The Benefits of Postsecondary Education

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Time Frame 180 minutes

Essential Question(s)

How does postsecondary education benefit you?

Summary

This lesson focuses on scaffolding the use of the Get a Life college and career simulation game in the classroom, specifically targeting career awareness in middle school students. Participants will play the game and experience classroom activities designed to process the gameplay and facilitate discussion about how salary, education level, and career/life satisfaction intersect.

Learning Goals

- The student can explain that different careers require different levels of education.
- The student can compare level of education to trends in salary and the number of career choices available.
- The student can identify factors that contribute to career satisfaction over a lifetime.
- The student can create a personal goal towards growing their future career options.

Attachments

- 3-2-1 Activity—The Benefits of Postsecondary Education.pdf
- Career Cards—The Benefits of Postsecondary Education.pdf
- Career Cluster Info Sheets—The Benefits of Postsecondary Education.pdf
- Character Sheet and Achievements—The Benefits of Postsecondary Education.pdf
- Game Portal Guide—The Benefits of Postsecondary Education.pdf
- Get a Life! Activity Slides—The Benefits of Postsecondary Education.pptx
- Research Brief—The Benefits of Postsecondary Education.pdf
- Teacher's Guide—The Benefits of Postsecondary Education.pdf

Materials

- Get a Life! Activity Slides (attached)
- Character Sheet and Achievements handout (attached; print two-sided; one per student)
- 3-2-1 Activity handout (attached; one per student)
- Career Cards (attached; one per group)
- Career Cluster Info Sheets (attached; one per career group)
- Research Brief (attached; one per student)
- Teacher’s Guide (attached; optional)
- Game Portal Guide (attached; optional)
- Laptops with Internet access
- K20 Game Portal teacher account
- 6-sided dice (one per career group)
- Highlighter (one per student)
- Notebook paper (one per student)

45 minutes

Engage

Teacher's Note: Accessing GBL Games

For your students to play Get a Life, you'll need to set up a class in the K20 Center Game Portal ahead of time. Go to games.k20center.ou.edu and create an account. After you log in, you'll be able to create a class and invite students. For more information on how to create an account and set up a class, refer to the Game Portal Instructions Youtube playlist. If you experience any issues, go to games.k20center.ou.edu/support to contact user support. A **Teacher's Guide** and **Game Portal Guide** are attached and optional for an introduction—and instruction—to the game.

Prior to the lesson, print a two-sided **Character Sheet and Achievements** handout for each student. The Character Sheet and Achievements page will be used at different points in this activity. Print and cut out the attached Career Cards.

Use the attached **Activity slides** to guide the lesson. To begin, display **slides 3-4**. Discuss with the student the essential question and learning objectives.

Display **slide 5** and ask students to choose a career cluster and form a group for each cluster, groups of 2-3 are best.

Display **slide 6**. Pass out the corresponding **Career Card** and dice to each group. Try to make sure all of the clusters are evenly distributed among your class. Once students have their Career Card, have each of them roll a dice (or otherwise randomly assign a number from 1 to 6 to each student). The number each student rolls reflects their level of education and their resulting career based on the possible careers numbered 1–6 on each card.

Teacher's Note: Adjusting Instruction For Class Size

For smaller classes, you can just focus on the fastest-growing career clusters: STEM, Health Science, Business, Logistics & Transportation, and Information Technology. For larger groups, you may need more than one career cluster.

Next, display **slide 7** and pass out the **Character Sheet** to each student and a dice to each group. Have students roll the dice to discover their character from the Character and Achievements handout.

Then display **slide 8** and have students take turns rolling the dice to discover their ACT score. Use the chart below:

- Roll a 1 and get a score of 15
- Roll a 2 and get a score of 19
- Roll a 3 and get a score of 23
- Roll a 4 and get a score of 32
- Roll a 5 and get a score 34
- Roll a 6 and get a perfect score of 36!

Have the students fill in their Character Sheet with their ACT score, their career, and the college they expect the character to attend. They can then sketch their character in the space provided. Students should begin to recognize the mediating factor level of education has on their further education choices and subsequent career options.

Teacher's Note: Encouraging Proactive Career Choices

The idea at this stage of instruction is to reinforce that students need to get involved and become active in the pursuit of a career they want—otherwise, they have to take what they get.

Next, display **slide 9** and introduce the Preflections instructional strategy to have your students respond to the following "My Career" questions on the Character Sheet:

1. *How much do you expect to be paid for this job?*
2. *Do you think this is higher or lower than the average income?*
3. *What kind of education does this career require?*
4. *How will this career affect your life outside of work (time with family/friends, good health, personal fulfillment)?*
5. *How will this career enable you to help society or your community?*
6. *What else would you like to know about this career?*

Teacher's Note: Income Stats And Resources

This game was created in 2018 and is based on income and salaries from that time frame. It is important that you point out to the students that the college costs and salaries do not reflect the current year. In 2018, the average household income in Oklahoma was $50,051, and the median household income nationwide was $60,336 according to The Census Bureau's American Community Survey. The Census Bureau and Data USA are good sources for finding up-to-date income statistics for Oklahoma and other locations. You might consider exploring this with your students.

45 minutes

Explore

Teacher's Note: Add Game Portal Link

Once you have created a class in your Game Portal Dashboard, you will find the link to share with your students to access the game. Add this link to slide 10 or your LMS prior to starting the activity.

Display **slide 10**, students will now play through *Get a Life*. Pass out laptops or facilitate another means for students to use a computer with internet access. Have the students navigate to the game portal link you added to the slide. Encourage the students to explore the game and pay close attention to the relationships between education, income, debt, and career choice.

Teacher's Note: About *Get A Life*

Each time a student plays *Get a Life,* they are randomly assigned to one of the game's 10 characters, who receives arbitrary values for ACT score, GPA, and their family's college contribution amount. The game is designed to encourage students to play several times to get a feel for different careers and varying levels of education. The game takes between 5 and 15 minutes to complete each playthrough, depending on how quickly the student plays. We recommend allowing enough time for all of your students to play through at least twice. You can track their progress in your Game Portal Dashboard.

After students have had enough time to play the game at least twice, display **slide 11**, introduce the 3-2-1 strategy, and distribute the **3-2-1 Activity** handout for each student to complete. Depending on the class size, follow up with either a whole-class or small group discussion of their observations related to the 3-2-1 questions:

1. *What three things did you learn or notice about the relationship between income, career, and education?*
2. *What are 2 questions you still have?*
3. *What is 1 thing you found interesting?*

If time constraints are a concern, this is a good stopping point.

Technology Option: 3-2-1

The 3-2-1 can be executed using an online interactive version of the instructional strategy. This will allow the teacher to instantly set up the prompt, provide students with a link/QR, and allow students to answer in real time. Consider downloading the responses to refer back to at a later time.

30 minutes

Explain

Form groups of 2–5 students based on which career clusters most interest them. These do not have to be the same clusters they chose previously. Hand each group the appropriate **Career Cluster Info Sheet** based on their chosen career.

Show **slide 12**. Distribute the **Research Brief** and a highlighter to each student. Have students read the brief individually and take notes using a Why-Lighting strategy, then read their Career Cluster Info Sheet. Each student should highlight at least three ideas in the Research Brief that are the most interesting to them and note in the margins why they highlighted that idea. Ask students to also highlight at least one career on the Career Cluster Info Sheet they would like to learn more about and note in the margins why they think that job would be satisfying.

Teacher's Note: Jigsaw and Reading Ability

If the Research Brief looks like too much text for your students to process, consider using the Jigsaw strategy. Assign each group member to read a different section of the Research Brief and explain it to their fellow group members.

After finishing the reading strategy, ask groups to discuss what they have highlighted and why. Then, lead a whole-class discussion about what makes a job meaningful.

If time constraints are a concern, this is a good stopping point.

Possible Student Response

When discussing what makes a job meaningful, you may hear responses such as: *"Being good at your job," "Getting paid well," "Doing work that is fun or interesting," " Helping others,"* or *"Working with people you like,"* among others. Encourage as many different responses as possible.

Optional: Data Point for Discussion Option

If you are able, have students examine this survey from Payscale and discuss why certain jobs were reported as being higher or lower levels in terms of meaningfulness and satisfaction. Ask them to connect these survey responses to the reading.

40 minutes

Extend

Display **slide 13**. Students will now get the chance to play *Get a Life* again with specific challenges to guide them. These challenges are located on the back of the Character Sheet. As they play, students should check off the different achievements they reach on their character sheet. Each time the student completes a game and gets their character to retirement, they'll see feedback on their comfort level, civic performance, and savings achievement.

Teacher's Note: Managing Challenges and Time Constraints

If possible, each challenge achievement should be completed. If time is limited, students may complete just the first three challenges.

20 minutes

Evaluate

Display **slide 14**. After playing through the game with challenges, have students participate in a survey to measure what they have learned about the relationship between postsecondary education and career options.

Survey Options: Digital and Analog Survey Options

You can add technology to this activity by using a survey app (such as Mentimeter or Plickers) to poll students. Follow the previous links or look for the full URL of these sites in the Resources below. Or you might choose to have the students hold up colored strips of paper (red for "disagree" and green for "agree"). Another option is to get students moving around the room by using a variation Four Corners strategy. Mark one wall or corner as “agree” and the other as “disagree” and have students move to the one that matches their opinion.

Click to revel each survey statement, this will help students process information and resolve misconceptions. Considering having students stand up or sit down to share their answer for agree or disagree. Discuss the responses and how students formed their ideas after each poll.

- **Agree/Disagree:** The higher the education, the higher the pay.
- **Agree/Disagree:** College is too expensive for me. *(Discuss how the increased future salary that accompanies many college degrees can offset the education costs, depending on the chosen career path.)*
- **Agree/Disagree:** I learned about new jobs that I didn’t know existed before this activity.
- **Agree/Disagree:** I was right about the level of education needed on my Character Sheet.
- **Agree/Disagree:** My thoughts on post-secondary opportunities have changed.
- **Agree/Disagree:** There are jobs I'd consider now that I didn’t know about before this activity.

Display **slide 15** and have students reference their **Character Sheet** from the Engage activity and their **Research Brief** from the Explain. Ask them to use these materials to identify some goals or actions for the next few years of school that will help them improve their chances of reaching a career and a lifestyle that blends comfort, balance, and purpose. Have students write their goals on a sheet of notebook paper.

Possible Student Responses

Some responses we would hope to see are: *“Challenge myself academically so I can do well on the ACT,” “Practice and get good at [a particular skill],”* and *“Explore my interests and find hobbies to spend time developing,"* among others.

Optional Activity: Meme Your Goal!

To further students' exploration of their goal, have them turn it into a meme. They can use technology by accessing a meme generator, such as Make a Meme, or may choose to draw their ideas. The meme can serve as a reminder of and motivation for pursuing their actions and goals in the coming years.

Research Rationale

See attached Research Brief.

Resources

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