GRADES 6–12

DISCOVER®

Pathway to Financial Success

In Schools

MASTER CLASS SERIES

# EDUCATOR GUIDE

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## Introduction

This collection of Master Class videos is designed to inform and inspire educators to bring financial lessons to their students. Each video in the series highlights a different educator and his or her approach to providing financial education. The educators bring their personal experiences to their work and find ways to make the lessons they provide relevant to their students. Through their stories, viewers see firsthand the benefits financial education can have both on the intended beneficiary (the students) and the teachers themselves.

The Master Class videos and this guide can be used in a variety of settings to:

- spark ideas and personal reflection;
- guide discussions with members of a professional learning network;
- prompt conversation with administrators about the need for financial education; or
- augment a professional development program.

In addition to the Master Class videos, Pathway to Financial Success in Schools offers a variety of resources that are designed for teachers with varying levels of experience, including ones who are interested in teaching about personal finance for the first time:

- Self-Paced Modules: Students complete engaging, technology-enabled experiences on one or more of the forty topics covered at the high school level. Designed to complete in about 15 minutes, the modules can be used to introduce or reinforce concepts and can be expanded with further discussion.
- Classroom Activities: Middle and high school educators have access to hands-on, standards-aligned learning activities that relate personal finance concepts to students' lives and reinforce key academic skills.
- Family Connections: Prompt discussion between students and their families with a series of guides that prompt conversation, encourage action, and provide additional information for families to explore.
- Student and Educator Videos: Middle school students can watch videos that break down personal finance topics and make them relevant for their grade-level. Meanwhile, their teachers will find videos to help them brush up on the content and integrate personal finance into a variety of subject areas, including language arts, family and consumer sciences, math, and social studies.

## Objectives

- Explain why it is valuable to provide students with financial education;
- Illustrate how educators can use Pathway to Financial Success resources to help students learn about personal finance and understand how they can take control of their financial futures;
- Inspire educators to consider how they can increase the extent to which they provide financial education and/or expand upon the materials they use to teach personal finance; and
- Encourage educators to explore ways to bring meaningful and relevant financial lessons to all students.

## Materials

- Pathway to Financial Success in School Master Class Videos
  - Amanda Lucero on Connecting Personal Finance and Social Emotional Learning
  - Tony Montgomery on Making Personal Finance Culturally Relevant
  - Yanely Espinal on Harnessing the Power of Your Own Financial Experiences
- Computer(s) with Internet access
- Chart paper, if using the videos as part of professional development activities (optional)

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## Video Overview

# Amanda Lucero on Connecting Personal Finance and Social Emotional Learning

"When you're happy, you may not spend as much money. When you're sad, you may spend more money."

## Featured Educator

Amanda Lucero is a Family Consumer Sciences teacher in Mission, Texas, where she started an elective personal finance course that has become a breakout hit among students at Sharyland High School. Amanda says it's important to be honest with students. If you don't know something that they're asking about, promise that you'll help them find the answer and follow up. She also believes it is important to admit some of your own financial mistakes or in her case, she says, "lots of mistakes." Amanda also connects financial education with social emotional learning. Her "Feelings Friday" sessions encourage students to share stories and emotions and allow her to highlight connections between personal finances and emotional well-being. Amanda holds degrees from Texas State University and Texas Woman's University and has achieved both the Certified in Family and Consumer Sciences (CFCS) and Certified Personal & Family Finance Educator (CPFFE) designations from the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences.

## Her Approach to Financial Education

Located along the US-Mexico border, the student population of Sharyland High School is considered majority-minority. In other words, more than half of the students represent social, ethnic, or racial minorities. In the case of Sharyland, the majority of students share a Hipsanic heritage. When Amanda started her Dollars and $ense course, she discovered that cultural norms were influencing course registrations. In particular, families were discouraging their daughters from enrolling in the class since personal finance wasn't something they'd "need to understand." Over time, she's worked to fight against this misconception. A strong advocate for mental health and well-being, Amanda acknowledges and uses the connections between finances, emotions, and relationships. For example, she shares with students that 99-percent of domestic violence cases also involve financial abuse. These aren't easy topics to broach with students. Before doing so, Amanda works to build trust with her students (starting out small) and embraces being vulnerable. Then she makes connections to relationships and emotions throughout the course. For example, she might ask, "Do you save money to share things with the people that you love?" These conversations take center stage on Feelings Friday where students discuss topics of interest. This approach underscores Amanda's effort to focus on the whole student and makes her course relevant and engaging for students.

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## Questions to Consider and/or Discuss

- What connections do you currently make between emotions or mental health and personal finance? How might you expand on these in a meaningful way?
- Are you comfortable with students openly sharing their personal experiences and stories in class? What are the benefits of doing so? What are the potential tradeoffs?
- In the intro Amanda says, "When you're happy, you may not spend as much money. When you're sad, you may spend more money." Do you agree? What personal example could you share with students to demonstrate this phenomenon in action?
- Amanda describes the self-paced modules in Pathway to Financial Success in Schools as turnkey, easy to use, and a great way to introduce or review content. Have you explored these modules? If so, what did you think?

## Related Resources

- Why Social and Emotional Learning Is Essential for Students: Review the five key areas of social and emotional learning and consider the connections between SEL and financial education.
- National Network to End Domestic Violence: Learn about financial abuse and the many forms it can take. Fact sheets on the topic are available in both English and Spanish.
- The Five Love Languages: Explore the five love languages and consider how these connect to finances.
- Data on Valentine's Day Spending: Find out how much consumers typically spend celebrating Valentine's Day including averages per person and a year-to-year comparison.
- Mental Health and Finances: Read up on the different ways personal finances and mental health are often connected.
    - 7 Reasons Mental Health Issues And Financial Issues Tend to Go Hand-in-Hand
    - Compulsive Spending: What You Need to Know
    - Stressed About Money? 6 Stress-Less Financial Tactics

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## Video Overview

# Tony Montgomery on Making Personal Finance Culturally Relevant

"Every kid, I don't care who they are, has to learn how to handle money."

## Featured Educator

Before Tony Montgomery became a teacher, he was a financial planner and stockbroker. This real-world experience has paid dividends in his nearly 30-year teaching career. More than half of that time, he has taught a course dedicated to personal finance. His philosophy behind teaching about money is that it's important to meet kids "where they're at" and then take them "where you want them to go." At City-As-School High School, an alternative high school focused on real world internships in New York City, Tony achieves this by always trying to relate to the stories of his students. He works hard to not only know and understand his students, but also to make them realize that every person has to be able to handle money at some point in their lives. A strong advocate for personal finance education for all students, Tony serves as a member of the Financial and Consumer Empowerment Focus Group created by the New York State Comptroller's Office. He holds degrees from the State University of New York and the College of Mount Saint Vincent.

## His Approach to Financial Education

Tony Montgomery believes financial education should be relevant to students. Meeting them where they are and taking advantage of teachable moments—what he calls "hunger moments"—are key. He strives to know his students and their individual situations in order to make his lessons and discussions as relevant as possible. Tony is also committed to honing his craft through practice. He values being able to refine his lessons and instructional approach over time which allows him to identify where students might get stuck and then avoid those "potholes" in the future. Like many financial educators, Tony knows what it is like to be the only person in his school teaching personal finance. Unlike colleagues in other departments, there is often only one person assigned to teach personal finance. Tony encourages financial educators to become part of a community and seek out like-minded educators. Doing so can offer support and encouragement as well as open the door to new resources and approaches.

## Questions to Consider and/or Discuss

- What comes to mind when you hear the term culturally relevant instruction?
- How do you make your lessons culturally relevant for students? What areas of your curriculum could use the most improvement in terms of cultural relevance?
- What support do you have as a teacher of personal finance? To whom do you turn when you are looking for a strategy to teach a particular topic or are looking for an innovative resource? How can you build upon that support network?

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- Tony Montgomery is an advocate for every student receiving financial education as evidence in this opinion piece he wrote. Where do you stand on the need for financial education? In what ways might you advocate for more students to take a course in personal finance or increase access to financial education in your community?

## Related Resources

- Culturally Relevant Teaching: Use this introduction to culturally relevant teaching to help learn more about how you can create more engaging and equitable learning opportunities for all students.
- FinLitFanatics: Join this or another Facebook group and connect with educators who are committed to financial education. More general groups also exist for specific disciplines such as business or family and consumer sciences.
- Advocating for Financial Education: Explore the advocacy tools created by Next Gen Personal Finance to support financial education in your school, district, or community. Amongst the tools are examples of advocacy goals other educators have set and case studies which profile specific educators and their efforts to enhance financial education.

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## Video Overview

# Yanely Espina on Harnessing the Power of Your Own Financial Experiences

"Mistakes that you've made with your own personal finances are great stories for your students."

## Featured Educator

Born and raised in Brooklyn, New York, Yanely Espinal is a former classroom teacher turned full-time financial educator. Despite being a proud product of the New York City public school system and Brown University, Yanely found herself ill-equipped to manage the credit card debt she accumulated in college. Yanely couldn't believe she had never had a class about making smart money decisions. Determined to teach herself the basics of finance, Yanely began learning about personal finance by reading books, listening to podcasts, and watching YouTube videos. "Self-study is one of the best ways to learn anything," she says. After serving as a Teach For America corps member, Yanely paired her love for teaching with her passion for financial literacy, creating a unique YouTube channel for people to engage with personal finance topics. Known to her followers as Miss Be Helpful, Yanely shares information and tips on topics like budgeting, managing credit, saving and investing for retirement, and more. Her passion for financial education led to Yanely's current position as the Director of Educational Outreach at Next Gen Personal Finance, a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing financial education resources for educators and students. Yanely also serves as a member of CNBC's Financial Wellness Advisory Council and holds a master's degree from Relay Graduate School of Education.

## Her Approach to Financial Education

Yanely Espinol doesn't claim to be perfect when it comes to her past financial choices. In fact, she harnesses her mistakes and leverages them to connect with students as a way of encouraging students to make better choices and be informed about their financial options. She openly shares her personal stories about accumulating debt during college and working to pay it off over time. Yanely is passionate about all students receiving personal finance education in schools. She knows that many people are like her—learning from the school of hard knocks and a multitude of sources to become financially "literate." Her stories of being self-taught and the dangers of a lack of financial education are powerful as she works with teachers and other educators to support their financial education efforts. She believes every student deserves financial education and that teachers should have the tools and resources needed to teach it effectively.

## Questions to Consider and/or Discuss

- In what ways can you use your personal experiences with money to gain student trust and enrich your personal finance lessons?
- How comfortable are you with sharing financial mistakes with your students? Have friends or family members made mistakes that you can share while protecting the person's anonymity?

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- In what ways are you engaging parents in their child's financial education? Do you find that parents are supportive of the education their students are receiving, do they wish they'd had the same opportunity as a student, and/or are they learning along with their child?
- Who do you think should take a class in personal finance? How does that align with what is offered and/or required in your school?

## Related Resources

- Miss Be Helpful: Watch videos of Yanely sharing her financial knowledge on her YouTube channel.
- Encouraging Conversations with Families: Encourage conversations between students and their families.
- Learning From the Past: The Power of Stories: Read this post from The Teaching Channel about three benefits of using stories in the classroom.
- Spend Now or Spend Later?: Explore this classroom activity that gets students thinking about their financial futures. Consider using it as a springboard for discussing your financial past. What do you wish you'd known about finances when you were their age? How might that knowledge have changed your action or attitudes?
- Got Finance?: Check the map and see how your school stacks up against others. Schools are given one of four designations: 1) Gold: All students take personal finance. 2) Silver: A course in personal finance is an elective. 3) Bronze: Personal finance is embedded in another course. 4) No personal finance offerings are included in the course catalog.

## Acknowledgements

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