Measuring Your Lifespan

Objectives

Students will:

- Become aware of the importance of long-term goals
- Gain perspective about the lifespan
- Understand the importance of making postsecondary plans
- Gain awareness of the world of work

Create a Plan & Set Goals

Audience: Awareness
Length: 30-45 minutes

Materials Needed

- Tape measure for each student or small group, at least 100 inches long
- Goal setting information and worksheets
  - GPS LifePlan Secondary – Creating a Plan and Setting Goals
  - MCIS – My Career Plan {subscription required} http://mncis.intocareers.org
  - MyMnCareers – Make a Career Plan
    www.iseek.org/mymncareers/advance-career/make-career-plan.html
- Calculators (optional)

Instructions

This is an interesting activity to do with high school students, especially sophomores and juniors.

1. Give each student or small group a tape measure. Explain that each inch represents a year in a person’s life.

2. Have the student pull out the tape to five or 10 inches. Explain that this represents the first years of their lives. Lead a short discussion about what they remember about their early years, and how they are different now.

3. Have the students pull the tape out to 18 inches. Ask what turning 18 might represent (the end of high school, becoming an adult, etc.). Discuss what they think will be different about their lives at age 18 than today.
4. Pull the tape measure out to 22 or 25 inches. Explain that:

“At this age, you can do anything ... get more education, go into the military or Peace Corps, get a job, start a family, etc. It’s up to you.”

Discuss what the students think their lives will be like at age 22 (or 25).

a. When you think about being 22 (or 25), how do you feel? Scared? Excited?
b. Who plans to go to college or job training? Will you have completed it by age 22?
c. What type of job do you expect to have at age 22?
d. What is your income source? How will you support yourself?
e. Do you plan to live with your family, with roommate, start a family?
f. How many have not thought about their life after high school?

5. Finally, have the student pull the tape out to 65 inches. Show the students how long the distance between 18 and 65 is compared to 0 to 18. Discuss what the students think their adult lives will be like.

a. When you think about being 30 or 40 years old, how do you feel? Scared? Excited?
b. What is your plan for your living situation or family life?
c. What type of career do you want to have?
d. How does the vision of your lives at age 22 (or 25) connect to your plans for the rest of their lives?
e. What are some things you can do today that will affect your life plans?

6. Have students create short-term and long-term goals to help them create a life plan.

a. What are one or two goals you want to have accomplished by age 65? Example: Buy a house, be a good parent, travel to Italy, own my own business.
b. What are two goals you want to accomplish by age 22 (or 25)?
c. What three things can you do in the next year to help you get to where they want to be by age 22 (or 25) or age 65?

Evaluation of Learning

- Grade students on the completion of their goals list.
- Assess student’s participation in class discussion.
- Monitor students’ postsecondary planning.
- The completion of their goals list can be added to students’ Individualized Learning Plans or portfolios.
Enhanced Learning

- Discuss the importance of choosing a postsecondary education program or career pathway that matches individual interests and values.
- Have students add their education or career plans from the Minnesota Programs of Study website (www.mnprogramsofstudy.org) to their portfolios.
- Discuss how higher education might be helpful to accomplish their goals.
- Discuss the importance of planning and the ability to be flexible when plans have to change (economy, injury, family changes, etc.).
- Assign a multimedia project or writing assignment for students to describe how they envision their lives at age 65.
- Invite guest speakers to talk about how their lives are different from when they were in high school and how having a plan helped them to succeed. Invite alumni or community members in their early-20s, mid-20s, and early 30s.