

# Tailoring a programme for youths

THE Citi-SMU Financial Literacy Programme delivers financial information to young adults aged 17 to 30, with a focus on the low to moderate-income earners. Its curriculum is broken into three levels.

The first covers basic money-management skills such as saving and budgeting; the second covers financial planning and products such as stocks; and the third, investment principles such as portfolio management.

“Think of it as a menu-driven programme,” said Jeremy Goh, the programme’s principal investigator. “We build this depository which we can customise very easily.”

Benedict Koh, who runs the programme with Prof Goh, said that how the programme is customised depends on the education level and the learning mode of the target group.

For example, when the programme partnered the Institute of Technical Education (ITE), the content covered basic money-management skills.

As students learn better through hands-on experience, they were taught through games instead of classroom instruction, Prof Koh said.

He noted that as people think



that finance-related subjects are difficult and mathematical, financial literacy classes cannot be taught using hardcore mathematics. Instead, information should be framed intuitively to make it accessible to all students.

Young people are typically not keen on concepts such as saving or retirement planning, so programmes have to be fun to capture their attention, said Prof Goh.

“In some sense, the topics are pretty much similar,” he said. “It’s how you deliver it. You have to understand your target audience first, and what type of pedagogical technique works for different groups.”

The programme has partnered the Association of Muslim Professionals to run workshops until year-end for about 80 teenagers between 14 and 17, whose parents are

in debt and undergoing counselling. Content and teaching styles will change to suit this younger lot.

Prof Goh said that a hands-on method could be tried for this group as well. “There will always be fine-tuning. We’ll go, try, and brainstorm about what works and what doesn’t. It’s a learning process for us too.”

**Make learning fun:**  
*The Citi-SMU Financial Literacy Programme is customised depending on the education level and the learning mode of the students attending the module.*

– By SHEENA TAN