

Word to the Wanna-Be Wise

The **BIG** Idea

- Why is “growing your intelligence” worth the effort?

AGENDA

Approx. 45 minutes

- I. Warm Up: Career Match (5 minutes)
- II. Career Match Discussion (10 minutes)
- III. “Grow Your Intelligence” Review (10 minutes)
- IV. A Word to the Wise Letter (15 minutes)
- V. Wrap Up (5 minutes)

MATERIALS
 PORTFOLIO PAGES:

- Portfolio page 20, Grade 7 Skills Checklist (Grow Your Intelligence Only)

 STUDENT HANDBOOK PAGES:

- Student Handbook page 22, Word to the Wise Letter

 FACILITATOR PAGES:

- Facilitator Resource 1, Career Match
- Facilitator Resource 2, Career Match Answers

 Overhead projector

 Chart paper and marker
OBJECTIVES

During this lesson, the student(s) will:

- Consider the ways in which stereotyping can limit aspirations
- Review behaviors needed to grow your intelligence

OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students are asked to match 12 photos of people with their careers. Students discuss how a person's appearance, gender, or race influenced their ideas about career possibilities, and how such stereotypes can limit their own aspirations. The class reviews what they learned about growing your intelligence, and each student writes a letter to a sixth-grader advising him or her on this topic.

PREPARATION

- List the day's **BIG IDEA** and activities on the board.
- Write the day's vocabulary words and definitions on the board.
- The following handouts need to be made into overhead transparencies or copied onto chart paper:
 - **Facilitator Resource 2, Career Match Answers**
 - **Student Handbook page 22, Word to the Wise Letter**
- Make color copies of **Facilitator Resource 1, Career Match** (half the number of your largest class). Cut up the photo cards and career strips and place each complete set in an envelope or Ziploc bag. (This will be used as a class set.)
- Make copies of **Facilitator Resource 2, Career Match Answers**. If you want students to be able to highlight their answers, you'll need a copy for each student (or pair of students).

VOCABULARY

Perseverance: (from persevere) Quality of persisting in an idea, purpose, or task despite obstacles.

Persistence: (from persist) Quality of continuing firmly and steadfastly despite obstacles.

Stereotype: An oversimplified image or idea held by one person or group about another. (For example, “Teenagers have no respect for their elders” is a stereotype.)

IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS

In **Activity II, Career Match Discussion**, you may wish to have students continue to work in pairs to find the people whose backgrounds are similar to theirs.

For **Activity II, Career Match Discussion**, you may organize the students into groups of four to cut down on color printing. Make sure to give specific guidelines to make sure everyone is involved in the decision. You may want to use a Kagan strategy to assign roles so everyone gets to talk.

In **Activity IV, A Word to the Wise Letter**, if your students struggle with writing, you may wish to reduce the number of required “facts” to three and/or allow students to include information about the brain as bullet points. In addition, you may choose to have students complete this exercise in small groups with one person writing down the group’s thoughts.

For **Activity IV, A Word to the Wise Letter**, you may choose to send your students’ letters to sixth-graders in your district.

In **Activity V, Wrap Up**, if time permits, you may wish to allow two minutes for students to describe their ideas for improvement to their partners before sharing them with the class.

ACTIVITY STEPS

I. Warm Up: Career Match (5 minutes)

1. [Review the previous week's work as follows:]

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: Who believes it's possible to grow your intelligence? In a few minutes, you'll have the opportunity to share your knowledge with sixth-graders who will soon be where you are today. But first, I'd like you to consider 12 more people. They are similar to Michael Jordan and the students of Garfield High School because each of them is top in his or her field. Let's see how well you can predict their careers.

2. [Pair students. Distribute **Facilitator Resource 1, Career Match**, one set of 12 photo cards and 12 career strips for each pair of students. (See **Implementation Options**.)]

II. Career Match Discussion (10 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Please remove the materials from your bag or envelope and place them on your desk. You should put all of the photo cards on one side, face up, and all of the word strips on the other side, face up. You'll notice that all of the word strips are the names of careers. [Define any careers with which the students are unfamiliar.] On each of the photo cards is a picture of someone who has one of these careers. Your assignment is to match each career name with the person who you think has the job. You should talk through your choices with your partner. When you are finished, we'll find out more about these people, who they are, and how they got where they are today. You have five minutes.
2. [Give students four minutes to work, and a one minute warning when time is almost up. If students protest that they don't have enough information, acknowledge that they don't have much to base their decisions on, and that they should just do the best they can.]
3. [When students have finished,] **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** This was a very difficult job! You had nothing to go on but a person's appearance. Before we find out who's who, let's talk for a minute about how you made your decisions. [Ask the following questions, and ask students to explain their answers. **Note:** they should be courteous in describing any of the people pictured.]
 - Did you make any matches based on what a person was wearing?
 - Did you make any matches based on a person's gender, that is, whether a job is more likely to be held by a man or a woman?

- Did you make any matches based on a person's race, for example, whether you thought a white person was more likely to have a particular job than an African-American person, or vice versa?]

4. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Let's reveal the results and see how you did.

[Quickly distribute **Facilitator Resource 2, Career Match Answers**, and have students review their answers.]

5. [Refer students to the vocabulary word on the board, and explain the definition of **stereotype**.]
6. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** In this activity, you had no choice but to base your answers on stereotypes – ideas about groups of people and the types of careers they might have. What are some reasons to question stereotypes in real life? (They might cause you to misjudge people and keep you from getting to know them.)

You may not have considered that stereotypes may also cause you to misjudge yourself. Stereotypes might keep you from reaching your goals or considering all the opportunities available to you. Can anybody give an example of how your own stereotypes have affected you, or someone you know? (Girls can't/don't . . . people from a small town can't/don't...people from my race or ethnic group can't/don't ...)

7. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** If some of the people in these photos had gotten trapped by this kind of thinking, they wouldn't be where they are today. Let's see if you can find examples of this.

[Have students look for one of the following, depending on which describes your school setting best. Instruct them to highlight the phrases that prove their point, and provide an example if needed.

- Three people who came from very small towns (Homer Hickam, Tari Hampe Deneen, Nadia Begay)
- Three people who are immigrants (Ang Lee, Agustin Lao-Montes, Michaela)
- Three people who grew up in a large city (Neil DeGrasse Tyson – NYC, Sonia Sotomayor – NYC, Sampson Davis – Newark, NJ)]

III. “Grow Your Intelligence” Review (10 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** People often describe themselves as “smart” or “not so smart,”

or “good” or “bad” at a particular subject or activity. As you’ve learned, these labels aren’t particularly useful. Why? (Anyone can get “smarter” by working hard; labels could prevent you from trying or cause you to fall apart the first time you fail.) I’d like to offer you some adjectives to use in place of these old labels. [Write the following on the board:

Persistent

Persevering

Hard-working]

2. [Refer to the vocabulary definitions of **persistent** and **persevering**, making sure students understand the definition of “obstacles.” Have someone define “hard-working” and give an example.]
3. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** For our last activity in this unit, I’d like you to consider everything you’ve learned about growing your own intelligence. It’s time to pass that knowledge on. Each of you is going to write a note to a sixth-grader describing why it’s so important to be persistent, hard-working, and persevering. Let’s summarize some of the things you’ve learned about growing your intelligence that you might want to include in your note.
4. [List the following categories on the board to help students recall what they’ve learned:
 - Your Brain
 - Practice Makes Perfect
 - Use It or Lose It
 - Stereotypes

[Create a T-chart. At the top of the left-hand column, write “message.” At the top of the right-hand column, write “evidence.”]

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: Let’s think of this in terms of advice (messages) you want to pass along, and evidence that what you’re saying is true. For example, my message might be that even superstars have to practice to get where they are. I’ll abbreviate this as “even superstars practice” in the “messages” column. [Demonstrate.]

My evidence would be that Michael Jordan didn’t make his high school basketball team, and came to the gym at 7:00 in the morning to practice his skills. I’ll abbreviate this as “Michael Jordan didn’t make team, practiced at 7a.m.” [Demonstrate.]

Notice that these aren't whole sentences, just ideas to help you when you write your letter.

[Let students know it's okay for one person to present an idea for a message, and another to follow up with evidence. Have students make suggestions for ideas to include in the letter until all topics have been covered.]

IV. Word to the Wise Letter (15 minutes)

1. [Have students turn to **Student Handbook page 22, Word to the Wise Letter**, and place its transparency on the overhead. Read the text aloud, and model how to create the next sentence from the ideas listed on chart paper.]

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: The first thing I want to talk about is Michael Jordan, so I'd look at my notes to get an idea of what I wanted to say. I might say something like, "Lots of people think that talented athletes don't have to work hard, but this isn't true." Then I'd explain how hard Michael Jordan had to practice: "Michael Jordan didn't even make his high school basketball team. This made him determined to work harder than ever." Then I'd explain how this idea applies to any subject in school.

I want your letters to be very encouraging, and to make a good argument for the need to work hard as a way to grow your intelligence. I'd like each of you to include at least five facts – pieces of advice or evidence – in your letter.

2. [Let students know they will have about 15 minutes to write their letters. Circulate throughout the class and provide help as needed. Remind students when they have only five minutes remaining to work, and let them know when they have a minute left to wrap things up.]

V. Wrap Up (5 minutes)

1. Conclude the unit by asking students to consider one skill they'd like to get better at, and one step they could take to make that happen. Have volunteers share their ideas with the group.

SKILLS CHECKLIST

Direct students' attention to **Portfolio page 20, Grade 7 Skills Checklist**. Have students complete the skills checklist questions for Grow Your Intelligence skills.

GROW YOUR INTELLIGENCE

I can ...

Give evidence that it's possible to improve a skill by practicing.	<input type="checkbox"/> not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> very well
Describe ways to "grow my intelligence."	<input type="checkbox"/> not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> very well
Recognize that stereotypes may cause me to limit my own opportunities.	<input type="checkbox"/> not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> very well

Career Match

Astrophysicist (studies space)	Basketball Player
Carpenter	Cartoonist
College Professor	Doctor
Electrician	Film Director
Restaurant Owner	Author/ Rocket Scientist
Supreme Court Justice	Wildlife Biologist

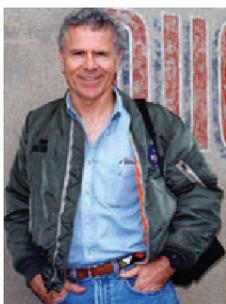
Career Match



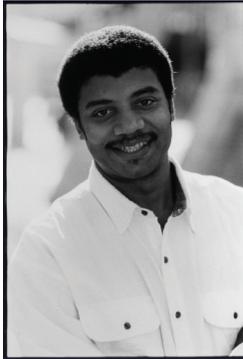
Photo credit: Bruce Caines



Career Match



Career Match Answers



Astrophysicist

Neil DeGrasse Tyson is the Director of the Hayden Planetarium. He has written nine books and hosted science shows on PBS. He was born and raised in NYC, and graduated from Bronx Science High School. He has his BA from Harvard and a PhD from Columbia.

Photo credit: Bruce Caines



Film Director

Ang Lee was born in Taiwan. He has a BA from the University of Illinois and an MA from NYU. He has directed more than 10 well-known films (and won an Academy Award for one of them). But he was not an instant success. He spent six years keeping house while his wife worked before breaking into film.



Restaurant Owner

Tari Hampe Deneen is an entrepreneur – someone who started her own business. She opened Tari’s Café in 1989 in Berkeley Springs, WV (population: 700). She won a WV “Celebrate Women” award in 1999. She sold the restaurant in 2006, and later began a career as a singer.



U.S. Senator

Sonia Sotomayor grew up in a housing project in the South Bronx, New York City. Sotomayor got scholarships to Princeton, then Yale, where she earned her law degree. She became a lawyer, then a judge. In 2009, she became a Supreme Court Justice, one of nine judges on the highest court in the U.S.



College Professor

Agustin Lao-Montes is an Assistant Professor at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. He is an expert in Latino and Puerto Rican studies. He has a BA from Catholic University of Puerto Rico, and an MA and PhD from SUNY Binghamton.



Basketball Player

Nadia Begay learned basketball from her mom, and joined her first team in the fourth grade. As a senior, she was her state’s high school player of the year. College scouts never visited her “one-stop-light” town (Kirtland, NM), so she sent videos to schools across the country. She went on to play Division I basketball for Boise State.

Career Match Answers



Carpenter

Michaela grew up in Germany, where she studied to be a kindergarten teacher. After arriving in North America, she worked as a nanny and a security officer. She learned her carpentry skills in a community college program.



Electrician

Geri worked as a licensed practical nurse and took business courses in college. She got into a trade-school electrician program after a four-year wait. She's good at repairing things. She loves seeing city lights and knowing she had a part in putting them there.



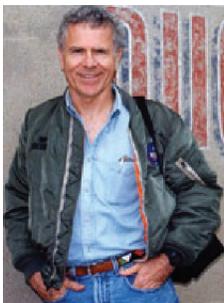
Wildlife Biologist

Matt Varner grew up in the small town of Kingwood, WV. He and his wife worked many jobs to put themselves through college. Varner has worked as a fish and wildlife biologist in West Virginia, Nevada, and Alaska. In 2007, a new species of springsnail was named after him.



Doctor

Sampson Davis grew up on the tough streets of Newark, NJ. He and two friends (Rameck Hunt and George Jenkins) promised each other that they would all grow up to be doctors. They wrote a book called "The Pact" to tell how they did it. Together, they started The Three Doctors Foundation to inspire city youth to achieve their dreams.



Author/ Rocket Scientist

Homer Hickam was born and raised in Coalwood, WV. He's a writer, a scientist, a scuba diver, and an amateur paleontologist. He has written 12 books, including "Rocket Boys," which was later made into the movie "October Sky." He graduated from Big Creek High School, and has a BSc from Virginia Tech.



Cartoonist

Liza Donnelly's cartoons have appeared on websites, in books, in newspapers, and in magazines from "Good Housekeeping" to "The New Yorker." She has written and illustrated seven children's books about dinosaurs. She lives in New York City, and teaches at Vassar College.

Word to the Wise Letter

Use what you've learned to coach a sixth-grader on how to grow his or her intelligence. Assume that you really want this student to succeed. Complete this letter by writing your advice on the lines below.

Date:

Dear

Welcome to _____ (name of school). We know you'll want to learn a lot in this year. Our class has been studying the brain, and we have some advice.

Work hard – it's worth it!

Sincerely,

(Your name)