



Virginia
ECONOMIC
EDUCATOR
Awards

Third Grade Scarf Factory Elementary School

Submitted by: Eileen Hennon, Kimberly Boronat-Garcia, Peyton Erb, Sarah Rodgers, Laurissa Kennedy, Ashley Switzer, Erica Park, Bluestone Elementary School, Harrisonburg City Public Schools

Abstract.

On a basic level, this project served as an anchor activity to introduce our students to the idea of capitalism--you have an idea, you get the capital to make it happen, and you provide a good or service to consumers in exchange for money. But beyond just providing our students with hands-on experience as producers and workers, Scarf Factory showed our students how to use money as a tool for positive community change. Before participating in Scarf Factory, many of our students had concrete and stunted views of what it means to have money--"you can buy a fancy car," and "you can buy gold jewelry," were just a few responses our students gave when initially asked the purpose of money. This experience helped broaden their understanding that economics is about choices, and everyone, even a group of third graders, can make choices that create a better world.

Scarf Factory is a well-loved third grade tradition that began years ago at Keister Elementary and traveled to Bluestone upon its opening. It has evolved significantly over the years to fit the ever-changing needs of our students. Now, Scarf Factory is a two-week, cross-curricular, service learning project with the goal of providing our students with a practical understanding of basic economic concepts such as:

- goods and services
- human and capital resources
- job specialization
- producers and consumers
- opportunity cost

VIRGINIA COUNCIL ON
ECONOMIC
EDUCATION

50th Est. 1970



At the end of the two weeks, our students had:

- Applied and interviewed for a job specialization
- Received job training
- Worked on an assembly line to produce over 500 scarves
- Sold the scarves to their peers before and after school, raising \$682.29.
- Studied three different local charities--CWS Refugee Resettlement, Patchwork Pantry, and Our Community Place--to learn about the various ways they serve Harrisonburg and the Shenandoah Valley
- Written and presented a speech explaining which charity they believe should receive the donated proceeds
- Cast a vote deciding which charity should receive the donation
- Donated \$682.29 to CWS Refugee Resettlement

Materials.

This is a link to a Google Drive folder containing all of the necessary instructional materials as well as student work samples:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/13q9rpoe3rcsk1UD9g_sMiNAKm47tLycE?usp=sharing

Time required.

10 days, language arts and social studies blocks (approx. 35-60 min each)

Economic or personal finance concepts.

- producers and consumers
- goods and services
- human and capital resources
- job specialization
- opportunity cost

VIRGINIA COUNCIL ON
ECONOMIC
EDUCATION
50th Est. 1970

<https://vcee.org/economic-educator-awards/>



-economics as a study of choices

Virginia Standards of Learning (SOLs).

-History and Social Studies 3.8: The student will demonstrate an understanding of different cultures and the natural, human, and capital resources they used in the production of goods and services

-History and Social Studies 3.9: The student will recognize that because people and regions cannot produce everything they want, they specialize in what they do best and trade for the rest

-History and Social Studies 3.10: The student will identify examples of making economic choices and will explain the idea of opportunity cost.

-History and Social Studies 3.11b: Students will take part in the voting process when making classroom decisions

-History and Social Studies 3.11c: Students will describe actions that can improve the school and community

-English 3.1: The student will use effective communication skills in a variety of settings

-English 3.2: The student will give oral presentations

-English 3.8h: The student will express an opinion about a topic and provide fact-based reasons for support

Student learning outcomes.

**VIRGINIA COUNCIL ON
ECONOMIC
EDUCATION**

50th Est. 1970

<https://vcee.org/economic-educator-awards/>



-Students learned about producers and consumers by acting as producers to create the scarves, and selling to consumers (their peers).

-Students learned about goods and services by creating and selling a good (the scarves).

-Students learned about human resources by determining which human resources we would need (what jobs would need to be done in the factory), and then filling those roles themselves to produce the scarves. Students learned about capital resources in much the same way--deciding which capital resources would be needed in the factory (felt, scissors, boxes etc.) and using them to produce the scarves.

-Before we launched into scarf factory, we pre-taught job specialization using a reindeer-donut activity. Students were tasked with decorating a donut to look like a reindeer using pretzels and m&ms. On the first day, each student decorated their own donut, and as expected, they were all different and the process was slow. On the second day, students had the same task, but were given a job specialization (m&m placer, pretzel breaker, pretzel placer etc.) and worked as a group to decorate the donuts. The second day's donuts were more uniform, and produced more quickly than those made on the first day. Then, while the kids were munching on their donuts, we explicitly taught the term specialization in regards to producing a quality product. When we began Scarf Factory, kids had that previous activity to anchor on when considering, applying and interviewing for, and performing their specific jobs in the factory.

-This activity really forced kids to reckon with the concepts of opportunity cost in an authentic way. It wasn't easy for our kids to choose the charity that would receive the money, because they had come to love each one through our study of them. "Why can't we just split up the money to all three?" several students asked. Aside from the fact that a small number of large donations goes further than a large number of small donations in helping charities, we wanted kids to understand that economic choices are rarely easy, and they need to be carefully thought out.



Procedure.

Scarf Factory is a cross-curricular service learning project that builds skills and understanding in both social studies and language arts. It is a multi-step process that will span across 10 days, not including the days you sell the scarves. This outline breaks down your day-by-day instructional activities for both language arts and social studies

1-2 WEEKS BEFORE STARTING: bulk order felt in preferred colors/designs, and send home a parent letter (you will want to coordinate with parent volunteers well before Days 9 and 10 of this project).

Day 1 (All coordinating files labeled by day and subject in lined Google Drive folder)

- LA small reading groups: look at one charity's flyer. Ask students to find information about the organization and answer who, what, where, when, and why questions. Ask them why someone would look at this flyer? Why would someone write it? Who's the intended audience? (Typical questions asked of flyers on SOL exam). It will be helpful to record this information on an anchor chart for students to reference when outlining their speeches
- LA whole group: discussion of audience/purpose. Who do authors write for? Why do they write? You can use any great read-aloud book to anchor this discussion (we used *Can I Be Your Dog?* and *The Day the Crayons Quit*), and you may choose to provide an exit ticket at the end in which students have to match a book to its intended audience and/or purpose.
- Social studies: In a lecture-style, while providing lots of opportunities to speak using new vocab words, introduce the idea of economics, and key terms goods and services, and producers and consumers, human and capital resources. It's a vocab-heavy day, so you'll want to continue using these terms (and providing opportunities for your students to use them) throughout the project.

Day 2:

- LA small reading groups: repeat Day 1 procedure, this time with a different charity's flyer
- LA whole group: continue discussion of audience/purpose, again with any great read-aloud (you might consider a book that highlights charitable work to plant a seed for what's to come)
- Social studies: opportunity cost activity. The goal of this activity is for the kids to

VIRGINIA COUNCIL ON
**ECONOMIC
EDUCATION**
50th Est. 1970

<https://vcee.org/economic-educator-awards/>



Virginia
ECONOMIC
EDUCATOR
Awards

understand opportunity cost as the next-best option that they didn't choose. Before starting, pre-teach the term "opportunity cost" by providing a definition and a few kid-friendly examples, then have them practice using the term by having them visit different stations around the room with a partner. At each station, they will need to make a choice and speak using the sentence frame "I am going to choose _____ because _____. Therefore, my opportunity cost is _____."

Day 3:

- LA small reading groups: repeat Day 1 procedure, this time with a the final charity's flyer
- LA whole group: read an example of a persuasive text and discuss how the author tried to change their readers' mind (we used The Big Bed). Their purpose was to convince their readers to agree with them. Point out striking words and phrases the author uses to accomplish that purpose, and the convincing reasons cited to support their opinion. The text you choose will serve as an anchor for the kids' speeches.
- Social studies: Reindeer Activity Day 1. Provide your students each with a mini donut, 1 m&m, 2 sprinkles, and a pretzel. Tell them to make their donut look like a reindeer. After they've decorated, have the students show and compare with their classmates' donuts. Point out that they all look different. Use these questions to guide a class-wide discussion while kids munch:
 - Do these donuts all look the same?
 - When you buy treats from the store, do they look the same or different? (Same because you want to sell them to people--you don't want some to look nice and some look messy)
 - Do you think we could sell these donut reindeer treats the way they are right now?
 - What do you think we'd have to do in order to sell them?

Day 4:

- LA whole group: introduce persuasive writing piece, scarf factory project (including charitable donation factor) and have students complete a graphic organizer for their speech. This is where it will be handy to have the "who what when where why" anchor charts for each charity posted around the room for kids to refresh their memory of each charity.
- Social studies: Reindeer Activity Day 2: The goal is the same as the day before, but this



Virginia
ECONOMIC
EDUCATOR
Awards

time, students will each receive a specialized job (e.g. pretzel breaker, pretzel placer etc.) and will decorate the donuts in an assembly line. This will make the donuts more uniform and lead to quicker production. Afterwards, discuss:

-Do these donuts all look the same?

-Could we sell these the way they are right now?

-Why do you think factories have it so each person does just one job?

After the discussion, explicitly teach students the term “job specialization.”

Day 5:

-LA whole group: students will draft their speeches from their graphic organizer. This is a good time to do a mini-lesson on transition words.

-Social studies: The goal is for students to understand that people apply for certain, specialized jobs that they are qualified for and enjoy. Today you will provide an overview of the different jobs we will have on our scarf factory floor. Students will apply for the job they want after thinking about their own skills and writing a letter explaining why they are qualified for that job.

Day 6-7

-LA whole group: students work with a partner or teacher to revise and edit their drafts. This is a good time to choose one grammar convention to target, and/or teach a mini-lesson on choosing striking words that will convince their reader.

-Social studies: Students will individually interview for their jobs (it will probably take two days, and other students can be reading or catching up on unfinished work during this time). Students took it surprisingly seriously (some dressed up for the interview!). It's a good opportunity to teach soft skills (firm handshake, eye contact etc.). I asked:

-Why do you want this job?

-Why do you think you will be good at this job?

-What is your second choice if you don't get this one?

-Then I ask them to demonstrate a skill necessary for the job (can they fold? can they tie knots? Can they cut a straight line?)

Day 8:

-LA whole group: Students publish the final copy of their speeches. Remind them to include

VIRGINIA COUNCIL ON
ECONOMIC
EDUCATION

50th Est. 1970



all of their changes from Days 6-7, and write neatly.

-Social studies: Students will receive their job acceptance letter and training. Meet with small homogeneous groups of students who will be doing the same job, and have them practice that job on a real would-be scarf.

Day 9:

-LA whole group: Students rehearse delivering their speech to a small group of similarly-minded peers (those who chose the same charity). They will use a checklist for self-evaluation.

-Social studies: The factory floor is open! Students do their jobs and create as many high-quality scarves as possible. It's a good idea to establish some rules--e.g. there is no running on the factory floor, you must stay at your job station etc.

Day 10:

-LA: Students give their oral presentations. You may opt to do this in small heterogeneous groups or to the whole class, depending on time and how comfortable your students are with oral presentations. This is a good time to remind students what it looks like to be a respectful audience member. After everyone has presented, ask students to vote.

-Social studies: follow the same procedure as Day 9

Evaluation.

The evidence we collected was:

-Speech explaining which charity they want to support and why, assessed by the quantity and quality of factual reasons. (Samples included in Google Drive folder)

-Job application letter was used to assess student understanding of job specialization

-Teacher observations of student-use of content-specific vocabulary

Extension



-Profits may be significantly different one year to the next due to competition from Kindergarteners who were selling hot-chocolate for charity during the same week. Next year, we are considering moving the sale dates so they do not clash with hot-chocolate tycoons.

-We would like to add assessment of long-term student understanding of economic terms. We taught this unit right before heading out for winter break, and never revisited economics. Next year, we would like to spiral back to the concepts taught in this unit to assess the staying power of this instruction.

Interdisciplinary aspects.

Scarf Factory dominated both our social studies and language arts instruction for the two-week duration of the project. Students used language arts time to read informational flyers about the charities and then outline, draft, revise, publish and present their speeches. Social studies time was dedicated to learning economic-specific terms and concepts, and engaging in the various steps of the scarf factory (applying and interviewing for jobs, receiving job training, conducting the factory).