

College! Is it Worth the Time & Money? Pre-Campus Visit

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Time Frame 50-60 session(s)

Essential Question(s)

Is college worth the time and investment?

Summary

Through small-group activities and discussions, students will be exposed to a variety of careers, along with their average salaries and post-secondary requirements. Students will also be asked to brainstorm possible fears or concerns that high school students have concerning college. Then, students will look ahead at their upcoming campus visit and prepare questions that they have about college costs or funding.

Learning Goals

- Participants will explore and evaluate the ideas surrounding college when considering the investment of money and time.
- Participants will identify concerns about going to college and generate key questions to ask during their college visit that address their identified concerns.
- Participants will match a career to an average annual salary.

Attachments

- Career Salary Cards for Card Sort.pdf
- Career Salary Match Handout.docx
- Four Corners Signs.pdf
- List of Careers for Card Sort.docx
- Pre-Campus Visity Learning Activity PowerPoint.pptx

Materials

- Pre-Campus Visit Learning Slides (attached)
- Career Salary Cards (attached; print and cut one set per every two or three students.)
- Career Salary Match handout (attached; one per student)
- Career Salary Answer Key handout (attached)
- Four Corners Signs (attached)

Engage

Begin by briefly introducing the session topic and explaining that students will engage in activities that will help them prepare for the upcoming campus visit.

Presenter's Note

Post the **Four Corners Signs** (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree) in four areas of the classroom.

Using **slide three** and the Four Corners instructional strategy, ask the students to go to the sign/corner that best represents their reaction to the following statement: "College is worth the time and investment." Working with the other students in their respective corners, and separating into groups of three or four, students will decide on a statement that defends their position. Give at least one group from every corner a chance to share out their statements.

Possible Responses

"I disagree with this statement because there are good jobs like _____ that do not require a college degree."

Explore

Change to **slide four**. In groups of two or three, the students will complete a Card Sort activity using the attached **Career Salary Cards**, matching a career to an average annual salary. Provide students with the attached **Career Salary Match** handout where they can record their answers. Give the students approximately eight minutes to complete the Card Sort.

Explain

Once all groups have completed the Card Sort, show them the answer key on **slide five** so that they can check their answers, or distribute the attached **Career Salary Answer Key** handout. Have groups share out any surprises or disagreements they have with the list. Remind students that these are nationwide median salaries and not averages. It is also important to discuss that many jobs will require additional training or years of experience to reach the upper levels of pay.

Presenter Note

Be aware the nationwide median salaries presented on PowerPoint and all the handouts are from 2014, and may still be used for this session. To retrieve and use the most current salary data visit the Occupational Outlook Handbook on the Bureau of Labor Statistics website. If referencing updated data, update all PowerPoint slides and handouts that reference these numbers throughout the session.

Ask students, "What other factors could affect pay?"

Possible Responses

Other factors affecting pay could include supply and demand (nursing), weather (construction), stress level of the job (air traffic control, home health nurse), or location (a job sector that's weaker in some areas and stronger in others).

Extend

Change to **slide six**. The cards are color-coded by education level required. Have students separate the groups by color and decide which group represents each of the following categories:

- High school diploma-only
- Trade/vo-tech school or associate degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree or above

As needed, explain the difference between a trade school/vo-tech certification and a college degree as well as the difference between associate, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees.

After students assign colors into groups, show them the answer key on **slide seven**. Allow students an opportunity to discuss misconceptions.

Give students a moment to reflect individually on the three questions shown on **slide eight**. Have them then turn to a neighbor or partner and discuss the questions. After giving them three to five minutes to discuss, ask the pairs or groups to share out what they came up with. Make sure that each pair or group has a chance to share something.

The chart on **slide nine** is a great visual that can tie back the discussions that the students might be having about other factors to consider. It speaks to the importance of thinking long-term, which is difficult for many teenagers. Although there are some jobs with decent salaries that do not require a degree, these jobs often do not have good benefits or retirement plans. Working conditions in jobs like construction or truck driving also make it harder to stay in that career until retirement due to the type of work involved. These types of careers also offer limited possible growth in total earnings during the course of one's lifetime.

After talking about lifetime earnings and the financial benefits of a college degree, ask the students to consider benefits other than money (**slide 10**). Give them a minute to reflect and answer independently and then have them turn to a different partner and discuss the question together. A few may share out their thoughts to the whole group. *(NOTE: This is the instructional strategy Think-Pair-Share.)*

Possible Responses

Other benefits besides money might include better health, longer life, more job availability, better job satisfaction, health care, better working conditions, or more engaged citizens.

The goal by this point in the lesson is to have students agreeing that, overall, college is worth it.

Evaluate

Change to **slide 11** and instruct students to work with a partner or small group and compile a list of five concerns that they or another high school student might have about going to college..

After a minute, change to **slide 12**. Ask students to pass their list to another pair or group. With the list they receive from another group, they will then generate a question for each concern listed that could be answered during a college visit.

Possible Questions

For the concern, “being able to pay for food and housing,” a matching question could be, “Do scholarships or loans help cover food costs at college, and, if not, what options are there?”

As an Exit Ticket (**slide 13**), have students write down at least one or two questions that they have based on today’s lesson that they can commit to finding out the answer to during the upcoming campus visit. Have students write their names on their Exit Ticket and turn it in. Review and save these Exit Tickets and return them to each student on the day of the campus visit.

Follow-up Activities

The follow-up activity is to attend the campus visit. After returning, students will report out their experiences in relation to their questions from the Exit Ticket. Students take turns sharing out with the whole group or with small groups about what they learned from the campus visit. **Slide 14** can be used to facilitate a whole-group or small-group discussion among students who attend the campus visit.

Research Rationale

Students who attend college after graduation and complete a four-year degree enjoy greater job satisfaction and better quality of life post-graduation, and college graduates have significantly better opportunities for upward career mobility and earning a living wage (Okerson, 2016). College readiness is a process, not a program. The reasons students do not matriculate to college are many and varied (King, 2012). To mitigate the college-going gap, high school students need both support and assistance in preparing for and attending college (Radcliffe & Bos, 2013; King, 2012; Sherwin,2012). Students need to perceive college as a goal worthy pursuit and understand the benefits that a college education can bring to their lives (Okerson, 2016; King, 2012). Pre-campus visit help create a college-going culture within the school establishing clear expectations that all students have the ability and opportunity to attend college.

Resources

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