Informational Interviews Fact Sheet

Informational Interviews

Using informational interviews to support learning is a structured Career Exploration activity in which students formally interview an employer partner about his or her industry, educational and career path, and chosen profession. Students may also explore the range of career opportunities within the company or industry, opportunities for growth and the salary ranges for different occupations.

Designed to meet specific learning objectives, informational interviews are educationally rich, are tied to the curriculum, and help students connect what they're learning in school with the workplace. 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 company's workplace. They may also be conducted via telephone – ideally utilizing Facetime or Skype. In some cases, hybrid informational interviews may be conducted via Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet or some other technology; are conducted on-line, and students participate in a virtual classroom. There are also virtual simulations available where a recording of a live informational interview, conducted by a teacher or small group of students, can be viewed on-line and serve as a foundation for an activity and/or discussion in the classroom.

Informational Interviews are designed to:
- Provide exposure to potential careers and jobs.
- Provide a realistic picture of the business, its role in the community and the career paths and occupations of its workforce.
- Help students make the connection between school and the workplace.
- Inform career planning.

Informational Interviews are structured to:
- Offer students the chance to practice and demonstrate key professional skills, including communication, critical thinking, workplace appearance and timeliness.
- Enable students to begin identifying areas of career interest.
- Build knowledge about the education and training needed for a particular job, career path and entry into the industry.

Informational Interviews are supported by:
- Classroom preparation, including research on the industry and participating businesses.
- Employer orientation and support.
- Opportunities to reflect upon the experience verbally and in writing.

Informational Interviews are connected to:
- Individual career development/training plans.
- Future work-based learning activities.
- The student's next steps.

Informational interviews are one activity in the continuum of authentic work-based experiences provided to all students engaged in career-related programs or course of study in New York City schools.

Informational Interviews Support Materials

Checklists, Tip Sheets and Fact Sheets:
- Coordinator Informational Interview Checklist
- Student Informational Interview Checklist
- Teacher Informational Interview Tip Sheet
- Employer Informational Interview Tip Sheet
- Employer Informational Interview Fact Sheet
- Virtual Informational Interview Options Sheet

Required Forms and Documents
- Employability Skills Profile

Implementation Tools
- Informational Interview Research Activity
- Informational Interview Student Reflection
- Virtual Fact Sheets

Tips for Success

Effective Informational Interviews include structured activity before, during and after the experience.
Pay attention to these tips to ensure meaningful experiences that result in enriched learning.

- Engage in proper planning and preparation.
- Address logistical details.
- Communicate with all parties.
- Maximize learning potential.
- Focus on building awareness.
- Connect to the classroom.
- Provide support for students and supervisors.
- Promote student reflection.

Sustaining and growing Informational Interviews and all other work-based learning activities depend on maintaining positive relationships with the participating employers. These employers should be treated as valued customers and partners with frequent check-ins to address participation needs as they arise.