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## Citizenship Education Through a Classroom Economy

Meg Nally  
*Illinois Wesleyan University*

Robin Leavitt, Faculty Advisor  
*Illinois Wesleyan University*

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# Citizenship Education Through a Classroom Economy

Meg Nally and Robin Leavitt\*

I want to thank my cooperating teacher for her guidance, dedication, and contributions to this project. I would also like to thank the families and students of that classroom for participating in this study.



## 1 Research Questions

- What does citizenship education look like in an elementary classroom?
- What skills will 4th graders need in the future to be productive citizens?
- In what ways is money management a useful skill to incorporate into the classroom?
- In what ways will this apply in the real world?



## 2 Abstract

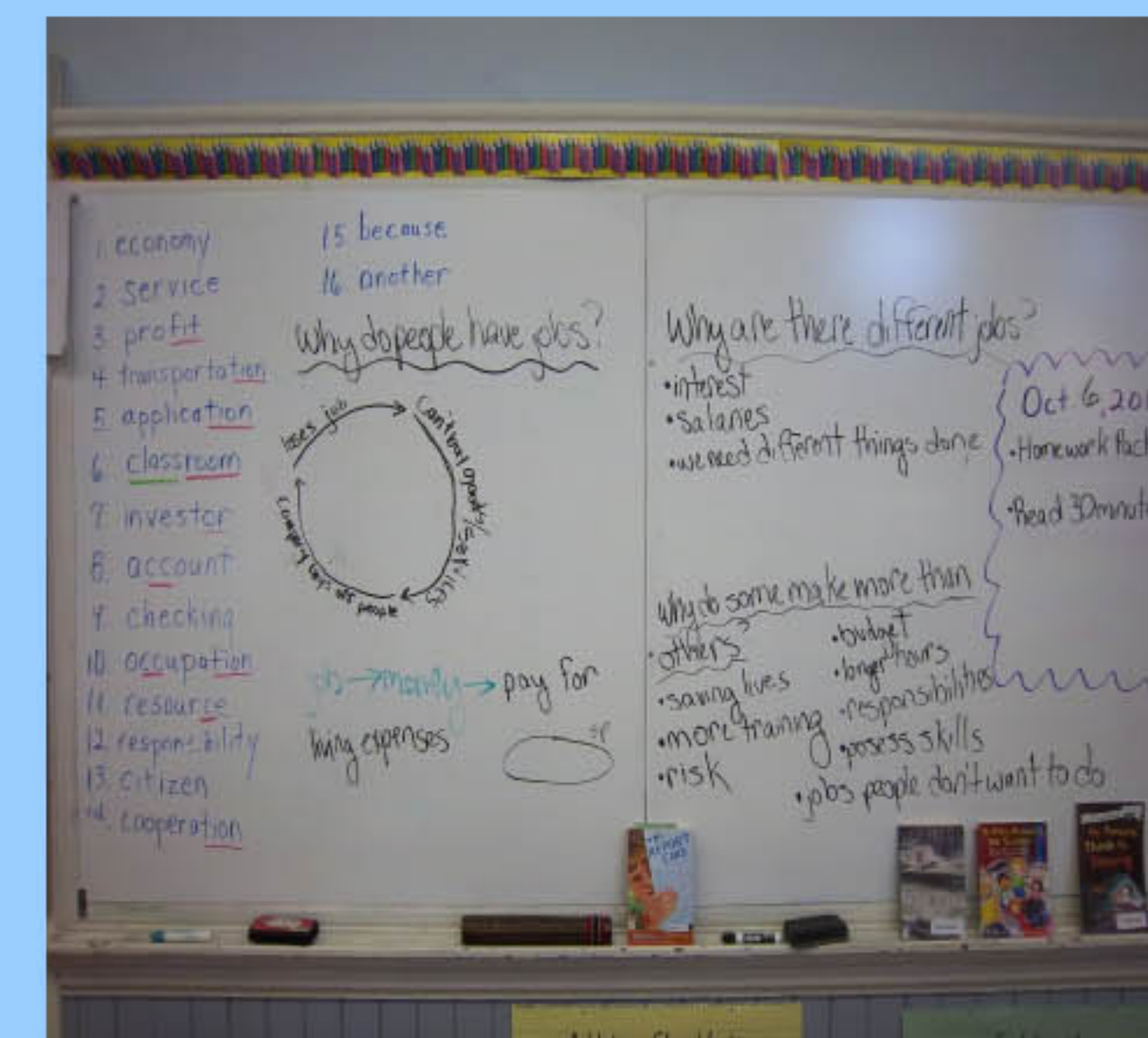
This self study is based on my belief that citizenship education should be a part of our schools' curriculum. Drawing on the work of Raif Esquith, I implemented a classroom economy to facilitate students' hands on educational experience of being a working citizen by contributing in our classroom. Over the course of the study, students were given responsibilities to keep our classroom running smoothly. They were "paid" for some of these responsibilities and were responsible for managing their earnings to pay rent, fines, or purchase rewards. To assess what students learned, I implemented three assessments, photographed materials, and recorded field notes. Through these means, I concluded that the students' awareness of what it means to be a working citizen was broadened. The major learning goals met were students are able to manage money, understand how to write a check and pay rent, and contribute positively to our class community.

## 3 Methodology

To build a foundation for the classroom economy, I facilitated a week long unit exploring what hard work and an economy are and why they are necessary to lead a productive life.

To do this, we...

- Read about what hard work is
- Covered a mini-unit on economy
- Applied it in our classroom by having classroom jobs and personal online bank accounts



## 4 Primary Findings

- A class economy can teach important life lessons like money management.
- Student interest and participation in classroom upkeep increased.
- Students gained experience in writing checks, paying rent, and applying for jobs; something they'll have to do on any career path.
- With these experiences, students understand the importance of contributing to a community as a productive citizen.

## 5 Conclusion

Participation in a classroom economy system equips students with life skills to manage money and contribute to a community. These are skills needed to be a well educated citizen who is equipped with tools and knowledge to participate in society.

