

life is a journey — a workshop for new American youth

Grade level: 9–12

Format: small-group discussion, advisory period, or class discussion

Teacher prep time: 15 minutes

Class time: 30–45 minutes

Materials

- pens
- handouts (attached in this file, following the lesson plan)
 - Structure of education in the United States
 - Education pays
 - Life is a journey — start where you are

Objectives

Students will:

- reflect on their journeys from their countries of birth to the United States
- identify and share the personal assets and community resources that enabled them to overcome significant obstacles in their transition
- recognize their accomplishments
- describe desirable traits of their role models
- focus on one lesson learned from their role models
- understand the structure of education in the United States from kindergarten through post-doctoral studies
- understand the relationship between level of education, and income and likelihood of employment

Framing the activity

1. Introduce yourself, your department, or your organization, and thank all attendees for coming. Explain that this gathering is designed to help with their continuing journey toward success in education and in making their career plans come true.
2. Acknowledge what they've accomplished thus far by learning English and by adapting to a different culture, society, and climate. Note that people have been coming to Vermont for hundreds of years to make a good life for themselves and their families.
3. Ask where each participant was born, repeating each country (and perhaps writing it on the board).
4. Acknowledge that they've already traveled a great distance in time, miles, and experience to be here today. Explain that they have more opportunities available than people have ever had.

Procedure

1. Introduce the handout on the structure of education in the United States. Review the various paths shown and explain the importance of education in pursuing a life plan.

2. Introduce the handout “Education pays.” Highlight the average difference between the earnings of workers with high school diplomas and those with bachelor’s degrees.
3. Introduce the handout “Life is a journey — start where you are,” which students can use to write or draw on and keep for themselves. Then invite students to participate in what ever way they are comfortable around the following:
 - Describe the biggest challenge in your life so far.
 - What’s the biggest obstacle you faced in coming to the United States?
 - What’s the biggest success you’ve experienced in your move to this country?
 - Name one person you admire for the success he or she has achieved in coming to the United States from another country and overcoming obstacles.
 - Among the skills and personal traits that he or she used in order to succeed, which do you admire most?
 - What were his or her most important accomplishments?
 - What did you learn from his or her example; how do you hope you can be like him or her?
4. Ask students to gather in groups of three (if they’re willing) to discuss their answers, sharing whatever they choose.
5. End the activity by returning to one large group. Ask each person to name the most admirable trait in his or her role model; repeat each trait so that everyone can hear (or write each one on the board). Discuss the value of all these traits in providing all of us with ways to move forward in our lives.
6. Thank everyone for participating.

NCDA guidelines for personal social development

- develop understanding of self to build and maintain a positive self-concept
- develop positive interpersonal skills, including respect for diversity
- integrate growth and change into your career development
- use accurate, current and unbiased career information during career planning and management

Vermont’s Framework of Standards vital results

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| Section 1 | Communication Standards |
| 1.15 | Students use verbal and nonverbal skills to express themselves effectively. |
| Section 2 | Reasoning and Problem-Solving Standards |
| 2.2 | Students use reasoning strategies, knowledge, and common sense to solve complex problems related to all fields of knowledge. |
| 2.3 | Students solve problems of increasing complexity. |
| Section 3 | Personal Development Standards |
| 3.3 | Students demonstrate respect for themselves and others. |
| 3.5 | Students make informed, healthy choices that positively affect the health, safety, and well-being of themselves and others. |
| 3.7 | Students make informed decisions. |

Section 4 Civic/Social Responsibility Standards

4.5 Students understand continuity and change.

VTSCA career standards

Academic Development Domain, Standard C: Students will understand the relationship of academics to the world of work, and to life at home and in the community.

A:C1.3 understand the relationship between learning and work

A:C1.4 demonstrate an understanding of the value of lifelong learning as essential to seeking, obtaining, and maintaining life goals

Career Development Domain, Standard C: Students will understand the relationship between personal qualities, education, training, and the world of work.

C:C1.1 understand the relationship between educational achievement and career success

Personal/Social Domain, Standard A: Students will acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others.

PS:A1.1 develop positive attitudes toward self as a unique and worthy person

PS:A1.2 identify values, attitudes, and beliefs

PS:A1.5 identify and express feelings

PS:A1.10 identify personal strengths and assets

PS:A2.3 recognize, accept, respect, and appreciate individual differences

PS:A2.4 recognize, accept, and appreciate ethnic and cultural diversity

PS:A2.6 use effective communications skills



**Vermont Student
Assistance Corporation**

10 East Allen Street

PO Box 2000

Winooski, VT 05404

Toll-free **800-642-3177**

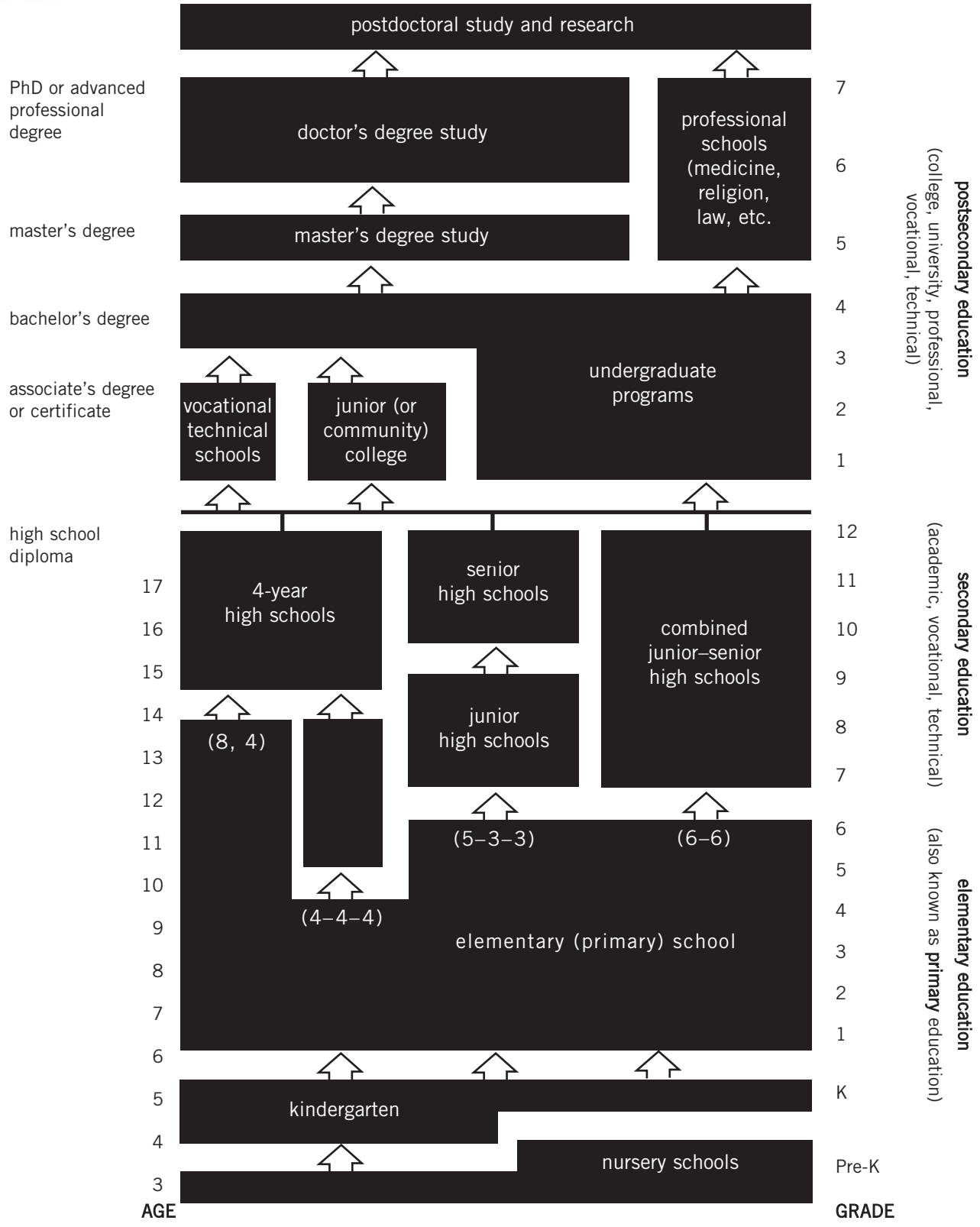
In the Burlington area **655-9602**

Visit our Web site at www.vsac.org

E-mail us at info@vsac.org



The structure of education in the United States



Adult education programs, while not illustrated here, may provide instruction at the elementary, secondary, or higher education level. The chart reflects typical patterns of progression, rather than all possible variations.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

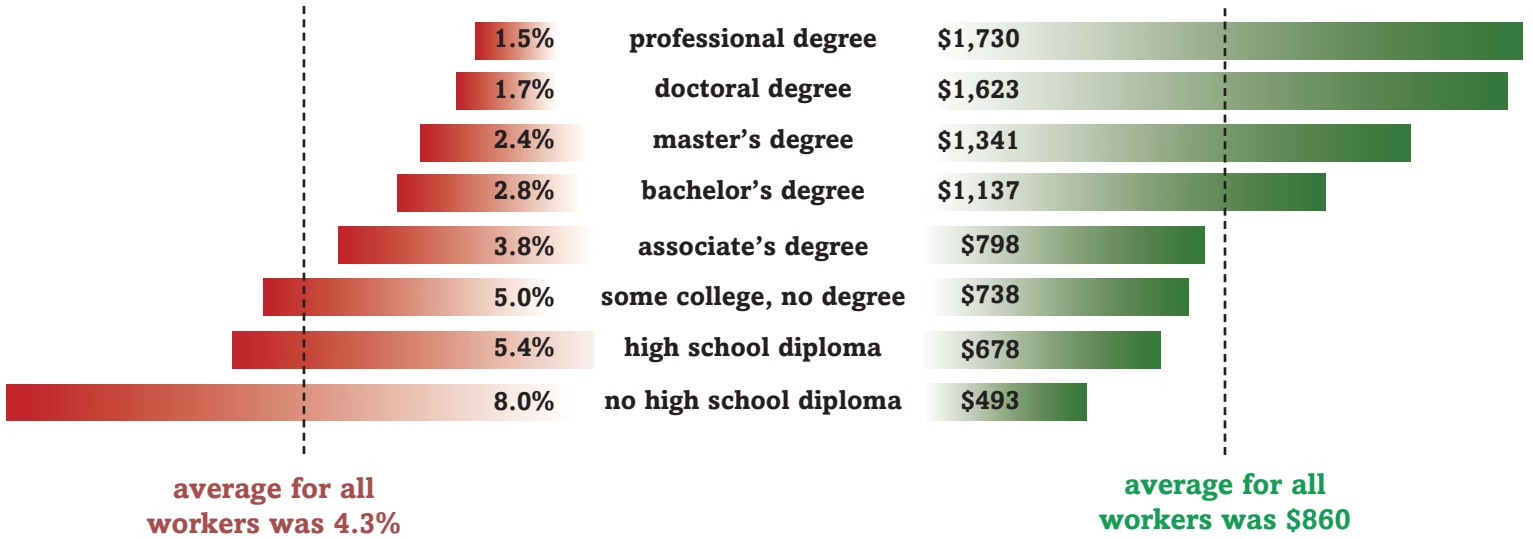


Education pays ...

in higher earnings and lower unemployment rates.

2015 unemployment rate

2015 median weekly earnings

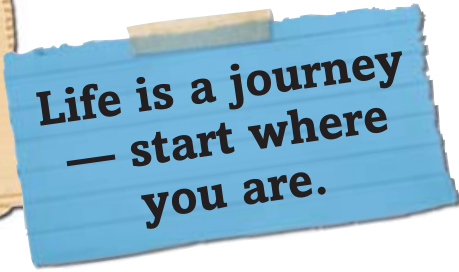


Data are 2015 annual averages for persons age 25 and over. Earnings are for full-time wage and salary workers.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics.

More data on educational attainment is available online from the Bureau of the Census at www.census.gov/hhes/socdemo/education/.





Your reflections

Your greatest challenge:

Your biggest obstacle:

Your greatest success:



Someone you admire

His or her skills/personal traits:

His or her accomplishments:

Lessons you learned from this individual:

