

Teacher Tip Sheet

Informational Interview

A tip sheet for teachers on how to help students get the most out of an Informational Interview. An Informational Interview presents a unique opportunity to support and augment the curriculum and get students more deeply engaged in learning. If you are coordinating an Informational Interview, have a look at the Coordinator Tip Sheet in the WBL Toolkit.

Informational Interviews

Utilizing Informational Interviews to support learning in the classroom is a structured Career Awareness activity in which students formally interview an employer partner about his or her industry, educational and career path, and chosen profession. Unlike a Guest Speaker activity, where speakers usually address a group in the classroom, Informational Interviews are one-to-one interactions and generally take place at the employer's workplace. The interview includes discussion of the person's chosen career, the path they took to get there, the level of education required and the responsibilities and daily activities of the job. The students also ask questions and learn about the range of career opportunities within the industry, opportunities for growth and the salary ranges for different occupations. Informational Interviews are especially effective if conducted at the workplace.

Informational Interviews are designed to promote:

- Exploration of a field of interest
- Exposure to careers and jobs
- Awareness of the academic, technical and personal skills required in particular jobs
- The opportunity to practice and demonstrate key work-readiness competencies, including communication, critical thinking, workplace appearance and timeliness.

Teacher Tips

Informational Interview Success Factors

When planning and implementing an Informational Interview, keep the following success factors in mind.

Before the Informational Interview

- Familiarize yourself with the goals of Informational Interviews and how best to support them.
 - ✓ Review the Informational Interview Activity Guide. The interview ideally includes a discussion of the particular career, duties and daily activities of the job and the level of education required for success. It also ideally offers opportunities for students to explore growth opportunities in the industry and salary ranges for different occupations.
 - ✓ Assess how Informational Interviews can help meet curriculum goals.
 - ✓ Identify and document desired student learning outcomes and career interests.
- Work with your P-TECH coordinator to facilitate effective employer involvement.
 - ✓ Set clear expectations about desired learning outcomes for students.
 - ✓ Talk with company employees about how to be real with and fully engage students.
- Prepare students to maximize learning.

- ✓ Share and review the Student Tip Sheet.
- ✓ Discuss what students can expect to learn from the Informational Interviews.
- ✓ Help them plan the best ways to engage with the person they're interviewing (e.g. greet the employee, introduce themselves, and thank the person when done).
- ✓ Discuss what students know about the company and the industry and have them research the employer website.
- ✓ Support students in preparing the questions they want to ask the employer they interview, including conventional and less conventional questions. A conventional question might include, "What does a typical work day look like for you?" A less conventional one might be, "What is the most surprising aspect of your job?"
- Encourage the employer to provide time and space for introductions and an overview of the company.
- Make the classroom connection.
 - ✓ Connect the Informational Interviews to the curriculum, so the experience is not an isolated activity, but is linked to academic learning.

After the Informational Interview

- Reflect on learning.
 - ✓ Provide individual and group reflection activities for students.
 - ✓ Support them in determining their next steps in learning about the industry and careers.
- Work with other classroom teachers and instructors to help students connect classroom content to their interests and what they learned in the interview.
- Work with your P-TECH coordinator to conduct follow-up activities.
 - ✓ Debrief with the employer and participating employees.
 - ✓ Complete and review assessments of student learning outcomes.
 - ✓ Assess the effectiveness of the Informational Interview and make recommendations for future adjustments.
 - ✓ Have students write thank-you notes to the employer and participating employees.
- Document student learning and record the experience.

Go Deeper

Here are some activities to deepen the impact of an Informational Interview.

- Ask employees before or after the presentation to provide industry information that they find valuable to help students learn more about this field.
- Identify and schedule any follow-up activities suggested by the employer or indicated by particular interest from participating students.