TRANSITION SKILLS

LESSON 8-17 ▲ TRANSITIONING TO HIGH SCHOOL

**LEARNING GOALS/OUTCOMES**

* Summarize their top ten achievements in middle school.
* Identify the three most important ‘things to work on’ to be successful in high school.
* Students celebrate successes and challenges from the past year.

**MATERIALS NEEDED**

* **Student Handouts:**
* Pre-High School Thoughts
* Journal Page
* **Two poster boards**
* **An item for catching and throwing**

**CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES**

1. **Students compare watching life to doing life.** Write this quote on the board:

***"There's a difference between knowing the path and walking the path."***

**The Matrix (1999) -** Morpheus (Laurence Fishburne)

Ask students what they think Morpheus is saying.  What is the primary difference between watching a sport and playing a sport?  What is the benefit of playing over watching?  What is the benefit of watching over playing?  If you want to build personal capacity, explore personal interests, discover new things in the world, is it better to watch or play the game?  Which is safer - watching or playing?  Help students understand that sometimes, it is better to 'know the path' and just watch things going on.  However, most of the time, it is better to 'walk the path' and get fully engaged with wherever you happen to be.

Tell students that today, they are going to evaluate their middle school experience - identifying their top achievements, celebrating personal successes and challenges.

1. **Students reflect on their years of middle school.** Distribute a copy of *Pre-High School Thoughts* Handout to each student. Ask students to look back at their middle school years. Ask them to identify their top ten achievements since entering 6th grade. They may identify academic achievements, activity achievements, social achievements, family achievements, or personal achievements. Encourage students to recognize that they have accomplished things, even if they wanted to accomplish more.
2. **Students code their top achievements**. Ask students to look over their top achievements in middle school. Tell them to put the word ‘academic’ beside any achievements that involve grades, awards, courses, or skill development. Have them write the word ‘activity’ beside any achievements that involved in-school teams, clubs, or other school activities. Have them write the word ‘social’ beside any achievements that involved communication, friendship, or expansion of personal networks. Write the word ‘family’ beside any things that have improved with your parents, siblings, or other relatives. Finally, write the word ‘personal’ beside the development of new interests, new future goals, or anything else that is not coded. Ask students to notice which category showed the greatest number of top accomplishments. Tell students that they should be proud of what they have achieved in middle school.
3. **Students discuss their hopes and fears about high school.** Ask students what they are most excited about when they think of attending high school next year, and what concerns them most. Have a ball or something that students can toss to one another. When the ball is caught they must share an answer. Recommend that students think of at least three or four answers before the game starts. Give the students a few minutes to think of answers or write them down if necessary. After students have had several minutes to answer and toss the ball, ask students to write their top two hopes and top two fears on the handout.
4. **Students discuss ways for making high school a meaningful experience.** Ask students to define what a meaningful experience is. Encourage them to see ‘meaningful’ as an active connection between what a person does and who they are (or are becoming). Ask students to think of one way that a student could make high school more meaningful. On your signal, ask all students to come to the board and write their one idea. Ask students to look at all the ideas and look for common themes.
5. **Students select the three best ways for them to make high school a meaningful experience.** Ask students to think of the three most important things to work on in order to be more successful in high school and get meaning from the experience. Encourage them to get ideas from the board. Have them write their answers on the handout.
6. **Students write their last middle school entry in their Journal.** Ask students to look back over their years in middle school and estimate how much time was spent watching (“knowing the path”) and how much of it were they fully engaged in the experience (“walking the path”).  Tell students that it is okay to be a watcher sometimes, as long as you are also an active participant in other times. Ask them to answer the following questions on their Journal Page.

* Did you spend more time watching or actively engaged in your middle school years?
* When you are in high school, what do you want to get involved in to make your experience more meaningful?
* What could you do this summer to make it more meaningful and fun?

**STUDENT PRODUCTS**

* **Completed *Pre-High School Thoughts***
* **Completed *Journal Page***

TRANSITION SKILLS

LESSON 8-17 STUDENT HANDOUT

PRE-HIGH SCHOOL THOUGHTS

***Summarize your top ten achievements in middle school.***

(consider Academic, Activity, Social, Family, and Personal achievements)

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***Write your top hopes and fears about high school next year.***

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***List three most important ‘things to work on’ to be successful in high school.***

**1.**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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TRANSITION SKILLS

LESSON 8-17 STUDENT HANDOUT

JOURNAL PAGE

**DATE:**

**Lesson 8-17 | *TRANSITIONING TO HIGH SCHOOL***

***Q1:*** Did you spend more time watching or actively engaged in your middle school years?

***Q2:*** When you are in high school, what do you want to get involved in to make your experience more meaningful?

***Q3:*** What could you do this summer to make it more meaningful and fun?

***Answers:***