

An integrated approach to teaching personal finances



Simulation project of everyday financial activities



Students hold jobs, maintain bank accounts, pay bills, shop for cars, houses, vacations, invest money, pay taxes, and much more!



Fun and easy-to-implement; takes only minutes per day; can be added to daily class routine activities



Randomness included as a successful motivational technique



Students develop co-operation, responsibility and financial confidence



Increases student financial skills and consumer awareness



Excellent teaching tool; flexible to adapt to all different student levels (grades 7 - 12, ages 12 - 18) in mathematics / business / life skills courses

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## Introduction

Welcome to the *Lifeproject*! I have designed this project package for intermediate / senior level mathematics / business teachers who wish to enrich their students' practical math skills. The *Lifeproject* is an ongoing project created for mathematics classes of all levels (grades 7 - 12, ages 12 - 18), which simulates on a simplified level many of the real-life financial activities that adults tackle in their lives. This binder contains a complete set of reproducible blackline masters, and clear, easy-to-follow directions on how to implement the *Lifeproject*, including suggestions on how to adapt for different levels. The *Lifeproject* can be implemented as a complete project, or selected activities can be used on an individual basis instead to enhance the curriculum. Also included is an evaluation tracking and record sheet to help simplify monitoring of student progress.

As a mathematics teacher for several years, one of my commitments has been to **prepare my students for the world which awaits them** when they leave high school. Over the years, however, I was dismayed to see that a vast number of students complete their secondary education without having acquired any training in how to handle their personal finances. Many students graduate not knowing how to balance a chequebook, set a personal budget, or make major purchasing decisions such as buying a car or a house.

It was in the hope of giving students an opportunity to practice these indispensable skills that I developed this book. I wanted to create a project that would challenge my students in these areas, and at the same time be motivating and fun for them to do, as well as easy for me to facilitate as a teacher. I believe the *Lifeproject* achieves this. Here, students can effectively practice **balancing chequing accounts, depositing paycheques, spending money, paying bills, purchasing homes, automobiles, vacations, investing, and more.**

There are two main aspects of the *Lifeproject* which make it a valuable simulation project. One is that various **elements of randomness have been worked in** such as drawing random weekly expenses, for example. This keeps the *Lifeproject* unpredictable and exciting to the students. The other is that this book **encourages and outlines the use of free, easily accessible external resources vital to the project** (eg. auto magazines, real-estate flyers, etc.) By introducing students to the same resources that will be available to them in the future, they can gain the confidence and insight to use these resources wisely.

*The **Lifeproject** is structured into several components, some of which may be optionally included/excluded or adapted at the teacher's discretion to suit the level and needs of the class. The **Lifeproject** can therefore successfully enhance and enrich any mathematics/business/lifeskills class from grades 7 to 12, ages 12 - 18, semestered or non-semestered system, basic to enriched level, since the teacher has the ultimate control over which components to utilize and the degree of sophistication with which to implement. The **Lifeproject** provides a very flexible tool for the teacher with limitless possibilities. This flexibility also allows for students to practice their skills each year as their mathematical abilities grow without losing interest in the **Lifeproject**. Also, due to its ongoing nature, all components of the **Lifeproject** can be implemented at the teacher's own pace and all evaluations can be easily maintained in-class with minimal out-of-class preparation for both the teacher and the student.*

*I have personally found tremendous success with the use of the **Lifeproject** in my classrooms. Students of various abilities enthusiastically learn the skills that are essential to their future; **they learn to be responsible and accountable. to co-operate and gain the confidence to face future financial challenges.** I wish you similar success with the **Lifeproject**. You can be proud that as a teacher, you have provided a valuable service to your students and they will enter the adult world better prepared from your efforts.*



*Vicki Schulz*