

## **Evaluating Your Money, Your Future: Examining Analysis Plans**

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### **Abstract**

This proposal would explore the analysis plan for the evaluation of the middle school curriculum Your Money, Your Future which is being delivered to fourth through eighth grade students in 69 Georgia counties. The goal of the curriculum is to provide an improved, research-based curriculum for use with middle school youth focused on financial management knowledge and behaviors. This is an audience that this type of curriculum has not been tested with previously, therefore this evaluation is focused on assessing the impact of the curriculum on career aspiration, financial management behaviors, and the key components of the curriculum delivery that are the most directly associated with positive outcomes. The evaluation plans to examine the relationships between county demographics (i.e. median income, poverty rate, educational attainment, etc.) and characteristics of the youth participants (gender, age, financial knowledge and financial behaviors) upon career aspirations with a particular focus on selected Black Belt counties (N = 36) and Appalachian Regional Commission counties (N = 16).

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This presentation focuses around a discussion of the analysis plan and other potential analysis mechanisms to utilize with the data that will be collected as part of the Your Money, Your Future program. This program is being developed and implemented with a rigorous evaluation in place from conception. For each youth who participates in the program, pre and post assessments will be collected at the beginning of the program and at the end of the multi-session program. In addition, other ways to expand and improve the evaluation will be explored including potential ways of improving instruments and additional questions or metrics to gather if further evaluation is conducted.

Whereas similar studies will typically involve a convenience sample of a few hundred cases at most, this study will yield matched pre- and post-tests from several thousand students in grades 4<sup>th</sup> through 8th. The program is already being implemented and data is being collected from counties across Georgia. At least 69 counties across the state of Georgia will be implementing the curriculum in a variety of methodologies (one day course, hourly sessions at school, after school programs etc).

The pre-tests which were specifically designed for this program will gather data from youth including gender (boy/girl), age (open ended), how often they have money of their own to use as they want, the sources of their income, what they typically do with money they have, the best strategy for saving a million dollars by age 70, and how often they save money for goals, give to charity, buy wants before needs, add money to savings, earn extra for spending, earn extra to save, think of quitting school, and think of going to college. Students respond to the same items for the post-test plus a yes/no item about sharing tips with parents and an open-ended question about the most important thing learned. In addition to the knowledge and demographic data that is collected on the pre and post tests, additional data is gathered from each instructor about how the program is implemented, the age range of the participants, where the program is offered (school/camp/after school), and other notes about how implementation occurred. The mix of qualitative and quantitative data will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the implementation and impacts of the program.

The evaluation plan includes analysis which will examine the outcome impact of the program and an extensive process evaluation. The process evaluation component will focus on the examination of the qualitative data on how the program is implemented at different sites around the state of Georgia. The outcome evaluation analysis will focus on the analysis of pre and post test change scores, interactions of implementation characteristics (frequency of contact, and setting), and demographic characteristics (age of youth, gender) on the outcomes.

The qualitative data will be analyzed using Nvivo software to examine themes in the implementation patterns among the programs that have shown the greatest impact on youth knowledge. A multiple coder approach will be used to develop reliability scores for this analysis. The examination of practices by site will include a cross reference with the quantitative outcome analysis of the data by site or agent.

Initial outcome analyses will focus on the extent to which student responses changed from the pre-test to the post-test (change scores). This analysis will indicate whether youth showed changes in knowledge about money use, saving practices, and plans for behavior. The analysis will focus on the questions that specifically focus on the strategy for saving a million dollars by age 70 and behaviors related to saving for goals, earning extra income, thinking of quitting school, and thinking of going to college.

Additional outcome analyses will explore interactions between pre- and post-test responses and factors related to program delivery such as the age of the student, the frequency of contact, and the setting. All of these additional variables are collected by the instructor and provided back to the evaluator on a cover sheet which accompanies each packet of pre and post test data. Each instructor is allowed to adjust the program delivery methods to best meet their needs, the delivery method is one of the items collected on the cover sheet submitted with each set of pre and post tests. The diversity of delivery methods will allow for additional statistical analyses of the impact of the intervention in the various settings, with youth of different ages, and with different delivery methods. This additional analyses will allow for research-based enhancements to the curriculum and the way it is delivered.