The course structure comprises modules of rich instructional content. Contained within this structure are numerous pages of content, graphic novel scenarios, interactive activities, auto-graded assessments, and an interactive graphing engine that enables users to manipulate variables and analyze information in graph and chart form. The modules are intended for an average class time of 45 minutes; students, however, may proceed at their own individual paces. All modules follow a similar pedagogical structure tailored to targeted competencies. After presenting the standards to be covered, each module begins with a short story, often illustrated with animations. This introduction connects the concepts in the module with situations that might occur as part of the students’ daily lives. Then, the content is presented as a blend of direct instruction in text, graphic, or video formats with embedded interactive components. The embedded activities provide formative assessment opportunities to help ensure each student truly understands the concepts. Finally, each module ends with a Comprehension Check and a Homework Practice assignment that assess the students’ progress.

The course content is comprehensive with topics ranging in complexity from the fiscal and monetary role of government to understanding a bank statement. One module, for example, focuses on paying for post-high school education. After completing the module, students will understand what it costs to attend college,
know the various sources of funding for a post-high school education, and learn to plan a course of action for paying for college. In addition, students practice their newly acquired skills through EconLab, an embedded simulation in which they guide their character through a series of scenarios as they apply their understandings of economics and personal finance.

Our Breaking the Economics Barrier Multi-Touch textbook provides teachers and students all they need to know to work together to master the world of economics.

**KEY FEATURES**

**Core Content:** The core content of the course was developed by a team of writers with either a master’s or doctoral degree in economics or related fields. It was then reviewed thoroughly by a team of content experts from Virginia. More than 2,600 pages of content—enlivened with illustrations, photographs, animations, and interactive exercises—provide a rich and varied learning experience.

**Graphic Novel Scenarios:** To provide meaningful connections with students’ daily lives, a series of characters were developed to provide a diverse group of teenagers to whom students can easily relate. The characters provide continuity throughout the course in a series of graphic-novel inspired cartoon strips. They depict daily life situations that highlight the connections between everyday decisions and economic concepts.

**Embedded Assessments:** The course blends assessment and instruction in a seamless fashion. More than 500 interactives provide students with opportunities to challenge themselves by answering questions, playing games, and solving dilemmas. Students get instant, focused feedback about their performances in each of these interactions.

**Interactive Graphing Engine:** Students explore critical skills, such as creating, interpreting, and interacting with information in graphic form. A powerful graphing engine, tailor made for the course, supports visual learning by allowing students to create, manipulate, and analyze information in graphs and charts.
**Embedded Videos:** Videos are embedded in the content to further illustrate key concepts. The videos are stored with the course content and do not rely on access to external links or to video-streaming sites.

**Articles and Scenarios:** Excerpts from various publications provide food for thought on the workings of economics in real life. Questions based upon these readings allow students to analyze the information and reach their own conclusions. The characters from the course are portrayed in everyday scenarios to which students can relate. This feature helps the students reflect on the decisions they would make in similar situations.

**Overarching Simulation:** To provide a fuller learning experience, students may practice their newly acquired knowledge through EconLab, an embedded simulation that goes significantly beyond traditional multiple-choice assessment. In the simulation, students assume the identity of one of the characters they have encountered in the course. They steer that character through a series of scenarios in which they can apply their understandings of economics and personal finance. To achieve specific objectives, students must make decisions about what to study, where to live, and how to spend their time—bearing in mind the trade-offs each decision carries.