice

Open-ended comments in the teaching evaluations provide more direct—though still anecdotal—evidence of how students perceived the DVP. Across the five semesters (2021–2023), approximately 60 students completed evaluations. Of those who wrote open-ended comments, at least seven explicitly mentioned data visualization, peer grading, or the communication emphasis. All mentions were positive or requests for more. No student commented negatively on the DVP or the peer-grading mechanism in the written evaluations.

Students who valued the communication push:

> "He helped us step out of our comfort zone, especially with data presentation and peer review." (Trade 2023)

> "Pone énfasis en la importancia de la parte comunicativa en la economía." [He emphasizes the importance of the communicative dimension in economics.] (Trade 2023)

Students who connected the DVP to real-world application:

> "También se esforzó en proporcionarnos otro tipo de conocimientos y herramientas como la visualización de datos y presentaciones de los temas del curso pero aplicados a la realidad." [He also made the effort to provide us with other skills and tools like data visualization and course-topic presentations, but applied to reality.] (Trade 2021)

And students who explicitly requested more:

"Más visualización de datos." [More data visualization.] (Money 2022)

"Más ejercicios de visualización de datos." [More data visualization exercises.] (Money 2022)

These comments come from a self-selected subset of respondents; students who disliked the assignment may not have commented. Still, the DVP clearly registered as a distinct part of the course experience, and the combination of visualization with peer evaluation was perceived as challenging and valued.

6 Discussion

Why peer grading matters

Peer grading forces students to read the rubric as evaluators, not just producers. Scoring another team's visualization on the Impact criterion—could this chart headline an article in a major economics publication?—means applying an external benchmark, not just hearing about one. After evaluating seven or eight visualizations against the same seven criteria, the rubric categories become part of how students see charts.

The choice of benchmark deserves scrutiny. The original rubric used *The Economist* as the reference publication for the Impact criterion. For CIDE students—Mexican economics undergraduates—*The Economist* is a recognizable but foreign benchmark. References to *El Financiero*, *Expansión*, or Banxico's own publications might resonate more directly with students' media environment. In practice, the *Economist* benchmark functioned well because students understood it as shorthand for "clear, audience-facing, publication-quality" rather than as a literal submission target. Instructors adapting the DVP could substitute a publication more relevant to their students' context without altering the criterion's function.

Why economics-specific data matters

Economic data requires interpretive choices that generic datasets do not. A student visualizing Mexico's inflation rate must decide whether to show headline or core inflation, whether to use monthly or annual frequency, and whether to mark Banxico rate decisions on the timeline. A team charting trade flows must choose between nominal and real values, handle seasonal adjustment, and decide whether to index to a base year. A group mapping financial inclusion must grapple with what "access" means when measured by deposit accounts versus debit cards versus point-of-sale terminals.

These are the same choices working economists face when they prepare a chart for a policy brief: what to emphasize, what to leave out, what context to provide, and

where simplification starts to distort. The student visualization of Mexico's disinflation process described in Section 5.2 illustrates this: the decision to annotate Banxico's three inflation-targeting milestones transforms a simple line chart into an argument about institutional credibility. That annotation decision is an act of economic interpretation, not visual decoration.

Why audience-facing framing changes student behavior

Telling students to "make a correct graph" produces completeness: all the data, every label, proper units. Telling them to "make a graph that communicates to a non-specialist" produces something different: they start asking what to leave out, what story the chart tells, whether someone outside the course would get the point. Peer grading reinforces the shift because classmates have not seen the team's data and judge the visualization cold.

Limitations

The DVP has run five times without major redesign, and students report valuing it. But feasibility is not the same as effectiveness. No pre-post test of visualization skills exists. Peer scores across offerings exhibited the leniency and range compression typical of the peer assessment literature (Topping, 1998; Falchikov & Goldfinch, 2000), but formal reliability analysis has not been conducted; the peer-grading data remain a priority for future work. And every implementation took place in small, selective classes at a single institution. A pre-post assessment, a systematic analysis of peer-grade reliability, and a trial at a different type of university would each address one of these gaps.

Portability and adaptation

The DVP is designed to be portable. It requires no specific software, no proprietary datasets, and no institutional infrastructure beyond a course with a quantitative component. The economic topic is modular: "liquidity in Mexico" can be replaced with any domain—labor markets, public finance, development indicators, health economics. The rubric, assignment document, and presentation materials are available as supplementary materials.

Scalability is a more open question. At CIDE, class sizes of 10–14 students meant that each student evaluated all other teams' submissions and that the instructor could provide individualized feedback during Phase 3 presentations. In a class of 60 or 200 students, both features would require adaptation. Peer grading could be managed through a learning management system (Canvas, Moodle) with randomized subsets of submissions assigned to each evaluator. Phase 3 presentations might shift from

full-class sessions to smaller workshop groups. The four-phase structure could also be compressed: at institutions on a shorter academic calendar, Phases 1 and 2 could be combined into a single session, and Phase 3 feedback could be delivered in writing rather than in class. These adaptations change the social dynamics but preserve the core requirement: produce a visualization that communicates economic data to an audience that grades you on it.

7 Conclusion

This paper has documented the design of a Data Visualization Project for undergraduate economics courses—a scaffolded, team-based assignment that requires students to source real-world economic data, create an original visualization, and present it to peers who evaluate it using a structured rubric. The complete assignment, rubric, instructional presentation, and examples of student work are provided as supplementary materials for instructors seeking a ready-to-adopt visualization assignment that integrates data sourcing, economic interpretation, visual design, and audience-oriented communication.

Data availability

Individual student-level grading records are available from the author upon request. The assignment materials, rubric, and student visualization examples are provided as supplementary materials.

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