

2007 Bessie B. Moore Award-Winning Projects

Newcomer Category

The American/Arkansas Economy

Zach Bledsoe

Lakeside Junior High School
Lakeside School District

Teachers are always looking for interesting ways to supplement basic textbook information and searching for resources that help develop relevant, real-life connections to their subject matter. Mr. Bledsoe found such a resource when he used the newsmagazine, *Arkansas Business*, in his 9th grade Civics and Government survey classes. He supplemented the economic section of the textbook with a three-week unit that allowed for a more focused look at local, state, national and world economies. Assignments were given that allowed students to focus on economics and its impact on their personal lives. Students viewed video clips and used computer-based programs that reinforced basic economic principles and terms and provided an overview of the history of economic study. Each week students selected articles of special interest to them and provided written analysis of the information from an economic standpoint.

Budget It - Shop For It

Ruth Eyres

J. A. Fair High School
Little Rock School District

Budget It - Shop for It was designed to teach students in Community Based Instruction classes the financial literacy necessary in budgeting and making wise choices when planning and shopping for food items needed to prepare meals. Students with moderate to severe disabilities were provided experiential educational opportunities to help make economic and math learning "real." Students went beyond the traditional classroom approach of hypothetically planning for and purchasing items to actually being engaged first hand in making healthy food choices within a specified budget, engaging in the purchasing process, recording purchase transactions, and using the purchased items to learn food preparation skills. Being a decision maker, making choices within a budget, shopping and ultimately enjoying the resulting picnic lunches made this project very exciting and personal for each student.

Economics Our Way

Mildred Green

Clinton Primary School
Hope School District

The students in Ms. Green's 4th grade Gifted and Talented classes help her run the school store, which is part of the GT program at Clinton Primary School. When she began integrating economics into the curriculum, it seemed logical to go a step further from having her students just staff the store to teaching the students the skills needed to make decisions and experience all aspects of managing the store. To achieve this goal, she developed active-learning instructional units that introduced basic economic concepts and personal finance lessons that provided real-life decision making connections. Each month for four months, a different group of students successfully managed the school store selling items they selected, ordered and priced. Students also developed advertising and supervised and staffed the store each day.

Creating a Classroom Newspaper

Lindsay Griffin

**Greenbrier Middle School
Greenbrier School District**

"Celebrate Freedom Week" was the front page headline of the first edition of *Panther Shout*, a publication of Greenbrier Middle School 5th graders. As a literacy teacher, Ms. Griffin had always been interested in producing a class newspaper. After attending a week-long Economics Arkansas workshop, she decided to incorporate a classroom newspaper project with economics. Students were first introduced to basic economic concepts such as opportunity cost, goods and services, producers and consumers, and human and capital resources. Additional lessons in economics were used each week as the students learned about production and distribution of a newspaper and creating and writing articles for the newspaper. The students learned the importance of a newspaper and how it relates to what is happening in their lives. One of their favorite columns was called "Dear Shirley" where an anonymous student answered letters from students that expressed problems or concerns that 5th graders have. The students in these 5th grade literacy classes were so excited, involved and interested in this project they got together during their lunch time to work on it!

Extra! Extra! Economics!

Jenny Humble

**Grace Hill Elementary School
Rogers School District**

Basing instruction on students' interests is a time-honored educational tool. This 5th grade teacher listened when students expressed interest in a school newspaper, and developed a unit that integrated a firm foundation of economic understanding with the production of a school newspaper. This five week unit was truly a cross-curricular learning experience. Students reviewed geography as they examined local, state and world economies, reinforced literacy skills as they prepared articles and studied the economic aspects of producing and selling a paper. Math application was utilized when they calculated percentages from responses to a market survey. The class visited a local newspaper office to learn the process from reporting to printing; a bank to learn about currency, saving and checking accounts; and a doughnut shop to witness an assembly line in progress. Ms. Humble provided a unique educational opportunity for her students to see a newspaper evolve from idea to publication.

Heifer Helpers

Dianne Kellogg

**George Elementary School
Springdale School District**

The children's literature book, *Beatrice's Goat*, was the inspiration behind this economic unit. Just as Beatrice's life was changed after receiving the gift of a goat from Heifer International, the students in Ms. Kellogg's Gifted and Talented classes wanted to help families in need. After a field trip to Heifer International, the 5th grade students led the school in the kick-off for fundraising to support the mission of this outstanding organization. The integration of economics flowed easily throughout the unit. From the PACED decision making model (state the Problem, list Alternatives, determine Criteria, Evaluate, make a Decision) to the use of natural, human and capital resources in the production of goods to sell at the school's product market, students practiced real-life application of economic concepts. All students, kindergarten through 5th grades participated in this study of economic opportunities that culminated in the donation of more than \$2000 to improve the economic condition of others.

Economic Exposure Through Student-Run Businesses William Peak

**Eureka Springs High School
Eureka Springs School District**

It has been said, it's not the "I Q," but the "I will" that makes a person successful. This is the philosophy Mr. Peak brings to his self-contained special education classes at Eureka Springs High School. The goal of this project was to provide exposure and practice in a variety of job-related experiences that would prepare the students to transition into jobs, during and after high school. He wanted his students to understand the value of money; to place a real-life value on a dollar and understand what it takes to earn a dollar. To this end, he started four student-run businesses: a laundry service for Oceanography Lab and medical professions classes; a button factory making and marketing buttons for school events; a greenhouse planting and selling garden plants and flowers; and a restaurant preparing and serving food to staff and parents. This real-life learning contributes to each student's success as they confidently and enthusiastically state, "I will"!

I Want To Be On My Own Mary Steele

**J. A. Fair High School
Little Rock School District**

I Want To Be On My Own! embraces the desires and expectations of most teenagers in society today: the desire to live as independently as possible upon high school graduation. As a Community Based Instruction teacher, Ms. Steele faces many challenges in helping her students gain the skills they need to achieve this goal. A CBI classroom focuses on functional life skills for students with severe to profound developmental delays. By integrating basic personal finance concepts into the existing curriculum, she hoped to instill more self-confidence in her students and start them thinking about making choices that will impact them upon graduation. *"My students learned how to understand necessities versus wants, the importance of working to earn a salary, how to open a checking account, how to fill out a deposit slip, add and subtract money on the deposit slip, budget specific amounts of money for specific activities, plan for meals, shop for meals, use coupons as necessary, prepare the meal, make decisions when faced with limited funds, and many other subtle economic tasks. It was important for them to see the responsibilities they have ahead of them and to gain confidence in their abilities to pursue their futures."*

Economics in Everyday Life Shelina Warren

**Jack Robey Junior High School
Pine Bluff School District**

Spring 2007 found 108 9th grade students involved in a six week unit that exposed them to economic content not found in their Civics textbook. Based on comments by teachers and students, Ms. Warren realized that many students do not believe what they study in school will help them in life. She used this information to develop a teaching unit that expanded the economic content of the textbook by incorporating resources that focused on using the decision making model to help students set goals for their future. Students participated in modules such as consumer awareness, Working It Out, and resource management. The culminating module was a classroom economy simulation that focused on personal finance management the students will need when they are on their own. This was a unique, very successful blend of personal development understanding and economics learning.

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Veteran Category

Arkansas Farm Friends

Peggy Johnson

Harmony Grove Elementary School
Harmony Grove School District

Ms. Johnson is a 3rd grade teacher who has a great love for Arkansas History and a great love for teaching economics. She combined the two to develop a unit that focused mainly on the types of farms in Arkansas and the productive resources needed for each farm. Although their school is located in a rural community, many of the students had never been on a farm nor knew there were so many types of farms in Arkansas. Activities in this unit incorporated reading, writing, science, mathematics and history with learning basic economic concepts. Students read about farms, wrote about farms, played folder games to learn about farms and watched videos about farms. They planted seeds, visited local farms, conducted a survey to determine favorite farm animals and used their decision making skills to determine that the culminating activity for the unit would be a flea market. Prior to this unit they mainly thought of farms as places that have cows, horses, pigs and vegetables. Imagine their surprise to learn that Arkansas also has rice, cotton, tree and catfish farms!

Canine Capers

Melody Key

Bayyari Elementary School
Springdale School District

If dogs could talk, those that live near Bayyari Elementary School would thank Ms. Key for teaching her 1st graders how to be responsible pet owners. In response to a growing number of unfenced and unleashed dogs around the school, she developed a teaching unit to help her students learn to become better decision makers by learning good practices for pet care and understanding the city laws for pet restraint. Because the majority of the students in her class were English language learners, she decided to integrate economics across the curriculum but focus on a minimum number of economic concepts with much review. The 1930's book, Lassie Come Home, was the read-aloud that captured the students' attention. A thorough integration across the curriculum fused basic economics and fundamental pet care with reading, writing, math and geography. *"The best learning occurs when a child's heart is in it."* No one would dispute that children and dogs form a connection of the heart.

What's My Job in Our Community?

Lea Metcalf

College Hill Elementary School
Texarkana School District

Kindergarten students are immersed in being consumers but do they look beyond the toy they bought or the haircut they received to the producers of those goods and services? Ms. Metcalf wanted to make sure her kindergarten students were aware of the providers of goods and services. Using children's literature about careers, she developed a teaching unit that introduced economic concepts. A wide variety of lessons and activities provided the students with opportunities to learn about community helpers such as fire fighters and garbage collectors. Students were given hands-on opportunities to put math, reading, writing and science skills in practice as they toured various businesses in town. From the importance of correct measurement in baking a cake to giving correct change to a customer, students were shown the value of investing in their own human capital. Guests at the culminating Career Day activity were impressed with the knowledge these kindergartners displayed and the variety of answers received to the age-old question, "What do you want to be when you grow up?"

The Power to Believe

Lana Neumeier

**Tilles Elementary School
Fort Smith School District**

This economic unit involved the entire school, grades PreK through 6th, as well as community and business leaders, parents, teachers and school district leaders. It began as an idea to “shine a positive spotlight” on the school and students, and quickly grew into a far-reaching, powerful life experience for all involved. With the help of their partners in education, the school formed a company called “Everyday Angels” to produce a Christmas CD entitled *The Power to Believe*. The goal of the project was to integrate the teaching of economics with other curriculum areas through grade-level appropriate lessons and showcase the students in a positive learning experience. Every student participated in the economic lessons and in the creation of the CD and many had the opportunity to perform for community groups. The sale of the CD provided funds for the Clearinghouse Backpack program that provides a backpack with food for students to take home each Friday. As the Tilles student creed says, “If our minds can perceive it, and our hearts can believe it, then our hands can achieve it.”

Economics: The ‘Core’ to the Future

Deborah Shearer

**Baker Elementary School
Pulaski County Special School District**

“An apple a day keeps the doctor away” but can it also lead to economic literacy? Ms. Shearer certainly thinks so. She developed a year-long kindergarten thematic unit on apples that infused the introduction of economics in all curriculum areas. A field trip to an apple orchard was planned as a kick-off for the unit but unfortunately adverse weather conditions had reduced the apple harvest. The trip was cancelled but a better introduction to scarcity could not have been planned! From this beginning, the students were immersed in economics: they recorded goods produced from apples they found at the grocery store; they became producers and consumers of homemade applesauce; they listed productive resources needed in making an apple pie; they read books about apples; and were introduced to choice and opportunity cost in the selection of apple-themed goods. By the end of the unit, each student realized they lead economic lives and were beginning to understand the importance of the role they play in our economic society. They are growing on their journey towards becoming economically literate citizens.

Incentives Matter

Ruthie Walls

**Hall High School
Little Rock School District**

The Warrior Mini Economy was a high school version of a simulated economy. Ms. Walls developed the classroom economy as a motivational and educational tool for students in her United States History, African-American History and English-as-a-Second Language World History classes. The mini-economy taught several economic concepts such as incentives, productivity, cost/benefit analysis and voluntary exchange. Students were hired as independent contractors; they were contracted to be the best social studies students they could be. Students and teacher negotiated and determined that a good social studies student would have good attendance, get to class on time, have necessary supplies, complete assignments in a timely manner and actively participate in class. The students earned a weekly salary from which they rented desks and paid bills or fines. The closer a student sat to the front of the class the less the weekly rent. If they wanted to sit toward the back they had to pay for it! Students learned many valuable concepts and skills through this mini-economy experience that will better prepare them for real-life situations upon graduation.