College2Career Forum: Build My Future OKC

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Essential Question(s)

- What steps do I need to take to reach my future goals?
- How can I apply the career information to my current post-secondary plans and academic opportunities?

Summary

The College2Career Forum: Build My Future focuses on career exploration in the architecture and construction career clusters. Held at a pavilion at the Oklahoma State Fairgrounds, students will engage with over 100 exhibitors ranging from Postsecondary Education institutions to local businesses. They will also hear from a variety of career speakers and engage in hands-on activities and experiences from a plethora of career fields.

Learning Goals

- Connect career information to current academic opportunities and plans for postsecondary education.
- Collaborate with career professionals while completing hands-on activities.

Materials

- Name badges (provided)
- T-shirts (provided)
- Pens/pencils
- Electronic devices (optional)

10 minutes

Prior to Event

Go to the Build My Future website to learn more about this organization and their events. On the Home page scroll until you see the “Email Us” link to register students prior to the event. Sign-ups are first come, first served; therefore, emailing well ahead of the event date is highly recommended. This event typically takes place on the Oklahoma State Fair grounds during the Fall semester each year. This event usually runs from 9am - 2pm but schools may leave whenever as needed due to time or travel constraints.

Prior to the event, collect data on which students to bring through a career interest survey. Consider using the K20 Clusters Survey. These “Interest Surveys” may be conducted in a number of ways. You are free to use your own survey material or try out our K20 resources.

- 16 Ways to Survey Your Career - This student resource is a lesson teachers or school staff can facilitate with their students to collect paper results reflecting students’ career interests. Click on the hyperlink or type in the URL provided: http://k20.ou.edu/16ways
- **Career Cluster survey** - This online survey is the same as the previous resource, yet it provides quicker results and can be done independently by students. Note: results are seen by students. It is up to the facilitator to determine how to gather the results from students (i.e. students can submit a screenshot in an LMS platform). Click on the hyperlink or type in the URL provided: https://tinyurl.com/K20CareerSurvey

Lunch is provided by Build My Future and is typically hot dogs/hamburgers, chips, and a drink. If you have any students with dietary restrictions, you may wish to contact Build My Future ahead of time or plan on bringing an outside lunch for those exceptions.

90 minutes

Arrival / Welcome

What to expect:

There are specific locations for bus parking at the Pavillion on the OKC Fairgrounds. The Build My Future team should email instructions on parking and provide maps prior to the event.

Upon arrival, chaperones will need to check-in students with a Build My Future staff member. Students will receive a Build My Future tee-shirt and lanyard to be worn throughout the event (required).

Afterwards, staff will welcome students and watch a short informational video on what they will experience during the event. Following the video, staff will review general safety training prior to engaging with the different vendors and exhibits.

15 minutes

Interactive Hands-On Exhibits

Facilitator Note: Event Structure

This event has an “open structure” meaning that students don’t have to stay together and your group doesn’t have to go in a line from one vendor to the next. This structure may be challenging for chaperones to monitor student behavior.

What to expect:

Students are given the opportunity to engage with over 100 vendors and/or exhibits within the field of Architecture and Construction. These exhibits range from: Academic programs (such as OU College of Architecture and OSU-OKC Programs) to Local businesses (such roofing, heavy machinery, design, etc.). Many of these exhibits are hands-on allowing students to explore the many different facets of this field with activities such as: nailing shingles, caulking, operating heavy machinery simulators, dry-walling, mixing concrete, painting, etc.

Lunch is provided by the event facilitators and is staggered throughout the day. Color/markings on students’ name badges and lanyards determine their lunch timeslot. An intercom announcement will inform students when their lunch is ready.

20 minutes

Final Reflection

After attending the event with students, teachers may wish to engage them in an evaluation, gauging the impact and interest the trip had on students and their next steps.

Once back in the classroom the following day, we suggest using the reflection strategy I used to think... But now I know. This strategy allows students to consider their earlier thoughts and preconceived notions about careers the event focused on, then compare those ideas to what they learned after engaging with the professionals and experiencing the hands-on activities. To facilitate this activity, have students divide a piece of paper or sticky note into two columns. Then have students write the following headings at the top of each column: 1) I Used to Think 2) But Now I Know. Have students reflect on their experience and list what they thought about the fields of Architecture and Construction prior to the event and then what they think now.

20 minutes

Follow-Up

Facilitator Note: Online Opportunities

If you would like more resources relating to the Architecture and Construction fields or if your school was unable to attend in person and you still want the experience for your students, Build My Future has a plethora of online resources.

From the Build My Future homepage, navigate to the "BMF Online" tab and have students explore the website in case they couldn't go in person. This tab includes resources, videos, career talks, and more. This allows students a similar experience if they are not able to attend the in-person event.

Research Rationale

As research continues, it is becoming increasingly evident that simply telling students about PSI opportunities or career fields isn't enough. Teachers need to give students impactful, relatable, and engaging experiences so that they can actively explore these options. Not only do these experiences help students explore future opportunities, they can also lead to career success later in life. Research shows a strong correlation between career success later in life and job shadowing and workplace visits as a teen. One study found that Canadian students who made a workplace visit by age 15 were 4% less likely to be NEET (Not being in Education, Employment, or Training) than their peers at age 25 (Covacevich et al. 2021). The same study found that Korean students who made the same type of workplace visits were 1.23 times more likely not to be NEET than those who did not take a visit.

Work-Based Learning

In making college and career decisions Work-Based Learning (WBL) opportunities can provide secondary students with experience, clarity, and increased self-efficacy. Field-based learning is a powerful tool in helping students to better understand the core concepts and to raise their enthusiasm (Janovy & Major, 2009; Manzanal et al., 1999, as cited in Pereira & Gheisari, 2017). These experiences also enable students to interact with professionals and perceive fieldwork in a way that is unattainable in a traditional school setting. A research project by Pereira and Gheisari (2017) studied faculty perceptions of the effectiveness of construction site visits during construction courses. The researchers found that faculty members believe observing the construction environment is critical for the students (Pereira & Gheisari, 2017). With student benefits and faculty acknowledgment, WBL can provide a compelling experience for students.

Another WBL study of eleven low-income ethnic minority secondary students aimed to gauge the impact of a school's WBL program. Through data analysis of student interviews, the study revealed that the WBL program promoted hope for their future academic and career success as well as support and mentorship through workplace supervisors within the program (Medvide et al.; M. E., 2020). This hope, support, and mentorship give students—especially low-income students whose backgrounds and lived experiences may hinder them—the self-efficacy to reach their full potential.

Hands-on Educational Experiences

Several research projects prove that hands-on educational experiences can positively impact students' academic and work-related outcomes. One such study followed a group of Australian secondary school students through a year-long science program. This program aimed to strengthen students' science skills in data analysis, experimentation, and scientific writing through current, hands-on research within the context of a significant worldwide health issue (Puslednik & Brennan, 2020). The research team found that the intervention reflected in students' mean score of knowledge growth—per a self-assessment survey—rose considerably. They also found, through VALID 10 testing, that 84% of intervention students would have scored lower on their tested science knowledge, problem-solving, communication, and planning skills than the control group's mean score (Puslednik & Brennan, 2020).

Another similar study evaluated the effectiveness of a hands-on learning experience in cancer research for 20 secondary students. After a two-week science summer camp at The University of the Pacific, the researcher found that 83.33% of the students were interested in participating in another hands-on science learning experience, and the same number reported increased interest in attending The University of the Pacific as their Post-Secondary Institution (PSI) (Argueta et al, 2020). These results showcased the impact and importance of hands-on learning for high school-aged students when considering their future academic and career endeavors.

Resources

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