

# TEACHING TIPS

from the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City



BASED ON THE  
MARCH 2007 MAIN STREET ECONOMIST  
"MINORITIES IN THE TENTH DISTRICT:  
ARE THEY READY FOR THE JOBS OF THE  
FUTURE?"

This issue of the Main Street Economist focuses on the correlation between educational level and job opportunities for minorities in the Midwest. It examines specific levels of education attainment for Hispanics, blacks, Asians and Native Americans and the relationship to their future job outlook. The article suggests ways that public policies can promote increased educational attainment and thereby enhance job prospects for minorities.

## Reading the Article with Students

Teachers can use this five-page article in the classroom for a reading and discussion activity across a variety of disciplines. The article could be read as homework or in class; it can be paired with a class-directed discussion or written questions completed in advance. The article is available at: [http://www.kansascityfed.org/publicat/mse/MSE\\_03\\_07.pdf](http://www.kansascityfed.org/publicat/mse/MSE_03_07.pdf).

## KEY PERSONAL FINANCE & ECONOMIC CONCEPTS

*Review the meanings of some of the personal finance and economic concepts contained in this article.*

### Current Events

1. The rapid growth of minorities in the Tenth District counties has been documented by the Census Bureau data (Map 1). What are some reasons that the minority population growth has exceeded the growth of the general population? Explain how these reasons could affect employment opportunities.

#### Social Studies, Economics and Business

1. According to Bureau of Labor Statistics data, jobs requiring postsecondary education are expected to grow faster than those jobs requiring a high school education or less. If the average level of minority educational attainment stays at the high school level in the future, predict how the economic growth of the Tenth District may be affected.

2. The job outlook research indicates that jobs requiring associate degrees are expected to grow faster than those that require bachelor's and master's degrees (Chart 3). The data also shows that there are more minorities enrolled in two-year programs than in four-year universities (Chart 4). Discuss how this correlation may influence the job outlook and earning potential of minorities in the future.

#### Social and Cultural Issues

1. Looking at the research on high-paying occupations (Chart 1), you will notice that minorities were employed in a below average amount of professional occupations and very few management positions. What could be some social or cultural reasons that may have influenced their job choices? Can you suggest ways that students could get beyond reasons that may limit their choices?

## Direct Discussion Questions

**ECONOMIC GROWTH:** *The ability of the economy to increase its total real output or real GDP (gross domestic product), or its real GDP per person. Economic growth comes from several sources: improvement in the education, experience and skill level of the workforce, greater amounts of physical capital, and improved technology. Economic growth is critical to job creation and economic well being.*

**EMPLOYMENT:** *People who have jobs.*

**HUMAN CAPITAL:** *The health, education, experience, training, skills and values of people.*

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2. Early childhood education is recommended as a way to increase long-term educational attainment of minorities. Compile a list of reasons showing why early childhood education is beneficial to the child, parent, community and country, both socially and economically.

1. Look at the Occupational Outlook Handbook online at [www.bls.gov/oco](http://www.bls.gov/oco). Select the link to Tomorrow's Jobs. Read the introduction and section on "population" and "labor force" to see how these factors influence the job market. Explain your answers to the following questions: What changes are projected to happen to the overall population until 2014? What specific changes are predicted for the minority population? How will these changes affect the U.S. workforce in terms of job opportunities?

2. Search the U.S. Census Bureau data online at [www.census.gov/hhes/socdemo/education/data/cps/2006/tables.html](http://www.census.gov/hhes/socdemo/education/data/cps/2006/tables.html). Make a table/chart comparing the 2006 educational attainment in the "15 years and up" category of blacks (refer to Table 01-04); Asians (Table 01-05); and Hispanics (Table 01-06). Compare the following educational levels: some college, associate-occupational, associate-academic, bachelor's and master's degrees. Do your findings correspond with those of the article (Chart 5)? What, if any, differences did you discover?

3. In the U.S. Census Bureau data, go to [www.census.gov/prod/2006pubs/acs-02.pdf](http://www.census.gov/prod/2006pubs/acs-02.pdf) to look at the American Community Survey. Focus on the "Median Earnings by Educational Attainment" p. 11. Read the data on median earnings for men and women in Table 5. Compare and contrast the earnings of white, black, Hispanics and Asian men and women of the same racial origin. Record the average percentage of men's earnings for each racial group of women. How would you explain this discrepancy? What conclusions can you draw as to women being considered a minority group?

4. Interview a guidance counselor at your school on the topic of educational level and job opportunities. Use the following questions to guide your interview:

- In your experience of counseling students, did more minorities consider lower levels of postsecondary education than whites?
- What reasons did minority students give for their educational choices?
- What are some of the barriers that these students face as they try to advance their education?
- In your opinion, how can students get beyond these barriers?

## Extension Activities

## Key Personal Finance & Economic Concepts continued

**INCOME:** Payments earned by households for selling or renting their productive resources. These may include salaries, wages, interest and dividends.

**JOB:** A paid position of regular employment.

**LABOR FORCE:** The people in a nation who are age 16 and over and are employed or actively looking for work.

**RESOURCES:** The basic kinds of resources used to produce goods and services; land or natural resources, human resources (including labor and entrepreneurship), and capital resources.

For more economic concepts, definitions and lessons, check out *Virtual Economics 3.0* from the National Council on Economic Education (online at [www.councilforeconed.org](http://www.councilforeconed.org)).

Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City:  
Main Street Economist - January 2007  
"Minorities in the Tenth District: Are They Ready for the Jobs of the Future?"  
[http://www.kansascityfed.org/publicat/mse/MSE\\_03\\_07.pdf](http://www.kansascityfed.org/publicat/mse/MSE_03_07.pdf)

Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City:  
TEN Magazine - Spring 2007  
"Career Builders: Education Can Help Growing Minority Populations Face Workforce Challenges"  
<http://www.kansascityfed.org/publicat/TEN/pdf/Spring2007/Spring2007CareerBuilders.pdf>

Occupational Outlook Handbook  
<http://www.bls.gov/oco>

U.S. Census Bureau  
<http://www.census.gov>

## Links and Resources

Teaching Tips is a FREE resource from the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City. It is available on our web site at [www.kansascityfed.org](http://www.kansascityfed.org).

For more educational resources from the Federal Reserve Bank, contact Michele Wulff ([michele.wulff@kc.frb.org](mailto:michele.wulff@kc.frb.org)).