

# **The Iowa Council for the Social Studies Journal**

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## FORWARD

Recent research studies conducted by the Joint Council on Economic Education and the Center for Economic Education at the University of Northern Iowa, reveal Iowa's elementary and secondary students lack a basic understanding of economics in daily living. While economic principles impact every decision students will make and are imbedded in every social and political event they will encounter, the impact of these principles frequently goes unnoticed by students. The cause of this deficit can not be laid at the feet of students. They are the products of an educational legacy characterized by haphazard social studies instruction where quality frequently takes a back seat to tradition; where content integration is often placed behind out-of-context abstractions; and where thinking and problem-solving fall second to content memorization.

In an effort to address this need, this issue of the Iowa Council for the Social Studies Journal is focused on ECONOMICS EDUCATION. Six articles, written by teachers and educational specialists, address the needs of both elementary and secondary students through a variety of instructional approaches.

The article *ECONOMICS: IT'S EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS* by Vickie Robinson, introduces the theme with a less-than-encouraging presentation of student achievement data for the area of economics. In addition, she extends an invitation to teachers to work together and share an economics education activity they have found helpful in their classrooms.

The article *DEVELOPING AN AWARENESS OF MEXICAN AND MEXICAN-AMERICAN CULTURE THROUGH CHILDREN'S LITERATURE* by Mary Salazar DeGuenther and Junko Yokota, presents criteria for including good children's literature into the study of a culture. What does this have to do with economics education? Many of the cultural barriers minority students face are related to economic disadvantage. Good children's literature includes culturally accurate images making the curriculum accessible to all students.

The article *ECONOMICS INSTRUCTION IN FIRST GRADE?* by Micah Krusenstjerna and Donna Wilkin, extends the work of Guenther and Yokota by identifying themes of economics in children's literature related to Africa applicable to grade one.

In the article, *JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT: AN OVERVIEW*, Lisa Garcia and Stephen Becker review resources available to Iowa teachers through Junior Achievement, Inc., an innovative and highly effective economics program for elementary, middle and high school students.

*PROJECT BUSINESS: A JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT EXPERIENCE FOR MIDDLE GRADES* by Lowell Tiedt and Charlene Zrudsky focuses specifically on a very successful middle level program developed by Junior Achievement, Inc., and implemented in the Cedar Rapids Schools.

In *INTEGRATING ECONOMICS INTO THE SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM* by Francis C. McMann, six successful and effective strategies for integrating economics into the high school social studies curriculum are explicated.

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