

Career Cafés for Middle School Students

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Riverside, CA

February 7, 2018

Learning Objectives

After attending this session, participants should be able to:

- Explain what a career café is and how it is different from other middle school career exploration programs
- Outline the benefits of a career café program
- Brainstorm how to implement the career café program in their school

Icebreaker

Turn to the person next to you and ask these two questions:

- When you were in middle school what career(s) interested you?

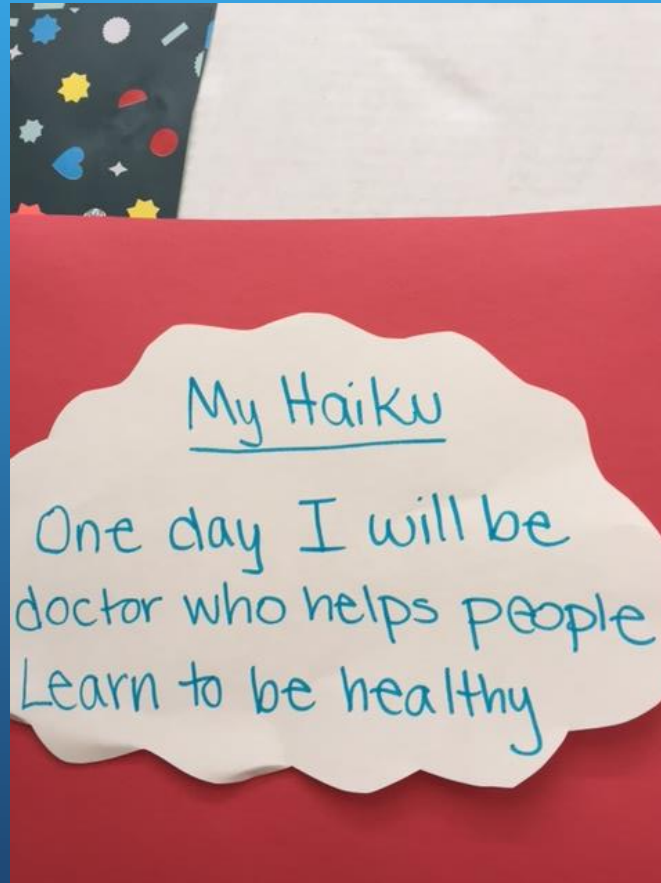
AND

- Who told you about different career options?

Why Career Exploration in Middle School

- Developmentally appropriate: this is Erikson's identity vs. role confusion stage and Super's growth stages
- Capture excitement in conjunction with self-efficacy
- Flexibility in school day and schedule
- Increased opportunity for interdisciplinary work

Example of Interdisciplinary Work: A Career Haiku



Building a Career Café from scratch

Items to keep in mind when building your career café:

- Location
 - Time and frequency
 - Selection of careers
 - Engaging stakeholders
- Follow-up

Using Holland's Codes to Gather Student Interest

If you have a budget, consider the Self-Directed Search Career Explorer

- Age range: 11-17 years
- Administration time: 30-45 minutes
 - Scoring time: 10 minutes
- Each booklet comes in a set of 35
 - 3rd grade reading level

Other DIY Examples

GET STARTED THINKING ABOUT YOUR FUTURE.

**You're
invited
to a**

Career Party

Lucky you! You're invited to a party at a friend's house this weekend. When you arrive, you see lots of your classmates. They all seem to be talking in small groups about different topics.

As you walk around the room, listen to each group to see which one you want to join:

GROUP 1

Your friends in this group are talking about everything from sports to raising animals to fixing cars. Everyone in the group enjoys being outdoors and working with their hands, fixing and tinkering with things.

GROUP 2

Everyone in this group is interested in watching, investigating, analyzing or solving problems. Some say they like science, others enjoy puzzles and computer games. They're definitely good at finding answers.

GROUP 3

This group of your friends is very creative. Some like to draw and paint, others enjoy doing innovative or unusual things. All of them enjoy using their imagination and creativity in unstructured situations.

GROUP 4

At first you think this group is very loud, but then you realize they just all like to talk. Some of the students say they want to teach people what they know, others want to be on stage or in movies, while others want to work with people in the medical field.

GROUP 5

Your friends in this group are "take charge" people who like to persuade others. They're definitely leaders, some are on the student council, and others say they want to own their own business or make a lot of money some day.

GROUP 6

Even though this group is quieter than the others, you can tell that these students like to talk about how they keep things ordered and organized. Most of your friends in this group like working with numbers and data...and they're really good at it.

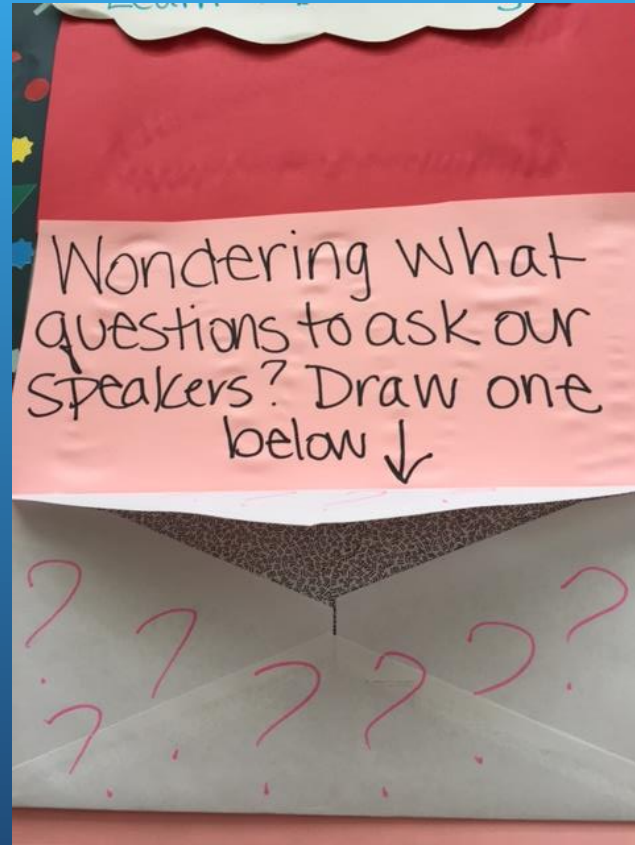
Websites to Helps Students Explore

- <https://www.mynextmove.org/>
- <http://www.educationplanner.org/students/career-planning/find-careers/career-clusters.shtml>
- <http://www.educationplanner.org/students/career-planning/find-careers/careers.shtml>
- <https://www.careeronestop.org/Videos/CareerVideos/career-videos.aspx?&frd=true>
- <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/explore-careers>

Wheel of Work



Wondering what Questions to ask Speakers?



Logistics: Who to Survey and When

- 8th grade is often a natural fit in the classroom guidance curriculum because high school is the next step, but don't overlook other built-in opportunities that might be present in other grades. Is your 5th grade learning about government or participating in Junior Achievement?
- Once you have decided the frequency (monthly vs. weekly) it will help frame your year. Monthly sessions that start in October mean you may want to survey early in the year. If it is part of your 8th grade curriculum, perhaps early January so career cafés happen in the spring

Logistics: Finding a Space

Find a location that is central in your school. You want it to be visible to students, teachers, and parents/guardians. Some frequently used places:

- Library
- Classroom
- Counselor's office (if it is big enough)
 - Flex space such as classroom

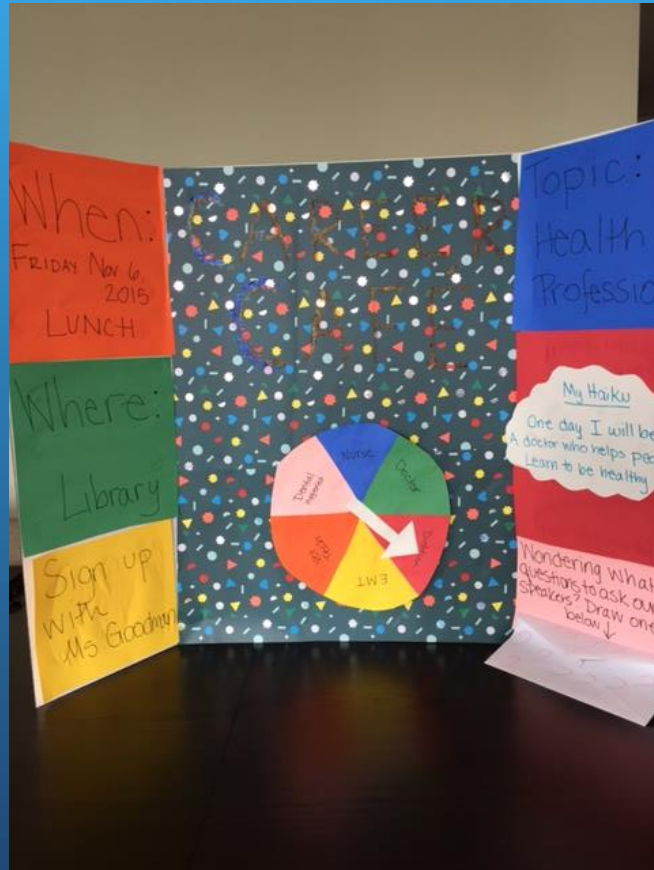
Logistics: Time and Frequency

- Finding time in a school setting is a constant challenge; typically before/after school options only capture a small number of students
- Start with lunch, as it provides a nice break in the day. Lunch Bunches are popular amongst elementary/middle school students
- Frequency: monthly- Pros: more notice for guest speakers, time for planning, advertising, assign theme/career field to month; cons- drawn out over year; can lose student interest
- Weekly for a condensed amount of time (6 weeks)- pros: easy to make thematic and build interest; culminating experience for a classroom guidance unit; cons- more difficult to find speakers, space availability

Selection of Careers

- Use student data as a starting point. One idea may be to make the café thematic around Holland's 6 codes: realistic, conventional, artistic, social, enterprising, investigative
- Make it relevant to your school community, geographic location (ex: technology in Seattle)
- Provide diversity in terms of types of education and training needed (technical school, associates degree, bachelors degree, professional degree, apprenticeship)

Marketing within your Community



Engaging Stakeholders

- Utilize already-established partnerships such as Pencil Partners
- Generate flyers for distribution at nearby businesses
- Send flyers home to parent/guardians or send electronically (whatever is the main vehicle of communication for your school)
- As with any school communication, keep in mind your population and provide translations as needed

Great Books

- *What color is your parachute for teens?* By Richard N. Bolles
- *Do what you are: Discover the perfect career for you through the secrets of personality types* by Paul Tieger
- *Who moved my cheese for teens?* By Spencer Johnson
- *You got this!: unleash your awesomeness, find your path, and change the world* by Maya Penn

References

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Questions??

- Check out my article on Career Cafés in the Nov/Dec 2017 issue of ASCA School Counselor Magazine

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