

Interview with a scientist

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'Interview with a scientist'

Overarching goal of the activity: help students be more informed about (1) their possible career options and about (2) specific skills they can develop to best prepare themselves for the workforce.

Activity design.

The student will complete three main sections to receive full credit for the activity.

Part 1: design a web page outlining the path to a career they are interested in, citing and summarizing several resources

Part 2: interview a person who works in that field, specifically asking about skills that helped them succeed in their current position

Part 3: supplement their web page with resources/a plan that would help them gain the particular skills mentioned by their interviewee, and/or list of ways the student has already gained some of these skills

How does it support or prepare students for their future degrees or careers?

This activity would help the student focus on the big picture of their career path and making sure their course of action is bringing them closer to their goals. It would also be available to future students to be able to use as a resource.

What are the strengths of its design and the most valuable aspect?

Having a contact in the field that you plan to enter is the most valuable aspect of this activity. This person could become a potential mentor for the student. The contact might be able to provide contacts for internship or other similar opportunities. This may help non-science majors identify where science is important and related to their career path.

What are the challenges of implementation?

Challenges might include: (1) finding a person in the field who is willing/able to respond quickly to the student interview, (2) many students are non-science majors, so implementation as a geology assignment may require investigation into earth science related careers that are not actually within the student's field of interest.

Some ideas that may help overcome these challenges: (1) provide a structured outline of procedures for the student to follow, pre-approve of concise student interview questions, suggest a 10 minute skype interview or phone calls instead of email only contact, (2) pre-approve or help find earth science related fields/contacts within that field (i.e., if the student wants to be a history teacher – have them interview a geology teacher instead, if the student studies criminal justice – suggest a forensics expert interview, lawyer – an environmental law specialist, etc.).

What is the evidence of its effectiveness?

Untested, I have not yet implemented this activity.