Lesson Overview

The first lesson in the middle school series will engage students in income-earning research as they explore **career** opportunities, and investigate how education and training increase their earning power.

Group Handouts 73

Answer Key 96

Glossary with key vocabulary 105

Standards met by lesson 107

Topic: Career and Job Opportunities

Time Required: 50 minutes   
*(excluding* **Extended Exploration***activities)*

Learning Objectives:   
*Students will be able to…*

* Identify and assess the skills   
  and experience needed for a   
  variety of careers
* Examine the impact of education and other opportunities like internships on career trajectory
* Create a path for advancing in   
  a career field

Supplies:

* Projector (for teacher presentation slides)
* Loose-leaf paper
* Access to the Internet (**optional**)

Preparation:

* Make copies of student handouts and group handouts
* Set up projector with presentation slides
* Cut job cards for random selection
* Set up individual or group computers with access to the Internet (**optional**)

Student Handouts:  
*(found in* **Student Guide***)*

* ***Career Pre-Assessment***
* ***Career Pre-Assessment*** answer key (pages 96-97)
* ***Volunteering, Internships, and Job Shadowing*** informational text

Group Handouts:

* ***Job Card*** (1 per group)
* ***Opportunity Card*** (1 per group)
* ***Degrees Matter*** (1 per group)

Teacher Presentation Slides:

* ***Degrees Matter***

Essential Questions:

* *What is the difference between   
  a job and a career?*
* *What is the best path to take to   
  succeed in my chosen career field?*

Assessment Activities:  
**Pre-Assessment:**

* **Career Pre-Assessment** activity

**Post-Assessment:**

* **The Path to a Successful Career** activity
* **Creating My Career Plan** activity

Instruction Steps

Warm Up

Career Pre-Assessment [10 minutes]

Distribute the ***Career Pre-Assessment*** student handout and ask students to fill it out based on their interests and experiences.

Once students have completed their ***Career Pre-Assessments***, provide them with pages 96-97 of the **Answer Key** to determine in which career field(s) they are most interested.

Ask them to hold on to ***Career Pre-Assessments*** for the group activity later in class.

MONEY SMART TIP!

The unemployment rate of someone with a doctoral degree is 2.2%, while the   
unemployment rate of someone who has a high school diploma is 7.5%. Additionally,   
someone with a doctoral degree will earn $2.2 million more in his or her lifetime than   
someone with a high school degree. Hang this poster on unemployment rate and pay by educational attainment as a reminder to your students about the importance of education. [**http://www.bls.gov/k12/content/teachers/posters/pdf/learning-and-earning.pdf**](http://www.bls.gov/k12/content/teachers/posters/pdf/learning-and-earning.pdf)

Guided Exploration

Understanding Important Vocabulary [5 minutes]

**Career** and **job** are two important vocabulary terms in this lesson. Explain to students the differences and similarities between the two:

* **Career:** The type of work a person pursues for the majority of their life that may involve formal education, special training, or be within a specific industry. For example: medical career field, education career field, business career field, law career field, or engineering career field.
* **Job:** A specific duty, task, or activity someone completes using his or her time, skills, and energy to earn money. For example (examples line up to career fields above): doctor, teacher, business owner/entrepreneur, lawyer, or engineer.

Optional checks for understanding:

* *What is the difference between a career and a job?*
* *Give an example of a job you might have in the medical career field* (for example: a nurse, doctor, physician’s assistant, hospital administrator, medical clerk)
* *What career field do you think that you would be in if you had the job of teacher?*   
  (for example: education)

Guided Group Exploration

The Path to a Successful Career [25 minutes]

Split students into small groups of three to five. Explain that, today, students will be following the path of one particular career field, understanding a job in that career field in more depth, and making decisions about education and opportunities as a way of advancing or exploring in the career field.

First, the groups will have to select their job. Distribute a set of the ***Job Cards*** (group handout) to each group, and have students randomly select one (without seeing the options). Once they have selected their job card, students should read the information about that job, and then compare it to the results of their pre-assessment. Students should discuss:

* *What career field is this job in?*
* *Did anyone select this career field from their* ***Career Pre-Assessment*** *on the Warm Up?   
  What new information do you know about this job?*
* *Is anyone interested in this job? Why or why not?*
* *What is one surprising fact about this job?*

Next, distribute one copy of the informational text ***Volunteering****,* ***Internships****,* and ***Job Shadowing*** (group handout) per student group. Once students have completed the short reading, check for understanding with the following questions:

* *What is the difference between volunteering, interning, and job shadowing?*
* *As a middle school student, can you volunteer, hold an internship, or shadow   
  different jobs? Explain your answer.*
* *Do you think you can volunteer, intern, or shadow at any point in your career? Explain.*
* *How could volunteering, interning, or job shadowing improve your career field opportunities?*

After discussing the reading, provide student groups with a copy of the ***Opportunity Card*** (group handout) options. Prompt students to select an ***Opportunity Card*** based on what they think will best advance/explore and help someone in the career field from the job that they selected earlier. (**Note:** provide the “Change Jobs” card as an option only if students will be able to research other jobs on the computer in order to make their job change decision.) In groups, students should discuss:

* *How does this opportunity help someone in the career field from the job that we selected?*
* *How would someone go about getting an opportunity like this?*
* *What connections are there between this job and opportunity and the career field I am interested in from my* ***Career Pre-Assessment****?*

Next, students will examine the ***Degrees Matter*** slide and study how education impacts a career. Check for understanding by asking the following questions:

* *What does this graph show about the connection between education and a career?*
* *What are some reasons why people choose to further their education as they advance/explore their career field?* (For example: it provides them with more training, it can help secure a promotion, and it helps them get paid more money.)
* *What do you think are some reasons that people choose not to further their education as they advance/explore their career field?* (For example: it costs money to go to school, it takes time to go to school.)
* *Are there any solutions to some of the problems you present?* (For example: financial aid, scholarships, reimbursements, and in-house classes that students can take on the job.)

Finally, student groups should select an ***Education Card*** (group handout) from the options based on what they think will best advance/explore and help someone in the career field of the job that they selected earlier. In groups, students should discuss:

* *How does this educational opportunity help someone in the career field   
  of the job that we selected?*
* *How would someone go about making this educational opportunity happen?*
* *What connections are there between this career and educational opportunity and the careers that I am interested in from my* ***Career Pre-Assessment****?*

Wrap Up

Creating My Career Plan [10 minutes]

Ask students to pull out their ***Career Pre-Assessments*** and ***Answer Keys*** from the introductory activity and select their top career field. Ask students to consider what path they might need to take to break into their career. Ask students to use a sheet of loose-leaf paper to make a plan for going from where they are now to where they hope to be in their careers. Remind students to include their education, volunteering, internship opportunities, and job shadowing. Students may draw up their career plans in a variety of ways, including:

* Write a description of your career plan from now until you achieve your career.
* Create a captioned illustration (like a game board or a path) to show the steps you   
  will need to take to get from where you are now until you achieve your career.

Extended Exploration

**Note:** Use the following ideas to extend financial literacy concepts throughout the school year within core content areas through English Language Arts, Math, Social Studies and Economics, and Technology activities, projects, and discussions. Duration of activities will vary.

English Language Arts

* **Writing Prompts:**
* Describe your dream job. What are your responsibilities? What do you have to do to achieve your dream job? Who are your co-workers? Why is this job your “dream job”?
* Review the results of your ***Career Pre-Assessment***. Do you agree or disagree with the results? Why?
* Write a narrative about your path from where you are now to your dream job. Your narrative should read like an interesting memoir or novel. Include characters, dialogue, plot, and an interesting conflict.
* Develop a résumé to get your dream career. Using a model and/or résumé template, create a résumé where you include the education and experiences that will lead you   
  to submit a résumé for your dream career.
* **Additional Readings/Resources:**
* *My Next Move* by U.S. Department of Labor: A searchable, browsable resource   
  to help figure out dream careers and match interests to career options. <http://www.mynextmove.org/>
* *Jobs in 2020: The Industries and Occupations to Watch* by U.S. News and World Report: A collection of informational texts about careers that are expected to grow in the future. <http://money.usnews.com/money/careers/jobs-in-2020>

Math

* **Activity/Project Ideas:**
* Read the table to determine the mean salary for two or three jobs of your dreams. Compare the salaries. Which job has a higher salary? By how much? Why do you think that is? Use the job salary statistics provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. <http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_nat.htm#25-0000>.
* Analyze the costs of reaching a higher salary. Review the job cards and discuss the education requirements that align to the salaries. Use the National Center for Education Statistics data on the cost of a degree. <http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=76>.

Social Studies and Economics

* **Activity/Project Ideas:**
* Examine the change in career fields and the employment force in United States   
  history. What career fields were more important in U.S. history and no longer   
  hold the same weight today? Why? What did the U.S. workforce used to look like,   
  and how has it changed? Why?

Technology

* **Online Games/Tools:**
* *College Navigator* by the National Center for Education Statistics: A search tool for students to find colleges that fit with their interests. <http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>
* *Occupational Outlook Handbook* by the Bureau of Labor Statistics: A search tool for students to explore jobs and career fields based on pay, educational attainment, growth rate, and on-the-job training. <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/>
* *Be Your Own Boss Challenge* by The Mint: Students take a quiz to determine whether entrepreneurship is the right career path for them.   
  <http://www.themint.org/teens/be-you-own-boss-challenge.html>