



Find Your Route: Navigating Postsecondary Options



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Time Frame 60

Essential Question(s)

- How can exploring postsecondary institutions and planning campus visits support informed college and career decision-making?

Summary

Participants will reflect on their early career and college interests, explore postsecondary institutions through a virtual scavenger hunt, and collaborate with peers to learn about different college and career pathways. Through interactive discussion and information sharing, participants will deepen their understanding of postsecondary options and the importance of planning campus visits as part of college and career exploration.

Learning Goals

Standards

Educator Standards 6–12 (6th - 12th)

E.K.1.2: Understand the array of college and career options, including four-year universities, community colleges, career technology programs, apprenticeships, and military opportunities, where students can achieve success based on their strengths and goals.

E.K.8: Understand how to integrate postsecondary education discussions and resources into the curriculum in meaningful and age-appropriate ways, ensuring alignment with academic standards and career readiness goals.

E.S.6.1: Organize campus visits, job shadowing opportunities, career fairs, and community service projects to expose students to real-world environments and college and career options.

Attachments

- [Checklist for Campus Visits—Find Your Route.docx](#)
- [Checklist for Campus Visits—Find Your Route.pdf](#)
- [Oklahoma Edge-Campus Visit Checklist—Find Your Route.pdf](#)
- [Presentation Slides—Find Your Route.pptx](#)
- [Virtual Scavenger Hunt Deep Dive—Find Your Route.docx](#)
- [Virtual Scavenger Hunt Deep Dive—Find Your Route.pdf](#)

Materials

- Presentation Slides (attached)
- Virtual Scavenger Hunt Deep Dive handout (attached; one per participant)
- Checklist for Campus Visit handout (attached; one per participant)
- Oklahoma Edge: Campus Visit Checklist handout (attached; one per participant)
- Sticky notes (at least 3 different colors)
- Poster paper (optional)
- Pen/pencil

10 minutes

Engage

Facilitator's Note

This resource was originally part of a 1-day workshop in conjunction with two other related resources. However, it can be conducted on its own. For more information check out the Counselor Academy collection: [Navigator Network](#).

Use the **Presentation Slides** to facilitate this session. Introduce the topic with **slide 2**, then move to **slide 3** and invite participants to access the [Mentimeter](#) reflecting on the question: "Thinking back to yourself as a middle schooler, what career or major were you interested in?" Give people time to respond. Consider displaying the Menti results as people respond. After enough time has passed, have participants share out as a whole group, table group, individually, or with an [Elbow Partner](#).

Continue introducing the session with **slides 4-5** going over the essential question and learning objectives in as much detail as needed.

20 minutes

Explore

Display **slide 6**. Place participants in groups of 4-5 or allow them to select groups themselves. Assign a Post-Secondary Institution (PSI) campus to each group or allow groups to pick from the list you generated. Distribute the **Virtual Scavenger Hunt Deep Dive** handout to all participants.

Have groups use keywords to research information about their assigned campuses in order to complete their handouts. Direct participants to explore multiple sections of the institution's website, including admissions, academics, student life, financial aid, housing, athletics, and student support services. As they investigate, participants should gather information related to the scavenger hunt prompts, including the institution's location, type of school, degrees offered, admission requirements, campus life opportunities, tuition costs, and available student support services. Encourage participants to record their findings on the worksheet and identify information that stands out to them or influences their perception of the institution.

While participants are working, circulate throughout the room to answer questions, support student research, and encourage deeper thinking by asking questions such as, "What makes this institution appealing to you?" or "How does this school connect to your future goals?"

Allow participants time to work.

Facilitator's Note: Guiding the Activity

Encourage participants to go beyond the questions on the scavenger hunt by exploring additional information about the postsecondary institution (PSI). For example, participants can use established, reliable resources such as [Big Future](#) and [OK College Start](#).

20 minutes

Explain

Move to **slide 7** and introduce participants to the instructional strategy [Three Stray, One Stays](#). Have group members decide who will be their “expert” and stay at their table while everyone else moves to different groups to learn about different PSIs. Explain that experts will be in charge of presenting what the group learned about their chosen PSI to the “strays” who come to you from other groups. Transition to **slide 8** and explain that the rest of the table will be “strays” or migrating groups. Each “stray” from a table group will go to a different PSI table to listen carefully and ask clarifying questions. They will have a sticky note to write down some key items from the PSI group to take back to their original table. Set the [K20 5-minute](#) timer then have “strays” come back to their original table and teach their members what they learned.

10 minutes

Extend

Optional: Scaffolding Campus Visit Research

If your participants are new to the idea of Campus Visits, unhide **slide 9** and share some of the research behind its effectiveness.

Move to **slide 10**, pass out the **Oklahoma Edge: Campus Visit Checklist** handout, and explain that it's a resource that students may use before, during, and after a future campus visit. Using the [3-2-1](#) strategy and colored sticky notes, have participants read the document and write down 3 benefits of using this resource using blue sticky notes, 2 questions they still have on orange sticky notes, and 1 way they can implement this resource before/after the campus visit on a pink sticky note. Once completed, have participants post their sticky notes on the prepared designated spaces, organized by color.

Facilitator's Note: Optional Activity

Consider inviting participants to revisit these sticky notes during the break or before they leave. Make sure to especially highlight visiting the '1' on the 3-2-1 stickies board to be inspired by how other participants plan on implementing this resource.

Facilitator's Note: Possible Discussion Topics

Reflection after a campus visit can help students evaluate whether an institution is a good fit and can provide valuable documentation for their Individual Career Academic Plan (ICAP). Highlight that the feedback questions encourage students to connect their experiences to their future goals and educational planning.

10 minutes

Evaluate

Move to **slide 11**. Distribute the **Campus Visit Checklist** handout to participants. Explain that this checklist outlines the steps that counselors, school staff, and chaperones may need to complete before and during a campus visit. Ask participants to read through the checklist independently or with a partner. As they read, have them underline tasks they think are easy to complete and do not require much bandwidth and circle tasks they think may be challenging or a barrier in making a campus visit successful. Allow participants time to work then ask for volunteers to share their ideas as a whole group.

Research Rationale

College can be a life-altering experience for students, and not only academically. Here are just a few of the ways in which college can change students' lives for the better: Earning a bachelor's degree enables students to earn, on average, \$1 million more than high school graduates over the course of their careers (Abel & Deitz, 2014). College offers students an opportunity to build relationships with mentors and peers that can benefit them throughout their careers (Campbell, Smith, Dugan, & Komives, 2012). College graduates tend to have greater job satisfaction, jobs that offer a greater sense of accomplishment, more independence and opportunities for creativity, and more social interactions in their jobs than noncollege graduates (Oreopoulos & Petronijevic, 2013). Graduating from a college or university increases the chance of employment. Over the last 20 years, the unemployment rate for college graduates has been approximately half that of high school graduates (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018). College helps students develop skills that prepare them for careers in the tech-driven economy, including nonroutine, abstract skills that aid in problem solving, multitasking, and creativity (Oreopoulos & Petronijevic, 2013).

Resources

- Abel, J. R., & Deitz, R. (2014). Do the benefits of college still outweigh the costs? *Current issues in economics and finance*, 20(3). https://www.newyorkfed.org/research/current_issues/ci20-3.html
- Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2018). Labor force statistics from the current population survey. <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat07.htm>
- Campbell, C.M., Smith, M., Dugan, J.P., & Komives, S.R. (2012). Mentors and college student leadership outcomes: The importance of position and process. *The review of higher education* 35(4), 595-625. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1353/rhe.2012.0037>.
- College Board. (2022). College search. Big future. <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). 3-2-1. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/117>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Mentimeter. Tech Tools. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/645>
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- OKcollegestart (n.d.). *OKcollegestart*, Oklahoma college assistance program. <https://www.okcollegestart.org/>
- Oreopoulos, P., & Petronijevic, U. (2013). Making college worth It: A review of research on the returns to higher education. Working Paper 19053. *National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper Series*. <https://doi.org/10.3386/w19053>