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Career Profile and Budget

Course: Economics

Grades: 12<sup>th</sup>

Students: 90+/-

Duration of  
Project: 2 weeks

My classes: During the Spring 08 semester, I taught 6 Economics classes in which each had approximately 20 students. I had a diverse group of males and females as well as black and white students. During the first nine week period, we studied the basic economic concepts as well as basic financial literacy. During the second nine-week period, we participated in the Stock Market Game. During this time, they participated in many learning experiences that originated with the SMG, but they also expanded their knowledge gained by participating in other projects.

My school: Brandon High School is located in the Rankin County School District at 3090 Highway 18, Brandon, MS, 39042. Our school consists of grades 9-12 with approximately 1350 students. We have approximately 100 faculty members. Our principal is Mr. Buddy Bailey. The demographics of our school are as follows:

- Male- 660
- Female- 690
- White- 975
- Black- 350
- Hispanic- 14
- Asian- 11

My district: The Rankin County School District is headquartered in Brandon, MS. We have a total of 17,140 students in grades K-12. Our superintendent is Dr. Lynn Weathersby. The demographics of our district are as follows:

- Male- 8,768
- Female- 8,372
- White- 12,966
- Black- 3,732
- Hispanic- 226
- Asian- 200
- Native American- 16

**ABSTRACT:**

Overall, the purpose of this series of assignments was to give students a real-world view of the steps necessary to become a professional in today's society, a realistic view of that profession, and the expectations they should possess upon achieving that position . Students were required to conduct research both in class and independently to investigate their respective choices. Then, they had to compile the data as required and assess their findings.

As a result of this project, my students' expectations have risen dramatically, and the reality of their role in the working world has improved tremendously. In order to assess the value of these assignments, I developed a before and after questionnaire for them. They see for themselves a tremendous growth in preparedness and expectations as a result.

Basically, economic concepts from the MS curriculum are applied and reinforced throughout this assignment such as scarcity, productive resources, competition, how an individual may prosper in our free market economy by investing in their human resources, and the supply and demand for labor. Specifically, the competencies are 1.a, 1.d, 1.g, 2.a, and 2.c.

## CHRONOLOGY, INSTRUCTIONAL PROCESS, AND LESSONS:

These lessons were taught in a one semester economics course for high school seniors, but it could easily be adapted for any grade within the high school setting of an economics course. Since lesson one of this project occurs about 3-4 weeks into the course, I have taught lessons on the basics of economic concepts concerning scarcity, productive resources, supply and demand, etc.

**Lesson One** (one class period) A questionnaire which takes about 25 minutes was given to students at the beginning of class to help them realize how sufficiently or insufficiently they are prepared to enter their chosen field of study or profession. As they finished this reflection activity, we had a class discussion in an effort to help them realize (if not already) that they needed a realistic view of their role in the professional realm, the degree of difficulty involved in obtaining their chosen job, and the level of preparedness they needed to achieve in order to be successful in their endeavors.

Following these procedures, students are given time for the remainder of class to perform their research on the computer. During this time, they are to investigate available information on their three top career choices and provide the following information for each (see attached rubric):

- ❖ Requirements to hold that job (education, skills, testing, etc.)
- ❖ Starting salary (preferably for MS)
- ❖ Job description of duties performed
- ❖ Job outlook for the future

Students typically have to spend time outside of class as well to completely gather all of this information. They are required to compile the data in a report of 2-4 typed pages. As a correlating assignment, students are required to prepare a budget based on actual salary amounts (see attached rubric). One crucial element of this is that they accurately account for taxes; I have provided them with a website that helps them to accomplish this task. They are then required to tabulate the money in an effort to determine if their original expectations were accurate. At the end of this assignment, students are required to write a conclusion in which they discuss what they discovered.

**Lesson Two:** (half of one class period)

In this session, there is a good deal of spirited class discussion. Students are usually very shocked at their findings concerning how much money they will have to pay in taxes and the costs of living. This follow-up discussion is intended to help them make real connections between their original perceptions and reality. I then used this as a segway to ask questions such as What is the government's current taxation policy? How do these policies affect them? What current issues should they be following in an effort to be a more educated and productive citizen (elections, etc.)?

Students are then assigned to interview someone in their chosen profession. They are given some class time to brainstorm questions for this interview. The goal is to make sure their understanding of this profession is realistic in an effort to prevent disillusionment later. They are given one week to complete the interview. They were required to type their questions, have the answers completed, and obtain the date and signature of the person interviewed for verification purposes.

**ASSESSMENT:** The overall assessment for this project is counted as individual homework grades for the overnight assignments, but then a 'test' grade is given for the overall completion of the project as well. This grade was based on completion of all activities and the depth of student reflection involved. Rubrics were used to assign numeric grades (see attached).

**CLOSURE:** Following the entire process, students were given the original questionnaire as a post-test in an effort to measure their growth in knowledge, perceptions, and expectations.

