

Personal Finance Planning: Why Me?

A Financial Literacy curriculum for high school students, including those with special needs, was Developed to address the following subjects: Financial Planning, Choosing a Career, Credit Banking, and Savings and Investing.

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Purpose

This project was designed to produce a Financial Literacy curriculum for high school students, including those with special needs. The curriculum *Personal Finance Planning: Why Me?* was developed to address the following subjects: Financial Planning, Choosing a Career, Credit, Banking, and Savings and Investing. Some areas of concern in developing this curriculum were students' lack of attendance and students' skills ability. Many students enrolled in Family and Consumer Sciences Classes are either Special Education students or students who are not engaged in the learning process. The development of this curriculum addressed these issues of concern.

Rationale

Young adults today are faced with financial challenges and decisions greater than previous generations. The financial decisions that a child makes early on in life will affect his or her ability to become a financially secure adult. If children are not taught the benefits of saving, using credit wisely, and other money management skills, their ability as adults to buy a home or plan for retirement may be greatly hindered. Young adults with poor financial planning skills are often paying off student loans and credit debt well into their thirties. Bankruptcies among persons under 30 continue to rise and this is possibly due to inadequate financial education and poor planning (Martin & Olive, 2001).

High school students are failing at basic financial literacy according to a survey conducted by ACEE (2001). According to ACEC, high school students who participated in a one-semester course on financial literacy all passed the same test. These results have led the Consumer Bankers Association (CBA) to believe that education is the key to financial literacy (Minsemoyer & Furry, 2003). Therefore, a curriculum entitled *Personal Finance Planning: Why Me?* was developed.

Content

The curriculum, *Personal Finance Planning: Why Me?* addresses the following subjects: Financial Planning, Choosing a Career, Credit, Banking, and Savings and Investing. The curriculum is divided into five sections and is designed to be completed in 25 classroom hours. Each lesson plan can stand alone or can be used as a whole unit. The lesson plans were developed to accommodate special needs students. The curriculum is flexible in format so it can be used in class period of any length. Each section contains complete lesson plans that meet the Family I Consumer Sciences National Standard and are aligned with Washington States Essential Academic Learning Requirements. The lesson plans include a variety of learning activities such as: individual learning, cooperative learning, classroom discussions, and Web activities. The curriculum includes all worksheets, overheads, and a variety of assessments. A poster describing the project will be presented at the conference and copies of the curriculum will be available for viewing.

Method

This was a master's student project. The purpose was to develop a financial planning curriculum for school students with special needs. A review of literature was conducted and Web courses were adapted to the new curriculum.

Conclusions

Materials are available for high school students regarding Personal Finances. However, if students are not aware of these resources, they are of little value. Many of the materials found seemed engaging enough for most

students. Students, who attend school sporadically, could easily find resources available to them from the many Personal Finances Web-based sites. Future curriculum should cover a broader range of topics, including more advanced lessons.

Endnotes

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