Job Shadow/Industry Tour: How-To Guide

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Time Frame 3-4 hours

Essential Question(s)

- What steps do I need to take to create a job shadowing event?
- How can I help apply the career information from a job shadowing event to my students' current post-secondary plans and academic opportunities?

Summary

This resource serves as a guide for planning and facilitating a job shadowing or industry tour event to give students hands-on experiences in career fields that interest them. During each job shadowing event, students travel to job sites to explore common aspects of a career through experiential learning. Facilitators collaborate with other school staff to identify interested students for each targeted career, organize a job shadowing event in collaboration with local career experts, and transport students to the identified career site to engage in hands-on activities that exemplify that career. Students then tour the business location, shadow a practicing professional, and engage in a short mentoring session with that professional.

Learning Goals

- Create and facilitate a job shadowing event.
- Explore career options in a post-secondary environment (a job site).
- Develop relationships with job site staff or career-specific professionals.

Attachments

- Agenda Template for Worksite—Job Shadowing and Industry Tour.docx
- Agenda Template for Worksite—Job Shadowing and Industry Tour.pdf
- Planning and Communication Guide—Job Shadowing and Industry Tour.docx
- Planning and Communication Guide—Job Shadowing and Industry Tour.pdf

Materials

- Planning and Communication Guide document (attached; one per facilitator)
- Agenda Template for Worksite document (attached; one per facilitator)
- "16 Ways to Survey Your Career" resource (linked)
- Career Cluster Survey (linked)
- "Career Cluster Madness" resource (linked)
- "Practice, Reflect, Repeat" resource (linked)
- Off-campus forms (optional; as required and provided by school)
- Name badges (optional)
- School shirts (optional)

120 minutes

Contact Potential Career Partners

Prior to completing the activities outlined in this resource, establish a list of potential career partners complete with contact information. Use the attached **Planning and Communication Guide** document to assist in the process of recruiting a worksite and planning the details of the visit. If your contact was provided by a peer, include them in the first email, or allow them to establish initial contact to introduce you and your class.

The email templates in the Planning and Communication Guide are ordered as follows:

- **Email Template 1:** Recruiting Worksite Visits
- **Email Template 2:** Visit Details with Agenda and Activities
- **Email Template 3:** Confirming Worksite Visit Information
- **Email Template 4:** Event Details and Needed Information
- **Email Template 5:** Thank You

180 minutes

Create, Plan, and Facilitate

The facilitation of a job shadowing event begins long before the day of the event. All responsible parties must consider several steps during the creation and planning process for the event. Review the below considerations as you plan, but remember that your site may require more logistics when transporting students off campus.

> **Teacher's Note: Timing**
>
> The following pre-visit considerations are not sequential and can be completed in any order as needed. The length of this section is listed as 180 minutes, but the timing will vary based on your visit.

Pre-Visit Considerations

Identify student attendees based on career interest. To ensure that students are matched with job shadowing experiences that align with their career interests, consider facilitating career exploration activities prior to the visit. This process helps students make informed choices and increases engagement during the job shadowing experience.

Step 1: Facilitate the Career Cluster Survey. Issue the Career Cluster Survey from the LEARN resource "16 Ways to Survey My Career" to students.

This activity introduces students to a broad range of career options and helps them begin identifying areas of personal interest. It serves as a foundation for deeper exploration and reflection.

Step 2: Conduct the "Career Cluster Madness" Activity. The interactive "Career Cluster Madness" activity guides students through a process of narrowing down their interests by comparing and ranking career clusters. By the end of the activity, students should identify their top three career choices, which can then be used to match them with relevant job shadowing sites.

These activities not only support students' self-awareness and career readiness, but also help educators organize meaningful groupings for site visits. When students are placed in environments that reflect their interests, they are more likely to engage thoughtfully, ask relevant questions, and envision future pathways.

Key stakeholders: Identifying key stakeholders for the upcoming visit is a critical component of attending and facilitating the job shadowing event. These stakeholders may include any chaperones, front office staff involved in checking students out of school, bus drivers, school administrators, etc.

Example schedules: This may be the first time your partner organization has hosted this type of event. To help guide the organization, consider including an agenda worksheet to help them better understand the timeline and objectives. The attached **Agenda Template for Worksite** is an example worksheet based on previous GEAR UP schedules.

To use the template, copy the timeline from the template and edit the activities as needed. Work with your contact to create interactive activities for your students based on relevant content areas.

Teacher's Note: Visit and Content Alignment

Make intentional connections between the job shadowing experience and instructional content to the best of your ability. When possible, align the visit with current or upcoming curriculum to reinforce academic concepts, deepen student understanding, and highlight real-world applications of classroom learning.

Materials and supplies: Contact your job shadowing event contact to ask if there are any materials or supplies you should prepare prior to the visit. These materials may include school T-shirts, name badges, and any note-taking materials for use during or directly after the visit.

Student preparation: Conduct a pre-visit orientation to ensure that students are ready to meaningfully engage in the job shadowing experience. The orientation should include the following components:

- **Overview of the host organization:** Provide students with background information about the business or organization they will visit. Consider including the establishment's mission, services, industry sector, and relevance to the local community.
- **Logistics and expectations:** Share practical details including:
  - Dress code (e.g., business casual, closed-toed shoes, etc.)
  - Behavior expectations (e.g., professionalism, active listening, respectful engagement)
  - Safety protocols or site-specific guidelines
- **Career Exploration Activities (Pre-visit):** Before the visit, students should complete a variety of activities in the classroom to help them understand the following:
  - The purpose of the hosting business or organization
  - The available career paths within the industry of the hosting business or organization
  - The types of jobs offered by that business or organization and the educational or training requirements for those roles.
- **Question Preparation:** Encourage students to prepare thoughtful questions for the job shadowing experience in advance. These questions could focus on:
  - Daily responsibilities of specific roles
  - Career journeys of different staff members
  - Skills and education required for success in the field
  - Advice for young people interested in the industry

Transportation: Consult your school's policies about requesting transportation for students to an off-campus activity. Close the sign-ups for the event early enough to get a total number of students attending in order to arrange for adequate vehicles and drivers.

Lunch: Depending on the time of the job shadowing event, you may need to make lunch arrangements while students are at the event site. Consult with a school administration about the best plan for lunch. Options for lunch may include: having students bring their own lunch, distributing sack lunches provided by the school cafeteria, eating lunch at a facility on-site (if available), or ordering lunch to be delivered, such as pizza, a day before the event.

Substitute teachers: Work with school administration to ensure that your classes will be covered by a substitute while staff members are out of the building, if necessary.

Off-campus forms: Students may need to complete several off-campus, safety, or permission forms for the job shadowing event. Check with your school administration to identify any district-required forms in addition to any safety or permission forms required by the job shadowing location.

Photo releases: Check both your school site's and district's photo and talent release protocols before taking or posting pictures from the event.

On-Site Considerations

Engagement and facilitation: Ensure that all students participating in the job shadowing event engage with the staff and activities. All school chaperones should be willing and prepared to offer support during the facilitation of hands-on activities. Chaperones must also monitor students throughout the day.

Post-Visit Considerations

Debrief and reflection: During the following class periods, complete a debrief and reflection activity with students who attended the job shadowing event. Consider using the following instructional strategies to facilitate this activity:

- 3-2-1
- I Used to Think... but Now I Know
- Mirror, Microscope, Binoculars
- POMS: Point of Most Significance
- What? So What? Now What?

Teacher's Note: Additional Strategies

You may choose to use a different instructional strategy for debrief and reflection activity. Use the LEARN filter feature to search for additional strategies by selecting the "Intention or Purpose" box and selecting "Reflection" from the drop-down menu.

This debrief and reflection activity should solidify students' knowledge gained from the visit and allow staff to instructional theory to career practice. If you are currently teaching curriculum that directly relates to topics learned from the job shadowing event, engage students' new understanding of real-world connections from the event. The reflection should also allow students to consider how they might fit into the career from the job shadowing opportunity. Additionally, encourage students to give feedback on the event as part of the reflection process.

Optional Follow-Up Activity

If time allows, consider completing the entire "Practice, Reflect, Repeat: Student Reflections for Clubs" activity. This activity has students set a goal for a specific skill they are currently work on, and gives them several ways to reflect on their progress toward that goal. While this activity is designed for clubs, it can also be used with regular classes.

"Thank You" Notes and Follow-Up: After the visit, follow up with site staff and thank them for their time. Use "Email Template 5" from the Planning and Communication Guide to write thank-you emails. This follow-up will also give school staff the chance to ask any additional questions, collect any new contacts, and discuss opportunities for future visits.

Research Rationale

Continued research has made it increasingly evident that students need more than basic information about PSI opportunities and career fields to make future decisions. Teachers need to give students impactful, relatable, and engaging experiences so students can actively explore all of their options. Not only do these experiences help students explore future opportunities, they also can lead to career success later in life. Research shows a strong correlation between job shadowing and workplace visits as a teen to career success in the future. One study found that Canadian students who made a workplace visit by age 15 were 4% less likely to be NEET (Not 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 participate in a visit.

Work-Based Learning

Work-Based Learning (WBL) opportunities can support secondary students in making college and career decisions and provide students with experience, clarity, and increased self-efficacy. Field-based learning is a powerful tool in helping students better understand core concepts and raising their enthusiasm (Janovy & Major, 2009; Manzanal et al., 1999, as cited in Pereira & Gheisari, 2017). With student benefits and faculty acknowledgment, WBL can provide a compelling experience for students.

Another WBL study of 11 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 students' future academic and career success and support and mentorship through workplace supervisors within the program (Medvide & Kenny, 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 have proven 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, measured in a self-assessment survey, which 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 compared to the control group's mean score (Puslednik & Brennan, 2020).

A 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 preferred post-secondary institution (PSI) (Argueta et al., 2020). These results showcased the impact and importance of hands-on learning for high school-aged students in relation to their interest in future academic and career endeavors.

Resources

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