

Guideposts for Success: Lesson Plans and Activities

Developed by the Institute for Educational Leadership

LESSON 15: LITERACY...IT TAKES ALL KINDS

2-4 class periods – guest speakers & site visits

AT-A-GLANCE

When we hear the word “literacy,” we often think of one’s ability to read and write. In order to be successful in today’s society, there are different types and levels of literacy that one must realize: functional, cross-cultural, health, environmental and workplace are just a few examples of some of the “new” literacies written about and studied today. For the purpose of this lesson, the focus will be on introducing students to the need for financial literacy. These lessons are structured to be a series of site visits and guest speakers to allow students the opportunity to hear from financial professionals. You will want to consider a visit to the local bank, the office of a Certified Professional Accountant,

LESSON/ACTIVITY (classroom discussion, site visits, guest speakers)

Ask students for a definition of “financial literacy.”

- Suggested definition: Financial literacy is basically the ability to understand money and how to manage it, so that you can make financial decisions that will benefit you now and in the future. Financial literacy is having the knowledge and skills to make informed decisions about money matters so that you can fulfill personal, family, social and governmental responsibilities.

In order to have the knowledge and skills necessary to make informed decisions about money matters (for yourself and your family), there are a few questions to ask:

How do you differentiate between “needs” and “wants?”

- Use the following list to generate a discussion about the differences: cable TV, car, clothing, flat screen TV, food/groceries, gas, homeowners/renters insurance, MP3 player/music, movies/entertainment, rent/mortgage, savings, utilities (gas, electric, etc.). Have the group come up with qualifiers for “needs” and “wants.”

How do we figure out how much money we need to live? How can we figure out how we can spend? How much we can save?

- Have students talk with their parents or a family member or a caring adult to find out how families go about creating and using a budget. They may be surprised to find out the answers.

How is credit used?

- Did you know that studies indicate that a sizeable majority of college students have at least one credit card—and have incurred several thousand dollars in credit card debt while in school (not including school loans)?

What is the difference between a credit card and a debit card?

- Why would you use one over the other?

What about banking?

- Do people still write checks? How do you know if your bank statements are correct?

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When should you open a checking account? A savings account? What are some of the other options available for saving with a bank?

What about government benefits?

- If I receive financial benefits from the federal government, is that considered income? Can I put that money aside to plan for my future?

Now it's time to get these questions (and more!) answered by qualified professionals.

1. Plan a trip to a local bank or financial institution. Ask for an introduction to money/financial management. Be sure to request information about credit, credit cards, credit scores, etc.
2. Use your contacts and student networks to find a local financial planner and request a visit to his/her office or to your facility as a guest speaker. Many local areas have a speaker's bureau with a listing of professionals who are willing to conduct presentations to youth. If you have trouble finding an appropriate person, call your local office of economic development and see if they can provide you with some leads.
3. If possible, find the local chapter of SCORE (a nonprofit organization with hundreds of offices across the country) or contact your local Small Business Administration to find out if you can have a guest speaker talk about entrepreneurship and starting/growing your own business <<http://www.sba.gov/teens/>> .
4. According to Social Security Online, today there are almost one million young people under the age of 18 who receive Supplemental Security Income. Approximately 70 percent of those young people receive a "Ticket to Work" when they turn 18. Invite your local, AWIC/Area Work Incentives Coordinator <<https://www.chooseworkttw.net/findhelp/>> to your facility to talk about social security work incentives, Plans to Achieve Self Support (PASS), and MORE!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCE:

The FDIC Money Smart Curriculum

<<http://www.fdic.gov/consumers/consumer/moneysmart/young.html>> is a FREE and customizable resource available to those who are looking to provide an in-depth course building on financial knowledge and developing financial confidence.

EXTENSION

Have students explore the Tips for Teens portion of The Mint, a website launched in 1997 by the Northwestern Mutual Foundation, to provide tools for developing good financial habits. The Tips for Teens section of the site <<http://www.themint.org/teens/index.html>> offers a variety of hands on activities designed to help young people think realistically about their futures. There are sections on earning, saving, spending, owing, tracking, giving, investing and safeguarding. TheMint.org has received the "Great Website for Kids" seal of approval by the American Library Association.