

Creating a College and Career Culture Scavenger Hunt

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Time Frame 50 Minutes

Essential Question(s)

- What are different ways to go to and pay for college?
- What do I need to know about a college before deciding to go there?

Summary

This activity has students engage with the many possible paths available in post-secondary education. Students embark on a scavenger hunt in which they locate facts about the many post-secondary education options by discussing college journeys with teachers, viewing college journey boards, or locating information about post-secondary education online. This activity provides multiple opportunities for students to explore different colleges and universities and what those institutions offer to students. At the end of the activity, students reflect on what they learned about different paths in post-secondary education.

Learning Goals

- Increase student awareness of different types of colleges and the post-secondary journeys they could take to realize their career aspirations.
- Develop an understanding of the purpose of college.
- Explore the opportunities that post-secondary institutions can offer.

Attachments

- Activity Slides—College and Career Culture.pptx
- Digital Scavenger Hunt—College and Career Culture.docx
- Digital Scavenger Hunt—College and Career Culture.pdf
- Scavenger Hunt Journey Boards—Creating a College and Career Culture.docx
- Scavenger Hunt Journey Boards—Creating a College and Career Culture.pdf
- Scavenger Hunt Stations—College and Career Culture.docx
- Scavenger Hunt Stations—College and Career Culture.pdf

Materials

- Activity Slides (attached)
- Scavenger Hunt Journey Boards handout (attached; one per student)
- Digital Scavenger Hunt handout (attached; optional; one per student)
- Scavenger Hunt Stations handout (attached; optional; one per student)
- Visual college resources (e.g., pennants, college brochures, FAFSA and scholarship flyers; optional)
- Journey board supplies (e.g., markers, poster board, glue sticks, colored pencils, Cricut, Cricut vinyl; optional)
- Inspiration boards (e.g., cork boards, bulletin board backdrops, bulletin board borders, bulletin board letters; optional)
- Paper

10 minutes

Warm-Up

Use the attached **Activity Slides** to guide the activity. Begin by displaying **slide 2** and distributing one piece of paper to each student. Introduce students to the Collective Brain Dump strategy. Have students brainstorm everything they know about college on their pieces of paper. Organize students into small groups and have them share their ideas with each other.

Allow approximately two minutes for small group discussion, then invite volunteers to share their responses with the whole class. As students share, record student responses on a poster, whiteboard, or other location where the responses are clearly displayed.

Transition through **slides 3–5**. Introduce the activity title and review the essential questions and learning objectives. Explain that this activity covers the different paths to get to college.

30 minutes

College Journey Exploration

Distribute one copy of the attached **Scavenger Hunt Journey Boards** handout to each student. Show **slide 6** and instruct students to visit each journey board and follow the instructions on the handout to respond to the questions.

Teacher's Note: Scavenger Hunt Alternatives

If your teachers did not create journey boards illustrating their college experiences, then the scavenger hunt can be facilitated using discussion stations with teachers. For this option, create five stations with one or two teachers at each station. Distribute one copy of the attached **Scavenger Hunt Stations** handout to each student. Have the students visit each station and ask the teacher(s) the questions on the handout for that station. Have students record the teachers' responses on the handout.

You may also have students explore college and career tech schools virtually. Give each student one copy of the **Digital Scavenger Hunt** handout. Have them individually explore college and career options digitally in order to respond to the questions on their handouts.

10 minutes

Wrap-Up

Show **slide 7** and introduce the I Used to Think... but Now I Know strategy. Pass out one piece of paper or one sticky note to each student. Explain that they should complete the prompt on the slide by reflecting on what they knew about college before the activities and what they know about college now. Remind students of their original thoughts about college by reviewing their responses from the Collective Brain Dump they completed during the Warm-Up phase.

Research Rationale

Students benefit from attending a school that encourages them to set and achieve big goals and creates a college-going culture that instills in them the desire and drive to attend college (Calhoun, 2019; Hernandez, 2019). Based on literature, there are many approaches and initiatives that may be implemented to establish a college-going culture. Approaches to creating a college-going culture should take into account the importance of family and community in students' decisions about their futures, the significant influence of personal relationships between students and school staff members, and concerns about the financial costs, as well as the irrefutable evidence that dual enrollment supports academic and emotional preparation for post-secondary education (PSE) (Hernandez, 2019). It is also essential to nurture each student as their own agent in the decision-making process for their future, and to support them in developing their own aspirations to pursue a post-secondary education path (Martinez et al., 2019; Holliday & Anderson, 2021; Hernandez, 2019). The purpose of methods should be to help students understand the nature of college, see the importance of attaining a college education, foster positive perceptions about college, prepare for the admission process, and set goals for being ready for college (Calhoun, 2019; Hernandez, 2019; Radcliffe & Bos, 2013).

Visual messaging plays a significant role in establishing a school's college-going culture. Visible displays in schools that relate to post-secondary education such as banners, posters, pennants, and bulletin boards send signals to students and the community that the school values post-secondary education, that many post-secondary education options exist and are revered, and that the school has support and resources within reach (Martinez et al, 2019). There should be contextual messaging alongside visual aids, such as admission statistics and requirements displayed for individual colleges (Calhoun, 2019). Additionally, schools can add their mission and college admission rate goals to their websites, orientations, parent meetings, and newsletters to share a visual presence of their college-going culture with parents and the community (Calhoun, 2019; Hernandez, 2019). Visual messages should be used as a piece of a school's holistic college-going culture, but not as the only tactic (Martinez et al, 2019).

Resources

- Calhoun, T. L. (2019). Promising practices to promote and sustain a college-going culture: A charter-school study case (Publication No. 27800633) [Doctoral dissertation, University of Southern California). *ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global*. https://www.proquest.com/docview/2400995134
- Hernandez Williams, C. (2019). Promising practices for building a college-going culture: A case study of a comprehensive high school (Publication No. 27669848) [Doctoral dissertation, University of Southern California]. *ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global*. https://www.proquest.com/docview/2385243570
- Holliday, C. & Anderson, S. K. (2021). Integrated theoretical frameworks: Understanding college-going culture. *Open Access Library Journal, 8*(12). 1–19.
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Collective brain dump. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/111
- K20 Center. (n.d.). I used to think . . . but now I know. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/137
- Martinez, M. A., Torres, I., & Lewis, K. (2019). Beyond posters and pennants: College-going messaging at three racially and economically diverse public schools. *Teachers College Record, 121*(11), 1–42. https://doi.org/10.1177/016146811912101103
- Radcliffe, R. A. & Bos, B. (2013). Strategies to prepare middle school and high school students for college and career readiness. *The Clearing House, 86*(4), 136–141.