



FAMILY
ECONOMICS &
FINANCIAL
EDUCATION

FEFE NEWS LINK



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MAY NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTS

- **Life In... United States** *has had an extreme makeover.... 2009 Edition! Page 4!*
- **Assessments.** *Learn what assessments FEFE has available and what the FEFE Master Teachers are suggesting! Check out page 6!*
- **Book Review.** *This month, The Overspent American by Juliet Schor! See page 3!*
- **Last chance to register for the FEFE National Conference!**
Information about this year's National Conference on page 2!
- **Can't make it to the National Conference?** *See which states FEFE is traveling to this summer on page 2!*

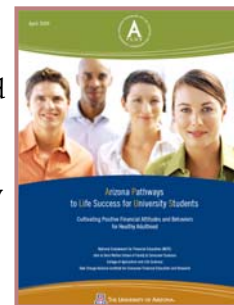
PROMOTING FEFE IN YOUR AREA?

Let us know! We have materials available to assist you in your presentation!

LAST CHANCE TO REGISTER to attend the FEFE National Conference, June 15-18, 2009!
May 15 deadline, see page 2 for details.

TCAI RESEARCH GETS NATIONAL COVERAGE

As part of the Take Charge America Institute's mission to provide research-based educational outreach programs, FEFE will benefit from a \$200,000 grant for a national investigative study that will lead to improved teaching models that directly impact students in the classroom. The Institute's Arizona Pathways to Life Success of University Students, or APLUS project, was initiated in 2007. The project is a longitudinal survey of the financial attitudes and behaviors of 2,200 University of Arizona freshmen. The project will track and resurvey these students over the next decade as they move through their college years. Their experiences will help researchers understand how young adults acquire positive financial attitudes and behaviors, and how those behaviors translate into financial confidence and personal well-being which directly links to how we impact youth. To read more about phase 1 research findings and implications or to read the national press release visit <http://www.tca institute.org/aplus.html> for more information.



FEFE NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2009



NATIONAL CONFERENCE FINAL REGISTRATION DEADLINE FAST APPROACHING!

TOP 10 REASONS TO ATTEND!

10. Receive **content updates** from university faculty and other industry professionals.
9. Purchase teaching tools and additional curriculum materials at **discounted prices** from the conference store.
8. "Ask the Expert" station available to discuss lesson plan content.
7. Network with educators from across the United States.
6. A night during the conference can be enjoyed doing fun activities and relaxing.
5. Receive hard copies of the curriculum.
4. Learn facilitation and **classroom management techniques** from FEFE Master Teachers.
3. Experience lesson plans from the "Take Charge of Your Finances" and "Get Ready to Take Charge of Your Finances" curriculum.
2. Receive continuing education units and academic **credit**.
1. Gain skills and **confidence** to teach family economics and finance to your students!



Don't wait too long! Send in your conference registration by **May 15th** to reserve your spot. For more information on the FEFE national conference, to download a registration packet and to register, go to



<http://www.fefe.arizona.edu/trainingSeminars.php>

SUMMER 2009 STATE TRAININGS ANNOUNCEMENT

FEFE is on the road this summer working with educators to feel comfortable and confident using the curriculum. States such as Arkansas, Louisiana and Maryland are just a few of the stops that FEFE will be making! In addition to those states, do not forget about our **national conference in Tucson, Arizona in June**. If you are interested in setting up a training in your state, contact FEFE today!



Pennsylvania	July 13	In conjunction with the Governor's Institute on Financial Education, presentations for middle and high school levels
Arkansas	July 22-24	3 day training and a 1 day update for previous attendees.
Louisiana	July 27-29	3 day training
Maryland	August 4-6	3 day training and a 1 day update for previous attendees.

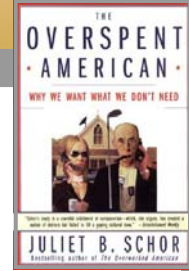


REVIEW OF FINANCIAL LITERACY TRADE BOOKS

THE OVERSPENT AMERICAN



The book, *The Overspent American*, by Juliet Schor was written in 1998 but is even more relevant in 2009, given our current economic situation. Many Americans today are struggling with credit card debt, mortgage defaults, and job loss. The entire financial debacle has been pushed to greater heights because of the overextension credit offered to and accepted by American consumers. Juliet Schor, a professor of sociology at Boston University and a former professor of economics at Harvard University, gathered data from surveys and in-depth interviews to form the foundation of this book on why Americans are so inclined to overspend.



Her main thesis is that we have been socialized to base our own self images on our ability to consume the best and newest products. We have been given free reign with credit cards with the message that we should enjoy life now rather than waiting until we have the cash. The messages from peers, media and even government are been to spend, spend, spend. Only in the last year or so has the public begun to look at the damage this type of spending has been doing to individuals, households, communities and the economy at large.

Schor suggests that Americans need to rethink their needs versus their wants. Living simply within our incomes, with a margin to spare for saving and emergencies, can be held up as the new consumer model—as the new “cool” thing to do. However, we must have conversations both privately and publicly about why this new idea of “living within your means” is a preferred lifestyle over “buy what you want now.”

You as a family financial educator can greatly help this ethic of living within your means by teaching students to spend less than they make, with an extra margin for saving and investing. The FEFE lessons have ample materials with this theme, such as the lessons on needs versus wants in Unit 17, the value of savings in Unit 14, and Unit 12, the investing unit.

Another quick exercise you can do is to ask your students what they would keep if they can only have 100 items in their lives. The Web link: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1812048,00.html> describes the efforts of people who are trying to limit their belongings to 100 things. It forces the person to decide what is a need, what is a want, and what is just plain clutter. This is a simple exercise: Take a piece of paper with numbers 1 to 100. Using a pencil (because you might want to erase and redo), write down the 100 items you really think you must have to live, not only to live frugally but to live well. The idea is not to force a Spartan existence, but to focus on the great usefulness and joy of having the 100 most important items. This exercise will be a good one to start your students thinking about trade-offs between work and family, work and leisure, and the overall goal of financial well-being. With financial well-being, individuals have the finances to fund the activities that mean the most to them. Finances are a tool to well-being, not the end result. The 100 items exercise can start students on a path to discovering what is really necessary in their lives. They will see that a full life does not necessarily rest on an endless shopping and debt cycle. For those students who are low-income, separating self worth from dollar income can also be a critical lesson to change the focus from consumption to the value of the human capacity to succeed in a variety of ways.

If you have the opportunity to read, *The Overspent American*, you will be motivated to help students understand the wider meaning of financial well-being. The book is a good read with a renewed vision for our time.

—By Dr. Deborah Haynes, Montana State University.

LIFE IN...UNITED STATES MAKEOVER



LIFE IN...THE UNITED STATES HAS BEEN UPDATED!



WHAT IS LIFE IN...? Life in... is a family spending plan simulation emulating the constraints the typical American household encounters when managing their finances. Each participant is assigned a profile based upon gender, age, marital status, education, career and wage. Utilizing scenarios based on national data, participants then apply course information to real life situations. Life In... can be integrated into a semester course, two week class, three hour workshop, or as an independent study.

Since 2005, when Life in...the United States was first developed, prices have changed. In an effort to keep the FEFE curriculum up-to-date, an updated Life in... (3.18.4) has been created to reflect these changes. The overall lesson plan objectives and scenarios have **not changed**. Therefore, the existing Life in... (3.18.3) may still be used to emulate the decision making process households encounter when creating and managing a spending plan.

Changes to the Life in... 3.18.4 include:

INDIVIDUAL PROFILES

- ★ Individual profile expenses reflect 2009 average prices for the various activities, hobbies, and memberships.

CAREER INFORMATION

- ★ Career information is from the 2009 Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook.

SPENDING PLAN

- ★ The *Guided Spending Plan* worksheet has more detailed instructions and a new, easier to follow format for participants to work through.

PAYCHECKS

- ★ Wages are the May 2007 national estimated mean annual wage for each occupation.
- ★ State Income Tax Withholdings were calculated using a national average flat rate of 3.6%.
- ★ Medical Insurance costs were increased by 40% to reflect changes since 2006.

HOUSING

- ★ Mortgage payments were recalculated to reflect the past 10 year average APR of 6%.
- ★ Power, Water/Sewer, Garbage, Internet, Phone Line in House, Cell Phone, Cable, and Satellite Dish plans reflect average current prices.
- ★ Recycling was added as an optional amenity.

TRANSPORTATION

- ★ Vehicles were modified to current or, in the case of used cars, more current models with the same price. Insurance,

Fuel Costs, and Repairs & Maintenance reflect an average monthly costs based on a five year life.

- ★ Taxi Service prices were increased to reflect current prices.

INSURANCE

- ★ Health, disability and life insurance costs were all modified to reflect current prices.

FOOD

- ★ Cost of Food at Home was updated to reflect current prices with slightly different age ranges.

COST OF RAISING CHILDREN

- ★ Cost of Raising Children is now based on the 2007 estimated annual expenditures on children by families according to the United States Department of Agriculture.

AVERAGE EXPENDITURES

- ★ Average Expenditures now lists several flexible expenses, such as cleaning supplies, food away from home, apparel, etc., and the average amount spent on each by low income families, median income families, and high income families.

LESSON PLAN & POWERPOINT

- ★ A lesson plan and PowerPoint 3.18.4 has been created to reflect new pricing as well as better guide participant through the simulation.

The updated
**LIFE IN...THE UNITED STATES
3.18.4**
Will soon be available to purchase or
download!

*For a complete list of
resources used to
make the updates,
download the
updated Life
In...United States
Lesson Plan 3.18.4*



ASSESSMENTS

Principals of Effective Literacy Assessment- North Central Regional Educational Laboratory:

<http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/content/cntareas/reading/li7lk5.htm>

Effective assessment is an integral part of instruction. The best forms of assessment are the routine daily activities of instruction, which tell us exactly how our students are performing. By comparing the work of individual students over time, we can determine patterns of growth. When a student writes a story about his or her trip to visit friends, you can assess his or her ability to organize ideas, express themselves, and use the various conventions of language. Overall, you get a picture of how effectively they construct meaning through writing.

Assessment should be an ongoing process. Literacy assessment is not a test given at the end of a unit or a block of study, separate from the ongoing daily activities of instruction. Instead, assessment should take place every time a child reads, writes, speaks, listens, or views something. When assessment is viewed as an ongoing part of instruction, it becomes natural and expected.

Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation- Peer reviewed electronic journal:

<http://pareonline.net/getvn.asp?v=6&n=2>

In order to administer any good assessment, you must have a clearly defined purpose. Thus, you must ask yourself several important questions:

- ★ What concept, skill, or knowledge am I trying to assess?
- ★ What should my students know?
- ★ At what level should my students be performing?
- ★ What type of knowledge is being assessed: reasoning, memory, or process (Stiggins, 1994)?

WHAT DO FEFE USERS HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THE LIFE IN... ASSESSMENT?

"It is a wonderful summary at the end of the course so students realize the 'whole' of the subject matter taught all semester."

- MO Educator

"The "Life...In" simulations help students understand money, and all things finance-related in their own "real life" context, allowing them to grasp concepts quicker and easier."

- NY Educator

"In my end of the student evaluation, students said they felt that the simulation was one of the best parts of the class because it helped them understand budgeting and what families (and potentially themselves) go through to make income equal expenses."

- OH Educator

Download "Life In...US" on the FEFE Web site!

<http://www.fefe.arizona.edu/curriculum.php?categoryID=32>

ASSESSMENTS



Assessments are a crucial part to any curriculum. It is the opportunity for educators to see the academic growth that has occurred. In order for assessments to be effective, they need to show improvement in a measurable way. The FEFE curriculum provides educators with many different types of assessments to help achieve this goal within a family finance course.

★ Multiple Choice Assessments

For each lesson plan that FEFE has within the curriculum there are also 3-5 multiple choice test bank questions that are created.

★ Portfolio Project 1.0.6

Is designed for students to keep all of their materials throughout a semester course. This will help them to learn the importance of keeping financial documents organized, what type of documents need to be kept and for how long. This will also provide a resource for when participants are living on their own and making financial decisions.

★ FEFE Semester Course Review Trivia 1.30.0.G1

This can be played and will help to show how much the students have learned through out the course.

★ **“Life in...”** is a family spending plan simulation emulating the constraints typical American households encounter when managing their finances. Each participant is assigned a profile based upon nationality, gender, age, ethnicity, marital status, education, and wage data, which participants use when applying course information to real life situations. “Life in...US” is geared toward high school aged students.

★ **“Life of...”** are individual spending plan simulations completed by analyzing the life of a teenager. Each simulation showcases a family who is working with their teenage child to create a spending plan. Participants identify the family’s values, needs and wants to make major expenditure decisions and create a spending plan. Available simulations include **Life of... Taylor, Monica, Ben, Mandy and Carlos** and are geared toward middle school aged students.



*DOWNLOAD THE LATEST EDITION
OF LIFE IN...UNITED STATES SOON!*

ASK A FEFE MASTER TEACHER

Suggestions and ideas for using FEFE assessments

Tracey Newman gives us insight into how she assesses her students: “While I use written assessments for each unit of instruction as well as some of the project-based assessments, my favorite end to the semester is using either the “Life In” or “Life Of” simulations. Students are asked to apply their knowledge from class in a situation very similar to how I want them to be able to apply it in real life. Not only must they use sound decision making and problem solving skills, they must also apply written communication arts techniques in order to rationalize these decisions.”

