

How to Afford College Regardless of Individual Circumstance

Module 1, Lesson 13

Estimated Class Time:

45 minutes in a classroom

Learning Objective:

Students will discuss strategies for making college affordable so that all students feel college or post-secondary training is possible for them.

Presentation Suggestions:

You might be asked by your students, "Why do we have to think about this now, in our sophomore year?"

Many students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, give up their dream to go to college or post-secondary training because of economic hardships. Perhaps their parents or guardian can't help at all or they have little savings because they have to contribute to their family's living costs. When students give up on the option of post-secondary education, far too many give up early on school all together.

You don't want this to happen to any of your students; therefore, this exposure to a *strategic planning process* is critical to encourage students to pursue some form of post-secondary education and training.

If you employed any of these methods yourself, share your stories with your students. Encourage students to interview the adults in their lives to learn about how they paid for post-secondary education. You might alternatively invite in individuals who were particularly adept at getting through college despite lacking the financial resources to do so easily.

Activity:

Provide each student with a copy of the following document *30 Ways to Reduce the Cost of College* and divide students into groups of three. Instruct them to discuss the 30 different strategies and then choose the six strategies that they feel would be most beneficial in their situation. If they have time, have them project how much money they can save if they follow their six suggestions and record their findings in their workbooks.

Ask each group to share their findings. This is a time for rich discussion and brainstorming as they take the ideas further. Saving money while in college is an increasingly important topic today.

As a class, discuss what is meant by this saying: *Where there is a will, here is a way.* How does this apply when it comes to affording to go to college?

Homework Assignment:

Have students share the list of *30 Ways to Reduce College Costs* with their parents or other adult family members or friends. Suggest they ask these adults to complete the same task of choosing the most applicable six strategies for saving money on college.

Have students compare findings. How many of the strategies were on both the student's list and their parent's list? Which ones were different? What was their parent's reasoning? Should the different ones be added to the student's list? Students can record the answers to these questions in their workbooks.

If you have a parent evening, use this activity as a small group discussion, having the students lead the parent groups in these discussions.

Resources:

30 Ways to Reduce College Costs handout

Lesson Extensions:

Invite appropriate guest speakers to share information about the cost of education. You might consider inviting a college-outreach specialist or someone from a college financial aid or scholarship foundation office to share relevant information.

Share information about the cost of graduate degrees as compared with earning potential and employment rates.

Extra Credit:

Here's an important math problem your students will want to tackle: If the careers they've chosen require graduate degrees beyond a *baccalaureate degree*, this is probably one of the most important math problems they'll ever do.

Have them factor the cost of the graduate degree compared with not only earning potential but also employment rates for their chosen career. Students don't want to spend a lot of money and go into debt if the career they are preparing for doesn't pay enough to comfortably repay their loan or, worse yet, is in a field where there are not enough jobs to ensure they'll get one.

Remember, bankruptcy does not get rid of student loans. A student loan will be an *obligation* until it is paid off.

Using the Internet resources they've learned about in this module, along with their own 10-year Plan and the data they've collected to date, ask students to write their own plans in their workbooks for researching this very important information.

English Common Core Standards

SL.9-10.1. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.