

Center for Economic Education at the University of Lynchburg In-Services Ideas

Teaching the Essential Skill of Decision Making

Grades: (can be tailored to any grade level)

This in-service focuses on engaging students in decision making to increase their understanding of the history and social sciences content, including historical, geographic, political, and economic events or trends. The development of effective decision making is important in order for students to become better-informed citizens. Interweaving teaching tools such as decision making charts not only makes learning fun, but also encourages students to be critical thinkers and problem solvers.

The Stock Market Game: Empowering Students to Invest in a Secure Financial Future

Grades: 4-12

This interactive workshop features financial planning basics, the role of the stock market in the economy, and the research tools available for interdisciplinary instruction. Details for playing the game will be covered with special attention to students' research and portfolios. Support materials, refreshments and door prizes are included.

Dragons Decide

Grades: K-3

This workshop will feature the popular story/coloring book, *Dragons Decide*, in which a family of dragons experience real-life economics as they build a castle for their new home. This instructional unit has proven successful in teaching the economics SOL in grades K-3, including concepts such as jobs, needs, wants, scarcity, choices, decision-making, opportunity cost, saving, producers, goods, services, resources, specialization, and interdependence. Each teacher will receive a complete teacher's guide, classroom set of disposable coloring books, and box of crayons for each student.

Energy, Economics, and the Environment

Grades: 3-8

This motivating, interdisciplinary workshop will give teachers the tools to investigate and analyze energy and environment issues. A conceptual framework for generating and comparing multiple alternatives to problems based on how well they meet the criteria will be used. In addition to motivating lessons, the workshop will include classroom ready alternative assessments in which students use a decision making model to analyze an energy or environmental problem. Each alternative assessment requires students to apply skills across several disciplines and encourages students to make extensive use of resources in their communities.

Teaching Economics Using Children's Literature

Grades: K-3

You are already using children's literature books to grab your students' attention. Why not make the most of your precious classroom time and sprinkle economics into the mix? This curriculum offers a wealth of teacher-friendly resources including:

- Introduction – shares a handy “how to” guide for integrating economics into your children's stories
- Student Glossary – includes unique “students language” definitions that boil each concept down to the bare basics
- Teaching Activities – gives you hands-on lessons and activities for popular children's books such as *The Three Little Pigs*, *Ant Cities*, *The Giving Tree*, *Lunch Money*, & *Beetles Lightly Toasted*.
- Econ Book Report – allows you to use a versatile template to assign book reports
- Generic Handouts – extends the core economic principles to any children's book
- Literature Connections – lists over 100 additional books used to teach economics and personal finance

Each lesson includes step-by-step procedures, key questions to test your students' knowledge, follow-up activities, and reproducible visuals, worksheets, and handouts. Storytelling...a perfect way to teach economic concepts!

Performance-Based Assessments Across K-12 Subjects: Essential Skills in Economics

Grades: K-12

This professional development program is for K-12 teachers of all subjects! The hands-on program will begin with a review of performance-based assessments (PBAs) best-practices as recommended by the Virginia Department of Education. Examples of multidisciplinary PBAs correlated to specific Standards of Learning will be shared. While the “Essential Skills” in economics (aka, economic reasoning skills) are required in every K-12 social studies subject, these 21st century life-skills are applicable to all subjects and everyday life. Examples of the benefits of developing these skills include: sharpening critical thinking and critical literacy skills; entertaining multiple perspectives; better understanding current events; laying the groundwork for authentic discussions and civil debates; articulating opinions grounded in basic economic concepts and principles; casting informed votes; and, making students' thinking explicit for assessment purposes. After the instructor models effective economic reasoning instructional practices, teachers will be grouped by grade levels and subject areas to practice using economic reasoning tools and rubrics. The session will conclude with teachers brainstorming other classroom-ready instructional activities for their students.

Economics, Geography, & Children’s Literature

Grades: K-6

Economics, geography, and children’s literature are combined in this dynamic unit of 36 activities which address the economic concepts in grades K-6. Students “book a trip around the world” as hands-on activities help them understand that people all over the world are buyers and sellers; that resources are combined to produce goods and services; and, that people have been trading to get the things they want for centuries. Students track their journey in a special student passport. Unit includes a thorough overview of economics for teachers.

Using Elementary Math to Teach Economics

Grades: 3-5

Designed for math and social studies teachers, this collection of 12 hands-on, engaging lessons gives teachers ammunition for the age-old question, “Why do we have to learn this?” Students creatively apply mathematical skills and thinking to solve economic and personal finance problems they are sure to face in life. Examples of activities include comparing income and expenses in a budget to make a choice necessitated by scarcity, calculating costs and revenues in a production process, and computing interest on savings. Economics explanations are provided for teachers who need a brush up; and, each lesson includes a web address for further connections to other disciplines, additional suggestions for math and economics activities, and links to interesting information and resources.

Economics & U.S. History (Volume I: Colonial America)

Grades: 4-8

This publication contains 15 hands-on lessons, using games, children’s literature, and simulations to assist in teaching the new social studies and U.S. history SOLs. Economic concepts such as scarcity, resources, opportunity cost, barter, investing, saving, credit, types of economies, roles of government, trade, specialization, interdependence, and economic freedoms are cleverly taught through colonial American history. History topics include New World travel/trade, colonial occupations/marketplace, eighteenth-century technology/industrialization, Jamestown, King James, Indians, etc.

Economics & U.S. History (Volume II: A Young Nation 1765-1877)

Grades: 4-8

Workshop participants will receive a brand new publication containing active, hands-on lesson plans that use games, children’s literature, and simulations to assist in teaching the social studies and U.S. history SOLs. Economic concepts such as opportunity cost, scarcity, resources, trade, taxes, role of government, supply and demand, U.S. economic freedoms, and investment are cleverly taught through American historical events (i.e., Declaration of Independence, Lewis and Clark expedition, Civil War, Gettysburg Address, American Revolution, U.S. Constitution, slavery, cotton industry, etc.).

Mathematics & Economics: Connections for Life

Grades: 6-8

Participants will become better equipped to empower students as effective savers, investors, consumers, producers, and informed citizens while reinforcing the mathematics and social studies SOLs. Each lesson contains background information about economics content and ways in which it relates to mathematics. This hands-on, interdisciplinary approach to classroom instruction is sure to enhance student interest and comprehension.

Using World Geography to Teach Economics

Grades: 8-12

Teachers can meet the challenge of teaching more in the same amount of time by using these 9 integrated lessons that emphasize content in economics and geography while providing opportunities for critical thinking about real-world problems. Students today are faced to a greater degree than before when it comes to overpopulation, environmentalism, and global economies which require higher levels of competency in economics and geography to understand the world in which they live. This collection of active-learning lessons employ graphic organizers, data, charts, maps, and graphs while giving students opportunities to read, write, speak, and reason. Correlated with the geography and economics SOL, this workshop will benefit all social studies teachers with a clear connection between geography and economics – two social sciences that rely on critical thinking skills to analyze human behavior.

W!SE Financial Literacy Test Preparation and Vocabulary Challenges

Grades: 9-12

Are you currently preparing your students to take the W!SE Financial Literacy test? Then, you will want to attend this session to learn helpful strategies related to vocabulary challenges, receive useful lessons, and discuss problematic topics that students experience. This session is designed for teachers who want to deepen their students’ knowledge of personal finance topics and financial literacy vocabulary. Intentional instruction focused on tier two vocabulary for the W!SE Financial Literacy Certification will be delivered. Instructional methodology will be referenced for the personal finance topics of banking, credit, consumer rights and responsibilities, insurance, taxes, and financial planning. Participants will receive various resources for use in the classroom.