

GETTING HELP IN MIDDLE SCHOOL/JUNIOR HIGH (MS/JH)

PSC Note: This lesson complements: MS/JH Question Box—2 lessons (AD.5.A-5th/6th grade). This lesson, Getting Help... features an adult (e.g., you OR middle school professional school counselor) who answers elementary school students' questions about MS/JH resources. The two (2) Middle School/Junior High Question Box lessons feature interaction between students in their last year(s) of elementary school and a panel of MS/JH students. Both perspectives are important as younger students address questions and misconceptions about their transition to MS/JH.

Purpose: One of the anxieties students have about entering middle/junior high school is that they won't know where to go if they need information or have a problem. In this activity, students discover where they can find help.

*PSC Note: Anticipatory anxiety about the mysteries of MS/JH begins a year **before** the final year in elementary school; thus, you may want to do a variation of this activity during the year before or at the very beginning of the year transition to MS/JH is made.*

Time: 50-60 minutes **Group Size:** Whole Class **Grade Level:** 5/6 (last year of elementary school)

Materials: A large (dispensable) calendar for the current year; circle in a bright color the date the students will begin MS/JH. [People Who Can Help](#) Student Thinking Paper; rolled-up sock

Missouri Comprehensive Guidance Program (MCGP) Strand/Big Idea/Concept:

Strand: Academic Development (AD)

Big Idea: AD.5.A Applying the Skills of Transitioning Between Educational Levels

Concept: Transitions

American School Counselor Association (ASCA): Domain/Standard:

Academic Development Domain

Standard A: Students will acquire the attitudes; knowledge; and skills that contribute to effective learning in school and across the life span

Link to Sample MCGP Units/Lessons (Note: The Unit listed is merely an example of how the activity fits with the MCGP Guidance eLearning Units/Lessons)

5th Grade AD.5.A UNIT: [Transition to Middle School](#)  

Show Me Standards: Performance Goals (check one or more that apply)

X	Goal 1: gather; analyze and apply information and ideas
X	Goal 2: communicate effectively within and beyond the classroom
X	Goal 3: recognize and solve problems
	Goal 4: make decisions and act as responsible members of society

This lesson supports the development of skills in the following academic content areas.

Academic Content Area(s)	Specific Skill(s)
X Communication Arts	<i>NOTE: This strategy supports the development of the universal skill of making successful transitions—from grade to grade, level to level and school to life. Learning that everyone has questions about a new situation and from whom they can get help will facilitate students' adjustment to changing expectations in all academic content areas as they progress through school grades and levels.</i>
X Mathematics	
X Social Studies	
X Science	
X Health/Physical Education	
X Fine Arts	

Enduring Life Skill(s)

X	Perseverance		Integrity	X	Problem Solving
X	Courage		Compassion		Tolerance
	Respect	X	Goal Setting		

Assessment: acceptable evidence of what learners will know/be able to do as a result of this lesson:

When asked to spontaneously identify someone who can help with a MS/JH problem; students are able to name MS/JH resource person from whom he or she can get help. Responses are stated using complete sentences and conventions of standard written and oral English AND in a confident voice that everyone can hear.

Lesson Preparation/Motivation

Essential Questions: HELP! I don't know where to turn for help! Who can help me?

Engagement (Hook): See Lesson Procedures

Procedures

<i>Professional School Counselor Procedures:</i>	<i>Student Involvement:</i>
<p>Advanced Preparation: Determine the date your students will begin MS/JH. Using a large (dispensable) calendar for the current year, circle in a bright color the date the students will begin MS/JH next school year (to be used during <i>Hook</i>).</p> <p><i>Throughout this lesson, systematically listen for what is NOT being said about anxieties of making the transition to MS/JH. Observe students to identify those who appear to have difficulty anticipating the future and formulating/asking question or seeking help. In addition, systematically observe as students who are hesitant to contribute to conversations.</i></p> <p><i>Hook:</i> Use a (dispensable) calendar for the current year... circle in a bright color the date the students will begin MS/JH. Before saying anything; tear off the current month and the successive months until it is the month school starts next year.</p> <p>1. Transition from <i>Hook</i> to lesson by saying something like: WOW! Time passes so quickly! Here it is the first day of your MS/JH career. A new page! A new day...and LOTS of butterflies.</p> <p>Close your eyes and take mental snapshots of yourself on this; your very first day of MS/JH! You have just walked in the door wearing brand new clothes, carrying new supplies and holding your schedule.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you feel? • What are you thinking? • What are you doing? • What questions do you have? • What information do you need? 	<p>Students: During this lesson, courageously volunteer and be sure to speak loudly and clearly enough for everyone to hear your great ideas. Use complete sentences and conventions of standard English in speaking and writing.</p> <p><i>Hook:</i> Where is time going?</p> <p>1. Listen with curiosity to what your school counselor is saying (and wonder if his or her mind has gone on vacation).</p> <p>Put on “imagination-cap” and follow your school counselor’s instructions as if it really were the first day of MS/JH. Take vivid pictures!</p>

<i>Professional School Counselor Procedures:</i>	<i>Student Involvement:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where do you get the information you need or get an answer to your questions? • You can't figure out where to go for help! What do you do? • What questions do you have that you won't/can't/are afraid to ask another student? • Whom do you seek because he or she is the most comfortable person with whom to talk? <p>2. Partner Processing: place students in pairs; describe and talk about the mental snapshots each took of their very first day of MS/JH; seek commonalities in thoughts and feelings and questions.</p> <p>3. Public Processing: invite students to discover common thoughts and feelings about MS/JH among classmates by talking together about the commonalities discovered during conversations with partners.</p> <p>4. SHOW-ME...SHOUT-OUT (one-at-a-time; inside shouts): Common questions you and your partner have. List questions on board. (list is used in Step 6)</p> <p><i>PSC Note: Systematically listen for thoughts that indicate misconceptions about MS/JH. Use systematic observations during lesson to gain more information about how students' thinking developed and, as appropriate, to correct misconceptions.</i></p> <p>5. Tell students they are lucky—time passing so quickly was just a nightmare...and they really have lots of time to get questions answered before starting MS/JH...AND...lots of adults are ready to help them make the transition.</p> <p>Distribute the <i>People Who Can Help</i> Student Thinking Paper. Explain that it includes some of the questions/experiences other 5th/6th graders have had before going to MS/JH. We'll complete it together; when we finish, you'll have an excellent resource to use when you need help.</p> <p>Read each question; identify people who can help solve the dilemmas. Invite student input based on their prior knowledge; write responses for each situation on board. (Write numbers for questions/situations to help those with auditory perception challenges and/or emerging/ slower note-taking skills to keep-up or catch-up.)</p>	<p>2. Partner Processing: Describe and talk with your partner about what you imagine your first day of MS/JH will be like. Seek common thoughts/feelings and questions you have. Prepare to talk about the commonalities with classmates during public processing time.</p> <p>3. Public Processing: Participate in conversation with classmates about commonalities you and partner discovered. Make notes of similarities and differences.</p> <p>4. Participate in SHOW-ME...SHOUT-OUT (one-at-a-time; inside shouts): Shout-out common questions you and your partner have about MS/JH.</p> <p>5. Look over the <i>People Who Can Help</i> thinking paper; ask clarifying questions; write answers to questions/statements as they are discussed.</p>

<i>Professional School Counselor Procedures:</i>	<i>Student Involvement:</i>
<p>6. Compare questions on list with student-generated questions (Step 4); erase questions that are answered on <i>People Who Can Help</i> thinking paper. As appropriate (some questions may not require students to seek a MS/JH resource person), instruct students to write the unanswered questions on their thinking paper as they are discussed.</p> <p>7. Give students time to write questions that have not been asked and/or list resource persons at middle school/junior high not mentioned on the <i>People Who Can Help</i> thinking paper.</p> <p>ASSESSMENT: Content: SHOW-ME...SOCK-IT-TO-US: (you'll need a rolled-up sock for Assessment: Content)</p> <p>Prior to the first toss of the sock, remind students—ok to pass—although student takes responsibility and confidently says [something like]: “I choose to pass for now.”)</p> <p>Tell students it’s time to play “Sock-It-To-Us!” Get ready...review thinking paper; put it away.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use rolled up sock, PSC asks question from thinking paper: • Toss sock to a student; • He or she answers question (standard English, complete sentences); • PSC asks next question; • Student (who just answered previous question) says “I invite _____to answer the next question and tosses the sock to that person • And so it goes until sock has made the rounds. <p>Last person with sock says: I invite (school counselor) to answer this question: (last student [or any student]) asks question about MS/JH, tosses sock to you...you answer question.</p> <p>ASSESSMENT: Personalization of Content: Explain that becoming a MS/JH student might be a little scary AND it is a sign you’re growing up. It is a time to begin anew.</p> <p>Instruct students to get out/turn over their <i>People Who Can Help</i> thinking paper and find the Reflection/Projection section. Explain the directions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write at least two thoughts about changes you want to make—as a student—as a person. • For one of those thoughts; write a specific goal for change. 	<p>6. Participate in comparison of questions on thinking paper with those you and classmates generated. Write unanswered questions on thinking paper as they are discussed.</p> <p>7. Write any questions you have that were not answered during the class conversations and discussions.</p> <p>ASSESSMENT: Content: Participate in “Sock-It-To-Us”:</p> <p>Remember: It is ok to pass—with responsibility (confidently say [something like] “I choose to pass for now)</p> <p>Review <i>People Who Can Help</i> thinking paper; turn it over or put it away for now.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When sock is tossed to you; answer question; • When school counselor asks the next question; • Say “I invite ___ to answer this question and toss sock to that person. • Last person (or another student) with sock, asks school counselor a question and tosses sock to him or her for answer. <p>Be sure to use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete sentences; • Conventions of standard oral English • A confident voice; loud enough for everyone to hear. <p>ASSESSMENT: Personalization of Content: Think about MS/JH as an opportunity to begin anew.</p> <p>Find the Reflection/Projection section of <i>People Who Can Help</i> thinking paper.</p> <p>Follow along as your school counselor explains instructions; ask clarifying questions; complete reflections/projections.</p>

<i>Professional School Counselor Procedures:</i>	<i>Student Involvement:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who can/will you go to get support for making those changes? • Use the back of paper if you need more room. <p>Before collecting <i>People Who Can Help</i> thinking papers; inform students that you will be reading their papers and returning them to their classroom teacher; he or she will return papers to students. The classroom teacher might read the papers. Is that OK? If not; write: PLEASE DO NOT SHARE at the top of paper.</p> <p>Collect thinking papers</p> <p>CLOSURE: SHOW-ME...SHOUT-OUT (one-at-a-time; inside shouts): Tell us; please: One thing that makes you excited about going to MS/JH NEXT YEAR.</p> <p><i>After class; review responses to both sections of People Who Can Help thinking papers. Review for identification of accurate resource persons for specific problems. Review individual questions for appropriateness as well as to identify indications of lingering misconceptions in thinking about MS/JH.</i></p> <p><i>Review reflection/projection section for students' (age appropriate) level of awareness about making a plan for change in MS/JH AND 1) age-appropriate command of conventions of standard English; 2) ability to articulate thoughts and feelings in 1st person language.</i></p> <p><i>Return thinking papers to classroom teacher for distribution to students. Honor the privacy of students who write "PLEASE DO NOT SHARE" on papers. Personally deliver papers to those students after your review.</i></p>	<p>If you want your responses to be private between you and your school counselor; write "PLEASE DO NOT SHARE" at top of papers.</p> <p>Give school counselor thinking paper.</p> <p>CLOSURE: Participate in SHOW-ME...SHOUT-OUT (one-at-a-time; inside shouts): Shout out one thing that excites you about going to MS/JH.</p>

Classroom Teacher Follow-Up Activities (Suggestions for classroom teacher to use to reinforce student learning of Comprehensive Guidance Curriculum concepts)

<p>Provide Classroom Teacher with a brief overview of lesson and a copy of the student thinking paper: <i>People Who Can Help</i>.</p> <p>Summarize Systematic Observations: Identify what was NOT being said about transition anxieties of making the transition to MS/JH and persistent misconceptions about MS/JH. Identify students who appeared to have difficulty anticipating the future and formulating/asking question or seeking help. In addition, identify students who were hesitant to contribute to conversations.</p> <p>Consult with Classroom Teacher: Discuss your systematic observations of students. Identify students' misconceptions about MS/JH. Identify additional observations/concerns about individual students. Does he or she validate your observations as being classroom behaviors as well? If so, collaborate with the classroom teacher to further identify the extent of a lack of accurate knowledge about MS/JH and/or anticipating the future. Is it evidenced in the classroom as lack of involvement in other classroom discussions? Determine if the difficulty is a "will" or a "skill" issue. Does the student know HOW to ask questions or project self into</p>
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MS/JH situations but lacks the confidence to take the classroom risks (will)? Or does the student lack the skill to imagine the future and/or formulate questions?

Collaborate with Classroom Teacher to plan appropriate interventions to assist students as they make the transition to MS/JH, especially those students who appeared to have excessive anxiety about MS/JH; whose responses indicated that their thinking about MS/JH was influenced by misconceptions; who had difficulty expressing themselves in group conversations or whose responses to thinking paper were inappropriate or lacked depth/sincerity. Interventions might include (and are not limited to) additional classroom guidance activities regarding transition to MS/J and/or Responsive Services (e.g., individual/group counseling regarding transitions and/or self confidence or more intensive parental involvement).

If the student behaviors are limited to classroom guidance lessons, consider reasons, for example: What are the unique factors that might be influencing these students' responses during classroom guidance lessons? Have the behaviors occurred during other classroom guidance lessons? All lessons? Topic-specific lessons? Motivated by peers?

People Who Can Help

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Resource persons are people who may be able to help you when you need help. Write the names of resource persons you might contact to get the information needed for each situation. You may have more than one resource person for each situation.

Situations	Resource Person
1. You are lost and you need directions.	_____
1. You were not in class and need the assignment.	_____
2. You left your backpack on the bus/in the car.	_____
3. You need help with an assignment.	_____
4. You have a personal problem and need advice.	_____
5. You want to organize a new club at school.	_____
6. You have a problem with the school bully.	_____
7. You are failing a class and need help.	_____
8. You forgot your locker combination.	_____
9. You want to try out for a sports team.	_____
10. _____	_____
11. _____	_____
12. _____	_____

Ask YOUR questions or list additional resource persons & how they can help.

13. _____	_____
14. _____	_____
15. _____	_____
16. _____	_____
17. _____	_____

Reflection/Projection: *Becoming a MS/JH student might be a little scary; however, it is a sign you're growing up. It is a time to begin anew. Write some (at least two) of your thoughts about the changes you want to make to become more of the **YOU** you want to be—as a student—as a person. For one of those thoughts, write a specific goal for change. Who can/will you go to get support for making those changes? (Use back of paper, too.)*
