

Kindergarten Activities

Purpose:

Very young children learn best by doing. I wanted to provide a learning experience for the students in which the entire class could participate to develop their understanding of economic principles. I also wanted them to gain an appreciation of how their actions could be beneficial to the larger community.

Vocabulary:

Advertising, capital resources, consumers, goods, human resources, natural resources, philanthropy, producers, services, specialization, and trade

Project:

During the past year our Kindergarten class set up two short-term businesses as part of our economic literacy program – a breakfast sale and a greeting card company. The students learned the mutual benefits of trade, as the other students in the school enjoyed a delicious breakfast and my class earned real money for preparing it. They also came to realize that, young as they are, their actions could be instrumental in helping other children in need.

Process:

Breakfast sale

In December we had a pancake, sausage and orange juice breakfast one morning before school, charging \$1.00 for each meal. We grossed \$79.00 before deducting our expenses of approximately \$45.00. I had the help of two parents, my aide, and one other volunteer. We bought all that was needed ourselves, using no school supplies.

One week before the sale, the students made posters to advertise our sale. We also sent home a flyer with each student. Although students would have specific assignments during the breakfast, I had them practice all the jobs and role-play them in preparation for the big day. Their enthusiasm for the project led them to greatly improve their money and number skills in ways I had not anticipated. They all learned to identify coins, to quickly tally the total value of various combinations of coins, and to make appropriate change when necessary. The students helped measure the ingredients and mix up the pancake batter. The adults cooked the pancakes and sausage on griddles in the classroom.

When we were finished cooking, the students helped clean up the room and get it ready for our sale. Each child had a particular job to do (passing out cups, napkins, forks, plates, sausage, pancakes, syrup, and whipped cream. Two students were in charge of collecting the money, two students were in charge of decorating the lunch room. The sale was operated like an assembly line. Before the sale, I taught the children various economic terms and we discussed how they applied to our production and sale. The proceeds from our sale went to two children in Sri Lanka.

Although it was a lot of work, the entire school had a fantastic time and the kindergarteners learned a lot.

Greeting Card Company

In April we had a greeting card, cookie and popcorn sale. The students made the cards in art class and, again, made posters to advertise the sale. I bought the cookies and the students put icing on them. They also helped make the popcorn. Again, during the sale each child had a special job to do. One parent helped me with this sale. We made a profit of \$45.00. Half of the money helped the children in Sri Lanka; we kept the balance for a classroom pizza party.

I used this sale to review economic concepts we discussed with the first sale. We also talked about presentation (how we will increase our sales with a nice presentation). As we sold our products, I had students continue to put out additional items in an orderly fashion. Cookies were placed on napkins in neat rows. The students decided to put cookies with the same colors in rows. The greeting cards were laid out nicely for all to see and the popcorn was placed in coffee filters in neat rows. The consumers could choose the ones they wanted. It was very successful and not too much work. In the future, I will have the students actually make the cookies and we will talk about the resources used.

I see so many benefits from our school's decision to incorporate economic literacy into our curriculum at all levels. I particularly love the idea of establishing small businesses in the classroom. The active learning approach ensures that all students will participate, and it is easy to make that participation very enthusiastic. As their enthusiasm mounts, they really seem to internalize the skills and the information they are learning. As with anything new, all of us have faced a learning curve, but the results I see in my students have made it worthwhile.

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