

Teacher Tip Sheet

Guest Speaker

A tip sheet for teachers on how to develop quality Guest Speaker experiences. Guest Speakers present a unique opportunity to support and augment the curriculum and get students more deeply engaged in their learning. If you are coordinating Guest Speaker program, take a look at the Coordinator Tip Sheet in the WBL Toolkit.

Guest Speaker

Using Guest Speakers to support learning is a structured Career Awareness activity in which students listen to a presentation to learn about the speaker's job, business and industry and ask questions to help them consider whether they might like to pursue a career path in the industry. Guest Speakers can address core academic concepts, or support an activity currently underway in the classroom. Presentations are designed and structured to meet specific learning outcomes, be educationally rich, and are linked to the curriculum. They are conducted at the school and involve preparation and follow-up in the classroom, including research and reflection by students. Guest Speakers are most effective when they address topics related to the curriculum, and provide examples of the application of academic concepts in a real-world setting. In some cases, Guest Speakers may "visit" a classroom electronically via Skype or some other technology.

Guest Speaker presentations are designed to:

- Provide exposure to potential careers and jobs
- Build occupational knowledge
- Build knowledge about the education and training needed for a particular job and entry into the industry
- Create awareness of the business's role in the community, as well as its functions, processes and products
- Provide a context for learning and foster an understanding of how academic concepts are applied in a real-world setting

Teacher Tips

Guest Speaker Success Factors

When planning and implementing a Guest Speaker activity, keep the following success factors in mind.

Before the Guest Speaker arrives

- Think about how and when a guest speaker might connect to and enhance an activity, lesson or concept being delivered in the classroom. Share that information with your P-TECH coordinator.
- Review the Quality Work-Based Learning section of the toolkit and the Guest Speaker activity guide.
- Support effective employer involvement. Talk with your P-TECH coordinator and decide who will address the following.
 - ✓ What classroom topics can the speaker support? Is the employer able to talk about multiple occupations in the sector and the application of academic concepts in the workplace?

- ✓ Talk with the guest speaker about subject matter appropriateness for this population of students and offer strategies for “being real” with and engaging them.
- ✓ Send information about the course to the speaker and provide background on the type and length of class, number of students, grade level(s), and students’ career interests. Ask about presentation needs, such as a projector, and ask for any handouts in advance.
- ✓ Confirm presentation with the speaker within one week of the selected date and make sure the speaker has all the information needed, including school-related visitor procedures, parking, etc.
- Make the classroom connection.
 - ✓ Help students research the company in advance.
 - ✓ Figure out how to effectively integrate the guest speaker presentation into the curriculum so that it’s not just an isolated learning moment.
 - ✓ “Sell” the experience in advance so that students are excited. Discuss appropriate behavior during the presentation and help them formulate questions.

During the Guest Speaker presentation

- Help maximize learning.
 - ✓ Support the guest speaker in effective interactions with students.
 - ✓ Assist the guest speaker in leading an interactive discussion and/or activity.
 - ✓ Encourage students to ask questions.
 - ✓ Hand out materials that will aid the presentation: activity sheets, industry facts, company brochures, sample products, etc.

After the Guest Speaker presentation

- Conduct follow-up activities.
 - ✓ Thank guest speaker and together identify follow-up activities for the students.
 - ✓ Assess the impact and value of the presentation.
 - ✓ Work with the coordinator and utilize employer, and student feedback to improve future presentations.
 - ✓ Document and archive information about the presentation.
- Make the classroom connection.
 - ✓ Provide individual and group reflection activities for students.
 - ✓ Help connect classroom content to their interests and what they learned.
 - ✓ Determine next steps in learning about the industry and the career options it offers.

Go Deeper

There are a number of activities that can deepen the impact of a Guest Speaker presentation.

- Ask the guest speaker before or after the presentation to provide industry information (in digital form or through a website) to help students learn more about this field.
- Take pictures during the presentation (get written permission for this) and provide them to the speaker for the company’s website or newsletter and/or for school communications.