

Community Collaboration: Building Bridges for Career Exploration

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Essential Question(s)

- How can I grow and sustain a mentorship program with a career focus at my school?

Summary

Building community connections is a critical aspect of the career exploration process. Creating long-standing connections with local businesses and post-secondary institutions cultivate sustainable partnerships between the community and the school. This session focuses on peer collaboration aimed on enhancing a school's career exploration program. Participants learn strategies and resources to host their own Career Expo, Career Cafe, and College2Career Forum by brainstorming local community partners.

Learning Goals

Attachments

- Career Cluster Table—Community Collaboration.docx
- Career Cluster Table—Community Collaboration.pdf
- Career Expo Cluster Cards—Community Collaboration.docx
- Career Expo Cluster Cards—Community Collaboration.pdf
- Career Expo Gym Setup (11x17)—Community Collaboration .docx
- Career Expo Gym Setup (11x17)—Community Collaboration .pdf
- Mentoring Action Plan—Community Collaboration.docx
- Mentoring Action Plan—Community Collaboration.pdf
- Mentoring Planning Document—Community Collaboration docx .docx
- Mentoring Planning Document—Community Collaboration docx.pdf
- Modified Appointment Clock—Community Collaboration.docx
- Modified Appointment Clock—Community Collaboration.pdf
- Presenter Slides—Community Collaboration pptx.pptx
- Station Cards—Community Collaboration .docx
- Station Cards—Community Collaboration .pdf
- Student Survey Data—Community Collaboration.docx
- Student Survey Data—Community Collaboration.pdf

Materials

- Presentation Slides (attached)
- Station Cards handout (attached; 1-2 per table)
- Mentoring Planning Document handout (attached; one per participant)
- Mentoring Action Plan handout (attached; one per participant)
- Career Cluster Table handout (attached; 1-2 per table)
- Modified Appointment Clock handout (attached; one per participant)
- Career Expo Gym Setup handout (attached; one per group)
- Career Expo Cluster Cards handout (attached; one set per group)
- Student Survey Data handout (attached; one per group)
- Poster Paper
- Pens
- Markers
- Green & Orange sticky notes (enough for all participants to have three of each)
- Paperclip or sandwich bag (optional for storing cards)

20 minutes

Session Preparation

Have all of these resources already set-up at the tables or around the room prior to participants entering:

- Each table should have 1-2 Station Cards and Career Cluster Table handouts.
- Each participant should have a Mentoring Planning Document and Modified Appointment Clock handout already at their seat.
- Place stacks of green and orange sticky notes on each table.
- Post three poster papers around the room. The posters should be labeled as one of the following: Career Expo, College2Career Forum, and Career Café.

For the Explore section, the Career Expo Cluster Cards should be cut into individual cards before the session. Consider paperclipping the cards or placing them in individual sandwich bags for safe keeping.

10 minutes

Engage

Use the attached **Presenter Slides** to guide this professional learning experience. Open the session by presenting the title on **slide 2**, Community Collaboration: Building Bridges for Career Exploration. This session is meant for participants to build upon their knowledge of community partners who can engage in career exploration events with their students.

Move to **slide 3** and ask participants to get out their **Modified Appointment Clock** handout. Explain how the appointment clock graphic is different from a standard clock because of the extra hours. Note the Modified Appointment Clock has 18 spaces for participants to list one Post-Secondary Institution (PSI) program, place of business, or individual, plus one line for PSIs and military. Inform participants to use the **Career Cluster Table** handout to help guide their brainstorming, noting that each row on the handout is numbered from 1-16. Once the participants understand the instructions, start the timer. Once the timer ends, check-in with your participants to see how many lines they were able to fill-out. Let the participants know they will be adding to the Modified Appointment Clock throughout the session.

Move to **slide 4** and review the essential question for this session. Move to **slide 5** and explain the learning objectives for the session. Unhide **slide 6** to showcase any facilitators for this session.

20 minutes

Explore

Now move to **slide 7** and explain the different stations or activities for the session. Participants will engage in station activities for each of the GEAR UP career exploration programs. Mention that each participant has a **Mentor Planning Document** that they will use throughout these activities to help with notetaking and brainstorming.

Facilitator's Note: Guiding the Session

Participants will begin by using a Career Expo Gym Setup to practice designing their own Career Expo with a set of Career Expo Cluster Cards. Next, participants will view sample student career cluster survey data and collaborate with their table group to match career speakers with the interests of their "students." Lastly, participants will brainstorm hands-on experiences that students can participate in, the action steps needed for off-campus trips, and their expected learning outcomes from these events. Each station builds off the previous one. We suggest each group should be no larger than 4 participants.

Move to **slide 8** and pass out one **Career Expo Gym Setup** handout and a set of **Career Expo Cluster Cards** per group. Explain how Career Expos are different from standard college and career fairs (e.g. focusing on careers over only bringing colleges). Move to **slide 9** and tell participants that they will be using the Career Expo Gym Setup and the Career Cluster Expo Cards to format and set up a sample Career Expo. Mention that participants should use the Career Expo section of their Mentor Planning Document to list potential speakers that could attend their Career Expo. Once all instructions have been given, start the timer.

Once the timer is finished, check-in with your participants to see how the activity went. Ask for groups to share out how and why they designed their Career Expo the way they did. Facilitators can also ask whether participants were able to add any new speakers to their Modified Appointment Clock handout.

Move to **slide 10** to explain what a Career Café is. Explain how Cafés are meant to bridge student interest and school curriculum to real-world connections. Pass out the **Student Survey Data** handout before or while giving instructions. Participants will use the Career Café section of their Mentor Planning Document. Move to **slide 11** and explain that the Student Survey Data handout is sample data taken from the K20 Center's Career Cluster Survey. Participants will work with their group to analyze the sample data given and create a list of up to five career professionals who could come to their school to participate in a Career Café. Inform participants to use their Mentor Planning Document to record these speakers for future reference. Once all instructions have been given, start the timer.

Once the timer is finished, check-in with your participants to see how the activity went. Ask for groups to share their lists of potential Career Café speakers. Ask if the activity caused participants to list speakers they had not previously thought about. Facilitators can also ask wheter participants were able to add any new speakers to their Modified Appointment Clock handout.

Move to **slide 12** and explain what a College2Career Forum is and its difference from a regular site visit. Facilitators should mention that College2Career Forums are meant to be highly interactive career exploration events for students interested in learning more about a career based on a degree or certificate granting program.

Move to **slide 13** and explain that participants will now take at least one speaker from the Career Café activity and outline actionable items needed to visit their place of business or PSI program for a College2Career Forum. Participants will use the College2Career Forum section of their Mentor Planning Document handout to list where they are going, when they would like to visit this location, and the logistics needed to take students off campus. Lastly, the participants should explain why they chose this location for a forum and their expected learning outcomes of the event. Once all instructions have been given, start the timer.

Once the timer is finished, check-in with your participants to see how the activity went. Ask for groups to share their potential College2Career Forum location and why they would like to visit that location. Ask if the activity caused participants to think about site visits that they had not previously thought about.

10 minutes

Explain

Move to **slide 14** and have participants share their experiences with the activities. Ask if they were able to fill out any more lines on their Modified Appointment Clock handout and whether they are still missing some. After this discussion, ask the groups if they have facilitated or participated in a GEAR UP career exploration event in the past, and if so, how did it go? Allow time for group discussion about events so that other participants can gain knowledge about past experiences and how they might be able to take that information and use it in their own setting. Lastly, share the Mentoring Career Exploration Resources LEARN Collection with the participants and explain how they can use these resources to plan their own events.

10 minutes

Extend

Pass out the **Mentoring Action Plan** handout to all participants. Move to **slide 15** and have participants group in similar job roles or with members of their own school if the participants are a mixed group. Have groups work on their Mentoring Action Plan handout to plan a Career Expo, Career Café, and a College2Career Forum for the upcoming school year. Participants should think about the dates that they would like to host an event, the location where the event will take place, and the key stakeholders needed to complete the event. Groups can complete the handout individually or together.

10 minutes

Evaluate

Move to **slide 16** and explain the Gallery Walk poster papers around the room. Instruct participants to each take three green and three orange sticky notes. Individuals should write their name and school on the sticky side so that facilitators can refer to who wrote on the sticky note. Participants should use the green sticky notes to write an action item they plan to do and use the orange sticky note to write a barrier they anticipate when planning the career exploration event. Once participants have written their notes, they can walk around to the respective posters and place the green sticky notes on the top half of the poster paper and the orange sticky notes on the bottom half. Facilitators will use the sticky notes to better support schools in their planning and facilitation process.

Research Rationale

Career Talks

Secondary school is essential in developing a student's life, interests, future career, and educational trajectory. Students often use their personalities and interest to help form career decision-making skills throughout their lives, but it becomes more prominent in secondary education as they approach adulthood. Personality traits "influence career adaptation by facilitating, or deterring, behavioral performances" (Lent & Brent, 2013, p. 563). Holland's theory of vocational choice notes that "the individual career satisfaction is based on the fit or congruence between the career personality and the environment of the work" (Zainudin et al., 2020, p. 884).

By connecting personality traits and interests, students begin to build self-efficacy in career decision-making as they are more confident in engaging in career exploration (Lent et al., 2016). This connection increases an individual's environmental fit and "level of congruence" within an organization (Zainudin et al., 2020, p. 884). One study taken from 4,834 secondary-aged students aimed to gauge the helpfulness of career talks in their schools (Kashefpakdel & Percy, 2017). The study showed that 2660 (55%) of students rated participation in career talks quite helpful, while 1196 (24.7%) rated the talk very helpful (Kashefpakdel & Percy, 2017).

This study shows that nearly three out of four students that participated in a career talk gained beneficial career knowledge from their guest speaker. Similarly, Covacevich et al. (2021) support this idea by stating that students who are engaged in guidance activities they felt were useful to them seemed likely to consciously gain value. Therefore, career interventions such as guest speakers play a significant role in shaping the career decision-making process of individuals. Career experts and professionals bring real-world experiences, insights, and knowledge insights to students during the critical career decision-making period.

Site Visits

As research continues, it is becoming increasingly evident that simply telling students about PSI opportunities or career fields isn't sufficient. 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, but 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 fifteen were 4% less likely to be NEET (Not being in Education, Employment, or Training) than their peers at age twenty-five (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 understand the core concepts better 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 Postsecondary 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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