Virtual Career Expo: Improving Access, Connecting Communities, and Increasing PSE Awareness

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Time Frame 60-75 session(s)

Essential Question(s)

How can your community help support your goal in improving Access among the students while increasing Post-Secondary Education (PSE) awareness?

Summary

In this interactive session, participants will explore a career roadmap and experience a mini-virtual career expo. Participants will leave with a variety of ideas about implementing virtual career experiences in their own GEAR UP programs.

Learning Goals

- Participants will engage in a virtual career experience.
- Participants will envision implementation of the virtual experience into their program
- Participants will assess the value of virtual career experiences

Attachments

- Career Exploration A Review and Future Research Agenda—Virtual Career Expo.pdf
- Collective Brain Dump—Virtual Career Expo.docx
- Collective Brain Dump—Virtual Career Expo.pdf
- Helpful Resources—Virtual Career Expo.docx
- Helpful Resources—Virtual Career Expo.pdf
- Pass the Problem—Virtual Career Expo.docx
- Pass the Problem—Virtual Career Expo.pdf
- Presentation Slides—Virtual Career Expo.pptx

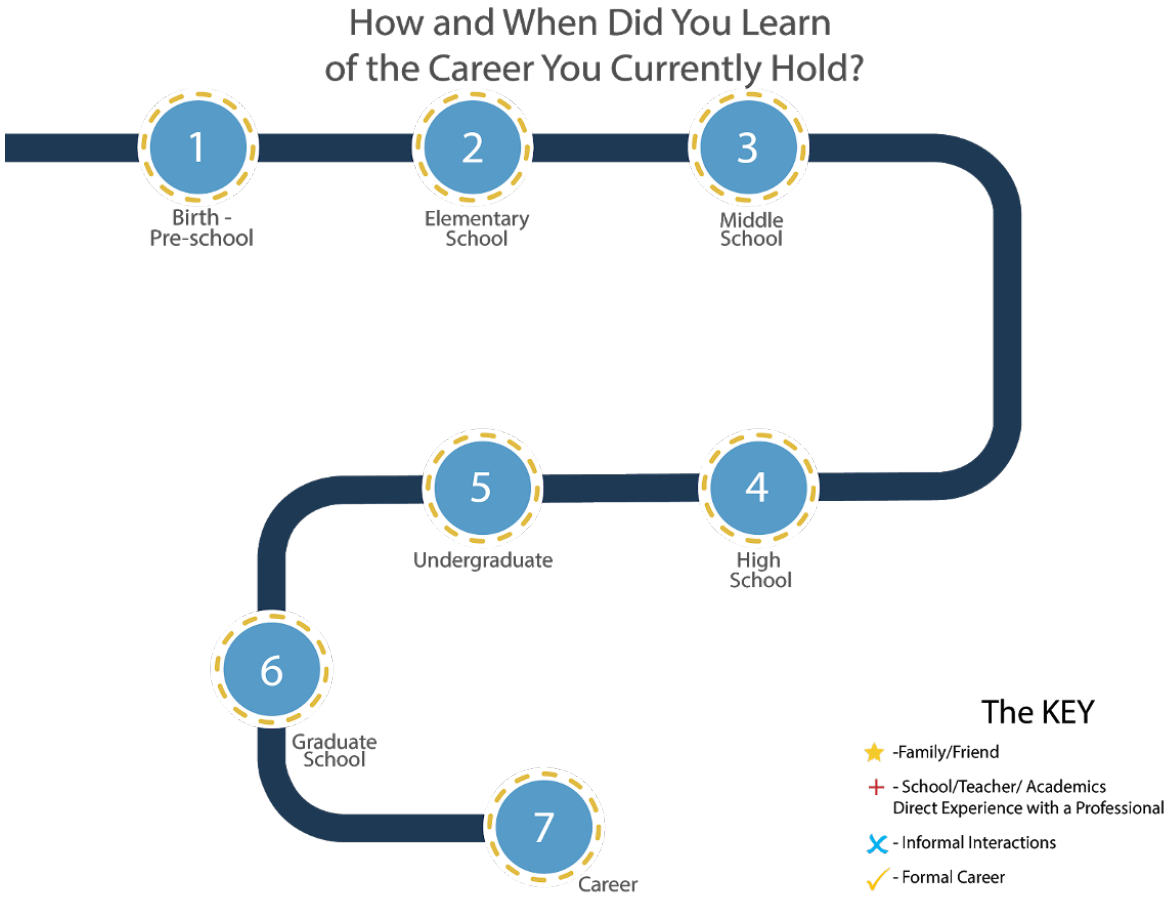
Materials

- Presentation Slides (attached)
- Helpful Resources (attached; one per participant)
- Collective Brain Dump (attached; if used digitally, one for the entire group; if to be printed, one per small group)
- Pass the Problem (attached; one per pair)
- Career Exploration—A Review and Future Research Agenda (Optional)
- Computer
- Projector
- Wifi
- Pencils or pens

Engage

Begin with the **slide 2** to introduce the title, yourself, and the topic.

Display **slide 3** and share the Career Roadmap with your participants.



Career Roadmap

Ask participants the following questions and allow them to share out their responses with the group:

1. When should career exploration be introduced to students? **(slide 4)**
2. When were you introduced to career exploration? **(slide 5)**
3. When did you learn about the career you currently hold? **(slide 6)**

Move to **slide 7** and share the following research with your participants. *"According to recent research found in the February 2019 publication of The Journal of Vocational Behavior, empirical studies show that many individual factors can foster or inhibit adolescents' career exploration. The studies show that individual beliefs affect career exploration. For example,* **(click next on the presentation slides to display a star over "High School")** *among high school students, there is growing evidence of a positive relationship between career exploration and students' capability to decide on a career. Additionally, researchers found growing empirical evidence that contextual support—which is social, interpersonal, and instrumental support—acts as a key facilitator in adolescent career exploration. For example,* **(click next on the presentation slides to display a star over "Middle School")** *social support from family, peers, friends, and educators promotes career exploration among middle and high school students."*

Use **slides 8-10** and share your GEAR UP grant's goals. Hide the grant goals for the GEAR UP grants you are not a part of.

GEAR UP for the FUTURE **(slide 8)**

1. Increase cohort academic performance and preparation for postsecondary education (PSE)
2. Increase high school graduation and PSE participation
3. Increase student educational expectations and increase student and family knowledge of PSE options, preparation, and financing

GEAR UP OKC **(slide 9)**

1. Increase students' engagement in learning
2. Increase students' academic preparation for PSE upon graduation
3. Increase schools' high school graduation and PSE enrollment rates
4. Increase students' and their families' knowledge of PSE options, preparation, and financing

GEAR UP for MY SUCCESS **(slide 10)**

1. Increase cohort academic performance and preparation for PSE
2. Increase High School graduation and PSE participation
3. Increase student educational expectations and increase student and family knowledge of PSE options, preparation, and financing

Move to **slide 11** and share the essential question with the participants: How can your community help support your goal in improving access among the students while increasing Post-Secondary Education (PSE) awareness?

Move to **slide 12** and share the learning objectives with the participants. Let them know that you will be revisiting these at the end of the session to see how well they have met them.

- Engage in a virtual career experience
- Envision implementation of the virtual experience into their program
- Assess the value of virtual career experiences

Explore

Transition to **slide 13** and inform participants that they will be participating in an activity called Collaborative Word Cloud as they watch a video. A word cloud is an effective way to collect feedback from your virtual expo because it allows you to hone in on the points of most significance.

Display **slide 14** and share Zoom Into Your Career with participants.

Display **slide 15** and have participants get together in small groups. Instruct the groups to first discuss the list of keywords each person wrote down, why they chose the words they did, and then to create a collaborative word cloud using markers and chart paper.

Facilitator Note: Technology Integration

If you have the tech capabilities, consider having each group use a program such as Mentimeter to create their word clouds. This will display those words that are entered multiple times larger than those entered only once or a couple of times.

Once the groups have completed their word clouds, have them share out with everyone. *Are there words or phrases that stood out as significant across all of the groups?*

Pass out the **Helpful Resources** handout and share, *"As you saw in the video, virtual career talks can be a great way to connect your students to a larger community, and it's a great way to help them gain more understanding of the postsecondary education opportunities they will have. Of course, virtual career talks take time to plan—to help you pass these opportunities along to your students, we have created a combination of resources for you to use. Included in these resources is a list of tips and tricks for what details to consider as you plan your event."*

Explain

Transition to **slide 16** and share Ayanna Wheeler NCCEP 2020 Presentation, in which Mentoring Coordinator, Ayanna Wheeler, explains how K20's Career Expos have evolved over the last couple of years.

Embedded video

https://youtube.com/watch?v=xhos2CqJeKA

Display **slide 17**, which has a list of five speakers that have been used in the past. Ask participants the following questions:

1. Thinking of your students and community needs, which of our speakers, if any, could be a good fit for your students? You may want to select more than one.
2. Why did you select the speaker(s) you chose?

Move to **slide 18** and inform participants that, together, they are going to participate in an instructional strategy called Collective Brain Dump. To do this, share the **"Collective Brain Dump"** handout with participants using an online collaborative working space such as Google Doc or One Notes.

In the handout, instruct participants to drop in any and all ideas for speakers within the community they have. This does not have to be a specific individual, rather, this could be a career within one of the career clusters.

Extend

Transition to **slide 19** and share Will Markham NCCEP 2020 Presentation, in which Mentoring Coordinator Will Markham explains how K20's Mentoring Team made critical adjustments to how they approached the technology use mid year and it's impact on the participating school staff.

Embedded video
https://youtube.com/watch?v=o2z93ZlxK5c

Move to **slide 20** and share with your participants that together you are going to participate in an instructional strategy called Pass the Problem.

In pairs, participants should receive a question/problem statement. Together, have them come up with a solution to the problem. Provide participants with three minutes to work on the problem in front of them.

1. What can I do about technology barriers?
2. What do I do if a speaker cancels?
3. What if my school doesn't allow us to use Zoom?
4. What if we don't have a lot of people in our community who want to be a speaker?

At the conclusion of the first three minutes, move to **slide 21** and instruct participants to find a pair who has a different problem statement and switch papers. Have pairs read the new problem and presented solution. Display **slide 22** and provide participants the next five minutes to build on the current solution or present an alternate solution.

Repeat this procedure until all participants have had a chance to read and present a problem for each of the four problem statements. Once they have completed the activity, have pairs review their original paper and the included solutions. Ask for volunteers to share out what they have. *Would these be viable solutions to real problems you may face?*

What Can I Do About Technology Barriers?

Have your schools check with their media specialists to see if their libraries have the ability to stream their virtual career expo. The main technology needed includes a computer, a video conferencing program like Zoom, and some kind of setup that lets you showcase your expo to a large audience. If necessary, you can look into requesting funds to purchase any extra technology you need. Right now, some schools are meeting in person with their students, while others are teaching and learning virtually. This presents a new challenge we're working to overcome, especially when it comes to determining multiple avenues of delivery. Right now, we are taking into consideration the variety of technology available to our schools and students. This way, we can make sure everyone is included in some way.

What Do I Do If A Speaker Cancels?

We've had speakers cancel on us. Life happens. If one of your speakers cancels, make sure you have backup options. We recommend scheduling 2 to 4 speakers in each time slot. That way, if one speaker can't make it, you (or your staff members who are hosting the expo) have links on hand for other sessions that you can send your classrooms instead. That's what we do here at K20. To keep speakers engaged before the event and prevent cancellations, we follow up with each speaker several times beforehand. We ask for a bio, photo, and we request for each of them to run a practice session with us. This also acts as a trial run to test out their technology. They can practice screen sharing and working in Zoom, as well as moving through their presentation. This gives our speakers an active role in the process, which makes them less willing to back out at the last minute.

What If My School Doesn't Allow Us To Use Zoom?

If some of you have schools that have blocked Zoom, you can use other video conferencing programs like Google Hangouts, Google Meet, or GoToMeeting. These are free and allow you to connect virtually with professionals, just like with Zoom.

What If We Don't Have A Lot Of People In Our Community Who Want To Be A Speaker?

To overcome volunteer limitations, we reach out to coworkers, to friends, and on social media, asking for their help in referring people they know to sign up as speakers. Most of our speakers come from referrals. This way, we can give schools multiple speaker options per hour.

Evaluate

Transition to **slide 23** and inform the participants that you are going to take a moment to reflect with a quick instructional strategy called POMS: Point of Most Significance. Instruct them to think about all of the new information they've learned, the conversations we have had through discussions, participant feedback, and the highlight reel that you saw. Have participants share out their POMS.

Return to the objectives on **slide 24**, read aloud, or refer to them again and ask participants to evaluate the professional development on the rapid feedback form based upon these objectives.

Research Rationale

Research shows that teenagers engaging in multiple opportunities to speak with professionals through career talks statistically earn higher salaries in adulthood (Kashefpakdel & Percy, 2017). However, often youth from low-income, or rural, isolated communities do not have access to professionals from a variety of career fields. To improve accessibility and ensure sustainability, GEAR UP programs can capitalize on virtual communication applications, such as Zoom, to implement virtual career expos. Through these expos, students from under-resourced communities can engage with professionals representing a wide range of career fields from around the world (Nikolic et al., 2016). Virtual career expos are attractive for educators and school administrators because of the low cost of implementation and relative ease of planning. Students enjoy career expos because they can interact with professionals, ask questions about college and careers, and connect online with students from across the state. Virtual career expos promote a student-centered, global community and have the potential to build a network of communication between GEAR UP schools and the larger college and career context. This Excel and Mobilize-Session is designed to support GEAR UP programs and partners in improving accessibility to services and strengthening sustainability of college and career awareness for students.

Resources

- K20 Center. (2020, July 22). Ayanna Wheeler NCCEP 2020 Presentation. [YouTube]. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xhos2CqJeKA
- K20 Center. (2020, July 22). Will Markham NCCEP 2020 Presentation. [YouTube]. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o2z93ZlxK5c
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Collaborative word clouds. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/103
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Collective Brain Dump. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/111
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Pass the problem. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/151
- K20 Center. (n.d.). POMS: Point of Most Significance. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/101