

Session Planner

Postsecondary Choices

Area: Career Readiness

Time: 45 Minutes

Standards: College and Career Access Standards 1B & 2B

Purpose/Goal:

Students will explore and identify reasons to pursue a postsecondary education.

Materials Needed:

- Smartboard or chart paper
- Paper, pens
- Postsecondary options sheet
- Why and Why not reference list (*pgs. 3-6*)
- “Top 5” handout (*pg. 7*)

Evidence of Growth:

Students will identify a postsecondary option and list their top five reasons to pursue that choice.

Agenda

Opening	10 -15 minutes
Activity/Content	20 minutes
Closing Connection	10 minutes

Opening Activity/Review:

- Ask students to introduce themselves to the class as if it 10 years from now. They will say their name, profession and what academic advice they have for a young adult. Once student is finish they can choose the next student to go.
- Review “Postsecondary options” sheet so students are reminded of their options and the description.

Activity:

- Students will be broken up into two teams, “Why?” (college/trade school) and “Why Not?” (career). “Why?” team will list reasons to pursue college and “Why Not?” team will list reasons to pursue a career.
- Once students are in their teams they will have 15 minutes with their team to make a list. (The facilitator will have a reference sheet to guide the teams if needed.)
- Teams are encouraged to list as many as they can on their own before asking the facilitator for assistance.
- The first team to finish will present their list to the class first. Ask students in the groups to take turns reading a reason from their team list. Once both teams have shared their list,

the facilitator will cross check team list on the reference sheet. The facilitator will share with the students any that they missed or add students' reasons to the sheet.

- Ask students what they thought about the reasons listed. What is on the list that they did not know, do they agree, disagree etc.

Closing:

- Ask students to identify their postsecondary option and list their top five reasons to pursue that choice. They can use some reasons listed from either team.

Why Not?

1. The admissions office let me in by accident.

Not true. And even if they did, they'd have told you by now.

2. I don't know anyone there, and I'll have problems meeting new people and making friends.

One important thing to remember is that almost everyone there is new, and virtually no one knows anyone else. Even the friendliest first-year college students know a small handful of folks, at most, before arriving on campus. Since everyone is looking to meet other people (especially during Orientation and your first week), take a deep breath and introduce yourself.

3. I won't be able to cut it academically.

Yes, your college experience will likely be much harder, academically, than your high school/HSE work load. That's ok, it means you are taking more challenging classes in a college environment. If you need help, there are resources on campus you can tap into.

4. I'm concerned about my finances.

This is a very legitimate concern. College can be expensive; your funds will be tight; you may be borrowing money to make ends meet. Knowing how to manage your money is one of the best things you can do. Additionally, scoring high on the HSE exam, being aware of the specifics of your financial aid package and getting a good on-campus job are smart ways to be proactive about your finances.

5. I don't know how I'll balance so many things.

Time management is one of the biggest challenges for college students. Learning time management skills can help you stay on top of your game and handle your demanding schedule while still having fun.

6. I don't think I can handle all of the stress.

College is a stressful place. When you feel overwhelmed talk about it, call a loved one or seek out a counselor or similar support on the college campus.

7. I have no idea what I want to do after college.

This is a really common fear for incoming students. The education, networking and exposure you receive in college will prepare you for the next steps. In many cases people find jobs outside of their major but it still makes a good match.

8. I'm nervous about being on my own for the first time.

Good! You should be nervous; being on your own, especially for the first time, is hard. Sure, you'll make mistakes along the way, but you're ready to head off on your own. And if not, there are plenty of people and support mechanisms on a college campus to help you out.

9. I'm intimidated by professors but know I may need to go to them for help.

Yes, professors may seem intimidating at times. Most college professors are actually really nice and approachable. There are many easy, low-key ways to get to know your professors; stay after class and ask questions, visit them during office hours, attend college network events etc.

10. I'm worried about being disconnected from my religious life, practice, and community.

Being away at school doesn't have to mean being disconnected from your religious life. Continue your religious practices. If any interfere with class, discuss that early with your dean/professor. On-campus religious groups can be a great network, support, and source of friendship.

11. I don't know how to do basic things, like doing my own laundry or cooking for myself.

While managing things like this is a common fear, there is also an easy fix. Before leaving for school, have someone teach you how to do laundry. If you're already at school, learn by watching someone. If you don't know how to cook, try watching some cooking shows or cooking with some friends. In no time at all, you'll be a laundry-washing, dinner-cooking college pro.

12. My health is really important to me, and I'm worried about gaining weight and the "freshman fifteen."

Being healthy -- and staying healthy -- in college is really important. And most incoming students have heard of the dreaded fifteen pounds that every incoming first-year student (supposedly) gains when they start school. With a few small but simple choices, staying healthy and avoiding the freshman fifteen is actually a lot easier than one would think on a college campus.

13. I'm worried about my safety now that I'm on my own.

Safety first! Most colleges have school safety officers patrolling the area. Either way, always be aware of your surroundings and at night try to walk with a group.

Why?

1. A Better Paying Job

Among the most obvious of reasons - college graduates, on average, make more than those who completed high school/HSE.

2. Be More Qualified For Your Field...

Lots of jobs require the kind of specialized training that only a college program can offer.

3. Branch Out into Other Fields

Just because you decided to major in Business, Nursing or Accounting in college, that doesn't chain you to one profession for the rest of your life. Having a degree can open up opportunities to hundreds of related (and not so-related) fields.

5. A More Secure Future

Statistics show that people with higher levels of education tend to have better job security, so stay ahead of the unemployment curve!

6. A New Lifestyle

Postsecondary education allows options: options to different jobs, different fields, location which gives you exposure.

7. Build Confidence

Take a speech class, even if it isn't required for your major. Better yet, take Intro to Theatre Acting. In ten short weeks you will be able get up in front of your peers and perform a five-minute monologue without a second thought.

8. Improve Your Social Skills

Technology (internet chatting, Facebook) has interrupted the old fashion way of meeting and greeting people. Instead of cringing and withdrawing, try striking up the odd friendly conversation with your classmates face to face. You might be surprised at what you learn about them.

9. Expand or Build Your Network

College has a lot to do with networking. From fraternities, study groups and internship to work-study.

10. Develop Discipline

It takes great discipline to study properly, avoiding procrastination and preparing adequate notes and study aids each week. It also takes great discipline to condense months of knowledge into a single crammed weekend.

11. Start a Tradition!

Hesitant because no one else in your family has gone to college? Don't be nervous, be the first!

12. Choose From Many Paths

Four year liberal arts colleges just aren't your thing? Contrary to what your guidance counselor may have told you, it doesn't mean there's something wrong with you. You have different needs or a different learning style, and there are tons of programs that could better suit you. Community college, vocational schools, online programs, a combination of two or several - there's a plan for everyone, and your options are limitless.

13. Your Options are Limitless

Here is another misconception: that if you haven't heard of a college, it's probably not very good and not worth looking into. Most colleges haven't heard of you yet, either - should they not give you a chance because your reputation doesn't precede you? Try looking into some smaller schools - what they lack in star power, they usually make up for in unique, hands-on experiences.

14. Go to Class in Your Pajamas

Honestly, you can show up in your pajamas with half a breakfast burrito hanging out of your mouth and no one will bat an eye as long as you contribute positively to the class and do well on your assignments.

15. Join Some Clubs or Go Greek

It's good to have hobbies to break up the monotony of study. Write for your school newspaper, take up a sport. Go Greek... They aren't all about partying and brutal hazing techniques - quite a few are dedicated to academia, social causes, and charity work.

16. Take Fun Electives

In college, you can take everything from Introductory Guitar to The History of Reggae, and let no one say you're wasting your time. That's the power of knowledge.

17. It's Not as Expensive as You Think

Not every school charges Harvard prices. State colleges, for instance, are shockingly reasonable (as long as you're a resident of that state) Even if you do end up at an Ivy League there are need-based financial packages available. Don't forget about FAFSA!

18. Independence!

College (whether you live at home or on a campus) builds independence in so many ways.

19. Reinvent Yourself!

Feeling stifled? With all of its new opportunities and potential interests, college means the freedom to shed your old skin and try on something new. College is a magical time, take advantage of it.

Top 5 reasons to continue your education

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____
