



OSY Conversation Starters/Bridges to Academic Instruction



Step 2



Step 3

TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF [ESTABLISHING RAPPORT]

Background: Unlike K-12 students, OSY have the option of working with the MEP or not. As adults, they are in charge of their time, and time is often limited and precious. An initial response to limited time might be to jump right into instruction to “save” time. Yet, taking time to establish rapport and getting to know the OSY can actually buy us more time with the OSY, because the OSY sees the service provider as someone who actually cares about them as a person and is there to better them, not just follow an educational agenda. These questions will help you get to know the OSY as a person. Answering these questions right along with the OSY also helps them get to know you as a person.

Conversation Starter Prompt	Notes	Bridge to Instructional Service	Resources	Date(s) & Follow-up
What are your strengths (things that you can do really well)?		Use the OSY Educational Resource Rubric and check off areas the OSY feels strong in. Celebrate each checkmark with the OSY that they already feel strong in this area and do not need assistance.	GOSOSY Educational Resource Rubric	
What is something you would like to know more about? Why?		Use the OSY Educational Resource Rubric to identify lessons that are relevant, needed, and interesting to the OSY. Let the OSY guide you in selecting lessons for future use.	GOSOSY Educational Resource Rubric	
Is there something that you have enjoyed reading? Tell me what was great about it.		Reading for fun is a great way to relax and also to build your confidence and learn more about things that are important to you. Since you loved reading about _____, you might enjoy one of our reading lessons about _____. Use the list of reading lessons to decide on a topic that interests him/her.	GOSOSY Reading Resources	



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TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF [CAREER INTERESTS]

Background: As adult learners, OSY need a purpose for learning. Many have tried and failed at school. Graduating from high school or obtaining a GED may not be a goal that they identify with immediately. However, all OSY do have dreams for their futures. Tapping into the dreams they have, and showing how further education can be one step in reaching their lifelong dreams, rather than an end goal, can be key to sparking interest initially, and helping the OSY stay motivated long term. These questions will help the OSY begin to think about and identify potential career interests.

Conversation Starter Prompt	Notes	Bridge to Instructional Service	Resources	Date(s) & Follow-up
Can you think of something you didn't think you would be interested in, but now you are interested in it? What happened that changed your thinking?		Use the OSY Educational Resource Rubric to identify lessons that are relevant, needed, and interesting to the OSY. Let the OSY guide you in selecting lessons for future use.	GOSOSY Educational Resource Rubric	
What is an activity or subject that you never get tired of talking about?		Can you envision yourself working in an area related to _____? Would you like to look at some careers related to these activities / subjects that you love?	ACReS Unit 6: Degrees Open Doors to Success Lesson 1: Education and Jobs	



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ACHIEVING YOUR DREAMS [EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS]

Background: Once the OSY has identified their life dreams and goals and the OSY is excited about achieving their goal, information on the education required to achieve those dreams is essential. Many OSY are not aware of the differences in earning potential between high school graduates and non-graduates. They may also be unaware of the requirements of obtaining high school diploma, a GED or a college degree. These questions will help the OSY de-mystify these concepts and select the option that best meets his or her goal can help them select the path that best meets their goal.

Conversation Starter Prompt	Notes	Bridge to Instructional Service	Resources	Date(s) & Follow-up
Tell me about a time that you worked really hard, not because you were required to, but because you wanted to.		You really worked hard on _____ because you really wanted _____. When we focus on a goal that we really care about, it makes the hard work of getting there easier. Would you like to learn about some different options for moving towards your goal of _____? Some of the options are high school diploma, GED, and post-secondary education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACReS Unit 6: Degrees Open Doors to Success: Lesson 2: High School • ACReS Unit 6: Degrees Open Doors to Success: Lesson 3: The GED • ACReS Unit 6: Degrees Open Doors to Success: Lesson 4: Post-Secondary Education 	

**If the student is not ready for a GED or high school diploma, but has identified other goals such as learning English, life skills, etc., use the experience s/he told you about in working hard to talk about how their success in working hard on _____ proves that they can also be successful in learning English or the life skills identified and refer to [ELL lessons](#).



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FINANCING YOUR DREAMS [LIFE SKILLS]

Background: Often, the obstacles in an OSY’s way are very real and practical – lack of resources. Facing these realities and assisting the OSY in making a plan to overcome them give the OSY confidence, realize what is attainable and how long it might take, and teach critical life skills towards achieving the goals they have identified. These questions will help the OSY form realistic goals of how to finance the dreams they have identified.

Conversation Starter Prompt	Notes	Bridge to Instructional Service	Resources	Date(s) & Follow-up
<p>If you had time and resources to achieve your dreams, what would they be?</p>		<p>Those are great dreams! You can achieve them. It may take time, but with hard work and planning, you can do it. Sometimes time is hard to find. Other times you may have time but not resources (money, house, car) to achieve your dreams. We have lessons on finances that can help you think about how to plan and save for your dreams. It helps you figure out how much money you have how many bills you have to pay, and what is left over, which can be saved to accomplish your dream of _____.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finanza Budget Lesson • Evaluating Jobs Based on Wage • Creating and Using a Budget • Paying for College • All Math for Living Lessons in English and Spanish 	



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REACHING YOUR DREAMS [OVERCOMING BARRIERS]

Background: OSY are unique and different than secondary students in that they have had the experience of trying and failing in education, or having circumstances beyond their control end their opportunity to continue their educations. These experiences and the feelings surrounding them can often hinder the OSY from fully pursuing a new dream. When difficulties arise, it is often easier to choose not to continue education than face the painful experience of failure or disappointment again. These questions will help the OSY by addressing the obstacles that they may face ahead of time, before the crisis hits, and can help the OSY develop the perseverance and grit they need to avoid failure or disappointment in their new endeavors.

Conversation Starter Prompt	Notes	Bridge to Instructional Service	Resources	Date(s) & Follow-up
What obstacles may get in your way of achieving your dreams? How can you overcome these obstacles?		If the OSY discusses any obstacles which suggest that his or her rights are being violated (not getting paid, unsafe working or living conditions, etc.) say, "That doesn't sound right. Would you like to learn more about your rights and how to overcome this obstacle legally?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal rights/Derechos legales Lessons • My Basic Rights • Field Worker Rights • Right to be Paid • Housing Rights 	
What school subjects are challenging or difficult for you that might make it hard for you to achieve your dreams?		<p>Tell the OSY that they can overcome the challenges and that you are here to help them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ If the OSY identifies math as a challenge, tell him/her that we have math lessons in English and Spanish that help make challenging math concepts simple and easy to understand: Math on the Move/Math for Living ☐ If the OSY identifies writing as a challenge, tell him/her that we have writing lessons that are simple, fun and helpful. Write On! ☐ If the OSY identifies reading as a challenge, tell him/her that we have great reading lessons for pre-GED to help build confidence and skills as a reader. Reading on the Move ☐ If the OSY identifies English as a challenge, tell him/her that we can help with that, and ask if they would like to take a quick test to see what English skills they already have and what they still need to learn. OSY English Language Screener <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Once the Language Screener is complete, refer to the ELL resources on the GOSOSY webpage and let the OSY help you select the resources based on interest and need. 		



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INCLUDING OTHERS IN YOUR DREAMS [SOFT SKILLS]

Background: No matter what career or life goal the OSY has identified, working with other people will be a big part of the goal. These questions lead to a discussion of how to successfully work with people and develop the “soft skills” needed for success in the OSY’s chosen goal.

Conversation Starter Prompt	Notes	Bridge to Instructional Service	Resources	Date(s) & Follow-up
Have you ever had a bad experience in a group of people? What made it a bad experience?		Sometimes, group communication makes or breaks the experience. As you work to accomplish your dreams, you will work with many people who are different than you, and communication will be important. There are many ways to communicate, and some ways work in certain groups, but not in others. Knowing the hidden rules of communication and which words to use in different situations can help us have better experiences with different groups of people. Would you like to learn the keys to communicating with different groups?	ACReS Unit 5: Life Skills: Communicating with Others	
What is the best group you have ever been part of? What made it a great experience?		When you’re in a group you love, such as _____, it’s a great experience. As you go through life working on achieving your goals, you will work with many people – at work or your classes, and outside of work and school. These people can help you and you can help them. Often, humor is a big part of a great group experience. Would you like to learn more about how to use humor with others?	ACReS Unit 3: Reading For Fun: Lesson 6: Humor	

References:

Questions in this document were adapted from *Non-Cognitive Conversation Starters* by the Search Institute and *the Dreams for my Future* from SOSOSY Training Guide, March 2015. http://www.search-institute.org/sites/default/files/b/Download_Discussion_Starter_Questions_Noncognitive.pdf; www.osymigrant.org.