Imagining Possible Future Selves

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Time Frame 60 minutes

Essential Question(s)

- Why are postsecondary campus visits important for middle school and early high school students?
- What are the essential components of a campus visit?

Summary

In this session, participants will examine research on the importance of postsecondary campus visits for middle school and early high school students. This professional development is designed to help participants implement a campus visit as a scalable college and career readiness intervention.

Learning Goals

- Understand the importance of a postsecondary education campus visit.
- Discuss the essential components of a campus visit to plan future events.

Standards

InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards (K-12th)

1c: The teacher collaborates with families, communities, colleagues, and other professionals to promote learner growth and development.
1i: The teacher is committed to using learners' strengths as a basis for growth, and their misconceptions as opportunities for learning.
1k: The teacher values the input and contributions of families, colleagues, and other professionals in understanding and supporting each learner's development
2j: The teacher understands that learners bring assets for learning based on their individual experiences, abilities, talents, prior learning, and peer and social group interactions, as well as language, culture, family, and community values.
3b: The teacher develops learning experiences that engage learners in collaborative and self-directed learning and that extend learner interaction with ideas and people locally and globally.

Attachments

- Campus Visit Checklist—Imagining Possible Future Selves.docx
- Campus Visit Checklist—Imagining Possible Future Selves.pdf
- Presentation Slides—Imagining Possible Future Selves.pptx
- The Importance of Postsecondary Campus Visits Research Brief—Imagining Possible Future Selves.pdf

Materials

- Presentation Slides (attached)
- Campus Visit Checklist (attached, one per participant)
- The Importance of Postsecondary Campus Visits Research Brief (attached, one per participant)
- Oklahoma PSE Map Infographic (linked)
- Laptops (one per participant or group)
- Pencils/pens

Engage

Open the attached **Presentation Slides** and introduce yourself to the participants. Display **slides 3** and **4** to introduce your essential questions and learning objectives.

Display **slide 5** and introduce the mental time travel activity. Ask participants to do the following:

- Imagine one positive event that could take place in your future. Think of as many details as possible, including the emotions you would feel.

Encourage participants to practice mental time travel. After a few minutes, display **slide 6**. Have them discuss the imagined event with someone near them and share all the details, including the emotions they experienced. Ask participants, “Where did the details of your event come from—past experiences, experiences you have witnessed in others' lives, or on social media?” Encourage participants to consider the source of the positive emotions.

Display **slide 7** and read the quote, “Positive mental time travel is shown to increase happiness and decrease anxiety” (Quoidbach et al., 2009). Tell participants that you hope campus visits will situate students in a space where they can begin to imagine themselves in the future.

Invite participants to consider how engaging in mental time travel and considering one’s possible future self allows them to plan for the future. By adjusting and regulating their present situation, they can better manage their present self, which positions them in turn to better reach the future they have in mind. Encourage participants to learn how they can use this knowledge in tandem with campus visits to help students do the same.

Explore

Facilitator's Note: Time

To save time, consider placing copies of the research brief at each participant's seat or stacked on each table in advance.

Move to **slide 8** and introduce a modified version of the Thinking Notes instructional strategy. Pass out a copy of the attached **The Importance of Postsecondary Campus Visits Research Brief** to each participant. Invite participants to read the research brief and mark the following:

- The main idea(s)—Mark with a star
- Favorite part—Mark with an exclamation point
- Something they are unsure of or have questions about—Mark with a question mark
- Benefits for students—Mark with a heart

Provide participants time to read the research brief and mark their thoughts. After participants have finished, move to **slide 9** and ask for volunteers to share out. Begin by asking for a volunteer or two to share ideas they marked with a star. Next, ask for volunteers to share sections they marked with exclamation points and hearts. Finally, ask participants if they marked any sections with question marks. Answer participants' questions or discuss if time allows.

Explain

Encourage participants to consider the purpose of campus visits. Display **slide 10** and provide participants time to discuss, at their tables, the following questions:

- What is the purpose of a campus visit?
- Can there be more than one purpose?
- Does grade level affect the purpose?

Display **slide 11** and inform participants that, when considering a campus visit, they need to identify the purpose and focus of the visit. This is important to ensure that each educational campus visit is relevant to students and helps them visualize their possible future selves. Explain that early campus visits should focus on the benefits of postsecondary education. Later visits might focus on career options and majors, extracurricular activities, making connections, how to pay for college with scholarships and grants, the requirements for admission, or the application process. Each of these topics could serve as the foundation for an educational campus visit.

Display **slide 12** and distribute the **Campus Visit Checklist** handout to each participant. Using the handout, describe to participants the logistics of planning a campus visit. Inform participants that there are ways to make planning campus visits more manageable. Invite participants to discuss in small groups the best practices for making these items more manageable. Inform participants they will have 5 minutes to discuss. Start the 5 minute timer on the slide.

Possible Participant Response

Permission slips could be made more manageable. For example, some districts have a blanket permission slip for each year, and parents can opt in or out at enrollment.

Once time is up, have each table share one or two ideas they came up with to help make campus visits more manageable.

Move to **slide 13**. Discuss with participants the benefits of smaller tours. Large tours limit one-to-one interaction and can discourage students from asking questions. Small group tours allow students to get to know their tour guides, get a better feel for the community, and ask questions that matter to students. Inform participants that one way to ensure visits are small and personal is to divide a large cohort of students into multiple campus visits across multiple days. It is important to recruit enough chaperones to create smaller tour groups for the best interactions on campus. The goal is to encourage interaction and avoid a scenario where students do not feel comfortable asking questions in a large group.

Display **slide 14** and explain to the participants that students will only be able to imagine themselves at a postsecondary institution if they think beyond classrooms and textbooks. It is most beneficial if campus tours are given by students from the institution who can share their personal experiences and why they made the choice to go to college or a career tech center. Participants' students will be more likely to hold on to images that inspire and interest them, so encourage participants to highlight parts of campus that will appeal to younger students during the visit. Campus life elements (e.g. student social events, the cafeteria, the dorms) will help students imagine their future selves thriving with friends and enjoying opportunities to develop their passions.

Move to **slide 15** to display the final recommendations for a successful campus visit. Share with participants the importance of providing items that will make the visit a success. Recommend that participants order a shirt for all students and chaperons to wear on the campus visit. This item will easily identify students as minors on campus and provide a visual cue to locate your group. If there are no funds for a uniform group shirt, consider requiring all students to wear your main school color (e.g. all students wear red). The second recommendation is to eat on campus in the main dining hall for students. Allowing students to see the food options and observe other students on campus adds to the positive mental image students will create from this experience.

Display **slide 16** and summarize the components that make up a successful campus visit.

Extend

Facilitator's Note: Outside Oklahoma

If you are outside Oklahoma, consider providing your participants with a list of a few example schools for each category to serve as a similar resource to the **Oklahoma PSE Map Infographic**.

Facilitator's Note: Padlet Preparation

Padlet works much better if participants work on a laptop. When participants form partnerships or groups, encourage them to make sure at least one person in the group has access to a laptop.

Prior to the activity, set up the following on Padlet:

1. Navigate to padlet.com.
2. Log in or create a Padlet account.
3. Consider selecting the "Wall" format for this activity.
4. Under settings, scroll to the "Format" column and select "Group posts by sections."
5. Add multiple sections and label each column with type of postsecondary institution. Your labels will include Community College/Junior College (Regional two-year), Regional four-year college, Four-year Research Institution, and Career Tech Center.
6. After you have labeled your columns and set up your Padlet, click the "Share" arrow.
7. Under "Links," click "Copy link to clipboard."
8. Insert your link into **slide 18** before the session.
9. You may consider creating a shortened link to save space on the slide.

Transition to **slide 17** and invite participants to brainstorm potential campus visit locations either independently or with a colleague from their school. Recommend that participants think of a location for each PSE category that is within a two hour drive from their school sites. Participants should consider all options and the best "fit" for the students at their school. Options may include:

- Career tech center
- Community college or junior college (regional two-year)
- Regional four-year college
- Four-year research institution

Encourage participants to consider options that will appeal to students from their community, but to also think about distance and travel logistics. Share with participants an example of each location type. Consider using the **Oklahoma PSE Map Infographic** as a visual. Inform participants they will choose the ideal postsecondary education location for each category listed and record their answers on a Padlet.

Display **slide 18** and have participants navigate to the Padlet using the shortened URL on the slide. Inform participants that this activity will help with planning locations for future campus visits. Provide participants time to work with their partner and fill in the Padlet.

Facilitator's Note: More Than One School

If participants from more than one school are represented, remind them to add their school names to their submissions on Padlet.

Evaluate

After the Padlet is complete, move to **slide 19** and introduce the MVP: Most Valuable Point strategy to encourage participants to reflect on this session. Ask participants to determine the most valuable and important piece of information that they learned today. Provide participants with time to think about their answers and discuss them with someone sitting near them. If there is time, ask volunteers to share their MVPs.

Research Rationale

See attached **The Importance of Postsecondary Campus Visits Research Brief.**

Resources

- K20 Center. (2021, September 21). *K20 Center 5 minute timer*. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watchv=EVS_yYQoLJg
- K20 Center. (n.d.). MVP: most valuable point. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/3034
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- K20 Center. (n.d.). Padlet. Tech tools. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/1077
- Quoidbach, J., Wood, A. M., & Hansenne, M. (2009). Back to the future: The effect of daily practice of mental time travel into the future on happiness and anxiety. *The Journal of Positive Psychology, 4*(5), 349–355. https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760902992365
- Smith, M. Corinne, Gosky, Ross M., & Li, Jui-Teng. (2022). Campus visits as predictors of postsecondary enrollment in low-income, rural school districts. *Journal of College Access*. *7*(1), 10. https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jca/vol7/iss1/10
- Swanson, E., Kopotic, K., Zamarro, G., Mills, J. N., Greene, J. P., & W. Ritter, G. (2021). An evaluation of the educational impact of college campus visits: A randomized experiment. *AERA Open, 7,* 1-18.