

I'm Not a Businessman-I'm a Business-MAN!

OVERVIEW

This economic group project provided six classes, 144 eighth graders, an opportunity to learn about entrepreneurship as well as interact with local businesses in our community. The goal was for students to learn basic economic concepts by studying examples of entrepreneurs from the past and present (in order to "grow" future entrepreneurs). By using the economic concept of entrepreneurship, it is easy to incorporate other economic terms into my classroom. State standards and frameworks were integrated throughout the unit. Internet sites, personal contact with business owners and National Council on Economic Education materials were used. Curriculum areas that were targeted included:

Math- Students determined prices of goods sold/provided by their business and how they could earn more money.

Writing/English - Students wrote letters to their business thanking them for the opportunity they provided. Students also used the iLife program on our Macbooks which consisted of Pages and Keynote- which are word processing skills.

Economics – Concepts including decision making, costs, opportunity costs, natural resources, human resources, supply/demand, market, market economy, benefits, market clearing price, entrepreneurs, competition, productive resources, scarcity, producer, consumer, interdependence, and choice were the focus of the unit.

Technology - iMovie was used to create a commercial, Glogster and Wall Wisher.

Character Education - Students learned responsibility, work ethic needed to be successful, kindness (in dealing with people), and perseverance (in working with adults who are very busy, and many were not ready to talk to the students at their scheduled appointments).

Music - All students incorporated music into their commercial.

Art - Students had to be creative in order to design a business card for their owners.

Rap music, pop songs, cool ideas, GPS, Walmart and Jay Z were all linked to the success of this economic project. In order to draw the students into the world of economics, it has to be interesting and relevant to them, and through these lessons, learning took place. I invested quite a lot of class time with my students learning what entrepreneurship was, why it was important and the history of many famous entrepreneurs.

Session titles included: "The Coolest Things in the World Today", "What do you Like?", "What Did Mom and Pop Know that We Didn't?", "Rap Your Way into Money", "ATTENTION-That's All We Want!", "Is Working for GOOGLE the Dream Job?" and "Dad, What do you Mean GPS?"

A variety of assessments were used throughout the year. A pretest and posttest were administered with the growth being phenomenal. In September, 144 students were administered a pretest to assess the level of understanding of basic economic terms. The growth was tremendous between September and May: 87% of all students scored advanced on the posttest as opposed to 7% on the pretest. Only 7% scored basic on Posttest as opposed to 79% on the pretest. This shows an 80% increase in economic knowledge on the advanced level! The greatest gain was experienced by two students who scored 0% on the pretest and they both scored advanced on the posttest. Students were assessed through a variety of venues.

Teacher observation and oral presentations were key components in the assessment process. In May, at the end of my unit, a student based project was given and students were allowed to grade their group members as well as give themselves a grade based on the merits of the project. Assessments were also given based on students' technology connections as these were evident throughout the project. Learning was obvious, not only to myself, but to fellow teachers as students raced to my classroom to get started on their projects. I also allowed each students to evaluate our projects and they only had positive things to say about their experience, especially with the final project including "Who knew supply and demand could be fun?", "When you said economics, I thought NO! But I was wrong. Economics was the bomb!" and "I will be the next Arkansas entrepreneur!"