

The Concepts of the Real World

In school, teachers are often questioned: Why is it important to learn calculus while most high school students either retake or won't need it in or out of college? This is an important question that makes everyone think about what is important for preparing students for life as an adult. A majority of people would agree money; money is everywhere. If you buy something, you need money. When you work you are paid in money and everything that adults do is related to money in one way or another. Most parents are expected to teach their children how to pay taxes, understand loans and investments, but don't people go to school to learn what they can't at home? Schools, public or private, are based on one goal: to teach skills and knowledge.

No one is born understanding what a closed-ended loan is or how conventional loans with variable interest rates work. Most people get their first checking account or credit card around the time they start driving to pay for gas or emergency necessities. Sure, the parent whose name is most likely on the credit card understand that it is an open-ended loan that has a fixed interest, but if you asked any high school student they wouldn't be able to tell you the first thing about it. If schools taught the differences in loans and how to choose which is the best, young adults headed off to college or putting a down payment on a car wouldn't get scammed by payday loans or advance-fee loans. Every day people are caught in financial pits due to their ignorance.

Another reason to start teaching personal finance early is that skills learned early in life can be refined over time. When people just start learning to read and write at the age of five it is very difficult and rough. There are lots of mistakes and it takes a long time to do something that in another five years is subconscious. Most of the math required to do taxes or balance a check book is algebra, and if schools started teaching money management and finance in ninth grade with algebra, by the time the student graduated they would be ready for life in the adult financial world. By the time

people graduate from high school, they have mastered basic English structure, basic math and have an understanding of the basic sciences and art, but imagine how much faster and farther people could rise in life if they had a mastery of the basics of finance at the age of nineteen.

Currently in a high school student's senior year they are worrying about where to go next, if they prepared for life as an adult, and they are feeling insecure about their future. But, what if they could get a boost to their confidence? A huge part of the insecurity caused by the shift into real adulthood is because many are unprepared and unaware of what to expect. Most people have questions flying around their heads all concerning what it means and what is expected to be an adult. With an established understanding of loans, taxes, and investments, young insecure adults headed off to college or their first real full time job wouldn't have to worry about their financial future or security as much. Instead they could put their all into doing the best they can where ever they are.

Every year children fresh from high school are separated from the security of a familiar surrounding, friends and family as they take their first steps to being an adult. Yet this transition can be overly harsh and brutal, as most fail to launch into the world and return home to the security they grew up in. With an understanding of the bigger concepts of the adult world, the traumatic transition could be far gentler. As a high school student myself, all this applies to me and I wish that I could have had the chance to learn such an important skill in a place where I felt safe and knew I could make a mistake.