



The Game of (College) Life – Lesson Plan

Grade Level: 10-12

Suggested Duration: 2-3 hours or 2-3 class periods

Target Audience: Students considering various financial options in preparing to attend college

Educator Video: “How I Got Here: Maria—Educator-focused Video”

§110.33. English Language Arts and Reading, English III (One Credit)

(b) Knowledge and Skills

(23) Research/Organizing and Presenting Ideas. Students organize and present their ideas and information according to the purpose of the research and their audience. Students are expected to synthesize the research into an extended written or oral presentation that:

(A) provides an analysis that supports and develops personal opinions, as opposed to simply restating existing information.

The odds were somewhat stacked against Maria. As a childhood arrival, her undocumented status loomed over her head for much of her youth. Thinking she couldn't attend college, she became discouraged. Then her GEAR UP counselor helped her understand her individual options. Maria, like many GEAR UP students, bounced back when she faced adversity. In this activity, students will explore one of four types of college students (an international student, a student relying on scholarships, a student relying on federal grants, and a student relying on student loans). They will then be given several scenarios they might face in college and will need to do some research to figure out a way to keep going—dropping out is not an option.

Student Objective: Develop strategies to cope with different challenges one might face in college.

Lesson Preparation: While preparing for this lesson with your students, make sure to watch the “How I Got Here: Maria—Educator-focused Video” available on both iTunes U and Project Share under the “Overcoming College Prep Obstacles with Texas GEAR UP” course. The video will provide guidance on how to navigate the lesson with your students and highlight the key messages for them to take away.

Teacher Direction: Play the “How I Got Here: Maria—Student-focused Video” for your class or student. Video is available on both iTunes U and Project Share under the “Overcoming College Prep Obstacles with Texas GEAR UP” course.

Write the four scenarios on the board:

- an international student
- a student depending on scholarship money for college
- a student depending on federal aid and grants for college
- a student using student loans to pay for college

Brainstorm with the class to create possible scenarios that each type of student might face during their freshman year of college. Have some scenarios already prepared to help steer the discussion in the right direction. Assign a scenario to each student, or allow them to pick their own.

Students will begin by writing down their assigned/selected scenario and thinking critically about the best decision to make in response to the scenario.

For example, if a student relies on his or her parents to pay for college, but during freshman year, one of them becomes unemployed, the student will need to evaluate options and decide how to proceed. After conducting research about paying for college, the student may choose to enroll in a work-study program or apply for scholarships.

The student then continues to sophomore year. They will find that some scenarios bring positive news (i.e., being elected to a leadership position in student government). These are added to help students think about the importance of making thoughtful decisions throughout college that will continue propelling them forward. Taking a leadership position, for example could be an opportunity for the student to apply for additional scholarships.

Students may work individually or with a partner for this activity. As they complete the activity, monitor their activity and ask them questions about their thought process as they faced each scenario.

Possible Teacher Dialogue (directed to students):

Man! If there's one thing GEAR UP students have, it's determination. Maria didn't let anything slow her down, and you shouldn't either. In this activity, you'll be given one of four different scenarios:

- *an international student*
- *a student depending on scholarship money for college*
- *a student depending on federal aid and grants for college*
- *a student using student loans to pay for college*

In each of these scenarios, you'll experience the highs and lows of college life as that student. Using technology, you'll need to research to make the best decision with the cards you've been dealt. Make sure you cite your sources, and make sure you access reliable information.

When all students have completed the assignment, review each scenario as a class. Ask students to volunteer to share what they decided to do and why. Be sure to take time for students to be able to share alternative decisions. You can then evaluate which might be the best option or how each decision would have a different outcome.