**Statement of Purpose**

**The Problem**

Economics is an integral part of people’s lives and having an understanding of it allows people to comprehend the modern world and make decisions about the future. It is stated in the Goals 2000 Educate America Act that every student should be able to demonstrate competency in economics to possess knowledge and skills to compete in a global economy (Meszaros, 1998). Therefore, a unit on economics will present students to the vocabulary and begin to provide students an understanding of concepts needed to be able understand and compete in the global economy.

**Needs of the Learner**

According to the research done by Piaget, students in third grade are still at the concrete operational stage of development. Huitt and Hammel (2003) maintain that at this stage, children’s “intelligence is demonstrated through logical and systematic manipulation of symbols related to concrete objects.” Therefore, curriculum at this level needs to be heavily reliant on meeting students at their needs- at the concrete level meaning that activities need to be hands on while incorporating meaningful experiences to the students’ lives. Students in this grade as well as at any stage move through activities and gain understanding of materials at different levels of understanding and at different times depending on their developmental level. In keeping students’ developmental needs in mind when designing curriculum, a variety of levels of understanding must be addressed from the basic skills needed to be successful at functioning in society to those who can gain a deeper understanding.

**Needs of the Society**

In today’s society, there is much emphasis placed on the job market, purchasing and daily living which revolves around the ability to understand basic economic principles. This understanding begins with identifying the difference between wants and needs at the primary level and goes all the way to life skills as an adult through earning and spending wages as well as making daily decisions relevant to independent living. In learning about economics, this helps prepare students to be able to become participatory members of society and well-informed, responsible citizens that can contribute to the general well being of their communities.

**Value of Subject Matter**

Through this unit on economics, students will be provided with as much real world experience as possible so that students are able to transfer learning in the classroom to their own lives. The study of social studies and economics is supported by the article “Why We Need to Save (and Strengthen) Social Studies,” written by Judith L. Pace (2007), and appeared in *Education Week*. In it, Pace addresses the need for teaching the subject to all students by reflecting on the question:

*Why must we save social studies education for all students? A voluminous literature, written by scholars, curriculum makers, and practitioners alike, speaks convincingly to that question. I will only add—at the risk of repeating bad news—that, internationally, public opinion of the United States, both its government and its people, worsens every day. The domestic and international issues facing us are so complex and pressing that, to preserve democracy as we know it, citizens must have some depth of historical, political, and cultural understanding. Making good decisions requires that. It’s one thing to have a nation of diverse opinions, which is crucial for democracy, but opinion before knowledge, or without tolerance, leads to demise. We’ve seen more than enough evidence of that in recent years.*

Her rationale stresses the impending failure of our society should students fail to be introduced to important economic concepts and principles.

**The Educational Goal**

As developed by the Ohio Department of Education in the revised Grade Three Academic Content Standards for Social Studies (2011), “Effective economic decision making requires students to be able to reason logically about key economic issues that affect their lives as consumers, producers, savers, investors and citizens.” Interlaced with these key economic issues are the topics of economic scarcity and financial literacy which are also stressed in the Revised Social Studies standards and through the Model Curriculum. This course will aim to help students meet the expectations for learning developed in this literature through a variety of learning strategies and by engaging students in as many real life examples and implications as possible.

**Work Cited**

Huitt, W., & Hummel, J. (2003). Piaget's theory of cognitive development. *Educational Psychology Interactive*. Valdosta, GA: Valdosta State University. Retrieved 2/18/12 from <http://www.edpsycinteractive.org/topics/cogsys/piaget.html>

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