

Lesson: SENIOR FISH BOWL**Domain:** Academic Development**Indicators:**

A:A1.5 Identify attitudes and behaviors which lead to successful learning

A:B1.4 Seek information and support from peers

C:A1.7 Understand the importance of planning

PS: A1.11 Identify and discuss changing personal & social roles

Time: 2 consecutive class periods, approximately 60 minutes each**Group Size:** Freshman focus course, approximately 25-30 students per class**Materials:**

Day 1: 5-7 Seniors, a cross mix of demographics and backgrounds

Day 2: Senior Fish Bowl reflection writing instruction handout, one per student
Lined paper**Observation Notes:**

Arrange for senior guests well in advance with affected teachers.

Fish bowl should have 5-7 planned, but have 2-3 back up seniors readily available in case of illness.

Activity Evaluation:

Completion of reflection writing.

Class reflective dialog

Instruction-Day 1:

Select 5-8 seniors to be guests in the Freshman Focus class. These seniors should be a cross section of demographics, GPAs, cliques, etc. Have a fifth year senior may work well. Group dynamics must be considered. Know your students. Set up room following diagram below. Seniors pose as the “fish” in the middle and the freshman form the “fish bowl” looking in on the fish. The circles should be tight so that chairs are almost touching each other in order to achieve a comfortable but intimate environment as well as allow audience to hear guest speakers clearly.



Instruct seniors to accept questions periodically from the instructor and then talk casually between themselves. The object is to create a *coffee house* type of conversation, not an interview where by seniors would take normally take turns one by one answering a question. Freshman will be allowed to ask questions towards the end of the session once the ice has been broke. Until then, freshman are to remain as silent observers watching the “fish.”

Instruction to students:

Welcome to the Senior Fish Bowl today! The rules are few. Seniors, you are going to be asked some simple questions regarding your experiences since entering high school and our fish, our freshman, will be your interested audience. Please be aware that your backs are to your audience so speak a little louder than maybe you would normally. Also seniors, please be honest. Pretend you are out after a game getting pizza or something casual. The answers to the questions will be different among you and there is no right answer; only the truth for you personally. Freshman, please remain respectful as our senior fish are our guests. Towards the end of the exercise you will be allowed to ask questions so if you think of something, please save it for this time.

Instructor should “feed” periodically the Senior Fish Bowl with the following questions:

1. What do you remember from your freshman year?
2. Looking back on your freshman, sophomore and junior years, what would you have done differently academically? Socially?
3. What are you glad you did academically? Socially?
4. What advise do you have for incoming freshman to Coopersville High School?
5. What were some of your favorite classes and why? What did you learn in them? What do you think they’ll be important to you?
6. What hints do you have for keeping organized? For studying? For staying interested in class even when it’s not interesting?
7. What extra curricular things are you involved in? What have you gotten from being involved in them?
8. What are your plans for after graduation and what are you doing (done) towards these goals?
9. What has been difficult for you in high school and what kinds of things have you done to overcome them?
10. How has the relationship changed with your parents since you were in high school?
11. What are your concerns now as seniors?
12. Are you paying for college? Have you applied for scholarships? What advice do you have for selecting a college?
13. What advice do you have for making a plan for after graduation? How did you decide on a direction for yourself? What are you doing now for that?

Instruction-Day 2:

Students will complete a Written Reflection. The goal is to offer a writing experience within the Focus curriculum, assess the effectiveness of Senior Fish Bowl, have the opportunity to discuss parents, goal setting, academics, peer pressure, social etiquette, etc., and use MEAP-like test vocabulary within the content of the written response.

1. Pass out Senior Fish Bowl Written Reflection student instructions handout and some lined paper.
2. Using handout, review student instructions with extra time spent on bolded, underlined MEAP-like words. These are words often found in tests and to be familiar with them through using them often is to improve test taking skills and ultimately scores. Note this to students.

****This task can be completed even if student was absent from class. Note: different written prompts have been provided for those students who missed day one of Senior Fish Bowl activity.****

3. After students have written their responses:
 - a. Have students compare answers in pairs with person next to them at table.
 - b. Open up whole class for dialog (fire-side chat style). Share answers.
4. Collect papers to grade.

SENIOR FISH BOWL WRITTEN REFLECTION

Student Instructions:

1. Write your name, block, and Focus teacher name at the top of your page.

IF YOU WERE PRESENT FOR SENIOR FISH BOWL:

2. Write at least a one page reflection using 3 or more of the below **prompts**. Please write so that the reader can read your writing!
 - What was said that surprised you to hear?
 - **Evaluate** what was said **elaborate** on what you don't believe and why?
 - What was said that made an impression on you?
 - **Compare and contrast** the differences are between a freshman student and a senior student in the way they think? **Reference** examples from the conversation to your own thoughts about yourself in 2006.
 - **Consider** what advice you heard that you will likely take and use?
 - What advice did you hear that you won't take and use?
 - In what ways did you **identify** with what was said?
 - Based on what you heard, what are your **conclusions** and impressions of what transformations/changes will take place between now and the time you are a senior?
 - **Illustrate** your understanding of Senior Fish Bowl by explaining how you personally hope to change between now and the time you are a senior? **Support** your thoughts by giving **specific examples** of what things have to happen in order for this to come true?

IF YOU WERE NOT PRESENT FOR SENIOR FISH BOWL:

3. Write at least a one page reflection using 3 or more of the below prompts. Please write so that the reader can read your writing!
 - What do you think the differences are between a freshman student and a senior student in the way they think?
 - What are your impressions of what it's like to be a senior?
 - How do you personally hope to change between now and the time you are a senior? What things have to happen in order for this to come true?
 - Describe what you think it means to be a good friend.
 - Describe what you think it means to be a good son/daughter.
 - Describe what you think the perfect parent-teen relationship would look like.
 - Describe what you think it means to be a good student.