Using web-based situated learning as a design strategy in teaching elementary economic concepts

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Abstract

Background of This Study

While we are now living in the knowledge-based economy era, economic education becomes essentials for all citizens. However, there are obviously lacks of the present teaching materials and instruction in our schools, especially for elementary teachers and students in Taiwan. Based on the above needs, the author would like to develop a web course, entitled ECONLAND, for teaching basic economic concepts for elementary students.

The web is a powerful medium with many unique attributes for learning. The web technology afford opportunities for multimedia presentation, communicaion, collaboration and knowledge construction. In addition, there are several theoretical foundations to guide instructional design for this web-based learning environment, such as constructivist principles, scenario-based, authentic activities, multiple roles and perspectives, collaborative construction of knowledge. These principles described as situated learning strategy are illustrated in elsewhere in details (Cognition and Technology Group at Vanderbilt, 1993; Oliver & Herrington, 2000). The value of situated learning has also been demonstrated in classroom settings through many empirical studies (CTGV, 1993; Shyu, 1999, 2000).

Purposes

Therefore, the purpose of this study were to analyze and synthesize the economic concepts suitable for 3-4th grade elementary students; design and develop web-based teaching material; design and develop the teachers’ guide for the web course; and to conduct a formative evaluation. The basic economic concepts were taught, such as scarcity, decision-making, opportunity cost, production, money and interdependence. By integrating the instructional strategy of scenario-based situated learning into design, five pieces of story were presented. Students have to solve the challenges presented from the end of each story and thereby acquire the knowledge of those economic concepts. Finally, based on the results of the formative evaluation, suggestions of
revisions and the directions for further investigation were also included in the end of paper.

**Significance of this Study**

This study was significant because it provides an example of how and what to teach economic concepts on the web for kids, and it also demonstrates an instructional model using situated learning strategy for developing and implementing web-enhanced learning activities for teaching economic concepts. The web site is located at [http://econland.et.tku.edu.tw](http://econland.et.tku.edu.tw).

**References**


**a Sample from the Screen:**

![Sample Screen](image)

**Key words:** Economic education, Elementary social studies, Web-Based Instruction, Instructional Design, Situated learning