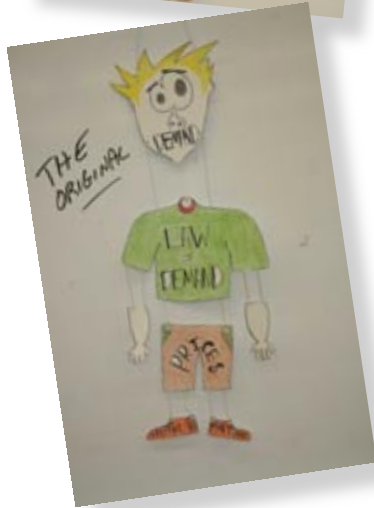


Super SHARING STRATEGIES

Economic Kids



“Kids’ Helping Kids,” that’s the theme of this project. We all know the importance of vocabulary development in our classrooms, and I find it especially important in the social science of economics. This project covers the four major research areas of vocabulary instruction: students as active learners, personalizing word learning, immersing students in words, and learning through repeated exposure (Blachowicz and Fisher [2000], CRISS manual, pg. 193).

The idea stemmed from the need to develop a “word wall” in my classroom, but I realized I needed a more innovative means to do it. That’s where the “Economic Kids” come in. Each “Economic Kid” is a word wall in itself. The “kids” are between 18 to 24 inches in size and are totally created by the students. An economic concept is chosen and put on the chest. Then the vocabulary that goes along with that concept is put all around the body of their kid, (not on the face). All the joints are put together by string so, as they hang from the classroom ceiling, they come alive and move with any airflow in the room. *Be careful not to put any “kids” near motion detector devices. If the AC comes on over the weekend, their tendency to dance a little may set off alarms. (I found out from experience!)* During a test, I’ll see some of the students look up to their “buddies” to make a connection or two. Seeing the term and the related vocabulary truly helps students to recall and retain those concepts, which means students take ownership! Which concepts are chosen? The ones the students decide they want to know “10 years from now.”

I use this project in my 12th grade economics classes, but I’m sure it can be adapted to any course and/or grade level.

Here’s how the four areas of vocabulary instruction are covered:

1. Students as active learners—they create the “Kids”.
2. Personalizing word meaning—students choose the concept and vocabulary.
3. Immersing students in words—over 100 “kids” are displayed throughout the room.
4. Repeated exposure—the “kids” have perfect attendance.

Reference:

Blachowicz, C. and P. Fisher. Vocabulary instructions. In M. Kamil, P. Mosenthal, P. D. Pearson, R. Barr (eds.), *Handbook of Reading Research*, Vol III. 503-523.

About the Author: Stephen Ahern is a social studies teacher at Santaluces Community High School in Lantana, Florida. He has 27 years of teaching experience, 19 at Santaluces. Stephen became a District Trainer in 2004 and Santaluces became a CRISS Demonstration Site in 2007.



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