

## **Money Ninja Warrior: An extension program designed to teach youth how to manage their money using apps on their smartphones and tablets.**

### **Description of content and method**

This session presents impacts on Money Ninja Warrior (MNW), an extension program designed to teach youth how to manage their money using apps on their smartphones. This is a timely educational program as youth from nearly all socioeconomic backgrounds gain increasing access to mobile devices at an early age. Additionally, apps that help with money management have become increasingly prevalent, and the accessibility and power of smartphone apps makes managing money regularly and on the go, not only possible, but preferable.

This AFCPE session will: 1) Give a brief demonstration of the MNW program 2) Present the impacts of the program, 3) Share directions for access to the program and all supplemental teaching materials, and 4) Share suggestions for program replication in other states.

### **Objective/purpose**

The MNW program addresses the 10 major financial app categories: 1) Allowance; 2) Financial Education; 3) Debt Reduction Planning; 4) Shopping Guides & Calculators; 5) Credit Monitoring; 6) Investing; 7) Account Aggregating Services; 8) Taxes; 9) Mobile Payment; 10) Bank & Insurance Companies. Examples of apps in each of these categories are shared, and their strengths and weaknesses presented and discussed.

### **Impact/value to the field**

This program was developed using research which indicates that youth respond well to digital games in the educational process (deCos, 2015; Schuster, 2012). Financial games and simulations have been successfully implemented both in and out of schools (Mosley, 2014; O'Neill, 2008). Digital games also have the ability to provide experiential learning opportunities of trial and error without putting learners at risk (Jones & Chang, 2014).

Following a logic-model-based process, the authors identified educational priorities through an advisory board, surveys, and research. On the basis of these findings, the authors created a library of 11 digital youth personal finance educational games, including MNW. They were designed to be delivered in group settings and were developed using the ADDIE instructional design process.

Program impacts include over 500 participants. Using a 5-point scale, participants indicated a 41% knowledge gain of financial apps, and 38% increase in intended behaviors using financial apps to help manage money in the future. Participants also shared comments on their intentions to share the program with friends and relatives and to play the game again on their own time outside of the classroom.

### **Target Audience**

The game itself targets middle- and high-school aged youth. The AFCPE session will be primarily for practitioners/educators who work with youth. The program is presented with a fun and playful narrated game structure. MNW is one of 11 innovative digital experiential financial programs under a digital educational games initiative from XXXXXXXXXX Extension.

## **Research Implications/Questions for Researchers**

There are several avenues of potential research that can be derived from this program. First studies about youth (and adults) who use smartphones to manage their finances and scarce. Second the use of digital games that are immersive and experiential for financial educational purposes are in need of further research.

## **Learning Objectives/Key Takeaways \***

After this session, attendees will walk away from the session and understand a little more about the power and potential of using smart phones and tablets to manage their money. They will also be made more aware of the different types of financial apps available. Attendees will also become familiar with the use of digital gaming techniques for teaching youth about personal finance topics.