

Career Research Activity

Name: Christy Walker, teacher

Grade: 12TH

Course: Economics

Number of Participants: around 90 students (4 classes)

Length of Project: 1 class day

Germantown High School, in Gluckstadt, Mississippi, is a new school in Madison County (four years old). It is classified as a level 5A school with about 960 students in grades 9th through 12th. This year, Madison County school district is implementing the 1:1 initiative in which each student was issued a MacBook Air.

Abstract:

I teach all seniors. Many students “think” they know what career path they are interested in but later change their minds when they truly see what the career entails – education, work environment, and so on. Years ago, I created a lesson where the students did brief research on a career. I decided to completely revamp that lesson and adapt it to the Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Handbook website. Since each student has a laptop for classroom use, we completed this activity in class. This is a simple, yet effective, lesson that allowed the students to research more into a chosen career. They read about work environment, national pay (I showed them where to find Mississippi’s pay average for same career), level of education, and skills needed. The students were assessed more qualitative rather than quantitative. The students completed a discussion thread in Canvas (online course program) where I was able to get further insight into their thoughts about the lesson. I found this lesson to be really effective, as will be discussed more in the Evaluation section. Even though simple and quick, it enabled the students to get a greater insight into a career they are interested in, hopefully guiding them into possibilities of further education after high school.

Instructional Process

National Economic Content Standards and Benchmarks:

- Standard 2 - Decision making: Effective decision making requires comparing the additional costs of alternatives with the additional benefits. Many choices involve doing a little more or a little less of something: few choices are “all or nothing” decisions.

Mississippi Economics Framework:

4. Understand that resources are limited and therefore choices must be made.

1. Describe how effective decision-making requires comparing the additional costs of alternatives with the additional benefits of alternatives. (DOK 2)

Student Objectives:

Students will...

- Research a chosen career
- Complete a discussion thread in Canvas

Time Required: 1 class (can be completed as a homework assignment)

Materials:

- Student Worksheet

Procedure:

- Give each student a copy of the career research activity.
- Using their computers, they should complete the research on their chosen career path.

Closure:

- Discuss the various careers. (I did this the next class day. I put the students in groups and made them create a chart, on butcher paper, detailing their careers. Then we presented in class.)

Assessment:

- Canvas discussion thread
- Class discussion

Evaluation:

Many of my lessons in class are not quantitative but qualitative. I do lots of discussions to assess the students' thoughts about various topics. With this lesson, the students completed a discussion thread, in Canvas, about the lesson. I believe this lesson was effective – not due to what the students said on the discussion thread but the conversations I had after the activity. One student, Connor, stayed after class to talk to me about the different engineering jobs. We got back on this website to compare and contrast the various engineering jobs available. Even the next class day, he was still asking me questions about petroleum engineering. On back to school night, several parents told me how their child came home talking about what they learned about the career they chose. One parent told me her son, Mark, was comparing/contrasting two jobs that were very similar but one paid a little more than \$100,000/year and the other paid around \$40,000/year. Of course he liked the \$100,000 a little more. This activity enabled him to make these comparisons. These comments from parents, and the personal discussions with students, prove this lesson to be more successful than a formative evaluation.

The question I posed to the students as a discussion thread in Canvas: “How did your perception of a career change after completion of this activity? How did you view this career BEFORE your research and how did it change AFTER your research? In other words, WHAT DID YOU LEARN?” I received a variety of answers for this. Below, you will see a chart that includes a few thoughts the students shared about this activity.

My perception of my career didn't really change. I viewed my career has a possibility of my future and now i see it has a major possibility of my future. It really broke down what i need and the statistics of it. I learned that the jobs in the field i want to pursue is growing faster than any other job which makes medical schools take more students which is a major plus! thanks for letting us do this assignment! - Kaitlynn

Well my perception of being a fashion designer has changed. I didn't know that the job hiring percent was 3%. But, the pay is great \$32.00 dollars an hour. Though it would be useless if I can't get a job. So I would go to college and learn the skills just to sit at home. Which made me change my career now I'm thinking about going to a tech school to become an EMT. Which I would be getting paid \$24.00 dollars a hour and would go to school for 42 week training. - Megan

I thought i had my plan all ready and set, but now i am really really scared about the choices i've made. Just jumping into a career with an initial plan was a dumb idea. Knowing what i know now i want to switch to a new path from my original career. I just hope my new choice is better than my original. I learned that you should really really really think super long and hard before you do something that you think is a good idea and then regret in the future. - Christian

My perception of my career did not change. The profession i want to do is not about the money. its about helping others and getting them back healthy and fit. so my perception stayed the same about my career. - Dontray

My perception of my career did change when I read that it pays 10x better then I thought it did. If I was on the fence before, I'm easily sold on this career choice now. – Mark (*this was the student whose mom I talked to on back to school night*)

My perception changed for the better actually. My career of interest actually looks more promising than I was originally thinking. I know the median pay isn't what I would start out making, but it's still more than I had anticipated. This activity gave me a sense for the job and what I would be making; which is more than I had to go off of a few days ago. - Josh

My perception of my career changed slightly by just a little bit. I saw my career in what I what i want to do before, but I realized it wasn't what I expected. I realized after I researched my career I still want to work in engineering I found out its gonna be behind a desk most of the time, but I actually want to be able to get active and build stuff for the marines, navy, and army. I learned that the career I want to do is slowly growing and I should get a job when its available. - Tyler

It made me look at my other choices more. I looked at police and detectives and realized that I do not want that type of pay. Before doing the career activity, I thought being a detective or police officer would have higher salaries. I'm definitely thinking of different jobs. - Molly

My perception of my career did not change very much after the research. Before i researched i expected the career to be difficult to obtain, after the research it seems the career is rather easy to obtain. I learned that the career is math based and from the career you can get more specialized to better higher paying fields. - Thomas

As you can see from the comments, some students' perceptions did not change after the activity. However, many students saw how they originally viewed the

career was different than what they now know about that career, thus leading them to think about another profession. This was the primary goal I was trying to attain. I wanted students to do a cost/benefit analysis in choosing a career. I wanted them to see the career as more than a monetary amount. If they struggle in math, then they may not want to go into engineering. If they do not have people skills, then they may not want to go into communications.

My Future!

Name: _____

Directions: Prior to high school graduation, it is important to set goals for your future. Regardless if you are not 100% sure what you would like to do with your life, choose a career/job that you are interested in and complete the following assignment.

Career/Job of interest: _____

1) Go to <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/>

2) Look under “Occupational Groups.” Find the group that best matches what you THINK you may be interested in doing as a career. When you click on this group, you will then see a list of various occupations. Find your occupation or something that is fairly close.

What is your job title: _____

3) Complete the following chart. This chart is under the “Summary” tab.

Quick Facts:

2012 Median Pay	
Entry-Level Education	
Work Experience in a Related Occupation	
On-the-job Training	
Number of Jobs, 2012	
Job Outlook, 2012-22	
Employment Change, 2012-22	

4) Click on the “What They Do” tab. List FIVE things that are done in this career.

1)
2)
3)
4)
5)

5) Click on the “Work Environment.” Write a short summary describing the work environment.

6) Click on the “How to Become One” tab.

- a) What type of education do you need for this career?
- b) What type of specific skills do you need?
- c) What type of training do you need?

- 7) Click on “Pay” tab.
- a) What is the median wage?
- b) Define median wage?
- 8) Click on the “Job Outlook” tab.
- a) What does the job outlook look like in this profession?
- b) Why is it important to research the job outlook in a profession?
- 9) Click on the tab “Similar Professions.” List three professions and the type of degree needed.

Pictures of group presentations of career research activity

Career	Pay	Education	Skills Needed
oncology-Physician+ Surgeons	Wage ≥ \$157,220/year \$90.00/hour	doctoral or professional degree, 4 years undergrad 4 years Med School 3-8 years residency	•Communication, •compassion •detail oriented, physical stamina •problem solving, dexterity, •leadership, •organization, •patience
Accountants	\$63,850 per year	Bachelor Degree	•Communication, organizational oriented, math skills
Nurse Anesthetists	\$166,460 - \$150,000 per year	Masters Degree	None, scientific background recommended
Computer Engineer	\$100,930 per year	Bachelor's Degree in Computer Engineering	Skills in Math and Science
Military	\$14,580 per month	Highschool or College or Both	Leadership

Career	Pay	Education	Skills
MRI & Radiological technologists	\$53,910/year	Associates degree	•Math •Detail Oriented •Technical Skills
Biomedical Engineer	\$86,960/year \$4010/hour	Bachelor's degree	•Communication •Problem Solving •Math
Occupational Therapist	\$75,400/year \$36.25/hour	Master's (OT School)	•Communication •Compassion •Patience •Flexibility
Physical Therapist	\$79,860/year \$38.37/hour	Doctoral	•Communication •Motivational
Sports Scout	\$28,360/year	Bachelors	•passion for sports •ability to spot young talent

Career	Pay	Education	Skills
Sales Manager	\$105,260	Bachelors degree	•Direct Organization •Set sales goals •analyze data •develop training For organizations! Sales representatives.
Special education teacher	\$55,060	Bachelor's degree	•Adapt lessons to students needs •Develop lesson plans with different learning styles •Develop individual education programs •Teach and tell students how their work •Good communication, critical thinking, patience, + resourcefulness
Dental Assistant	\$34,500	Associates Degree	•Organizational skills •Listening Skills •Dental oriented
Pediatrician	\$161,069	•At least a Bachelors •MCAT •Undergraduate work, in biology, chemistry, physics, math & English •Professional / Doctoral	•Communication •Compassion •Patient •Leadership •Organization •Problem-solving

Bibliography

Occupational Outlook Handbook: : U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics." *U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.* U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, n.d. August 2014