

From: [David Bach](#)
To: [Comments, Public](#)
Subject: Teaching financial literacy
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Hello,

Last July, I informed FINRA that its website was confusing people when determining net worth, using "expenses" as a heading rather than "liabilities." It was updated promptly. Let's continue from there.

Twenty-one states have no requirement to teach personal financial planning in grades 0 - 12. California, Pennsylvania and Texas get an "F" grade for financial knowledge. Meanwhile, Utah gets an "A+" grade for its requirement to teaching financial education in the fourth, eighth and twelfth grades. New college students at my local college learn how to write checks in orientation class. At the same university, only business majors are allowed to take a financial planning course. What about the other 96 percent of students on campus? I have met millennials that have never heard of "compound interest."

The local superintendent of schools, the state superintendent of public instruction, and the UC Chancellor have not returned my requests for how they plan to teach personal financial planning and retirement to students. School principals do not return my calls when I offer to conduct a one-hour basic investment class in, perhaps, an economics class they may have. Basically, if you are not in the education silo, you are *persona non grata*.

The Social Security website graphically portrays benefits received based on when they start (they grow nearly eight percent annually during the four years before age 70). However, it does not incorporate time value of money in the analysis which, in a low-interest-rate environment like we have now--and may have for awhile--is very important to consider. I have seen excessive fees being charged in workers' retirement plans but can do nothing about it as I have no standing. The Federal Reserve System estimates excessive fees by financial institutions amount to \$17 billion annually. It's time for that to stop.

What's going on in the marketplace today is crazy. Dogecoin and non-fungible tokens? Look what happened in the 1990s to options on housing starts and auto production.

What to do?

There is a plethora of options available to learn finance and investments. DVDs on investments are available (e.g., Great Courses). There are websites teaching investments, including FINRA, the SEC and other government and private concerns (AARP's website is a great source on scams). But the reality is, it's not working.

According to the Census Bureau, only four percent--one in 25--of Americans are financially independent in retirement; according to the Employment Benefit Research Institute (EBRI), just two percent!

There has to be an opportunity for students to ask questions and receive feedback. That doesn't work with DVDs. All should hear the questions and answers simultaneously so everyone gets feedback at the same time to ask follow-on questions and hear those responses together. That doesn't work well when someone reads the answer on a website a day later. Even if workers read the website of the service provider for their employer's retirement plan, they still don't understand it. We have to get back to basics. A Bill Cosby skit on an LP from the 1960s described the current situation well. A teacher is teaching their young students math. The teacher says "Two and two are four" and the kids say "Wow! Right on teach! What's a two?" People need to know the difference between a financial planner and an investment adviser. Who out there, right now, teaches the people the difference between suitability, Reg. BI and fiduciary and teaches people the disadvantages of mutual funds except for me (I have no products to sell)? Only in a school setting can people receive objective information with full disclosure.

A 2020 Charles Schwab Financial Literacy survey was quite revealing. Two-thirds of respondents said schools should be responsible for teaching financial planning and investments. Eighty-nine (89) percent felt financial education can address today's social issues. A school environment is the way to go. What do we have to lose except many people on the dole in retirement?

Most investors have no indication of the value of a stock. I have offered a simplified stock valuation model (red, avoid; green, consider) that has existed for nearly 60 years to the local university to provide the community some way of leveling the playing field on investments. Subscription fees could be allocated to scholarships. It was rejected. I am trying to construct a website to provide that to the community but need assistance in that capacity (I didn't learn website construction in school).

If I can be of help, please contact me.

Thank you,
David Bach
[Linkedin.com/in/david-bach-53581724](https://www.linkedin.com/in/david-bach-53581724)