



Paving the Path: Career Readiness Practices



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Time Frame 50

Essential Question(s)

- How can professional career talks and site visits support informed college and career decision-making?

Summary

Engaging students in career exploration early is essential to helping them develop informed, purposeful career goals. Participants will explore sustainable career exploration activities that align student career decision-making processes with the ICAP (Individual Career Academic Plan) and Oklahoma Career Pathways frameworks.

Learning Goals

Standards

Educator Standards 6–12 (6th - 12th)

- E.K.1.4:** Develop familiarity with the National Career Clusters and their career pathways to help students align their interests and skills with potential careers and corresponding educational options.
- E.S.6:** Plan and facilitate meaningful postsecondary education experiences outside of the classroom.
- E.S.7:** Incorporate postsecondary education discussions and content in the curriculum.

Attachments

- [3-2-1—Paving the Path.docx](#)
- [3-2-1—Paving the Path.pdf](#)
- [Career Cafe Scenarios—Paving the Path.docx](#)
- [Career Cafe Scenarios—Paving the Path.pdf](#)
- [Career Cluster Matching—Paving the Path.docx](#)
- [Career Cluster Matching—Paving the Path.pdf](#)
- [Career Journal - SPANISH.pdf](#)
- [Career Journal.pdf](#)
- [Career Talk Organizer—Paving the Path.docx](#)
- [Career Talk Organizer—Paving the Path.pdf](#)
- [Presentation Slides—Paving the Path.pptx](#)

Materials

- Presentation Slides (attached)
- Career Cafe Scenarios handout (attached; one per group)
- Career Talk Organizer handout (attached; one per participant)
- Career Cluster Matching cards (attached; see Preparation Note)
- 3-2-1 handout (attached; one per participant)
- Career Journal handout (attached; optional)
- Blue and Orange Sticky notes
- Pens
- Poster paper
- Markers

10 minutes

Engage

Facilitator's Note: Framing this Session

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](#).

The following was created with the intent to showcase a particular GEAR UP program's Mentoring & Tutoring services and show how they connect with student career exploration. This resource is intended to be used as a model for how you can create and/or showcase your own similar services.

Use the **Presentation Slides** to facilitate this session. Introduce the session with the title on **slide 2**. Move through **slides 3-4** to review the Essential Question and the Learning Objectives.

Display **slide 5** and explain the [Card Matching](#) strategy to participants. Invite participants to find a small group and a bag of cards. Explain that they will be using the **Career Cluster Matching** cards to match career clusters with potential jobs in that cluster. Individuals will take turns flipping cards, keeping the cards in the same spot on the play area. Participants will play until they match all career clusters and careers. Tell participants that the pairs are color-coded to help. Instruct them to keep any matching pairs and to return any non-matches back facing down. The person with the most matches wins. Give participants 5-6 minutes to complete the game.

After the game is finished, ask participants "Did anyone learn about a new Career Cluster? Maybe you knew the Career Clusters but had trouble finding the career." Then follow-up with "GEAR UP will help you learn more about the Career Clusters, help provide career exploration opportunities related to these Career Clusters, and help match potential career speakers to the needs of your school."

Next, move to **slide 6**. Give a brief overview of the services GEAR UP Mentoring offers, how GEAR UP informs the K20 CCP (College & Career Preparation) standards, ICAP (Individual Career Academic Plan), the Oklahoma Career Pathways, and long-term sustainability.

10 minutes

Explore 1

Move to **slide 7** and pass out the **Career Talk Organizer** handout and explain that participants will be acting as students who are attending a Zoom Into Your Career (ZIYC) Event.

Move to **slide 8** and play Kaden Stratton's ZIYC video, starting at 38 seconds and ending the video at 5 minutes and 43 seconds: Zoom Into Your Career - Building & Moving with Kaden Stratton

Embedded video

https://youtube.com/watch?v=_TF8mOe4AMw

Remind participants to use the Career Talk Organizer as a note catcher while watching the video. Once the video is over, explain that this section of the ZIYC video was only the prerecorded section of the live ZIYC. After this section, the professional joins a live Zoom call with students to answer questions.

Move to **slide 9** and ask participants to discuss as a whole group the use of a note taker while listening to a career talk. Ask the participants the following:

- "How can keeping a journal enhance student learning?"
- "What are some difficulties you could foresee?"

Facilitator's Note:

The Career Talk Organizer provides an adapted version of the Career Journal associated with the ZIYC resources. For the full version, check out the attached **Career Journal** handout.

10 minutes

Explore 2

Move to **slide 10** and tell participants to take two of the already distributed **Career Cafe Scenarios** and either work individually or as a pair and read through their chosen scenarios. Once they have read their statement, participants will answer the three questions on their handout. Give participants 3-4 minutes per scenario. Once participants have completed their two scenarios, have them share with others at their table. Guide the participants in explaining how classroom learning aligns with college and career readiness and how making career talks stick with students is impactful.

Move to **slide 11** and explain how Career Cafes are designed to help students make the connection between careers and curriculum. Cafes combine student-centered learning and real-world connections to ensure students see that content is important beyond the classroom.

5 minutes

Explain

Move to **slide 12** and explain how each of the GEAR UP Mentoring team's services inform the ICAP phases of Awareness, Exploration, Preparation, and Action. After, ask participants to give a [Fist to Five](#) about their understanding of the new Class of 2030 and beyond Oklahoma Career Pathways program. Explain that, while this is a program students will complete during high school, the Mentoring services align with student Career Goals and inform which Career Pathway they should consider pursuing.

Prompt participants to scan the QR code on the slide to have a copy of the Oklahoma Interactive Graduation Planning Guide, which gives more detailed information about the Oklahoma Career Pathways.

10 minutes

Extend

Move to **slide 13** and pass out the **3-2-1** handout. Explain to participants that this is a reverse [3-2-1](#) strategy. Explain that they will write 1 popular career cluster found at their school and 2 teachers they believe could benefit from implementing GEAR UP Mentoring Services. Lastly, explain that participants will be exploring 3 Mentoring resources using the [Strategy Harvest](#) instructional strategy. Give participants a couple of minutes to answer the first two questions. Then participants will scan each QR code, or use the URL to explore the GEAR UP resources for each of the services discussed in this session. Participants will describe how the resource was used/modified in the session and how they will use it in their school.

5 minutes

Evaluate

Lastly, move to **slide 14** and explain that participants have two sets of sticky notes at their table. They will use the blue colored sticky note to write any implementations they currently have in mind and the orange sticky note for any questions. If they have questions, have the participants write their names and contact information on the back of the orange sticky note.

After a couple of minutes, direct participants to put their sticky notes on each side of the T-chart posters labeled 'Implementation' and 'Questions' around the room.

Research Rationale

Secondary school is essential in developing a student's life, interests, future career, and educational trajectory. Students often use their personalities and interests to help form career decision-making skills throughout their life, but it becomes more prominent in secondary education as they approach adulthood. Personality traits "influence career adaptation by facilitating, or deterring, behavioral performances" (Lent & Brown, 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 students 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).

Recent research emphasizes the effectiveness of structured career guidance interventions in improving adolescents' career decision-making skills. For example, Jemini Gashi et al. (2023) evaluated a career guidance workshop for high school students and found significant improvements in career self-efficacy and career goals after the intervention. Although outcome expectations showed only slight, non-significant changes, the study demonstrates that career guidance workshops can positively influence adolescents' confidence and clarity in planning their future careers. These findings highlight the importance of providing interactive, structured career interventions during secondary education to support informed decision-making and goal setting.

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 to likely 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.

Resources

- Covacevich, C., Mann, A., Santos, C., & Champaud, J. (2021). Indicators of teenage career readiness: An analysis of longitudinal data from eight countries. OECD Education Working Papers, No. 258, OECD Publishing, Paris. <https://doi.org/10.1787/cec854f8-en>
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- K20 Center. (n.d.). Strategy harvest. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/135>
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- Zainudin et al., (2020). The relationship of holland theory in career decision making: A systematic review of literature. *Journal of Critical Reviews*, 7(9), 884-892.