The Benefits of Postsecondary Education (PSE)

Get a Life

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Grade Level	7th – 12th Grade	**Time Frame**	3-4 class period(s)
Course	Advisory	**Duration**	180 minutes

Essential Question

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.

Snapshot

Engage

Students choose a career that interests them and complete a Preflection exercise to activate their prior knowledge about educational requirements and work-life balance.

Explore

Students play the Get a Life game and complete a 3-2-1 activity about the relationships between career, income, and education.

Explain

Students compare the observations they made in the 3-2-1 activity after playing the game to research about career satisfaction.

Extend

Students play the Get a Life game multiple times with specific challenge parameters.

Evaluate

Students return to the Preflection exercise and discuss what they have learned about the relationship between education, income, and careers.

Attachments

- 3-2-1 Activity—The Benefits of Postsecondary Education.pdf
- 3-2-1-Activity.pdf
- Advisory Lesson Appendix—The Benefits of Postsecondary Education.pdf
- Advisory Lesson Career Data Sheets—The Benefits of Postsecondary Education.pdf
- Advisory Lesson—The Benefits of Postsecondary Education.pdf
- AdvisoryLesson-Appendix.pdf
- AdvisoryLesson-CareerDataSheets.pdf
- AdvisoryLesson.pdf
- Career Cards—The Benefits of Postsecondary Education.pdf
- Career Cluster Info Sheets—The Benefits of Postsecondary Education.pdf
- Career-Cards.pdf
- Career-Cluster-Info-Sheets.pdf
- Character Sheet and Achievements—The Benefits of Postsecondary Education.pdf
- Character-Sheet-and-Achievements.pdf
- Get a Life! Lesson Slides—The Benefits of Postsecondary Education.pptx
- Get-a-Life-lesson.pptx
- Research Brief—The Benefits of Postsecondary Education.pdf
- Research-Brief.pdf
- Teachers Guide—The Benefits of Postsecondary Education.pdf
- TeachersGuide.pdf

Materials

- Computers with Internet access
- K20 Game Portal teacher account
- Writing materials—pen, pencil, paper, etc.
- 6-sided dice (or another randomizer)
- Character Sheet and Achievements handout (attached)
- 3-2-1 Activity handout (attached)
- Career Lesson Cards (attached)
- Career Cluster info sheets (attached)
- Research Brief (attached)

Engage

Teacher's Note: Accessing Gbl Games

In order to play Get a Life, you will need to request access before the lesson. To request a Game Portal account, go to k20center.ou.edu/getgames and fill out the form.

Prior to the lesson, print a **Character Sheet and Achievements** (attached) for each student. Print and cut out the attached Career Cards.

To begin the lesson, have students form groups of 2-3. You can either have students form groups based on the career cluster they are most interested in and give them the corresponding **Career Card** or have them for groups another way and deal out a random Career Card to each group.

Ask students to choose a career cluster and form a group for each one. Try to make sure all of the clusters are evenly distributed among your class. Once students have chosen a cluster, have each of them roll a die (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 focus just on the fastest-growing career clusters: STEM, Health Science, Business, Logistics & Transportation, and Information Technology.

Next, have the students fill in their Character Sheet with their ACT score (their roll), 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, use a Preflection instructional strategy to have your students respond to the following "My Career" questions on the Character Sheet:

1. What kind of income do you think you are paid for the chosen career?
2. Do you think this is higher or lower than the average income?
3. What kind of education does this career require (no college, special training, 2-year degree, 4-year degree, more than 4 years)?
4. Do you think this career will give you lots of comfort (time with family/friends, good health, personal fulfillment)?
5. How will this career enable you to help society or your community?

Teacher's Note: Income Stats And Resources

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.

Explore

Students will now play through *Get a Life*. Pass out Chromebooks or facilitate another means for students to use a computer with internet access. 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, introduce the 3-2-1 strategy and distribute the **3-2-1 Activity** handout (attached) for students 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 3 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?

Teacher's Note: 3-2-1 Options, Including Technology Option

The 3-2-1 can be executed using the attached handout, through a group discussion, or you might want to use a technology tool such as Flip. With Flip, students record themselves responding to the questions and then view one another's videos. Explore this free tool to see if it's right for your classroom setting. Follow the link above or you can find the full URL in the Resources below.

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** (attached) based on their chosen career.

Distribute the attached **Research Brief**. 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.

Possible Student Responses

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.

Extend

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 keep notes on the changes between each play-through of the game.

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. On their Character Sheet and Achievements, have students record the results of each measure, as well as how much money their character can spend in retirement.

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.

Evaluate

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.

Teacher's Note: 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.

Below are some suggested survey statements and questions that will help students process information and resolve misconceptions. 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.

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.

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 imgflip, 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.

Resources

- Carnevale, A. P., Rose, S.J., & Cheah, B. (n.d.) The College Payoff: Education, Occupations, Lifetime Earnings. Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce. https://1gyhoq479ufd3yna29x7ubjn-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/collegepayoff-completed.pdf
- Data USA. (2019). Oklahoma Profile. https://datausa.io/profile/geo/oklahoma
- K20 Center. (n.d.). 3-2-1. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/d9908066f654727934df7bf4f5059a7b
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Flip. Tech Tools. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/1075
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