TY Budgeting Activity

Budgeting is a very important life skill. Whether you are doing a budget for yourself, for your family, for a company or for a country, it is important to have this skill and Transition Year is a great time to think about the importance of budgeting.

This budgeting exercise is designed to encourage young people to think about the cost of things, how to budget, the importance of saving and the importance of thinking about value for money when they are spending.

The exercise is designed to fill 1 class period, but it can be amended to include additional activities if desired.

A key aspect of the exercise is a general class discussion to find out what everyone learned about budgeting, its importance and where else these skills might be used and also about value for money and how it can be found.

Key components of the activity include team work, communication skills and it is a great way to explore creativity among the group.

Requirements:

paper and markers for each group

Access to the internet to research costings.

Getting Started:

- Students are introduced initially to the importance of budgeting as a life skill, and reassured that the only maths needed will be basic arithmetic!
- Divide the class into groups of four to six
- Pick a scenario for which the students will carry out the budgeting activity.
  It's important to pick a topic or activity that your students are interested in.

We have run this activity using two scenarios,

- Planning a TY trip
- Planning a TY Ball

It can be interesting for groups in a class to do different scenarios.

The teacher or the class can pick a scenario themselves. The scenario should allow scope for activity and interest and motivate the pupils.

Procedure:

- Students are divided into groups, ideally 4 to 6, and assigned the scenario.
- Each group are then asked to discuss the scenario and agree what the cost per head should be.
- What do they think is reasonable? and affordable? and how many participants will there be?

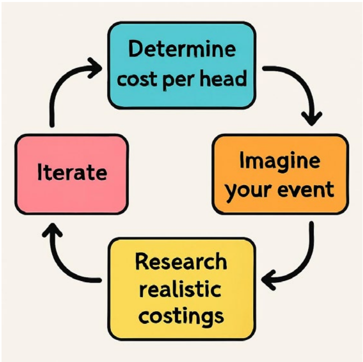
- The teams report their cost per head and the participation numbers. These can be displayed for all the class to see.
- The teams are then asked to imagine what their event would look like. They are encouraged to brainstorm ideas and agree on the makeup of the event. If it is a trip, where do they want to go / if it is a ball what venue do they want?

They then use the internet to cost each item.

- Note: there is no right or wrong approach – decisions are up to the team

Approach is:

- Determine reasonable cost per head
- Imagine your event
- Research realistic costings.
- Then calculate the total cost and the cost per head and then they see how this compares to their initial "reasonable" price.
- Check if budget balances
- Iterate – what can they change to balance our budget? Can they find cheaper options or alternative options? (This is where it really gets interesting.)



Note: It's a group activity and throughout they have to get agreement, and they help each other.

At the end of this process, each group gives a pitch on their idea as if to sell it to the class and this is a really interesting because they can tell us what their starting point was and what they finished on and about the process they used to get there.

This is followed by a general class discussion. Were they surprised by the cost of things? If so what and why? What did they learn about budgeting? How could they use these skills in their lives?

Extension:

You can add in an extra dimension by including fundraising: how much money would you need to raise? / how would you raise money?

After completing this activity your students could adapt it and run it with a younger class in your school. Or, perhaps in a local primary school. This will be really impactful for your students as well as the younger learners.

Share your experiences with us and the community by email at mathsweek.wd@setu.ie or by social media tagging @mathsweek.

This activity has been developed by Maths Week in partnership with Ireland State Savings.