

Making Bread Together

Lesson Video: Grades K-2

Overview

Teacher: Meylin Gonzalez
Grade: Kindergarten
School: Dickenson Elementary School
Location: Tampa, Florida

NCSS Standards-Based Themes: Science, Technology, and Society; Production, Distribution, and Consumption

Content Standards: Economics

Video Summary

Kindergarten teacher Meylin Gonzalez brings economic concepts to life in the classroom by creating a hands-on assembly line in which her students make bread. Ms. Gonzalez begins by reading a book entitled *Pasta, Please* to help students understand how pasta is made and where commercially prepared food comes from. Then they discuss the production and marketing processes involved in making and selling bread. Students invent a fictitious company called Kinderbread, make advertisements for their bread, and discuss how people make decisions about what they buy.

Working in groups, students form assembly lines and begin the process of making bread by hand. Each student has a job to do, such as adding an ingredient or kneading the dough. The assembly line structure not only illustrates the different steps involved in making bread, but also underscores the importance of each step in the production process. Meanwhile, Ms. Gonzalez starts a batch of dough in a bread-making machine. While the dough rises, Ms. Gonzalez explains concepts like supply and demand by first defining needs and wants and asking students to distinguish between them with examples from their own lives. The lesson concludes with a snack of fresh-baked bread, during which students compare the efficiency of making bread by hand versus using a machine.

Standards

Expectations of Excellence: Curriculum Standards for Social Studies defines what students should know and be able to do in social studies at each educational level. This lesson correlates to the following standards for elementary school students:

VII. Production, Distribution, and Consumption

Distinguish between needs and wants; identify examples of private and public goods and services; describe how we depend upon workers with specialized jobs and the ways in which they contribute to the production and exchange of goods and services.

Standards, cont'd.

VIII. Science, Technology, and Society

Identify and describe examples in which science and technology have changed the lives of people, such as in homemaking, childcare, work, transportation, and communication.

Content Standards: Economics

About the Class

Classroom Profile

“I wanted my students to develop a curiosity and understanding of how things are made, to know that things like bread don’t simply show up at the store. But I also wanted them to experience what it’s like for everyone to have a job, to work together, and to realize the value of each person’s job.” —Meylin Gonzalez

Meylin Gonzalez teaches kindergarten at Dickenson Elementary School in Tampa, Florida. Situated in a cruise-ship port of central Florida, near the beaches of St. Petersburg, Tampa is home to a diverse population. Dickenson Elementary School is located in a suburban community that supports a variety of small businesses and service industries. Approximately one-third of the students are Spanish bilingual.

Ms. Gonzalez started the year with a unit called All About Me, then moved on to units on transportation, insects, Native Americans, holidays, the seasons and weather, Black History month, forest and jungle habitats, the farm, the solar system, and the ocean environment

The lesson shown in “Making Bread Together” fell within the unit The Farm and Its Products. Before the lesson, the class read *Pasta, Please*, a book that explores the process for making pasta. Next, the class invented a fictional bread company called Kinderbread, and replicated parts of the pasta production process to make bread. Ms. Gonzalez introduced basic concepts in business and economics by discussing how buying decisions get made, then had the class create advertisements for their product. Finally, students went to work making bread, assembly-line fashion. Each student had a job to do, without which the bread could not be made. Simultaneously, Ms. Gonzalez mixed, kneaded, and baked dough in a bread machine, so that students could also compare production methods.

As the lesson concluded, the class categorized different products according to whether they were “needs” or “wants.” She reviewed the role of individual jobs in the production process, then invited different people to speak to the class about their jobs in the community. She segued into the next unit (on the solar system) by talking about the importance of the sun for life on earth.

Year at a Glance
All About Me
Transportation
Insects
Native Americans
Holidays, Seasons, and Weather
Black History Month
Forest and Jungle Habitats
The Farm and Its Products
The Solar System
The Ocean Environment

About the Class, cont'd.

Lesson Background

Read this information to better understand the lesson shown in the video.

Content: Economics

Economics is a social science that deals with the production, distribution, exchange, supply and demand, and consumption of goods and services. Even young learners encounter examples of economic concepts in their daily lives: scarcity of time and resources, the difference between needs and wants, making decisions about what to buy, and spending money. However, young children are also likely to have misconceptions about basic principles of economics. For example, they may not see a connection between jobs, work, and income, or they may believe that the value of money is related to its size and color.

Young students can build an economics vocabulary as they sort out labels that describe different economic processes. As they learn about the variety of jobs that exist in a healthy economy they also begin to understand the importance of cooperation and interdependence, competition, some of the factors that go into making business decisions, and the relationship between work and meeting one's needs. Some of the ways young students can explore abstract economic principles are by doing hands-on activities like making bread or pasta and then creating advertisements for the products they make.

Teaching Strategy: Learning by Doing

Young children learn best when they have direct, hands-on experiences and when they can relate what they learn to what they already know. In this lesson, students explored basic principles of economics by making a product (bread) and writing advertisements for their product. Then they created their own Needs and Wants chart and discussed how buying decisions are made—something they may already have experienced.

In addition to teaching students about supply and demand, the assembly line activity reinforced the value of the individual's contribution to a given process, the importance of working together, and the satisfaction that comes from seeing a job through to completion. It also encouraged social interaction, student engagement, and collaboration in meaningful work. As Ms. Gonzalez showed, learning by doing energizes students, sustains their interest, and exposes them to content from other subject areas like math, art, reading, and writing.

Watching the Video

As you reflect on these questions, write down your responses or discuss them in a group.

Before You Watch

Respond to the following questions:

- What are some economic principles or concepts that you teach (or could teach) in your curriculum?
- What concepts have you taught using hands-on activities? What are the challenges and benefits of this teaching strategy?
- How do you assess students' understanding when using hands-on activities?

Watching the Video, cont'd.

Watch the Video

As you watch “Making Bread Together,” take notes on Ms. Gonzalez’s instructional strategies, especially how she breaks down abstract concepts. Write down what you find interesting, surprising, or especially important about the teaching and learning in this lesson.

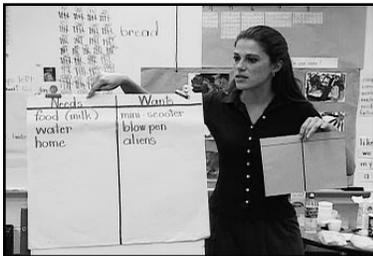
Reflecting on the Video

Review your notes, then respond to the following questions:

- What struck you about the classroom climate, background, preparation, strategies, and materials used in the lesson?
- How has Ms. Gonzalez prepared her students for the bread-making activity in the video?
- How does Ms. Gonzalez deal with any misconceptions her students have?
- How does Ms. Gonzalez use stories, role playing, and examples to illustrate economic concepts?
- How does Ms. Gonzalez assess students’ understanding of the concepts presented in the lesson?
- Consider the ways in which this class is different from yours. What activities and concepts might you introduce in your own teaching?

Looking Closer

Here’s an opportunity to take a closer look at interesting aspects of Ms. Gonzalez’s lesson.



Developing a Needs and Wants Chart: Video Segment

Go to this segment in the video by matching the image (to the left) on your TV screen. You’ll find this segment approximately 18 minutes into the video. Watch for about four minutes.

Ms. Gonzalez and her students discuss the difference between needs and wants. They work together as a class to develop a model of a Needs and Wants chart. As you watch the students develop their own Needs and Wants chart, consider these questions:

- What is the purpose of this activity?
- What aspects of student understanding can Ms. Gonzalez assess, using this project?
- How is the creation of a Needs and Wants chart similar to the assembly line activity? How is it different?

Watching the Video, cont'd.



Working on an Assembly Line: Video Segment

Go to this segment in the video by matching the image (to the left) on your TV screen. You'll find this segment approximately five minutes into the video. Watch for about seven minutes.

Ms. Gonzalez highlights the importance of each job on an assembly line. As you watch the students make bread, think about these questions:

- What is the purpose of this activity, and what aspects of the assembly line process will students better understand because of their participation?
- What larger economic and/or social questions might be raised as a result of students participating in this activity?

Connecting to Your Teaching

Reflecting on Your Practice

As you reflect on these questions, write down your responses or discuss them in a group.

- What is an especially difficult concept or set of concepts that you want your students to learn? How would you prepare them to learn these concepts?
- Think of a hands-on activity that you have used or are considering using. What background information or advance preparation is needed to ensure that students learn? What major concepts are learned from doing the activity?
- How do you assess student understanding when using hands-on activities?

Taking It Back to Your Classroom

- After exploring a difficult concept or set of concepts, ask students to find examples in magazines or newspapers. For example, if students are learning about various types of jobs, ask them to look for pictures of people doing those jobs. Visual representations of concepts can reinforce learning and can help students link what they have learned to the world beyond the classroom.
- Use a book (one example is *A Chair for My Mother* by Vera Williams) to explore how family members can work together to meet needs and wants.
- Take students on a tour of the school cafeteria to look for economic principles in action: for example, the variety of jobs involved in preparing a large-scale meal, the delivery of "raw materials" (ingredients) to the cafeteria, how various items are priced, and so on.

Connecting to Your Teaching, cont'd.

- Take a field trip to a nearby grocery store to give students a “behind the scenes” view of where food and household items come from.
- Think of an important concept or set of concepts that you teach that might be better understood using a hands-on experience. Design the experience and determine in advance how you will assess understanding. Help students think about the criteria that will guide their work.

Resources

Print Resources for Students

Berger, Melvin. *Pasta, Please!* Littleton, MA: Newbridge Educational Publishing, 1994.

Numeroff, Laura Joffe. *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie.* New York: HarperCollins Juvenile Books, 1985.

Williams, Vera B. *A Chair for My Mother.* Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Scott Foresman, 1984.

Print Resources for Teachers

Phipps, B., with M.C. Hopkins, and R.L. Littrell. *Teaching Strategies K–2.* Master Curriculum Guides in Economics. New York: National Council on Economic Education, 1993.

Web Resources for Teachers

Dallas Federal Reserve Bank: <http://dallasfed.org/htm/educate/students.html>

This site provides information about programs, online games, and other useful economics resources for students.

National Council on Economic Education program page: <http://www.econedlink.org>

This NCEE source offers national standards, Internet-based lessons, economic news, and links for K–12 teachers and students.

James Madison University Web site: <http://cob.jmu.edu/econed/Elementary.htm>

This site features a list of online economics courses for elementary school children.

National Council for the Social Studies: <http://www.socialstudies.org>

The NCSS provides teachers with an information service that includes curriculum content and assessment for ages 3 through 8.

Social Studies Standards in Economics: K–1: <http://ecedweb.unomaha.edu/standards/K-1standards.htm>

This site is a guide to economic lessons for kindergarten through first grade.

Notes
