
Bob Cassilly

City Museum

By M. Karen Hubbard

LESSON DESCRIPTION

Students read a story about entrepreneur Bob Cassilly who founded the City Museum in St. Louis, Missouri and sculpted many large animals/insects requested by different cities around the country.

ECONOMIC CONCEPTS

- entrepreneur
- natural resources
- capital resources
- human resources
- entrepreneurial ability
- what to produce
- how to produce
- for whom to produce
- incentives

RELATED CONCEPTS

- reading comprehension
- geography
- science (the four “R”s of waste management)

MATERIALS

- One copy of “Bob Cassilly” reading for each student
- Transparency of Visual 1 – “Three Basic Questions”
- One copy of Activity 1 – “Something from Nothing” for each student

TIME

60 minutes

PROCEDURE

1. Read the story about Bob Cassilly and instruct students to look for details about why using recycled materials helped him bring his ideas to reality.

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2. Discuss the following questions:
- What did Bob Cassilly produce? (large animal sculptures, City Museum, and now he is working on Cementland)
 - Why did he choose to produce these products? (he likes to bring joy to all ages and change the way people look at the world using recycled items)
 - Where is he located? (St. Louis, Missouri)
 - Why was St. Louis a particularly good location for Bob Cassilly and his ideas? (St. Louis has a lot of construction and Cassilly could use the items which were being taken away from the job sites and use them on his projects)
3. Point out that all businesses use resources to produce products. There are many kinds of resources, but they can all be separated into four general categories.
4. Explain that **natural resources** are things found in and on the earth that are used to produce goods and services. Some examples of natural resources include water, coal, and oil. Ask the following question:
- What natural resources are used in Bob Cassilly's productions? (water, dirt, piece of ground for building)
5. Explain that **capital resources** are goods made by people that are used to produce goods and services. Capital resources include tools, buildings, and equipment. Some examples of capital resources are hammers, computers, and schools. Ask the following question:
- What capital resources are used in Cassilly's productions? (buildings, sculpting tools, cash register, signs, desks for office, computers, vacuum cleaner for cleaning, etc.)
6. Explain that **human resources** are people doing mental and physical work to produce a good or service. Some examples of human resources include a teacher, a firefighter, doctor, and a lumberjack. Ask the following question:
- What human resources are used in the production of Cassilly's ideas? (artists, architects, construction workers, museum director, gift shop manager, restaurant manager, cook, custodian)
7. Explain that there is one category of resources that guided the way all other resources were going to be used at the City Museum, sculptures, Cementland. That resource was Bob Cassilly. He had entrepreneurial

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- ability. **Entrepreneurial ability** is another category of resources. It is the special skill of an individual entrepreneur who is willing to take risks to develop new products and start new businesses. An **entrepreneur** is a person who controls the production process of a business, makes business-policy decisions, attempts to be innovative in new products or methods of production, and bears the risk of their time, effort, and money invested in the business.
8. Explain that as an entrepreneur, Bob Cassilly had to answer three basic questions.
 9. Display “Visual 1 – Three Basic Questions.” Explain that entrepreneurs must answer three basic questions as they begin their businesses. Discuss each point as follows and record responses.
 - What to produce
 - What product did Bob Cassilly produce? (sculptures, City Museum)
 - Why did he think he would find buyers for his sculpture/City Museum? (people enjoyed the large and colorful animals and insects; people enjoy climbing and seeing unusual items and what was used to produce them)
 - How to produce
 - What resources would he use in his business? (museum employees, building, tools, equipment)
 - What natural resources did he use? (land for building, dirt, water)
 - What capital resource did he use? (building, tools, equipment)
 - What human resource did he use? (museum workers)
 - For whom to produce
 - Who would his customers be? (adults who love to feel like a child again, children)
 10. Explain to the students the “Four R’s” of waste management
 - Reduce: to produce and consume fewer goods. Producing fewer goods means that we use fewer natural resources and we produce less waste.

In building the City Museum, did Cassilly “reduce”? (Yes.)
How? (Students may have many different answers especially if they have visited the City Museum. Sample answer: he ‘reduced’ by using left over cement and parts of old buildings being torn down so they would not be thrown away in landfills.)

- Reuse: to use goods more than once or to use goods in new ways.

In building the City Museum, did Cassilly “reuse”? (Yes.)

How? (Students may have many different answers especially if they have visited the City Museum. Sample answer: he ‘reused’ by using the old International Shoe Company building which became the City Museum building.)

- Refine: to develop production methods that use fewer raw materials and energy and, therefore, use fewer natural resources and produce less waste.

In building the City Museum, did Cassilly “refine”? (Yes.)

How? (Students may have many different answers especially if they have visited the City Museum. Sample answer: he ‘refined’ by trying to produce his museum by reusing resources which would have been thrown away and thereby producing less waste.)

- Recycle: to collect used materials and use them to produce goods. This means fewer natural resources are used and less waste is produced.

In building the City Museum, did Cassilly “recycle”? (Yes.)

How? (Students may have many different answers especially if they have visited the City Museum. Sample answer: he ‘recycled’ by using the front of the St. Louis Title Company building as the ticket area for the museum.)

11. Instruct students to complete “Activity 1 – Something from Nothing.”

CLOSURE

Ask the following questions:

- Bob Cassilly can produce many things from “nothing.” How do you know this from the reading? (Answers may include that

Cassilly asked cement truck drivers to dump left-over cement at City Museum, he has an old fire engine, and he even uses the front of an old building as a ticket stand.)

- Why do we say Bob Cassilly produces many things from “nothing?” Hint: what were other people doing with these resources? (The items he uses are considered trash by others.)
- What were his incentives to use these resources? (incentives: rewards or penalties that influence people’s choices and behavior) (Answers may include that Cassilly wants to preserve old things, that he wants to recycle, or that he is a creative person who wants to make something special out of other people’s trash.)
- What in your school/home is being recycled? (Answers will vary.)
- What in your school/home is being used for something other than its original purpose? (Answers will vary.)

EXTENSION

Instruct students to look around their homes for an item that could be reused as something other than for what it was originally designed. Have them create the new item.

VISUAL 1 – THREE BASIC QUESTIONS

As an entrepreneur, Bob Cassilly had to answer three questions.

What to produce

How to produce

For whom to produce

ACTIVITY 1 – SOMETHING FROM NOTHING

Name _____ Date _____

1. Bob Cassilly can produce many things from “nothing.” How do you know this from the reading?

2. Why do we say Bob Cassilly produces many things from “nothing?” Hint: What were other people doing with these resources?

3. What were his incentives to use these resources? (incentives: rewards or penalties that influence people’s choices and behavior)

4. What in your school/home is being recycled?

5. What in your school/home is being used for something other than its original purpose?

6. Look around your classroom or home for a “nothing” item and suggest a use for the item other than its original use.

ACTIVITY 1 – SOMETHING FROM NOTHING – SUGGESTED ANSWERS

1. Bob Cassilly can produce many things from “nothing.” How do you know this from the reading?

He used leftover concrete, parts of torn down buildings that would have been thrown away

2. Why do we say Bob Cassilly produces many things from “nothing?” Hint: What were other people doing with these resources?

Cassilly was producing things from resources other people were throwing away.

3. What were his incentives to use these resources? (incentives: rewards or penalties that influence people’s choices and behavior)

Cassilly does not have to pay for many resources he uses on his projects.

4. What in your school/home is being recycled?

paper, aluminum cans, plastic, etc.

5. What in your school/home is being used for something other than its original purpose?

Cups used as pencil/pen holders, empty oatmeal boxes used as drums, etc.

6. Look around your classroom or home for a “nothing” item and suggest a use for the item other than its original use.

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Bob Cassilly graduated from Fontbonne University with a degree in Art. In the mid '70's, he renovated a house in Lafayette Square. This area was very run down at the time and people thought the houses should be torn down, but Cassilly saw the homes differently. In 1983, he founded an architectural carving and casting company. The company specialized in large sized art like the turtle sculptures in Turtle Park (across Highway 40/64 from the St. Louis Zoo), the "Mysterious Monarch" and the "Lopatapillar" at the entrance to the Butterfly House in Chesterfield, Missouri.

In 1993, he bought a 750,000 square foot complex in downtown St. Louis for \$.69 per square foot including the old International Shoe building. From there, Bob's talents led him to create one of the most unique attractions in Saint Louis – The City Museum. The City Museum is a playground, funhouse, and many other things all in one.

Bob used anything he could get his hands on to build his fabulous creation. Everything he used came from within the City of Saint Louis. A few examples are a stage from an old Catholic center, the front of the Saint Louis Title Company (as the ticket area), and an old generator from the largest windmill in the world. When Bob discovered that concrete trucks in Saint Louis usually dumped whatever they had left at the end of the day, he asked them to start dumping it at the museum. He then used that concrete to build all sorts of things including the caves that people can journey through inside the museum. Bob's cleverness in recycling helped to craft a unique playground.

The City Museum opened in 1997 as a non-profit company. The museum sought funds from the Danforth Foundation and other groups. The Danforth Foundation gave \$250,000 in 2000. In 2002, the museum ran into financial difficulties and was threatened to be closed. Cassilly was prevented from purchasing it so he persuaded others to do so, and the museum went from a non-profit company to a profit making company. This meant that the museum would pay its bills with the money it would take in from ticket sales, gift shop sales, and museum rentals.

Since its opening, the museum has been extremely popular. Yet, Bob and his artistic crew were not finished. They are constantly adding new features to the museum. Some of the fantastic sites within the museum include Art City (which features artists, potters, glass blowers and sculptors), the Everyday Circus, World Aquarium, and MostroCity – an amazing outdoor playground which includes two aircraft fuselage and a fire engine. In 2006, there were more than 600,000 visitors to the City Museum. There are even lofts at the City Museum for people to live in. The City Museum's slogan is, "Explore the Unexpected."

Cassilly has started another venture in St. Louis called Cementland. It is located on Riverview Drive, two miles south of the Chain of Rocks Bridge. In 2000, Cassilly bought 53 acres of land including 1400 feet of riverfront property for a little under \$2 million. The land to the east of Riverview Drive has the closed Lafarge Cement Factory on it which Cassilly hopes to convert to Cementland (a giant art installation). He has built a one-hundred-foot hill from 182,000 truckloads of dirt. (He gets paid to let companies unload their debris on this site.) Cassilly's goal for this site is similar to the goal for City Museum: to create an unmistakable place "where people can come and do things they are not supposed to do."

On the riverfront property, he would like to create the "Great Rivers Resource Center." Plans for Cementland include an observation deck and a restaurant. He hopes to have this project opened in 2010.

Bob Cassilly does not like to define himself. He is a sculptor, artist, businessman, boss, landlord, real-estate mogul, museum director, and a wheeler dealer. His mission is to "awaken the childlike imagination, joy, and sense of wonder in all ages and transform the way people look at the world."