WEBSTER COUNTY COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS WORKSHOP

by

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Abstract

College and career readiness is an essential component of today's student education. Students who graduate from high school without the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in postsecondary life have been let down by the education system in this country. These students are largely found in rural, impoverished communities. This project aims to demonstrate that college and career readiness interventions are necessary and extremely valuable for high school seniors. I designed a three-day college and career readiness workshop to match the needs of a small, rural high school in Webster County, WV. Webster is a small, impoverished county whose school system has suffered from cut-backs and overcrowding for many years. As a result, the county is well below the national average for high school graduation and college attendance. The workshop took place October 12-14, 2016. Each day of the workshop was dedicated to a unique theme, including "Find Your Passion," "The Pursuit of Education," and "The Search for a Career." I took pre- and post-workshop surveys in order to assess the success of this workshop, with an eye to developing this into a larger scale practice for rural counties. The assessment outcomes and evaluation of the workshop indicate that interventions such as this improve student knowledge of postsecondary options and empower them to choose the path most suited to their own life and values.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I believe that it is important to acknowledge the people of Webster County, WV who made this project possible. The high school principal, Stacey Cutlip, was tremendously helpful in coordinating this event, from the curriculum down to the scheduling. Her office staff were also gracious and kind to our volunteers, and were very receptive to our cause. Betsy Morris, director of the lovely Camp Caesar, helped my volunteers and I settle into our cabin and continuously thanked us for bringing our project to Webster. I would like to thank her for being an incredibly gracious host. My grandmother, Janet Woods, who works in the high school cafeteria, is the entire reason that I love Webster County so much. She has made sure to introduce me to every single person we walked by on the street, and she made me go to 4H camp even during my stubborn teenage years. Without her, this project would have never happened.

There are also several Webster County High School students who helped me to create this workshop with an understanding of student needs. I originally pitched my idea to Bradin Miller, a 2017 WCHS graduate. It was his support and his willingness to listen to my ideas, even when he was practically bored out of his mind, that allowed me to come up with a concrete idea of what I wanted to do with this project. Tyler Ray, one of my very best friends and a 2017 WCHS graduate as well, assisted me in creating curriculum that would apply to all students, as opposed to just those who wanted to attend four-year universities. Finally, Austin Hayes, a 2016 WCHS graduate, was able to give me information about what he missed as a senior at the high school. His perspective was unique in that he was currently enrolled in a university and was a recent graduate of WCHS when I approached him with this

idea. These three young men allowed me to create an inspiring project that truly fit the needs of students at their specific high school. Without them, it is doubtful whether this workshop would have been as successful as I believe that it was.

Next, I'd like to thank my incredible volunteers, and those who wanted to volunteer but were unable to due to other commitments. Each of the volunteers, including Augustin Calderon, Imelda Navarro, Carl Ericson, Amber Deal, JC Knox, Darrell Utt, Dylon Fisher, and Graham Purcell, were essential to the success of this project, and I'd like to thank them again for their help and their dedication to educational equity. Augustin Calderon, in particular, was a tremendous help when it comes to creating the workbook and curriculum for this project. He stayed up long nights with me and spent hours calming me down as I panicked about making sure that this project fit the needs of the school. As a partner and my biggest support system, I could ask for nobody better.

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Finally, there are several others who I'd like to thank for their support and inspiration

along the way. Jennifer O'Keefe and Timothy Adams were my inspiration behind this project. The two of them taught me all that they could about college, career, and life skills. More than that, they were both incredibly supportive of me during my high school years and are the reason that I am so passionate about providing students with college and career readiness skills today. They each provided me with ideas for curriculum and ways to involve the community in this project. Angela Mead and Jeff Cathey helped me to set realistic goals and to transform an abstract idea into a concrete plan. Both of my parents supported me throughout the planning process and the writing process. Their kind words and their ability to push my buttons encouraged me to push myself harder with this project. Last, but certainly not least, I'd like to thank those who donated to our cause. Leslie Romero, Katherine Hood, Brittany Harris, Cassandra Springer, my partner Augustin, my sister Lauren, my Grandpa, and my lovely boss at Shear Shakti all helped to make this workshop possible. Thank you all.

In 2017, college and career readiness programs are becoming much more common for students at schools which can afford them. While struggling to maintain the quality of their required courses, such as mathematics and language arts, many Title I schools are not able to implement college and career readiness curriculum. Programs such as Upward Bound are making an impact on some students, but are not made available to all of the students who need them. In an ever-changing economy, it is important to ensure that all students, regardless of their socioeconomic status, ethnicity, gender, or any other individual characteristics, are able to keep up with the evolving expectations and skills required of them.

Rural Appalachian schools are particularly vulnerable to falling behind in college and career education for several social and economic reasons. Webster County High School (WCHS) in West Virginia is one example of such a school. Though the school participates in Upward Bound, the program is not systematically offered and made available to all students. Several students underperform in areas of college and career skills because they are not afforded the opportunity to learn. AP and dual enrollment programs are offered for students who qualify, but this fails to address the needs of students who do not take these courses. This is not the fault of the school, which is struggling with funds and overcrowding, or of the students themselves. Instead, it is due to a complex set of circumstances created by an unjust and inequitable social system which perpetuates the poverty and undereducation of rural Appalachia.

The purpose of this project is to implement a three-day college and career readiness workshop for WCHS seniors in order to increase their understanding of postsecondary options and to give them the skills and knowledge they need to pursue their postsecondary

goals. Education is key in the fight against poverty and injustice. Preparing WCHS seniors for life after high school is a necessary step to boost their local economy and increase their access to high-quality postsecondary opportunities. I created and implemented this workshop specifically targeted at WCHS students' unique needs, including a fully developed and interactive workbook, in order to provide them with knowledge, skills, and motivation they need to pursue their goals.

Background

Webster County, West Virginia has always had a very special place in my heart. The mountains, creeks, woods, and wildlife are among the most beautiful that I have ever seen. One of Webster's most famous sites is Camp Caesar, a gorgeous campground with cabins, a lake, quiet locations for meditation, and buildings used for local events. Many high school students get jobs working at Camp Caesar over the summer, either cleaning the grounds or staffing the kitchen. I was introduced to the campground through my grandmother, who lives in Webster County.

Camp Caesar is home to Webster County's 4-H Camp. When I was young, I spent summers in Webster with my grandmother. Each summer from the age of 9 until the age of 21, I spent a week at 4-H Camp. Because I moved so often as a child, Webster became the most permanent location in my life, and Camp Caesar became the place that I feel most at home. Though my mother grew up in Webster County and my grandmother lives there now, my bond runs far deeper than familial ties. Instead, Webster is my home because of the incredible friendships I've forged over the years at camp. Though I only see my Webster County friends once a year, they are nearest to my heart.

This project began when my grandmother informed me that the county middle school was closed due to funding. The middle school and high school were consolidated, and the high school lost a large portion of its space, including the school library and the vocational technology, or vo-tech hallway, in order to accommodate the new students. When some of my friends started talking about the resources that they lacked for postsecondary planning, I started to think about ways that I could give back to this community. I spoke to many of my friends, who attended WCHS at the time, and we discussed the needs of the high school. It became apparent that many students did not know what they were going to do after high school, or how they could accomplish any goals that they might have had. From discussions with my grandmother and with WCHS students, the ideas that led to this workshop began to form.

Literature Review

Though it seems astounding that WCHS is so underfunded, overcrowded, and unable to provide students with essential tools for life after graduation, this is not uncommon for rural Appalachian schools. Appalachia is often characterized by poverty, isolation, and a low rate of opportunities to work in white-collar jobs (Chenoweth and Galliher 2004, 1). Though high school graduation rates have increased across the country overall, college completion rates are exceptionally low in rural areas (Marré 2014). As of 2012, the percentage of persons aged 25-64 with a college degree was 14 percent lower in rural areas than in urban areas. Because of the lack of white-collar jobs in rural Appalachia, many of those with college degrees tend to move into cities in order to improve their own financial situations. Unfortunately, however, this hurts the local economies by perpetuating a cycle in which the

inhabitants of rural Appalachia remain undereducated and impoverished (Marré 2014).

Webster County, WV is no exception to this rule. Webster's rate of persons living in poverty is shockingly higher than state and national data. The U.S. Census Bureau cautions that these data cannot be directly compared due to different cost of living estimates within different areas of the country, but it is still worth looking at to describe the extreme poverty found in the county.. In 2015, 13.5% of persons living in the US and 17.9% of persons living in West Virginia were characterized as persons living in poverty (US Census Bureau 2016). In Webster County, however, 29.6% of the population were considered persons living in poverty (US Census Bureau 2016). This is over twice the national average and nearly twice the statewide average.

In addition, high school completion and college completion rates in Webster are much lower than state and nation-wide statistics. Between 2011 and 2015, only 70.9% of Webster adults (25 and older) were high school graduates, and 9.3% of the same age group held a bachelor's degree or higher (US Census Bureau 2016). This is in stark contrast with both West Virginia statistics and the United States as a whole, with 85% and 86.7% high school graduates and 19.2% and 29.8% with bachelor's degrees or higher, respectively (US Census Bureau 2016). Webster's population with bachelor's degrees or higher is a startling 10% lower than the statewide average, and 20% lower than the national average. Ali and Saunders assert that:

Over the course of time, the chronic poverty has left rural central Appalachian high school students to contend with major barriers that are commonly associated with rural poverty including the following: underfunded schools; sparse investment and no infrastructure to build economic communities; unemployed or underemployed parents; inadequate jobs, services, and transportation, which often leads them to pursue limited economic and educational opportunities (2009, 174).

One study, done by the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission, looked

at the rates of 2014-2015 high school graduates who enrolled in an institution of higher education the following fall (2015). The data compared each county and individual school, including all private and public high schools in the state. Of the 18,408 students who graduated from WV high schools in 2015, 10,075, or 57%, enrolled in a higher education institution in fall 2015. Of the 107 Webster County graduates that year, 43.9% (47) enrolled in a higher education institution. This includes 22.4% (24) at a public four-year institution, 8.4% (9) at a public two-year institution, 11.2% (12) in an independent college or university, and 1.8% (2) in an out-of-state institution. Fewer students from WCHS attended a public four-year institution or a public two year institution than West Virginia graduates in general (32.6% and 9.6% each), though three times the percent of WCHS students attended a private or independent institution than West Virginia graduates (3.6%). Webster County, like much of rural Appalachia, faces poverty and systemic barriers that make student success extremely difficult.

Characteristics of Rural Schools and Students

It is easy to look at these data and perceive rural students as less motivated or less intelligent than their urban and suburban counterparts, but this is not the case. There is an entire complex of local mores and cultural experiences, as well as a variety of institutional barriers, that contribute to this issue. It is important to first address the idea that lack of motivation causes poorer outcomes in Appalachian schools. Hardré and colleagues discuss the factors affecting student motivation and post-graduation outcomes. Researchers gave questionnaires to 414 students from 10 different schools in the southwestern United States. Findings from these questionnaires suggest that student motivation is built from an intricate

web of relationships between attitudes and perceptions (Hardré et al. 2009, 13). Among the most influential factors are a student's perceptions of their own competency and evaluation of the usefulness of the curriculum they have learned. Teacher support also had a significant effect on student motivation (Hardré et al. 2009, 14). Students who appear unmotivated to perform in schools may need more support and encouragement from teachers and family in order to perform at a higher level.

"Resistant" students are also common in rural schools. These are students who "act out" during class, specifically through behaviors such as sleeping in class, talking over the teacher, not doing homework, or even causing arguments with faculty in front of other students. These behaviors are condemned in the school system because they are disruptive. However, some researchers believe that much can be learned from these students. One study evaluated Appalachian Ohio junior and senior students who displayed these disruptive behaviors in class (Hendrickson 2012). Each of the seven students identified (5 males, 2 females) were interviewed by the researcher. Three main themes appeared in these interviews: family values, relevance of courses to student goals, and misunderstandings between students and teachers (Hendrickson 2012, 46). If policymakers and teachers made the effort to understand the actions and behaviors of "resistant" students, conversations about how to address these behavioral issues and to improve student outcomes can begin.

Ali and Saunders evaluated students' college and career aspirations in two separate studies using the Social Cognitive Career Theory. In their original study, the researchers found that two major cultural factors affecting rural Appalachian students' college goals are self-reliance and strong kinship ties (Ali and Saunders 2006). Because of this, students often rely solely on their own knowledge and family for advice on postsecondary goals. However,

if family members did not go to college, or did so many years ago, they might not have access to the information and resources necessary to inform students of all their opportunities. Family values are also important for rural students. Those who perceive their parents and other family members as supportive of college are more likely to pursue higher education than those whose family is not.

The researchers analyzed demographic information, self-efficacy beliefs, perceived parent support (measured by the parent support index, through which students rate their parents' level of encouragement or discouragement regarding 32 items), and educational outcomes of 87 rural Appalachian 10th and 11th graders. Their findings supported the hypothesis that parent support was essential in predicting student expectations, more so than the parent's occupation or educational status. A student's self-efficacy beliefs were also influential (Ali and Saunders 2006). The researchers suggest that engaging parents in education and career planning for their students will help promote higher education and career aspirations, as well as the student's confidence and self-efficacy beliefs.

In addition, the researchers later evaluated career aspirations from 63 9th-12th grade Appalachian students. They proposed that "high levels of vocational/educational self-efficacy, career decision outcome expectations, perceptions of support, and SES would be associated with high levels of career aspirations" (Ali and Saunders 2009, 177). Students were assessed on all of these factors using survey data. Their findings suggested that self-efficacy and their own outcome expectations were strong predictors of their career goals. In other words, students who feel confident about their ability to do well in school and in their future careers will plan to pursue more fulfilling career opportunities. On the other hand, those students who repeatedly fail courses and assignments are less likely to pursue careers

which offer opportunities for advancement. From these studies, it is apparent that student goals and performance are not simply an effect of their lack of motivation. In contrast, their confidence in their own ability to perform and their family's support are key determiners of their future aspirations.

Chenoweth and Galliher (2004) take this idea even further, discussing several other cultural factors that affect a student's college aspirations. These researchers established sources that directly influence academic development, sources that indirectly influence academic development, and sources that were specific to the Appalachian region. Low self-esteem, a sense of school belonging, peer values, regional isolation, and socioeconomic status were among those not specific to Appalachia. Negative stereotypes regarding rural Appalachia (i.e., "hillbillies", "uneducated") and persistent stereotyped gender roles were among the most salient factors affecting student outcomes in Appalachia (Chenoweth and Galliher 2004, 4). The high rate of blue-collar careers, especially mining, timber-work, and truck-driving, contribute to the poverty in the area, as well as the oppression and lack of career opportunities for women (Chenoweth and Galliher 2004, 4).

The researchers distributed questionnaires to 242 high school seniors in rural counties in West Virginia. The questionnaires evaluated students' college aspirations, school belonging, academic achievement, and other peer, family, and financial factors. They found that 69% of students surveyed planned to attend college within the first two years of graduation (Chenoweth and Galliher 2004, 5). The most consistent factors affecting college decision making were academic. This included student GPA, if they had participated in college preparatory curriculum, their perceptions of their own intelligence, and their comfort in the school setting (Chenoweth and Galliher 2004, 10). Parent variables were also

important, as Ali and Saunders stipulated. Parent education and peers' college plans were more influential for males, while high school curriculum and perceived intelligence were more significant for females (Chenoweth and Galliher 2004, 12). In addition, males who did not plan to attend college were more likely to "dismiss" college as an option, while females were more likely to mention barriers such as lack of information or financial resources (Chenoweth and Galliher 2004, 9). While the researchers do not know what actual college attendance rates were for this group, their data is helpful in determining why Appalachian students may not perceive college as a viable option. Encouragement and increased access to college and career preparatory curriculum would benefit Appalachian students.

What is college and career readiness?

College and career readiness is a broad category that lacks a clear, enduring definition. In fact, as of September 2014, 36 states and the District of Columbia each had individual definitions for college and career readiness (Mishkind 2014, 1). According to the College and Career Readiness Success Center (CCRS), 33 of the 37 states have single definitions that encompass college and career readiness, while the other four define college readiness and career readiness separately. From its review of state definitions, CCRS defined several "actionable" definitions, which include "concrete skills that students must master to be considered college and/or career ready" (Mishkind 2014, 3). These definitions can be used to create standards for students and curriculum which encourages students to meet those standards. At least one of the six actionable categories listed was found in 21 of the 37 state definitions, and four of the six categories were found in over half of those 21 definitions. The categories are: academic knowledge, critical thinking and/or problem solving, social and

emotional learning, collaboration and/or communication, grit/resilience/perseverance,

citizenship and/or community involvement, and other additional activities (Mishkind 2014,

3-5).

West Virginia is one of the states that defines college and career readiness in one

cohesive definition. This definition emphasizes academic knowledge, skills and tools, as well

as an understanding of all of the postsecondary opportunities available to students. The West

Virginia Department of Education defines college and career readiness as:

> College and Career Readiness means that students exit high school prepared for
> success in a wide range of high-quality postsecondary opportunities. Specifically,
> college and career readiness refers to the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed
> to be successful in postsecondary education and/ or training that lead to employment.
> Today's workplace requires that all workers be lifelong learners in order to advance
> in their careers. Therefore, it is necessary that there be a common set of knowledge
> and skills that all individuals acquire to successfully transition into postsecondary
> education or the workplace. All students should exit high school with a full
> understanding of the career opportunities available to them, the education necessary
> to be successful in their chosen pathway and a plan to attain their goals.

The website also states that only 15% of the fastest growing jobs in West Virginia will be

available to those without postsecondary education. Because state education statistics are

much lower than the national statistics, West Virginia is very concerned with preparing its

students for postsecondary education in order to support the wellbeing of its citizens.

How can college and career readiness be taught?

While it is simple to say that college and career readiness is essential for the current

generation of students, it is more difficult to determine how these skills should be taught, or

even what those exact skills truly are. Because rural Appalachia represents a unique

population with economic and social issues specific to the region, it is crucial that any

college and career readiness curriculum is tailored to the region's needs and the needs of the

students within that region. King (2012) discusses initiatives in rural Appalachian high schools aimed at increasing the number of students going to college soon after high school, largely through community and parent involvement. The purpose of the study was to determine which factors most greatly affected students' choice and ability to attend college. The study reviews ten of eleven grant-supported projects in rural Mississippi high schools. Each of the project leaders was asked to respond to four questions to determine the success of those initiatives, as well as the leading influences on students' choice to go to college.

King's findings were that several factors influence college-going rates, including community and parental participation in these initiatives. Financial aid workshops aimed at helping students and parents understand the paperwork and the use of the computer in completing the FAFSA were deemed important because they allow parents to see that there are options available for their students. This, in turn, can result in rural parents being more receptive to the idea of their child attending college. Program leaders found that offering food at these workshops and making sure that they are well advertised encouraged parents and community members to attend. ACT preparation workshops helped students learn what to expect from the ACT, increasing their chances of being accepted to a college. Career weeks, assistance with completing the FAFSA, and college campus visits were also listed as important factors. Some teachers, however, stated that they had behavioral issues with college visits because those students who were not planning to attend a university were not interested in learning about colleges (King 2012, 23).

Program leaders also found that involving the community in project activities was important in increasing college-going rates (King 2012, 24). Job shadowing and required community service would be ways to involve the community in the growth and interest in

college for rural high school students. Finally, one of the most important factors was making sure that all of this information is given to students early enough for it to make a difference (King 2012, 25). If students do not receive information on financial aid and colleges until late in their senior year, it is of virtually no use to them. Every aspect of the program must be tailored to the needs of the students, and that includes when the program takes place.

While King discusses the factors that contribute to college and career readiness in rural Appalachia, she does not provide a comprehensive system for teaching the information. Instead of emphasizing a single experience or accomplishment, Barnett proposes a system that emphasizes the "accumulation of momentum points" (Barnett 2016, 1). Momentum points are defined as experiences and attainments that meet two criteria: they must be "(1) supported by research evidence and (2) made possible through collaborative work between high schools and colleges" (Barnett 2016, 1). There are three main categories in which students can gain momentum points: academic knowledge and skills, noncognitive skills, and college cultural capital. These momentum points are intended to "propel them to and through their first year of college" (Barnett 2016, 3).

Within academic knowledge and skills, Barnett provides two experiences and three attainments that provide momentum for students. The experiences are participating in difficult courses in high school and taking college-level courses through AP, dual enrollment, or IB courses. These are both intended to get students accustomed to college-level work and to get them to participate in critical thinking and writing (Barnett 2016, 5). Attainments in this category include math and English knowledge required for college-level (non-remedial) courses, earning a good GPA, and earning at least six college credits (generally two courses) during high school.

Noncognitive skills are also crucial for college success. Barnett defines two experiences and two attainments which contribute to a student's momentum chain. The experiences include opportunities to establish personal goals and direction and opportunities to develop and strengthen a range of noncognitive skills predictive of college success. Those skills include grit and time-management. Good attendance and showing readiness on a noncognitive assessment are the attainments in this category (Barnett 2016, 10).

The final category, college cultural capital, includes "knowledge, tools, and assets required to navigate the transition to college" (Barnett 2016, 12). This category also contains two experiences and two attainments. The experiences are exposure to college norms and expectations and validation by high school and college faculty. Barnett states that "Students, especially those from traditionally underserved groups, are likely to lack confidence in themselves unless they are actively 'validated' as capable students by members of the academic community" (13). The attainments are completing one or more college applications and the FAFSA and commitment to attend a college in the fall following graduation (Barnett 2016, 14).

If schools wish to see demonstrable changes from these programs, they must be made systematically available to all students. This means that schools must make sure that all initiatives are offered and found within time frames available to every student (Barnett 2016, 15). In addition, requiring community colleges and high schools to cooperate in the creation of these programs means that high schools will understand what community colleges are looking for, and that community colleges will be accepting more students who are college ready and do not need to take remedial courses (Barnett 2016, 16). Offering incentives for both high schools and colleges to participate in these collaborative initiatives is an important

step in ensuring that they are successfully carried out.

How is college and career readiness measured?

In order to determine whether students are meeting college and career goals, their progress and readiness must be measured. For West Virginia, college and career readiness is focused on "the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to be successful in postsecondary education and/ or training that lead to employment" (West Virginia Department of Education). To measure students' knowledge, skills, and dispositions, an assessment or series of assessments must be employed. Several such tests exist currently, though most them focus on either college or career readiness, and determine cognitive and academic skills such as reading comprehension, math skills, etc., more than non-cognitive skills, such as communication, collaboration, and conflict resolution.

The ACT WorkKeys assessment, for example, measures three skills: Reading for Information, Applied Mathematics, and Locating Information (LeFebvre 2015, 3). These are all academic skills geared toward creating career ready students. Upon completing the test, students can view the ACT JobPro database, which presents job clusters with high education, middle education, and low education sections for over 1,000 careers. Students can view skills required for 85% of occupations in that cluster and education group (LeFebvre 2015, 12). This particular test is an excellent measure of a student's readiness in regards to cognitive skills, but there are several issues with an assessment like this. First, it does not address the importance of noncognitive skills and does not test student understanding of interviews, resumes, and other important career skills. Additionally, students who receive low or failing scores may be disheartened. This often leads to lower confidence and career aspirations (Ali

and Saunders 2009; Chenoweth and Galliher 2004).

Two other tests, the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) exams have both been used in Massachusetts to examine students' academic preparedness for college or to graduate high school. The MCAS has been in place since three years prior to the No Child Left Behind Act mandated similar tests (Nichols-Barrer et. al 2016, 71). However, when Massachusetts joined the Common Core State Standards in 2010, educators were faced with the dilemma of continuing the use of the MCAS or adopting a new test, the PARCC, which aligned with Common Core standards.

A study was issued to compare the two tests to determine which was more effective in predicting student success in college. The researchers found that the scores on the math and language arts sections of both tests were positively correlated with college outcomes, and that the the differences between their predictive validity were insignificant (Nichols-Barrer et. al 2016, 72). However, PARCC's cutoff scores were much higher in math, meaning that students who scored as proficient in the PARCC were more likely to get even higher grades than those who only scored proficient in MCAS. This may be because the PARCC was created to identify students who are prepared for college level coursework, while the MCAS was created to measure proficiency for state standards for graduation. In either case, these tests only examine a student's academic preparedness for college, but fails to determine whether they are prepared on other levels, such as understanding of various financial aid possibilities or the college application process.

All three of the tests I discussed above may cause students who perform poorly to feel unprepared and even unfit for college, particularly if they do not achieve high scores.

Providing remediation and encouragement for those who do not do well on assessments like this is crucial for increasing their confidence and ability to successfully pursue postsecondary education. Too often, students who need remediation after graduating high school do not finish college. The requirements for remedial courses and the fact that they do not grant credit discourages students from continuing their education. Programs like New York's CUNY Start are leading the way in improving outcomes for students who need remediation. CUNY Start is a one semester program in which students put off taking all other courses for a semester of non-credit remedial courses. The cost for the entire semester is $75, including textbooks, which appeals to students from low-income backgrounds. It consists of 25 hours a week, including 12 hours of mathematics, 12 hours of reading/writing, and one hour of a college success seminar (Scrivener and Logue 2016, 4). Students are encouraged to write and participate in discussions, as opposed to lecture often found in traditional remedial classrooms.

A study of the CUNY Start program found that it was significantly more successful than traditional developmental courses. Sixty-two percent of CUNY Start students who needed remediation in writing reached college-level proficiency by the end of the program, as compared with only 26% of students in a one-semester long remedial writing course. In addition, 53% of CUNY Start students who needed remediation in math reached college-level proficiency as compared with 10 percent of the control group (Scrivener and Logue 2016, 6). This kind of semester long program would be beneficial for students who fail to meet academic standards of college readiness because it gives students the time to catch up without forcing them to take other courses at the same time. If high schools and community colleges were to work together, as recommended by Barnett, community colleges may offer

similar initiatives as a summer program to remediate recent high school graduates. This would allow students who need remediation to improve their own likelihood of finishing college, regardless of their academic ability upon graduation.

Methods and Materials

Methods

Funding for this workshop came from several donations. GoFundMe was the major source of donations, gathering $480. Volunteers carpooled to Webster County and stayed in a cabin at Camp Caesar. Volunteers paid for their own gas and dinner, but the rest of the expenses were paid through donations.

This workshop was created with the framework of Barnett's "momentum" system, as well as the activities from King's study on Mississippi schools, in mind. Each of the three days was dedicated to a particular goal and utilized different teaching techniques in order to reach those goals. A combination of lectures, readings, group discussions, individual and group presentations, and research was used to appeal to all learning types. Each day began with an introduction, followed by curriculum, and ended with a cluster discussion. There were 88 students in the senior class, all of whom participated in this workshop. However, many students had to leave throughout the day due to work, sports, or other extracurricular activities.

Nine volunteers (including myself) participated in the workshop. Each volunteer became the cluster leader of a small cluster of approximately 10 students. The school only had about 50 computers, so we had to split the clusters into two larger groups, with five clusters in one group and four in the other. While one group was in the computer lab doing research or projects, the other spent time in lecture and activities in the gym.

Materials

An interactive workbook was developed for this workshop with the specific needs of WCHS in mind (see Appendix A). It was designed using Adobe InDesign and printed by DocuCopies. The workbook was contained four main sections: one section for each day of the workshop and a resources section for future use. The purpose of the workbook was to give students something tangible from the workshop so that they would be able to review what they learned. Though much of it is applicable to students of all backgrounds, many sections (such as the financial aid project and the college admissions information) were tailored to West Virginia and Webster County students. It is my hope that future WCHS students will be able to look at their older sibling's workbook and have the resources they need to apply for school and financial aid.

The pre-test and post-test (see Appendix B) were both created based off information from the workbook and curriculum taught at the workshop. They had 26 scored questions and four opinion questions. The two tests were found in the exact same order. The evaluation (see Appendix C) was created based on the workshop as well. Students were meant to rate six statements on a scale of 1-5 (from strongly disagree to to strongly agree), and write short answers to four opinion questions. The pre-test and post-test were meant to measure how much students learned, while the evaluation was meant to gauge how students felt about the workshop. Both elements were important in gauging the overall success of the workshop.

Explore Your Passion

Because West Virginia's definition of college and career readiness emphasizes a

student's "full understanding of the career opportunities available to them, the education necessary to be successful in their chosen pathway and a plan to attain their goals," the first day (October 12, 2016) of this workshop focused on encouraging students to think about their postsecondary options (West Virginia Department of Education). We began the day with an orientation during which all the volunteers introduced themselves to the entire group. Then, we split into nine smaller groups, called clusters. Clusters were made up of one volunteer and approximately 10 students. Each cluster leader, had approximately 20 minutes to meet and bond with their students. Next, students took the pre-test. Once each group was finished with their pre-tests, the students moved on to the career assessments found in their workbooks. This assessment was meant to make students think about the kinds of careers that they may be interested in. Instead of assigning them to a specific career, the assessment assigned them to general fields, such as agriculture, education, human services, and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM).

After the career assessments, one group went to the computer lab to do a career project, which lasted two periods (approximately an hour and a half). The other group spent one period working on "education sessions" and the second period in a college life panel. For the career project, students were told to choose a career field in which they were interested (regardless of what their career assessments said) and to research three careers in that field. Each career was supposed to be at a different education point (one that required a high school diploma, one that required an undergraduate degree, and one that required a graduate degree). Their research included necessary education, what an average day in that career might look like, the career outlook for WV and the US in general, and starting and average salaries in WV and the US. After researching their career, they created poster presentations on large

sheets of paper. They then presented their posters within their cluster. The purpose of this project was to give students research and presentation experience, as well as a chance to set goals for themselves regarding potential careers.

While one group was creating their career projects, the other group started with education sessions. Each volunteer was tasked with researching one of the five education options discussed: community and technical colleges, universities, military, work-based learning, and distance/online education. Information on less common postsecondary options, such as the military, work-based learning, and distance/online education were emphasized, though community college and university were discussed as well. The students started with their own clusters and rotated through each volunteer's presentation. The presentations were approximately five minutes each, with two minutes for students to ask questions afterwards. The purpose of this exercise was to teach students about different post-secondary options, particularly for those who were not aware of all of the options available to them. The group then went to lunch and came back to the college life panel. The premise of this activity was to let seniors hear directly from college students about what college is like. Cluster leaders spoke about their experiences with each topic and allowed students to ask questions and discuss with them. The topics covered social, financial, and academic questions.

After both groups participated in the career projects, the education sessions, and the panel, all of the students and volunteers came together to discuss college choice. While we emphasized the fact that there were options other than university, we wanted to discuss the importance of choosing the university that best fit each student's specific needs. We discussed characteristics of the student body, the environment of the school, tuition, financial aid availability, distance from home, available resources (such as Tutoring Centers, fitness

classes, club sports), faculty and staff, and academic programs. After the presentation,

students went back to their clusters to discuss school choice with their cluster leaders.

The last hour of the day was spent with cluster reflections and then free time within

the gymnasium. For 30 minutes, students spent time discussing what they learned and asking

their leaders anything that needed to be clarified from the day. Students were then dismissed

for the day.

The Pursuit of Education

The second day of the workshop focused primarily on college admissions and

financial aid. Ideally, the entire day would have been devoted to this. However, because the

final day of the workshop was functioning on a two-hour delay, as well as an early dismissal

for the school's homecoming activities, some of the career activities planned for the final day

were moved to the second day. The day began with a brief overview of the schedule. The

first activity of the day was a lecture on college admissions. Volunteers presented on the

admissions process, including the Common App, when to apply, what to do if they were

deferred or rejected, and what to expect of the admission process from five of the schools

that most WCHS students generally apply to. Additionally, we discussed admissions

interviews and application essays.

The next lecture focused on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Because many students struggle with this application, we dedicated an entire period (45

minutes) to teaching it. The information that was covered included what FAFSA is, why,

how, and when to apply, who can see the information on the FAFSA, and how much aid a

student can expect. During cluster reflections at the end of the day, I offered to complete the

FAFSA4caster on my laptop for students who thought it would benefit them. This tool is essentially a simplified version of a FAFSA meant to predict how much aid a student might get, and it helped students who believed that they might have to do the FAFSA without the help of a parent or guardian.

The next two periods were broken up due to computer lab access. The first group began with a financial aid project. Each cluster was assigned a specific type of financial aid. The types of aid assigned included: the Federal Pell Grant, Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant, Federal Direct Subsidized Loans, Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loans, Federal Direct PLUS Loans, Sallie Mae, Work Study, West Virginia Higher Education Grant, and West Virginia PROMISE Scholarship. Each group researched the assigned type of aid. The cluster leaders worked with their clusters to create a group project about their aid. Because there were only nine clusters and 10 types of aid, I made a presentation on Sallie Mae ahead of time.

During this time, the other group attended a lecture on scholarships. Students learned what scholarships are, how to find and apply for them, and scholarships for which they may be qualified. They then spent time with their cluster leaders brainstorming activities, experiences, and skills that they had that might qualify them for a scholarship. They wrote these ideas in their workbooks for future use. Students then went to lunch and switched rooms to complete the other activity.

After both groups completed their project research, the clusters spent one period presenting the research to the entire senior class. This activity was intended to teach students about different types of financial aid, but also to get them to work collaboratively and to give them more presentation experience. Each student was required to say at least one sentence

during the 3-5 minute presentations. Student workbooks had space for students to take notes about each kind of aid. Though students did have to talk in front of the entire senior class, we attempted to alleviate the stress associated with that by allowing them to present in groups.

Once presentations were done, we spent 30 minutes discussing "networking" and social media. Students learned what networking is and why it is important during high school and college. They watched a video from Phoenix Career Corner titled "Professional Networking Tips from Career Expert Kathryn Minshew." This video discusses how to be authentic and professional when networking, as opposed to seeming like someone who is simply using another person for their own gain. Afterwards, we discussed the importance of using the internet to benefit oneself in a professional manner. We first taught students about Job Boards such as Indeed and Monster. Then, students learned about the importance of keeping one's social media professional. Students brainstormed some unprofessional things that might cause an employer to terminate an employee or to not hire them in the first place. Finally, students learned about LinkedIn, which is a social media website that encompasses networking, finding jobs, and professionalism.

This activity was particularly important because many students do not realize how their social media is used by potential employers to make hiring decisions. We emphasized the fact that colleges and potential employers can find posts that might be considered unprofessional and unsavory. Because we finished this activity approximately 10 minutes early, one of the volunteers suggested that we teach students how to properly handshake. Two volunteers demonstrated, then the clusters practiced with one another. This turned out to be a beneficial use of our time, as many students noted that they did not know how to give a professional handshake.

The last project of the day, which spread out until the third day, was either a resume clinic or interview clinic. The resume clinic began with 15 minutes of lecture. The topics of the lecture ranged from things that should or should not be on a resume, formatting, and cover letters. The students then created resumes with the help of their cluster leaders. Students who finished early wrote sample cover letters or helped other students with their resumes. This activity benefitted students because they were able to create professional resumes, but also learned how to tailor resumes and cover letters for future careers.

The interview clinic also included a 15 minute lecture and 30 minutes to practice interviews in their clusters. The lecture included interview preparation, tips, sample questions, questions for the interviewee to ask the interviewer, the importance of sending a thank you letter after an interview, and a section on how to "dress for success" with examples of inappropriate interview or workplace outfits. For the activity, students partnered up to practice interviewing one another. Their workbooks had a list of questions they might ask one another, as well as a section with the questions "What did I do well?" and "What do I need to work on?" The students spent 10 minutes on each interview and five minutes discussing what each student did well. This added up to approximately 30 minutes of practice time. The volunteers walked around and asked students potential questions to keep them on track and to check their progress.

For the final period of day two, students reflected on the day in their clusters. When all of the clusters were done reflecting, students were dismissed.

The Search for a Career

The final day of the workshop focused on finishing the career curriculum and

bringing all of the information together. The day started with a two-hour delay, which allowed volunteers the time to pack up all of their stuff and get ready to leave at the end of the school day. The first activity was either the resume clinic or interview clinic, depending on which group the students were in. Right after that, students went to lunch.

Following lunch, students completed the post-test and workshop evaluations. Once the tests and evaluations were collected and filed away, cluster leaders were given the answer keys for the test. Students were able to discuss the correct answers to each question. Clusters then reflected on the entire workshop. Students asked questions about the material and were given time to discuss how the workshop impacted them personally. Because many of the volunteers may never return to Webster County, they spent another 15 minutes bonding with their clusters and saying goodbye. At that point, it was time for the seniors to leave for their homecoming parade.

Results

The pre-test and post-test for this workshop were the same questions in the same order. There were 30 questions, with 26 scored questions and four opinion questions. Each question was graded and entered into a spreadsheet. Those questions that were answered correctly by 50% or less of students were marked as "urgently needs attention." Those that were answered correctly by 51%-75% of students were marked as "needs attention." The rest of the questions were not marked for concern. Each question was analyzed individually and in relationship to the other questions on the test.

Pre-test Results

Eighty-eight students took the pre-test, though one student did not complete the back page (questions 19-30, see Appendix B). Twenty-one of the 26 scored questions were marked for concern, while only five were answered correctly by at least 75% of the senior class. Four questions were marked as "needs attention" while 17 were marked as "urgently needs attention". Questions 8, 15, and 20 were missed by more than 80% of students, and were deemed most urgent of the topics to be addressed. The pre-tests were not graded until after the first full day of curriculum, but each of the three questions that were missed most often were addressed on later days of the workshop. The average score on the pre-test was 47%, with a range of 23%-73% (see figure 1).
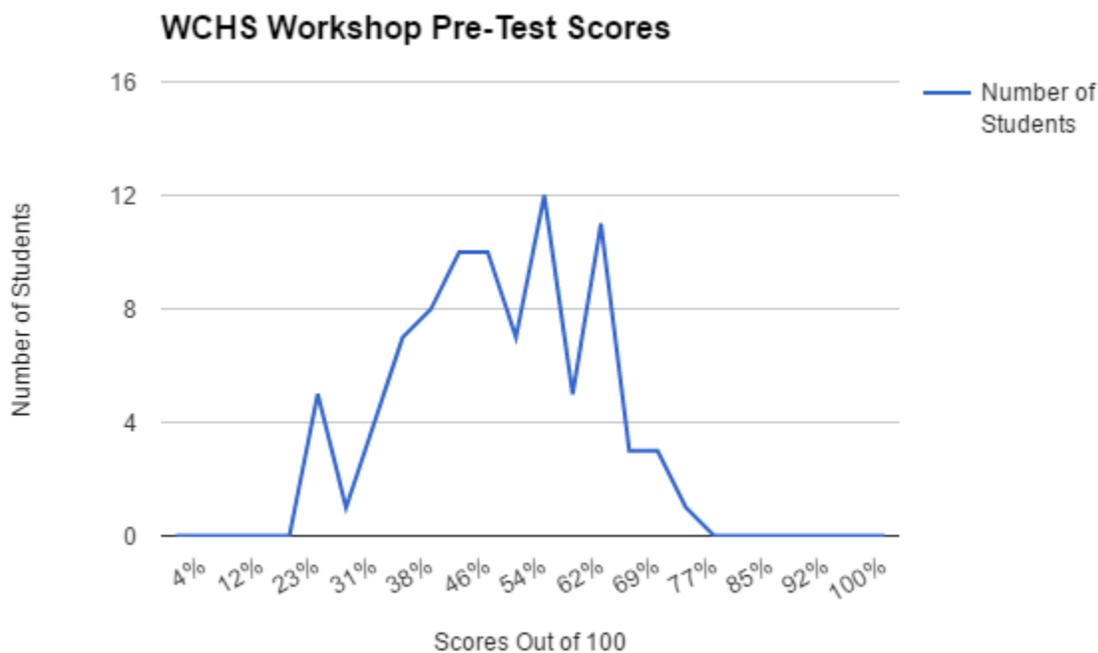
Figure 1. WCHS workshop pre-test scores

The next section included four opinion questions. The first question asked students to rate how prepared they felt for life after high school on a scale of 1-5, with 5 representing most prepared. The average rating was 2.95, with most students rating their preparedness as 3 (n=33) or 4 (n=34). The next question asked students to circle which postsecondary option

they had considered, including military, university, technical schools, and online or distance education. The majority of students (n=50, 57%) listed university as the only option they had considered. Technical schools were considered by 17 students, and distance education and military were each considered by six students. Some students listed more than one potential option. The most common response was military and university (n=5). Question 29 asked students if they thought this workshop would benefit their school. Students could circle the answer "yes", "no", or "I'm not sure". Fifty students answered yes, while five responded no and 32 said "I'm not sure". Interestingly, none of the respondents who answered "no" indicated an interest in attending university; one said technical school, one said military, and three were interested in online or distance education.

The final question on the test asked students what they were most nervous about in regards to graduating high school. Students wrote their own answers instead of circling one, in order to better represent what areas caused the most student concern. Twenty-one students either failed to answer or wrote "N/A" or "none". The most common response was related to adult life (n=29). This category included responses such as "big boy life" and "responsibilities". The next most common answer was related to college (n=20). These responses included "college applications," "finding out which courses to take for your field," and "choosing the right college." Nine of those 20 responses indicated some level of self-doubt. One student stated, "Not actually being accepted into college, and if I do get accepted, not failing the first semester". Adapting to a new environment also seemed to be a stressor for students. Ten students indicated that a new environment, including new food, new places, getting along with new people, or leaving familiar people was their biggest concern. Financial aid and paying for college (n=4), general success (n=2), and walking on stage

(n=1) were also concerns for some students.

Post-test results

Twelve questions, as compared with five in the pre-test, were not marked for concern at all in the post-test. In addition, ten were marked as "needs attention" and only four were marked as "urgently needs attention", as compared to 17 in the pre-test. Every question improved from the pre-test to the post-test except for question 25, which declined from 34% correct to 29% correct. Each question that was marked as "urgently needs attention" in the post-test was reviewed individually to determine why less than 50% of students marked it incorrectly. The mean score increased from 47% to 67%, and the range was 27%-96% (see figure 2).
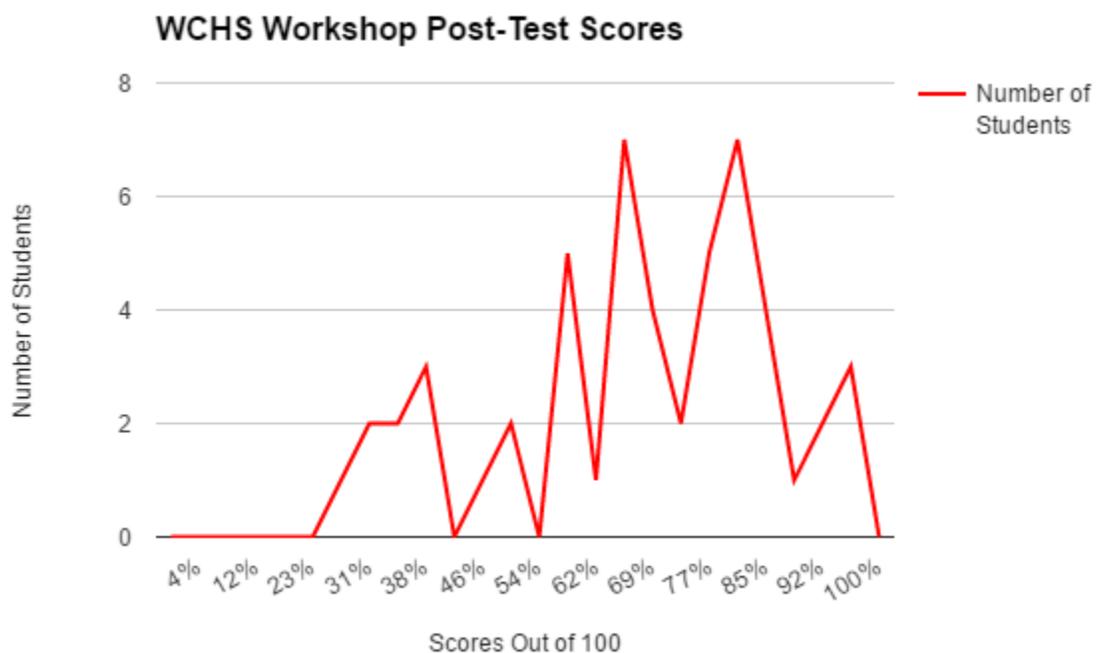
Figure 2. WCHS workshop post-test scores

Each of the questions marked "urgently needs attention" except for one were intended to be taught on the third day, but were mixed in with day two due to scheduling issues. The

only question that was not a career related question asked the following: "True or False: You cannot receive more aid than the total cost of attendance at your school." The answer to this question is true, and it was addressed directly in the FAFSA lecture. The other three most missed questions were career related. Two of the three were true or false answers. The wording in question 11 may have been ambiguous enough to cause students who understood the lesson to answer incorrectly. It stated: "True or False: You should keep your LinkedIn profile very basic and conservative." While the answer is false, this is counterintuitive for most students. The lecture on Networking and the Internet stated that a LinkedIn profile should utilize all resources, and should never be too basic. Question 15 stated: "True or False: A cover letter should simply restate what you said in your resume." The answer to this question is false, because a cover letter should include things that cannot be put in a resume, such as stories and statements that make the candidate stand out more than others.

Question 25 was especially concerning, because the number of students who answered it correctly actually decreased from the pre-test to the post-test. This could be a result of the smaller sample, but it was worth review in either case. The question was multiple choice. It asked, "Which type of resume is best for recent graduates with no job experience or people who are changing professions?" The choices were: (A) Functional, (B) Chronological, (C) Combination, and (D) It doesn't matter. The correct answer was A. Most students who answered this question incorrectly said C (37%) or B (27%). Only 29% of students marked this question correctly. It is completely possible that this topic was not addressed well enough during the resume lecture, or that students were more concerned with the overall information about resumes than the smaller details.

When rating their perceived preparedness for life after high school, some students

wrote in answers such as 4.5 or 6. In these cases, the number was rounded down to the

closest number on the scale (1-5). For example, the score of 4.5 was rounded down to 4. The

average score increased slightly from 2.95 to 3.11. None of the students answered that they

were least prepared and only four indicated a score of 2. Most of the students (n=28) circled a

score of 4. The next question asked students to circle which postsecondary option they had

considered, including university, military, technical schools, and distance or online

education. Thirty-five of the 52 (67%) students indicated that they wanted to pursue

university education, as compared with 57% before the workshop, a ten percent increase

from the pre-test. When asked whether they thought this workshop was beneficial for the

seniors at their high school, 36 students said yes, 4 said no, and 12 were still unsure.

Interestingly, the percent of students who stated that the workshop did benefit their school

increased from 58% to 69%, and the percent of those who stated that it did not benefit their

school also increased, from 5.7% to 7.7%.

In the final question, to which students wrote in their own answers, five students

responded that they were not nervous. College was most commonly cited (n=16), with six of

those responses related to self-doubt. A new environment was the next most commonly cited

category (n=13). Adult life was a close third, with eleven student votes. This category

decreased from the most cited to the third most cited cause of anxiety. General success (n=3),

financial aid (n=3), and "our next president" (n=1) were also listed.

Evaluation results

The evaluation given to students at the end of the workshop (see Appendix C)

consisted of six statements to which students rated and a section for students to write in short

responses. The rating scale ranged from 1-5, with one signifying strongly disagree and five signifying strongly agree. A score of three would represent no opinion or no change. The first statement read, "I felt like this workshop was well organized and planned out." The average score was a 4.25/5. Three of the 52 students gave the workshop a rating of 5 in all categories except for organization. The second statement read, "The content of the workshop was applicable to my own life." The average score was 4.46. The third statement read, "I am more likely to apply to or attend college than I was before this workshop." The average score was 3.96. This statement received several (15) scores of 3, suggesting that no change occurred from the beginning of the workshop. The fourth statement read, "I would recommend this workshop for other high school seniors in my state." The average score was 4.46. The fifth statement read, "I feel more prepared to pursue my goals after high school." The average score was 4.15. The final statement read, "I feel like this workshop benefitted myself and my school." The average score was 4.35.

The following questions required short, written responses from the students. The first question was "If you could add any topic to the curriculum of this workshop, what would it be?" Twenty-five students responded with nothing to add or did not respond. Six students wanted volunteers to help them complete their own scholarship applications, while five students suggested the same for the FAFSA. Four students wrote in money management and three wanted to add curriculum on filing taxes and writing checks. Two students each requested more information on student loans and time management. Finally, one student each suggested information on what to do after being admitted to college, body language in social settings, more college life information, leadership training, and entrance exams.

The next question was "Were there any topics that you found irrelevant or

unnecessary?" Forty-five students answered that there were not. Two students noted that they already knew everything from the workshop. Two others found the handshake exercise unnecessary. One person answered "some, yes." One other person said that the college life panel was unnecessary, and one stated that the slideshows needed work.

The third written answer question was "What activity or lesson did you find most valuable to your life?" Five students did not answer this question. Some students wrote in more than one answer. The FAFSA lecture (17) and resume clinic (13) were considered most valuable to the most students. The financial aid research project (5) and the interview clinic (5) were also written in by several students. Three students found the scholarship lecture to be most valuable, and two believed that the college application lecture was most valuable. College choice, the handshake activity, the discussion of life balance (found in the college life panel), college admissions information, importance of time management, and the career project were all written in one time each. All of the activities written in as most irrelevant were also considered most valuable to at least one student, justifying their presence in the workshop.

The final section left room for students to write in any additional questions or comments. Most students either left this blank, or simply wrote "thank you." Three students suggested that the workshop would have been more successful if it had utilized more hands-on activities. One student wrote, "The workshop could have been a little more interactive. A lot of the information was lost during the lecture." Another said, "Overall I enjoyed it, but there should be more hands-on activities. It was a really long/boring experience a lot of the time." Others thanked specific volunteers for being especially helpful. "Augustin is awesome! Helped me understand things better." "It was a great program! Darrell was

awesome." One student stated that the program itself was great but needed to be more

organized. Several simply stated that they found the workshop to be helpful, fun, or

educational. One said, "Loved this! It was very educational and planned out very well."

Summary of Results

Student scores increased significantly from the pre-test to the post-test. The mean

score increased by 20%, while the upper end of the range increased by 23%. The lower end

of the range showed no significant difference. Because at least one of the students in the

senior class struggled with low literacy skills, it is possible that the written form of the test

was partially responsible for the lower scores. The increase in scores suggest that students are

better prepared for life after high school through their newfound knowledge of college and

career readiness (see figure 3).
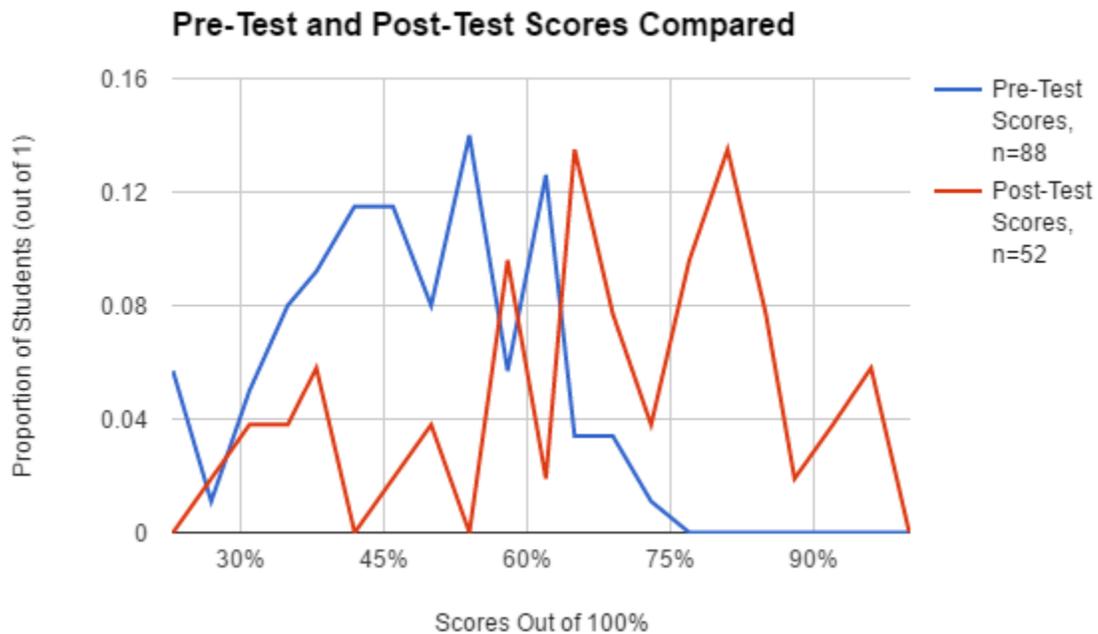
Figure 3. Pre-test and post-test scores

The evaluation scores suggest that students believe the workshop was successful. The

ratings for questions 1-6 all averaged to approximately 4 out of 5. This suggests that students enjoyed the workshop and found it to be a valuable resource. In addition, all of the substantive answers to the question about the most irrelevant activity (i.e., not "nothing," "some," or "all of it") were found in both the most irrelevant section and the most valuable section. This justifies keeping those activities, because they were valuable to at least one student. The FAFSA lecture was most valuable to the most people, but it was also one of the activities that most students wanted to learn more about. One-on-one help with FAFSA and applications would be beneficial for students who have to complete them on their own, or for students whose parents do not have the information to give the necessary help.

Discussion

This workshop was designed to empower students to pursue their postsecondary goals, regardless of what those goals may be, and to provide them with the knowledge and tools that they need to successfully achieve those goals. Barnett's momentum framework and King's factors were used to create this workshop. Students were encouraged to learn and grow, instead of simply doing well on the post-workshop assessment. Because this workshop was only three days long, much of the curriculum was very basic. Academic knowledge and skills were not fully due to the time constraints of the workshop. However, longer workshops and semester long courses should address these skills in order to assess a student's ability to enter an institution of higher education without remediation.

Noncognitive skills, which are not often addressed in the academic setting, were an essential part of the curriculum in this workshop. Every one of Barnett's attainments and experiences within this category were met by students. Specifically, students were able to

consider their future goals during the first day of the workshop. The career project and education sessions allowed students to understand the full scope of opportunities available to them. The college life panel taught students the importance of conscientiousness, time management, and study habits in the academic setting, as well in one's personal life. The assessments tested both cognitive and non-cognitive skills, giving students an opportunity to assess their own preparedness for life after high school.

College cultural capital was emphasized throughout the workshop, as well, in order to increase student understanding of what to expect from college. Most of the second day of the workshop was intended to expose students to college norms and expectations. Validation turned out to be one of the most important issues during the workshop. One student said that she wasn't able to go to college because she was "too dumb" (her words). Upon speaking with her, it became clear that she wasn't getting the validation she needed. Several students cited expectation of failure as their greatest anxiety for life after high school. These responses were similar to findings from previous studies in rural Appalachia (Ali and Saunders 2009; Chenoweth and Galliher 2004). Volunteers were instructed to validate students as often as possible. While most students would not say that validation was important to them (as is congruent with Ali and Saunders' evaluations of rural Appalachian students as lacking confidence in their academic ability and often being overly self-reliant), it was clear through the workshop that this was essential for students' confidence and success.

Many of the activities listed in King's research were also utilized in this workshop. Financial aid workshops, college application information, and career research were essential for student growth. As King found, students had varying success with different activities. While some found the handshake activity and the college life panel to be irrelevant, others

listed them as the most valuable activities. Each student has unique needs when it comes to learning about college and career information. It is important to provide resources for every student, regardless of what their specific goals are. This may mean that some activities are less appealing to certain students, but the point is to make sure that everyone gains something valuable from the program.

The overall findings of this workshop suggest that teaching high school seniors college and career readiness curriculum contributes to their confidence and their ability to successfully pursue their goals. The average score from the pre-test to the post-test increased by 20%, and the upper end of the range increased by 23%. The lower end of the range did not increase significantly, which may be a result of the written format of the test. All of the questions except for one (question 25) improved from the first assessment to the second. In addition, the number of students who were considering university education increased from 57% to 67%. This, of course, could be a result of the sampling bias resulting from students who had to leave early. However, these outcomes demonstrate that students were more knowledgeable about college and career readiness curriculum.

Though students were taught the basics of the FAFSA, volunteers were not able to help individual students fill out their applications. A sample FAFSA (through the FAFSA4caster) was completed for students who needed more assistance. However, some students still indicated on their evaluations that they would have liked more help on the FAFSA. This is consistent with findings in previous studies that students benefit from mentors who help them fill out FAFSA and other applications (King 2012). While we were not able to provide mentors for this workshop, future initiatives with greater resources will benefit from utilizing personal mentors.

Several students mentioned that the workshop would have been more successful if it had utilized more hands-on activities. Though there was at least one project every day, much of the workshop took place in a lecture format. Other methods of disseminating information, such as having students read on their own and discuss in a group, having students teach one another, or even simply teaching the lectures in clusters instead of large groups may have been more effective than large lecture. In addition, small games, such as a college life bingo, or competitions between clusters could have encouraged students to learn the material and engage them in a fun way.

Integration of the community and parents would likely have benefitted the outcomes of this workshop as well. Parent knowledge of FAFSA and scholarships, especially, would have been valuable for several students. One student said that she wasn't sure if she could go to college because her grandparents (her guardians) would not be able to help her complete the FAFSA. Family support and encouragement are also essential for students in this region. Integrating family and community members into student goal planning, as King suggests, would allow the community to gain an understanding of what options are available for their youth. Future projects should engage parents and the community in order to further improve college going rates.

In addition, we found out at the workshop that WCHS participated in Upward Bound. Upward Bound is a federally funded program run through West Virginia State University. It is a part of the TRIO programs, which also include Student Support Services and Upward Bound Math & Science. They are intended to "help students who are either low-income or first generation to enroll and graduate from college" (West Virginia State University "TRIO Programs"). While this program is an excellent source for students who enroll, it is not a

requirement at Webster, and not every student qualifies to enroll. As Barnett states, "...high schools and colleges make these opportunities available, but do not systematically offer them to all students… Thus, the impact on student outcomes is likely to be less than schools intend, except in the case of students who actively seek out multiple opportunities" (Barnett 2016, 15).

Unfortunately, the livelihood of programs such as Upward Bound may be at stake under the current presidential cabinet. President Trump's proposed 2018 budget cuts $193 million from federal TRIO programs "in areas that have limited evidence on the overall effectiveness in improving student outcomes" (United States Office of Management and Budget 2017, 18). At this point, it is fairly unclear what this means for the future of programs such as Upward Bound. The proposal is still under the process of review, so there is hope for change. In the meantime, initiatives such as this college and career readiness workshop are crucial in maintaining a level of education necessary to ensure that rural high school students are able to succeed in their postsecondary lives.

Limitations

There are limitations within this project which need to be addressed. The first is that this workshop was limited for time and funds. In an ideal world, this project would have been a cohort study. The WCHS class of 2017 would have taken the pre-test at the beginning of their senior year, and then again at the end of the senior year. This would have given us comparative data to see what our students learned as compared with what they would have likely learned without this intervention. In addition, graduation rates, college-going rates, and college graduation rates would have been recorded for both 2016 and 2017 WCHS graduates.

As that is not the case, the current data does not demonstrate long-term effects of this workshop.

The representativeness of the data presented is also questionable. Because many students had to leave the workshop for work, athletics, or other extracurricular activities, certain populations of the student body were not represented in the post-test. The workshop was also only provided to one small school in rural Appalachia. The small sample size affects the representativeness of the entire rural Appalachian region. As with many small projects of this nature, more workshops will need to be provided to other schools throughout the region in order to determine it effectiveness in Appalachia as a whole.

Conclusion

In 2010 Irina Bokova, the Director General of UNESCO, said, "Provided it is inclusive and of good quality, education is the wisest insurance against poverty. It creates a virtuous circle by giving people the knowledge and skills they need to make informed decisions and improve their livelihoods." Education is the key to ending poverty and social inequity in our current political system. Encouraging rural Appalachian students to pursue their goals, regardless of whether those goals include a college degree or simply technical training in their field, will allow them to succeed in a world where they are told that they cannot. College and career readiness curriculum should be incorporated in every high school in the United States. Empowering students to consider all of their options and giving them the knowledge and skills they need to pursue their options will improve their own livelihoods, as well as the economies in which they participate.

This workshop was successful on multiple levels. The increase in student scores and

amazing student response, as well as the support from WCHS alumni who shared and donated to the GoFundMe page, indicate that initiatives like these are valuable for rural Appalachian students. As a future educator, I hope to see a future in which college and career readiness is not just a "buzzword," but a required (and fully funded) part of high school curriculum. Whether I continue work as a teacher, move toward administration, or work in an education-based non-profit, I aim to connect with rural Appalachian students in order to increase their access to high quality postsecondary opportunities and, hopefully, improve their lives. The Appalachian region is one of the most beautiful areas in the world; it is time for us to give back to this community and rectify the injustices that are affecting it. Education is the first step in achieving justice. Empowered students can change the world, and it is our job to give them the inspiration and the tools that they need to do so.

APPENDIX A

Webster County High School
College and Career Readiness Workshop
October 2016

About this Book

This workbook/handbook hybrid is designed to get students thinking about their future, and to provide them with the tools necessary to achieve their goals. The reader will find a combination of informative pages and workshop activities. While the book itself is informative in nature, it is meant to complement the College and Career Readiness workshop. In order to get the most effective experience, students should take notes on lectures and projects to reread in the future.

The workshop and materials were developed by Erin Kiker for Webster County High School during the fall semester of 2016. All information found in this book is tailored toward this school, though some of the information may be applicable to all high school students.

Name: _____
Group: _____
Cluster Leader: _____

Table of Contents

Schedule

Day One: Explore Your Passion

Daily Goal - Find out what you want to do after high school.
Orientation
Cluster Meet and Greet: Get to know your cluster leaders
Pre-test: What do you already know about college and career readiness?
Career Assessment: What kinds of careers fit your interests?
Career Project: Learn about careers that you are interested in
Lunch
Post-Secondary Choice Sessions: Learn about university, technical schools, military, online/distance education, and work-based learning.
College Choice Lecture: How do you choose which school to attend?
Cluster Discussions: Reflect on what you have learned with your cluster.
Closing

Day Two: The Pursuit of Education

Daily Goal - Discover how to apply to and pay for your education.
College Admissions: How do you apply for college?
College Admissions Essay: How do you write a killer admissions essay?
FAFSA Lecture: What is FAFSA and how do you fill it out?
Financial Aid Project: What types of aid are out there?
Lunch
Scholarships and Letter of Recommendation: What can you get a scholarship for?
Project Presentations: Present your financial aid project to the class.
Networking and Online Presence: How can you meet people? What does your Facebook say to potential employers?
College Life Panel: What is college like? Academics, dorm life, clubs, etc.
Cluster Discussions: Reflect on what you have learned.
Closing

Day Three: The Search for a Career

Daily Goal - Become an employable job candidate.
Two Hour Delay! Enjoy your morning off!
Resume Lecture: What goes in a resume? How should it be formatted?
Resume Clinic: Create a resume with the help of your cluster leaders.
Interview Lecture: What is an interview like? How should you act?
Interview Discussion: Practice interviewing each other.
Dress For Success: How should you dress for an interview? For work?
Cluster Discussions: Reflect on what you have learned.
Post-test: What have you learned about college and career readiness?
Evaluations: What did you think about this workshop? Was it successful?
Closing

Day One: Explore Your Passion

"A successful life is one that is lived through understanding and pursuing one's own path, not chasing after the dreams or fulfilling the expectations of others" - Chin-Ning Chu (8)[2]

Career Clusters Interest Survey

Name_____

School_____ Date _____

Directions: Circle the items in each box that best describe you. You may make as many or as few circles in each box as you choose. Add up the number of circles in each box. Look to see which three boxes have the highest numbers. Find the corresponding Career Clusters on the pages immediately following this survey to see which Career Clusters you may want to explore.

	Activities that describe what I like to do:	Personal qualities that describe me:	School subjects that I like:	Total number circled in Box 1
BOX 1	1. Learn how things grow and stay alive. 2. Make the best use of the earth's natural resources. 3. Hunt and/or fish. 4. Protect the environment. 5. Be outdoors in all kinds of weather. 6. Plan, budget, and keep records. 7. Operate machines and keep them in good repair.	1. Self-reliant 2. Nature lover 3. Physically active 4. Planner 5. Creative problem solver	1. Math 2. Life Sciences 3. Earth Sciences 4. Chemistry 5. Agriculture	

	Activities that describe what I like to do:	Personal qualities that describe me:	School subjects that I like:	Total number circled in Box 2
BOX 2	1. Read and follow blueprints and/or instructions. 2. Picture in my mind what a finished product looks like. 3. Work with my hands. 4. Perform work that requires precise results. 5. Solve technical problems. 6. Visit and learn from beautiful, historic, or interesting buildings. 7. Follow logical, step-by-step procedures.	1. Curious 2. Good at following directions 3. Pay attention to detail 4. Good at visualizing possibilities 5. Patient and persistent	1. Math 2. Drafting 3. Physical Sciences 4. Construction Trades 5. Electrical Trades/Heat, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration/ Technology Education	

	Activities that describe what I like to do:	Personal qualities that describe me:	School subjects that I like:	Total number circled in Box 3
BOX 3	1. Use my imagination to communicate new information to others. 2. Perform in front of others. 3. Read and write. 4. Play a musical instrument. 5. Perform creative, artistic activities. 6. Use video and recording technology. 7. Design brochures and posters.	1. Creative and imaginative 2. Good communicator/good vocabulary 3. Curious about new technology 4. Relate well to feelings and thoughts of others 5. Determined/tenacious	1. Art/Graphic design 2. Music 3. Speech and Drama 4. Journalism/Literature 5. Audiovisual Technologies	

Source: Adapted from the Guidance Division Survey, Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education (2005)

Note: *This survey does not make any claims of statistical reliability and has not been normed. It is intended for use as a guidance tool to generate discussion regarding careers and is valid for that purpose.*   6

	Activities that describe what I like to do:	Personal qualities that describe me:	School subjects that I like:	Total number circled in Box 4
BOX 4	1. Perform routine, organized activities but can be flexible. 2. Work with numbers and detailed information. 3. Be the leader in a group. 4. Make business contact with people. 5. Work with computer programs. 6. Create reports and communicate ideas. 7. Plan my work and follow instructions without close supervision.	1. Organized 2. Practical and logical 3. Patient 4. Tactful 5. Responsible	1. Computer Applications/Business and Information Technology 2. Accounting 3. Math 4. English 5. Economics	

	Activities that describe what I like to do:	Personal qualities that describe me:	School subjects that I like:	Total number circled in Box 5
BOX 5	1. Communicate with different types of people. 2. Help others with their homework or to learn new things. 3. Go to school. 4. Direct and plan activities for others. 5. Handle several responsibilities at once. 6. Acquire new information. 7. Help people overcome their challenges.	1. Friendly 2. Decision maker 3. Helpful 4. Innovative/Inquisitive 5. Good listener	1. Language Arts 2. Social Studies 3. Math 4. Science 5. Psychology	

	Activities that describe what I like to do:	Personal qualities that describe me:	School subjects that I like:	Total number circled in Box 6
BOX 6	1. Work with numbers. 2. Work to meet a deadline. 3. Make predictions based on existing facts. 4. Have a framework of rules by which to operate. 5. Analyze financial information and interpret it to others. 6. Handle money with accuracy and reliability. 7. Take pride in the way I dress and look.	1. Trustworthy 2. Orderly 3. Self-confident 4. Logical 5. Methodical or efficient	1. Accounting 2. Math 3. Economics 4. Banking/Financial Services 5. Business Law	

	Activities that describe what I like to do:	Personal qualities that describe me:	School subjects that I like:	Total number circled in Box 7
BOX 7	1. Be involved in politics. 2. Negotiate, defend, and debate ideas and topics. 3. Plan activities and work cooperatively with others. 4. Work with details. 5. Perform a variety of duties that may change often. 6. Analyze information and interpret it to others. 7. Travel and see things that are new to me.	1. Good communicator 2. Competitive 3. Service minded 4. Well organized 5. Problem solver	1. Government 2. Language Arts 3. History 4. Math 5. Foreign Language	

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	Activities that describe what I like to do:	Personal qualities that describe me:	School subjects that I like:	Total number circled in Box 8
BOX 8	1. Work under pressure. 2. Help sick people and animals. 3. Make decisions based on logic and information. 4. Participate in health and science classes. 5. Respond quickly and calmly in emergencies. 6. Work as a member of a team. 7. Follow guidelines precisely and meet strict standards of accuracy.	1. Compassionate and caring 2. Good at following directions 3. Conscientious and careful 4. Patient 5. Good listener	1. Biological Sciences 2. Chemistry 3. Math 4. Occupational Health classes 5. Language Arts	

	Activities that describe what I like to do:	Personal qualities that describe me:	School subjects that I like:	Total number circled in Box 9
BOX 9	1. Investigate new places and activities. 2. Work with all ages and types of people. 3. Organize activities in which other people enjoy themselves. 4. Have a flexible schedule. 5. Help people make up their minds. 6. Communicate easily, tactfully, and courteously. 7. Learn about other cultures.	1. Tactful 2. Self-motivated 3. Works well with others 4. Outgoing 5. Slow to anger	1. Language Arts/Speech 2. Foreign Language 3. Social Sciences 4. Marketing 5. Food Services	

	Activities that describe what I like to do:	Personal qualities that describe me:	School subjects that I like:	Total number circled in Box 10
BOX 10	1. Care about people, their needs, and their problems. 2. Participate in community services and/or volunteering. 3. Listen to other people's viewpoints. 4. Help people be at their best. 5. Work with people from preschool age to old age. 6. Think of new ways to do things. 7. Make friends with different kinds of people.	1. Good communicator/good listener 2. Caring 3. Non-materialistic 4. Uses intuition and logic 5. Non-judgmental	1. Language Arts 2. Psychology/ Sociology 3. Family and Consumer Sciences 4. Finance 5. Foreign Language	

	Activities that describe what I like to do:	Personal qualities that describe me:	School subjects that I like:	Total number circled in Box 11
BOX 11	1. Work with computers. 2. Reason clearly and logically to solve complex problems. 3. Use machines, techniques, and processes. 4. Read technical materials and diagrams and solve technical problems. 5. Adapt to change. 6. Play video games and figure out how they work. 7. Concentrate for long periods without being distracted.	1. Logic/analytical thinker 2. See details in the big picture 3. Persistent 4. Good concentration skills 5. Precise and accurate	1. Math 2. Science 3. Computer Tech/ Applications 4. Communications 5. Graphic Design	

	Activities that describe what I like to do:	Personal qualities that describe me:	School subjects that I like:	Total number circled in Box 12
BOX 12	1. Work under pressure or in the face of danger. 2. Make decisions based on my own observations. 3. Interact with other people. 4. Be in positions of authority. 5. Respect rules and regulations. 6. Debate and win arguments. 7. Observe and analyze people's behavior.	1. Adventurous 2. Dependable 3. Community-minded 4. Decisive 5. Optimistic	1. Language Arts 2. Psychology/Sociology 3. Government/History 4. Law Enforcement 5. First Aid/First Responder	

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BOX 13	Activities that describe what I like to do: 1. Work with my hands and learn that way. 2. Put things together. 3. Do routine, organized and accurate work. 4. Perform activities that produce tangible results. 5. Apply math to work out solutions. 6. Use hand and power tools and operate equipment/machinery. 7. Visualize objects in three dimensions from flat drawings.	Personal qualities that describe me: 1. Practical 2. Observant 3. Physically active 4. Step-by-step thinker 5. Coordinated	School subjects that I like: 1. Math-Geometry 2. Chemistry 3. Trade and Industry courses 4. Physics 5. Language Arts	Total number circled in Box 13

BOX 14	Activities that describe what I like to do: 1. Shop and go to the mall. 2. Be in charge. 3. Make displays and promote ideas. 4. Give presentations and enjoy public speaking. 5. Persuade people to buy products or to participate in activities. 6. Communicate my ideas to other people. 7. Take advantage of opportunities to make extra money.	Personal qualities that describe me: 1. Enthusiastic 2. Competitive 3. Creative 4. Self-motivated 5. Persuasive	School subjects that I like: 1. Language Arts 2. Math 3. Business Education/ Marketing 4. Economics 5. Computer Applications	Total number circled in Box 14

BOX 15	Activities that describe what I like to do: 1. Interpret formulas. 2. Find the answers to questions. 3. Work in a laboratory. 4. Figure out how things work and investigate new things. 5. Explore new technology. 6. Experiment to find the best way to do something. 7. Pay attention to details and help things be precise.	Personal qualities that describe me: 1. Detail oriented 2. Inquisitive 3. Objective 4. Methodical 5. Mechanically inclined	School subjects that I like: 1. Math 2. Science 3. Drafting/Computer-Aided Drafting 4. Electronics/Computer Networking 5. Technical Classes/ Technology Education	Total number circled in Box 15

BOX 16	Activities that describe what I like to do: 1. Travel. 2. See well and have quick reflexes. 3. Solve mechanical problems. 4. Design efficient processes. 5. Anticipate needs and prepare to meet them. 6. Drive or ride. 7. Move things from one place to another.	Personal qualities that describe me: 1. Realistic 2. Mechanical 3. Coordinated 4. Obervant 5. Planner	School subjects that I like: 1. Math 2. Trade and Industry courses 3. Physical Sciences 4. Economics 5. Foreign Language	Total number circled in Box 16

Disclaimer: Your interests may change over time. These survey results are intended to assist you with informal career exploration. Consider more formal assessments and other resources or services to help you plan your career. This survey does not make any claims of statistical reliability.

The Sixteen Career Clusters

1	Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources	The production, processing, marketing, distribution, financing, and development of agricultural commodities and resources including food, fiber, wood products, natural resources, horticulture, and other plant and animal products/resources.
2	Architecture & Construction	Careers in designing, planning, managing, building, and maintaining the built environment.
3	Arts, A/V Technology & Communications	Designing, producing, exhibiting, performing, writing, and publishing multimedia content including visual and performing arts and design, journalism, and entertainment services.
4	Business, Management & Administration	Business Management and Administration careers encompass planning, organizing, directing and evaluating business functions essential to efficient and productive business operations. Business Management and Administration career opportunities are available in every sector of the economy.
5	Education & Training	Planning, managing, and providing education and training services, and related learning support services.
6	Finance	Planning, services for financial and investment planning, banking, insurance, and business financial management.
7	Government & Public Administration	Executing governmental functions to include governance; national security; foreign service; planning; revenue and taxation; regulation; and management and administration at the local, state, and federal levels.
8	Health Science	Planning, managing, and providing therapeutic services, diagnostic services, health informatics, support services, and biotechnology research and development.
9	Hospitality & Tourism	Hospitality and Tourism encompasses the management, marketing and operations of restaurants and other food services, lodging, attractions, and recreation events and travel-related services.

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Career Clusters cont.

10	Human Services	Preparing individuals for employment in career pathways that relate to families and human needs.
11	Information Technology	Building linkages in IT occupations framework for entry-level, technical, and professional careers related to the design, development, support and management of hardware, software, multimedia, and systems integration services.
12	Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security	Planning, managing, and providing legal, public safety, protective services and homeland security, including professional and technical support services.
13	Manufacturing	Planning, managing and performing the processing of materials into intermediate or final products and related professional and technical support activities such as production planning and control, maintenance, and manufacturing/process engineering.
14	Marketing, Sales & Service	Planning, managing, and performing marketing activities to reach organizational objectives.
15	Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics	Planning, managing, and providing scientific research and professional and technical services (e.g., physical science, social science, engineering), including laboratory and testing services, and research and development services.
16	Transportation, Distribution & Logistics	Planning, mangagement, and movement of people, materials, and goods by road, pipeline, air, rail and water and related professional and technical support services such as transportation infrastructure planning and management, logistics services, mobile equipment, and facility maintenance.

My top three Career Clusters of interest are:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

For more information, check with a career counselor at your high school, career technical center, higher education institution, or one-stop career center. 3

Career Project

Directions[4]
1. Choose a career that you are interested in researching.
2. Use the following websites to find information about that career:
    cfwv.com
    bls.gov
3. In that field, research a job that requires a graduate degree, one that requires an undergraduate degree, and one that requires a high school diploma. (Example: If you are interested in becoming a teacher, you could choose university professor, high school teacher, and tutor.)
4. Answer the questions in the following chart.
5. Choose the career that you are most interested in out of the three you researched. Present your career to your cluster.

Career:			
Education Require-ments:			
Average (US) Salary:			
Average (WV) Salary:			
Average Start-ing Salary:			
Job Outlook:			
Lifestyle:			
An Average Work Day:			
Interesting Fact:			

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Choosing the Right University

When it comes to choosing which University to attend, there is a lot more to think about than just where your friends are going. Each person has an ideal setting in which they can learn and thrive. The following section will talk about the different factors that you may want to consider before committing yourself to one school. Go to https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/compare-colleges to compare your top choices!

School Size: Is a school of 6,000 students enough for you, or do you prefer more than 20,000? The number of students at a university can affect your class size and social activities. With a bigger school comes higher diversity and more resources, but it may affect your ability to be noticed in class.

School Environment: Do you prefer big cities or small towns? Would you rather your school be the center of the city, or on the outskirts? Some universities are huge and are always bustling with city life. Others are somewhat quiet, but give you the option of walking or taking a bus into town.

Tuition: This one is a no-brainer. Before choosing a school, you should always consider the cost of tuition and fees. However, don't let this be your deciding factor! Most schools offer scholarships and other financial aid to students in need.

Available Resources: How important is a Counseling Center, Writing Center, Career Center, Tutoring Center, Office of Multicultural Affairs, Leadership Training, Fitness Classes, etc. to you? Does your school pride itself on helping graduates find careers? Look into the availability and effectiveness of the offered programs.

Distance from Home: Would you rather live close to your family and be able to go home, or would you like the independence of living far away?

Financial Aid Availability: Certain institutions, particularly private schools, offer much more scholarship and financial aid money than others. A higher tuition can often be related to a higher amount of scholarships.

Faculty and Staff: Do the faculty in a certain program seem to be researching diverse topics? Is there a particular professor that intrigues you? Reach out to them and get on their good side. This can make a huge difference in your admissions, class experience, and even your future research or internship opportunities.

Academic Programs: Does this school have your intended major? What about Honors programs? How do these programs compare to other schools?

There are many other factors to consider, but these are just a few to get you thinking about school choice![5]

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Notes

Day Two: The Pursuit of Education

"From better health to increased wealth, education is the catalyst of a better future for millions of children, youth and adults. No country has ever climbed the socioeconomic development ladder without steady investments in education." - Irina Bokova[2]

College Admissions

The college admissions process can seem incredibly scary, especially if you don't know what to expect. This activity will teach you about college applications, the admissions process, and how to waive application fees.

How many schools should I apply to?
Different sources will give you varying answers to this question. *The Fiske Guide to Getting Into the Right College* recommends applying to 6 schools total, including one reach school, two schools in which you feel you have a 50/50 chance of getting into, and three safe schools.[3]

When should I apply?
This depends on several factors, including the particular school you are applying for and which type of admissions you are applying with. Each school will have its own deadlines for regular/rolling admissions, early action, and early decision. Check the schools' websites to be sure of deadlines.

What is the application process like?
The following steps show the general application process:
- complete the online application
- pay the fees (unless you have a waiver)
- have your principal or counselor send your high school transcript
- if required, send your ACT and/or SAT scores
- if required, make sure letters of recommendation are sent
- complete your admissions essay(s)
- have your high school send your final transcript upon graduation
- if required, complete an admissions interview
- if required (mostly for arts majors), send in portfolio or complete audition[4]

What is the an application fee and how do I waive it?
For many schools, the application fee will be somewhere between $25 and $60, though the highest (Stanford University) can hit up to $90. If you took the SAT with a fee waiver, you are automatically eligible to receive four application fee waivers. Unfortunately, these waivers do not work with every college, so you must determine whether your desired schools participate[5].

What is the difference between early action and early decision?[6]

Early Action	Early Decision	Regular Admission
deadline generally between October 15 and December 1	deadline generally between October 15 and December 1	later deadlines, deferred students can apply here
non-binding (you can decline an offer)	binding (if enrollment is offered, you must accept and withdraw all other applications)	non-binding (you can decline an offer)
only admit "elite"; borderline applicants are deferred	offers admission advantages, particularly for "borderline" applicants	admission depends on school standards
first in line for limited financial aid, such as housing and academic scholarships	schools are less likely to offer financial aid because students are bound to go if accepted	later in line for limited financial aid
good choice for academically "elite" students who have high financial need	good choice for borderline students with low financial need and a clear first choice	good choice for students unsure of first choice; gives students a few extra weeks for research

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College Admissions

When are admissions interviews required?
Certain institutions require interviews, but many do not. Even if an interview isn't required, they are often recommended. If you request an interview, it shows that you are serious about the school and your admissions counselor can put a face to your application.

What should I do if I get deferred?
It is important to understand that the deferral policy differs from school to school. Some will defer applicants who are realistic candidates when the applicant pool is too large, while others will use deferral very generously for students who have a slight chance of getting in. The most important thing is to remain hopeful and focus on other schools. In order to increase your chances, you should continue to show interest by sending in new information, as well as a new recommendation[7].

What if my application is rejected?
A denial can be very difficult to receive, but this is one reason that applying to multiple schools is recommended. While you cannot appeal a rejection, it is a good idea to ask your admissions counselor why you were denied. If something was misinterpreted, this is a good time for you clear up any misinformation. If the reason for your rejection is related to your essay or letter of recommendation, you can use this information to create a stronger application for another school[8]. Remain hopeful, and focus on new applications.

WV College Comparison Chart:

	West Virginia University[9]	Marshall University[10]	Glenville State College[11]	Fairmont State University[12]	West Virginia Wesleyan College[13]
Type	public	public	public	public	private non-profit
Application Fee	$45	$30	$20	$25	free
Tuition and Fees (In-state, per year)	$7,992	$6,814	$7,344	$6,952	$29,952
Application Deadlines	Mar 1 - priority application due Aug 1 - regular application due	rolling admissions	rolling admissions	July 23 - last day to apply online Aug 1 - regular application due	Mar 1 - priority application due Aug 15 - regular application due
Acceptance Rate	86%	79%	72%	66%	77%
Financial Need Met (Average)	72%; $6,616 average financial aid package	49%; $11,163 average financial aid package	data unavailable	72%; $8,985 average financial aid package	95% of students receive some form of financial aid
Average ACT scores	21-27	20-25	17-22	18-23	20-25
Average SAT scores*	Reading: 25-30 Math: 510-600	Reading: 24-27 Math: 470-510	Reading: 20-26 Math: 420-510	Reading: 22-29 Math: 460-540	Reading: 23-29 Math: 460-570 Writing: 460-590

*scores converted from old SAT - if you took the SAT before March 2016, refer to https://bigfuture.college-board.org/compare-colleges for old scores[14]

Admissions Essays

For admissions officers, the essay is a way to get to know the students and their interests. It shows them what you are passionate about, your individuality, and whether you are a good writer. The following page will go over tips for writing and potential essay questions.

Types of prompts[15]:

1. Describe yourself

Subtopics include: your personal achievements, your passions, your extracurricular activities, your influences, your future plans

For this type of question, you really want to showcase who you are and what is important to you. Remember to focus on two or three strong topics that you are truly passionate about. The reader is looking to get to know you and to hear your voice through your writing.

....

2. Explain why you want to attend our college

This essay seems fairly straightforward. The most important thing is that you do your research about the school. Discuss why you chose this particular institution (refer back to the college choice lecture for topics to consider), and even why you are interested in a particular school or major. Admissions counselors want to admit people who are passionate about their school. Let them know that you've done your research and that this is the school for you (even if it isn't your first choice)!

....

3. Discuss an issue

Subtopics include: politics, education, environment, etc.

These questions can seem very random, but remember that these prompts were all created to get to know you better. Be creative and let your voice be heard, but remember to remain professional. Research can also be very important with this type of essay. Back everything up with solid facts, and avoid language that might be deemed too casual or offensive.

....

General Tips:

- Plan your essay with an outline, bubble map, or other method of organization.
- Admissions officers read hundreds of essays per week, so don't waste words that aren't needed; keep your essay long enough to get your point across, but short enough that your admissions counselor will want to continue reading!
- Let your personality shine through, and don't let someone else take over your writing; admissions officers can often tell if you let your mom do the writing for you.
- Allow two or three people to read your essays before you submit them.
- Proofread your essay several times; if you can, leave it for a few days and come back to check it for errors.
- Avoid "thesaurus syndrome" - if your words don't flow or make sense together, it will be clear that you have simply used a thesaurus to "boost" your vocabulary.
- Make sure your essay has a focal point, and avoid going on and on about something that doesn't make that point clear.
- Be positive and avoid the cliches, such as "I want to help people" or "I want to make a difference"; be unique!

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FAFSA

What is the FAFSA? FAFSA stands for Free Application for Federal Student Aid. This application helps schools and agencies determine what amount of aid you will receive for college.

How do I fill out the FAFSA?

The easiest way to fill out the FAFSA is online through fafsa.gov[16]. However, you can also download and print a PDF or request a paper copy to mail in. Certain schools may have specific software available to fill the form out. According to the fafsa.gov website, it should take approximately 25 minutes to fill out.

When do I fill out the FAFSA?

The FAFSA must be submitted every academic year. The 2017-2018 FAFSA will be available from October 1, 2016 - June 30, 2017. Schools tend to have separate application deadlines, which are generally much earlier in the year (around February or March). Some programs have limited funds, so applying early is in your best interest!

What do I need to fill out the FAFSA?

The fafsa.gov website lists the following items:

your social security number, your alien registration number (if you are not a U.S. citizen), your most recent federal income tax returns, W-2s, and other records of money earned, bank statements and records of investment (if applicable), records of untaxed income (if applicable), and an FSA ID to sign electronically.

Who receives my information?

Because this form contains sensitive information, the recipients of that information may be of concern. The application will ask you for a list of schools that you may be interested in, all of which will receive this information. Additionally, your state's higher education agency and agencies in the state where your school is located will be notified.

What happens if I mess up on the application?

You can make corrections to your application online or on paper (though the electronic route is recommended). After sending in your application, you will be sent a Student Aid Report so that you can check your application for mistakes.

How do I receive and accept aid?

Your school will calculate the aid you are to receive and send you an award letter. This could happen anywhere from the spring semester to right before the beginning of the fall semester. You can accept or deny all types of aid, and will be given directions to do so in your award letter.

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Financial Aid Project[17]

Federal Pell Grant

1. Who qualifies for this type of aid?

2. Who provides this aid?

3. Does this aid have to be paid back? If so, what is the interest rate? When must you begin paying it back?

4. Does this type of aid require a co-signer?

5. What can this type of aid be used for?

6. When is the deadline to apply for this aid?

7. Does this aid have to be used at a particular institution, within a particular state, or is it nationally recognized?

Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grant

1. Who qualifies for this type of aid?

2. Who provides this aid?

3. Does this aid have to be paid back? If so, what is the interest rate? When must you begin paying it back?

4. Does this type of aid require a co-signer?

5. What can this type of aid be used for?

6. When is the deadline to apply for this aid?

7. Does this aid have to be used at a particular institution, within a particular state, or is it nationally recognized?

Financial Aid Project

Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant

1. Who qualifies for this type of aid?

2. Who provides this aid?

3. Does this aid have to be paid back? If so, what is the interest rate? When must you begin paying it back?

4. Does this type of aid require a co-signer?

5. What can this type of aid be used for?

6. When is the deadline to apply for this aid?

7. Does this aid have to be used at a particular institution, within a particular state, or is it nationally recognized?

Federal Direct Subsidized Loans

1. Who qualifies for this type of aid?

2. Who provides this aid?

3. Does this aid have to be paid back? If so, what is the interest rate? When must you begin paying it back?

4. Does this type of aid require a co-signer?

5. What can this type of aid be used for?

6. When is the deadline to apply for this aid?

7. Does this aid have to be used at a particular institution, within a particular state, or is it nationally recognized?

Financial Aid Project

Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loans

1. Who qualifies for this type of aid?

2. Who provides this aid?

3. Does this aid have to be paid back? If so, what is the interest rate? When must you begin paying it back?

4. Does this type of aid require a co-signer?

5. What can this type of aid be used for?

6. When is the deadline to apply for this aid?

7. Does this aid have to be used at a particular institution, within a particular state, or is it nationally recognized?

Federal Direct PLUS Loans

1. Who qualifies for this type of aid?

2. Who provides this aid?

3. Does this aid have to be paid back? If so, what is the interest rate? When must you begin paying it back?

4. Does this type of aid require a co-signer?

5. What can this type of aid be used for?

6. When is the deadline to apply for this aid?

7. Does this aid have to be used at a particular institution, within a particular state, or is it nationally recognized?

Financial Aid Project

Sallie Mae

1. Who qualifies for this type of aid?

2. Who provides this aid?

3. Does this aid have to be paid back? If so, what is the interest rate? When must you begin paying it back?

4. Does this type of aid require a co-signer?

5. What can this type of aid be used for?

6. When is the deadline to apply for this aid?

7. Does this aid have to be used at a particular institution, within a particular state, or is it nationally recognized?

Work Study

1. Who qualifies for this type of aid?

2. Who provides this aid?

3. Does this aid have to be paid back? If so, what is the interest rate? When must you begin paying it back?

4. How often can the student work/how much aid can be obtained?

5. What can this type of aid be used for?

6. When is the deadline to apply for this aid?

7. Does this aid have to be used at a particular institution, within a particular state, or is it nationally recognized?

Financial Aid Project

West Virginia Higher Education Grant

1. Who qualifies for this type of aid?

2. Who provides this aid?

3. Does this aid have to be paid back? If so, what is the interest rate? When must you begin paying it back?

4. Does this type of aid require a co-signer?

5. What can this type of aid be used for?

6. When is the deadline to apply for this aid?

7. Does this aid have to be used at a particular institution, within a particular state, or is it nationally recognized?

West Virginia PROMISE Scholarship

1. Who qualifies for this type of aid?

2. Who provides this aid?

3. Does this aid have to be paid back? If so, what is the interest rate? When must you begin paying it back?

4. Does this type of aid require a co-signer?

5. What can this type of aid be used for?

6. When is the deadline to apply for this aid?

7. Does this aid have to be used at a particular institution, within a particular state, or is it nationally recognized?

Scholarships

What exactly is a scholarship?[18]

Scholarships are monies awarded to a student that do not have to be paid back. Because of this, they are highly sought after by students with high financial need. They can awarded by the federal government, state governments, through schools, or by an outside source. Each scholarship will have its own application deadline, though some correlate with the deadline for filling out the FAFSA. Some scholarships are renewable, meaning that if you uphold certain standards, you will receive the scholarship for multiple years. Others are one time awards. Be sure to keep up with all deadlines and application requirements in order to have the best chance at receiving awards!

How can I use scholarship money?

The total amount of aid that you can be awarded is based on the cost of attendance at your particular school. That being said, cost of attendance includes a lot more than just tuition and fees. Scholarship money can also be spent on room and board (meaning groceries!), books, school supplies, personal expenses such as toiletries, and transportation. The most important thing to remember is to spend your money wisely. Once the money is gone, there's no going back.

What kinds of things can you get a scholarship for?

The most well-known scholarships are need-based, athletic, and academic. Most often, these will be provided by schools or government agencies. You can also get scholarships for many other things, though! Here are a few:
- Community service
- Involvement in groups like 4H, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts
- Being a child or grandchild of a veteran or first responder (or being a veteran or first responder yourself)
- Demonstrating leadership skills
- Religious affiliation and involvement
- Being vegetarian/promoting vegetarianism
- Being a minority
- Being raised by a single parent, being adopted, or being raised in the foster system
- Submissions based scholarships; essays, poetry, drunk driving awareness videos, wearing an outfit made of duct tape to prom, creating greeting cards, etc.

At the end of this book, you will find a resource section with a list of websites to use if you are looking for scholarships. The above scholarships, and many more, can be found there!

Use this section to list some things that you could potentially get a scholarship for:

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Letters of Recommendation

Letters of recommendation are often required for college admissions, scholarship applications, and internship applications. They let the reader know more about you that a simple application can't get at. Additionally, they tell the reader more about your relationship with professors, coaches, mentors, etc.

What goes in a letter of recommendation?

The answer to this question truly depends on the writer. Most often, the writer will discuss their experiences with you, your goals and aspirations, and your achievements. They will likely tailor the letter to the specific school, scholarship, or position for which you are applying.

How and when do I ask for one?

Asking for a letter of recommendation can cause anxiety. The best thing for you to do is to find a convenient time and just ask! Most teachers will say yes. To help them out some, come prepared with a short list of your goals, interests, and accomplishments, as well as what you are applying for and the deadline for the letter. Be sure to ask at least two weeks in advance. Teachers are very busy people! Finally, if a teacher does say no, or suggests that someone else might be a better fit, listen to them. You want your recommender to be someone who is confident in you and in their ability to write the best letter for you.

Who should I ask?

This is the tricky part. Do you ask your history teacher from sophomore year who gave you an A, or should you ask you math teacher from last semester who gave you a low B? Remember the audience of the letter. If you are applying to a college, try to choose teachers that can demonstrate your academic ability, but also your drive and your passions. While coaches and electives teachers may know you better than academic teachers, schools are generally more concerned with how well you perform academically. You will likely need 2-3 letters, so try to keep the writers diverse[19]. You could choose an English teacher, a science or math teacher, and a coach or electives teacher. This range will show that you are a well-rounded student with many interests. Below is a chart of good and bad recommendations:

Good	Bad
well-rounded selection of recommenders	only electives teachers or coaches
someone with a relationship to the university or organization - donors or alumni	a "high profile" recommender who doesn't know you
someone who can attest to your motivation and grit (even if you only got a B or C in that course)	someone who gave you an easy A or someone who failed you
someone who knows your goals, can attest to your achievements and qualifications	someone who knows you personally but can't attest to your qualifications

If you had to choose recommenders today, who would they be?

_____

_____

_____

Networking

Have you ever heard the phrase "It's not what you know; it's who you know" and felt utterly hopeless? Networking sounds scary on the surface, but it's actually a very simple way to increase your opportunities!

What is Networking?

Merriam Webster defines network (v) as: the exchange of information or services among individuals, groups, or institutions; specifically: the cultivation of productive relationships for employment or business[20].

Why should I network?

So what are the benefits of networking? [22]

- Opportunities: if two people are equally qualified, it comes down to the contacts!
- Advice: people that you network with have different experiences and perspectives, meaning that you can get advice that you may not have thought of
- Assistance: promotion of you or your business, building community connections, links, and introducing you to more contacts
- Other benefits: friendship, helping you get out of problems, intriguing dialogue

How to Network:

The following tips will help you get started with your professional network[23]:

- Stay in touch with old friends and distant relatives.
- Be confident, and approach people that you want to talk to; you owe it to yourself to use your time wisely.
- Create a pitch for your professional and educational connections.
- Small talk is important! Learn the art of small talk by reading some tips and practicing.
- Always ask for a business card, keep it in an organized card-holder, and keep in touch with them!
- Use LinkedIn to build your professional connections.

But I'm in high school.... What connections can I possibly have?

Sometimes it's easy to think that you don't have any professional connections, but you are wrong! You can find connections through volunteering, job shadowing, interning, camps, school, and even religious organizations. Keep the contact information for your teachers, coaches, family friends, pastors, etc. Don't feel insincere for networking; these are mutually beneficial friendships and a great way to feel like part of a community.

Using the Internet to Your Advantage

Job Boards and Search Engines

Job Boards and Search Engines are websites that allow you to find and apply to positions that employers have posted. Examples include Indeed, Monster, SimplyHired, and SnagAJob[24].

Advantages	Disadvantages
- You can apply to hundreds of jobs in one night - You can search for keywords - Websites will often tell you whether you are qualified for particular positions	- Each individual has a lower chance of being hired because so many people respond - Employers may prefer applications through their website - Seeing so many posts can be overwhelming

Tips for using these websites:
- Don't apply to more than one job at a company
- Apply well to 20 jobs rather than poorly to 200
- Research the company to see what skills they are looking for in that position; customize your resume and cover letter based on this research.
- Google or Bing yourself to see what your online presence is like; delete anything that could be potentially embarrassing.
- Take advantage of your (relevant) blogs, portfolios, publications, etc.

You will generally need the following information to complete (online and paper) applications: personal information, including social security number (make sure the secure icon is on), education and qualifications, employment history, references (up to three), availability, resume, cover letter, sample writing (with some positions), e-certification and signature[25]

Social Media

Most employers look at your social media profiles when considering your application. This can include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn. While LinkedIn is a special case, the rest are usually purely social.

Tips for keeping a professional social media profile:
- Don't post anything that could be seen as unprofessional or undesirable to employers; even when you aren't working, you are a representation of their company. (This includes profanity, explicit content, drug/alcohol related content, etc.)
- Don't join undesirable groups online.
- Ask friends to delete and untag you from any unprofessional photos or videos.

What is LinkedIn?

LinkedIn is a social networking site that is used to increase your professional network. While it looks similar to a resume, it is much more than that. If you take advantage of the website's features, you can become more personable and attractive to potential employers[26].

Tips for using LinkedIn:
- Det a nice, professional headshot (your friends can take it with a high quality phone camera!).
- Write your summary with 5-6 of your biggest achievements, and remember your audience; show the employers what you can do for them.
- Make your headline stand out, but keep it under 10 words.
- Add images or documents of your achievements.
- Fill out as much as possible.
- Keep your work history relevant.
- Ask for recommendations.

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Notes

Day Three: The Search for a Career

"I've missed more than 9,000 shots in my career. I've lost almost 300 games. 26 times, I've been trusted to take the game-winning shot and missed. I've failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed." - Michael Jordan[2]

Resumes

Your resume is what stands between you and a job interview. Most employers don't spend much time looking at each resume, particularly if they decide that they aren't interested in a candidate. If you can create a sleek, professional resume, you will impress employers before you even get invited for an interview.

What's in a resume, anyway?[3]

Because each resume should be tailored to the particular job for which you are applying, this question can be answered in several ways. The following categories are generally present in every resume: Contact Information, Professional Experience, Education, Skills, and Awards or Honors. Additional information, such as an objective statement, summary, community involvement, extracurricular activities, leadership experience, and publications may be appropriate for certain individuals and jobs. Keep information relevant, positive, and impersonal. Don't tell an employer if you have a spouse or kids, and don't include your GPA if it is below 3.5!

Types of Resumes[4]:

Chronological	Functional
Order: Objective, Experience, Education, Skills	Order: Objective, Accomplishments, Skills, Experience, Education
Use reverse chronological order for experience and education	Experience may not use chronological order, may use importance or accomplishments to order
lists dates when applicable	may omit dates
Use whenever possible	Use only when you have employment gaps or are completely switching careers
Major Pros: employer favorite, easy to read, highlights experience	Major Pros: hides sketchy employment history, highlights skills and accomplishments
Major Cons: won't hide anything, particularly employment gaps	Major Cons: most employers see a functional resume as a red flag because they are used to hide certain aspects of work history

How do I format my resume?

- 9-12 pt font size
- traditional font, such as Times New Roman, Helvetica, or Arial
- no longer than 2 pages, approximately 400 words per page
- no more than 6-7 bullets per section
- do not include references on resume
- color may be used if it is tasteful, minimal, and appropriate

General Tips[5]:

- Tailor your resume to the job you are applying for! Use key words from the job posting.
- Be specific and use numbers when you can (dates, percentages, GPA, etc.)
- Use action words, like planned, developed, initiated, spearheaded, conserved, modified, revitalized, cultivated, mentored, forged, consulted, evaluated, composed, delegated.

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Cover Letters

A cover letter is either a physical letter or an email that accompanies and complements your resume. It should not simply restate your resume, but should highlight aspects of yourself that make you qualified for the job. In addition to complementing your resume, your cover letter provides a writing sample to the employer. Make sure (as always) to double check your cover letter for proper grammar, spelling, and flow.

What should I include in my cover letter?

Like a resume, a cover letter should be customized for each job opportunity. It should include the following:

Header - contact information if a physical letter, subject line for emails (last name, position open is usually a safe subject line)

Salutation - address employer by name and title (Ms., Mr., Dr.) if known

Introduction - who you are, which position you are applying for, how you heard about this position (be specific, include a referral if you have one)

Body - 2 or 3 paragraphs, why you are qualified, what you have to offer (pay attention to the skills and experiences listed in the job posting and on the company's website), remember to complement your resume by highlighting certain skills and experiences

Closing - the action paragraph, request an interview, state what materials are enclosed (most likely just your resume, but they may require publications or writing samples), thank the employer for their time and consideration, state again that you are looking forward to speaking with them

Signature - if sending a physical letter, sign and print your name; if emailing cover letter, restate your name and add contact information

Because employers are potentially screening hundreds of applicants, be sure to keep your cover letter short, relevant, and convincing[6].

Sample Cover Letter

Subject Line: Jane Doe - Pet Groomer

Dear Mr. Byrd,

I hope this email is finding you well. My name is Jane Doe and I am an aspiring veterinary assistant. I found your posting for a part-time pet groomer on Indeed.com, and I am very interested in this position. I am currently in school part-time to obtain a veterinary assistant certification.

My background with animals includes pet sitting (for which I can provide several references), volunteering at the Humane Society, and my vet assistant training thus far. I have experience in sanitizing kennels, bathing dogs and cats, grooming dogs, and have a pet First Aid and CPR certification from PetTech.

I believe that my qualifications make me the ideal candidate for this position. In addition to my experience in pet grooming, my pet First Aid and CPR training would be an invaluable asset for Pet Store. In the event that, Heaven forbid, an animal became injured or stressed during a grooming session, my training would allow me to handle the situation in a way that other candidates could not.

I have attached my resume to this email in the form of a Word Document. I would like to request an interview so that we may speak further about this position. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you!

Thank you,
Jane Doe
jane.doe@yahoo.com
(123) 456-7890

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Job Interviews

Preparing for the Interview

Pre-interview jitters are a real thing! They happen to almost everybody. In order to combat them, do everything you can to prepare for the interview. First and foremost, make sure that your appearance will be professional. Use the "Dress for Success" page in this workbook to guide your clothing choice. Bring a bag (briefcase or a professional handbag) with at least one hard copy of your resume, a legal pad with information about the company, the questions you have for the interviewer, and any other pertinent information, and at least two pens. Finally, make sure to practice speaking in the mirror to make sure that you look professional and friendly.

Interview Dos and Don'ts[7]

- DO practice your handshake before the interview.
- DO smile, make eye contact, and be aware of your posture.
- DON'T chew gum (but DO brush your teeth beforehand).
- DON'T fidget, squirm, touch your face, or cross your arms.
- DO memorize your resume and be prepared to talk about your experiences.
- DON'T talk too much about why you lost your last job or speak poorly of previous employers.
- DO research the company and prepare questions for your interviewer.
- DON'T lie or offer negative information about yourself.
- DO remember key words from the job posting.
- DO take a practice run of the route to get to the interview, and leave 5 minutes early anyway.
- DO get business cards for each person you encounter.
- DO write a thank you letter to the interviewer.
- DON'T bring up personal information or issues.
- DON'T wing it, but don't over-rehearse; you don't want to sound robotic.

Researching the Company

Before the interview, it is important for you to get to know the company that you're applying to be a part of. Learn about company goals, their interaction with the community (whether they have community grants, or if they do fundraisers for the community), skills and experience that the company values, products and services that they supply, recent news about the company and the field in general, and the interviewer's job. This will give you talking points for the interview, and you will sound much more serious about the position if it is clear that you have done research.

What should I ask the interviewer?

Many people think that their job at an interview is simply to answer questions, and they are often surprised when the interviewer asks if they have any questions. It is best for you to provide 3-5 questions. This shows the interviewer that you are serious about this particular position. Potential topics to ask about include: the position itself, company culture, training you may receive, how your performance will be evaluated, the team you will be working with, the interviewer's job, and the next steps[8]. Above all, remember to express interest in the job at the end of the interview. A simple "I'm very interested in this position. When can I expect to hear back from you?" can make you stand out among the crowd.

The "Thank You" Letter

It is customary to send an interviewer a thank you letter for taking time out of their busy schedules to speak with you. Either an email or a hand-written letter should be sent within 24 hours. This shows that you are still interested in the position and can reiterate your qualifications. The thank you letter will look similar to your cover letter. It should include a brief introduction in which you thank them, 1-2 paragraphs reviewing your qualifications and discussing specific points that were brought up during the interview, and a conclusion which thanks them again and states that you look forward to hearing from them[9].

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Job Interview Activity

In this activity, you will pair up with another student to simulate a job interview. Assume you are applying to be a sales associate at a small retail store. This page has sample job interview questions, as well as questions that you could ask an interviewer. Take turns interviewing one another, and be sure to point out (politely) any issues you see with body language, eye contact, voice control, etc. Then write down positives and negatives that were pointed out by your interviewer.

- -

Sample Interview Questions[10]:

- Why do you want to work for us?
- What is your biggest strength? Your biggest weakness?
- Why did you leave your previous job?
- What is your ideal work environment?
- Do you thrive or crack under pressure?
- What was the last major project you led? How did it go?
- When was the last time that you failed at something? How did you handle it?
- Tell me about a time that you went above and beyond what was required of you.
- What accomplishment are you most proud of?
- Where do you see yourself in five years?
- If I were to ask your last supervisor to tell me what you need extra training in, what would they suggest?
- If you could create a non-profit organization for any cause, what would it be?
- What do you know about our company?
- Can you tell me a little bit about yourself? (Don't over-answer. Stacy focused on 2-3 points.)
- What is your dream job?
- Why should we hire you? What makes you stand out from the rest of the candidates?

- -

Sample Questions to Ask the Interviewer:

The job: "What are some examples of projects I would be working on?"

"Where have successful employees previously in this position moved on to?"

The interviewer: "What made you decide to work at this company?"

The team: "Can you tell me about the people I will be working with?"

The company: "I read _____ on the company website; can you tell me more about that?"

The culture: "What is your favorite office tradition?"

Training: "What kind of training is offered to your employees?"

"Will I be able to attend industry conferences with/for this company?"

Performance Reviews: "What are some of the most important things you would expect to see someone in this position accomplish at 30 days, 90 days, or a year?"

Next steps: "Is there anything that I can provide you with that would be helpful for you?"

- -

What did I do well?   What do I need to work on?

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

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How to Dress for Success

Most employers say that they know whether or not they are interested in hiring a person within seconds of them walking through the door. Your smile, body language, eye contact, and handshake are a huge part of that decision; however, your outfit is equally important. Most interviews will be in a business formal or business casual dress. Always dress one level above what the employees wear on an average day. Consult this table to figure out which dress type works for your interview!

Dress Type	Masculine	Feminine
Black Tie - worn during galas, some weddings and other formal events (invitations will say black tie or black tie optional)	- black tuxedo jacket and matching trousers - pique or pleated front white shirt - shirt studs and cuff links - black cummerbund or vest, matching tie - black patent shoes with black dress socks	- formal evening gown - dressy cocktail dress - dressy little black dress - heels
Semiformal - worn during some weddings, parties, and some events (invitations will usually say semiformal)	- dark business suit - matching vest - dress suit - tie - leather dress shoes and dark dress socks	- short (knee length) cocktail dress - little black dress - dressy separates - heels or dress shoes
Business Formal - worn during important business meetings and conferences	- see semiformal, with conservative tie	- suit - business style dress with jacket - stockings - heels or dress shoes
Business Casual - most common attire for the average workday	- sports coats or blazer with slacks or khaki pants - dress shirt, casual button-down shirt, open-collar or polo shirt - optional tie - loafer style shoes with socks	- skirt, khakis, or slacks - dress - open-collar shirt, knit shirt, sweater - heels, flats, or dress shoes
Dressy Casual - worn during "casual" workdays	- seasonal sports coat or blazer with slacks - dress shirt, casual button-down shirt, open-collar shirt, or polo shirt -optional tie	- dress -skirt and dressy top - dressy pants and blouse - nice, dark jeans and a dressy top - casual shoes, including sandals
Casual - worn at home or during casual work events, such as barbecues	-khakis or good jeans - cargo or Bermuda shorts (depends on the occasion) - plain t-shirt, polo shirt or turtle neck - casual button down shirt and/or sweater - loafers, sneakers, sandals	- sundress - long or short skirt - khakis or jeans - shorts - plain t-shirt, polo shirt or turtle neck - casual button-down blouse - casual shoes

Always keep accessories, makeup, and perfume very conservative in a workplace environment. Unless applying for a boutique or other arena where "fashion" is emphasized, avoid overly trendy or fashionable clothing[11]. When in doubt, ask about dress code before going to an interview. When you arrive, look at what your boss and the successful employees wear.

Notes

Resources

Scholarships
Scholarship Search Websites
Scholarships.fastweb.com
Salt.org
Collegeboard.org
Scholarshipsandgrants.us
Collegenet.com
Scholarships.com
Scholarshipmonkey.com

WVU - Morgantown 4H
4-hyd.ext.wvu.edu/4h/scholarships

Girl Scouts
girlscouts.org/en/our-program/scholarships.
html

Eagle Scouts
nesa.org/scholarships.html

Veterans/(Grand)children of Veterans
amvets.org/amvets-in-action/scholarships/
mass.gov/veterans/education/for-family/schol-
arships-for-family-members-of-veterans.html\
scholarshipsandgrants.us/veterans-scholar-
ships/

Children in Foster System
scholarships.fastweb.com/u-students-who-re-
ceived-foster-care
fc2success.org/programs/scholar-
ships-and-grants/

Webster County
websterccf.com/grants-scholarships

Financial Aid Information
studentaid.ed.gov/sa/sites/default/files/finan-
cial-aid-myths.pdf
studentaid.ed.gov/sa/types
fafsa.ed.gov

Career Advice
Forbes.com
TheMuse.com
Time.com/money
University Career Center Websites

Job Boards
Indeed.com
Monster.com
Jobs.com
SnagAJob.com

Writing to Get the Job
Resume Help
forbes.com/sites/trudysteinfeld/2012/06/06/
the-only-resume-advice-youll-ever-need/#-
58402f876a39
themuse.com/advice/43-resume-tips-that-will-
help-you-get-hired
time.com/money/4171054/resume-tips-ad-
vice/

Cover Letter Help
https://www.thebalance.com/how-to-write-a-
cover-letter-2060169

Inexpensive Career Clothes
Sell Feminine Clothes Only
Lulus
Charming Charlie

Sell Masculine and Feminine Clothes
Department Store Sales Racks
Target
Walmart
Overstock.com
H&M Sales Racks

Miscellaneous Resources
cfwv.com
collegeboard.org
fastweb.org
studentaid.ed.gov

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11. Glenville State College. "Admissions." http://www.glenville.edu/admissions/
12. Fairmont State University. "Admissions and Recruitment." https://www.fairmontstate.edu/admit/
13. West Virginia Wesleyan College. "Admissions." https://www.wvwc.edu/admissions
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"Every day you may make progress. Every step may be fruitful. Yet there will stretch out before you an ever-lengthening, ever-ascending, ever-improving path. You know you will never get to the end of the journey. But this, so far from discouraging, only adds to the joy and glory of the climb." - Sir Winston Churchill

APPENDIX B

Webster County High School College and Career Readiness Workshop Post-Test
Circle the best answer:

1. True or False: You should wear business professional for every job interview, regardless of position.
2. True or False: You should use the same resume for every position you apply for; this shows consistency.
3. True or False: You should always send as many letters of recommendation as possible.
4. True or False: It doesn't matter when you complete the FAFSA, as long as it is by the federal due date.
5. True or False: You should blatantly request an interview in a cover letter.
6. True or False: If you are not working and not wearing anything that would associate you with your company, you can't be fired for what you post on social media.
7. True or False: If you and your parents can't afford college, you shouldn't apply.
8. True or False: You cannot receive more aid than the total cost of attendance at your school.
9. True or False: Extracurricular activities can be as important or even more important than your SAT and ACT scores in the admissions process.
10. True or False: Admissions counselors will think highly of you if you use highly complicated and advanced vocabulary.
11. True or False: You should keep your LinkedIn profile very basic and conservative.
12. True or False: You should only apply to schools that you are sure you can get into.
13. True or False: It is okay to exaggerate your experience and skills in a resume.
14. True or False: Color is never appropriate for resumes.
15. True or False: A cover letter should restate what you said in your resume.
16. Which of the following is best for students with a clear first choice school and high financial need?
    A) Early Decision B) Early Action C) Regular Admissions D) Rolling Admissions

17. How soon after an interview should you send a thank you email?
    A) Within a week B) Within three days C) Within 24 hours D) You shouldn't send one

18. Which of the following types of financial aid has to be paid back?
    A) Grants B) Work-study C) Scholarships D) Sallie Mae

19. When choosing people to write letters of recommendation, which option is best?
    A) A mix of academic and elective teachers B) Only academic teachers
   C) only elective teachers D) a "high profile" person who may not know you very well

20. Which of the following is not appropriate to include in a resume?
    A) GPA B) References C) Leadership experience D) Extracurriculars

21. Which of these is the most appropriate answer to "What is your greatest weakness?"
    A) "I don't have any." B) your actual greatest weakness C) a weakness that is unrelated to work

so they can't use it for the interview D) a true weakness that you can overcome

22.   How often do you need to complete the FAFSA?
        A) Every semester B) Once C) Every academic year that you are in college
           D) Every time you or a family member changes jobs

23.   Which of these types of dress is appropriate to wear on a "Casual Friday" work day?
        A) Casual B) Business Formal C) Black Tie D) Dressy Casual

24.   Which of the following is a binding application (meaning that if you get accepted, you must attend
        that school)?
        A) Early action B) Rolling admissions C) Early Decision D) None of the above

25.   Which type of resume is best for recent graduates with no job experience or people who are
        changing professions?
        A) Functional B) Chronological C) Combination D) It doesn't matter

26.   With which type of loan does the government pay the interest while you are enrolled in school?
        A) Direct subsidized B) Parent PLUS C) Direct Unsubsidized D) Private

27.   On a scale of 1-5 (5 being most prepared), how prepared do you feel to pursue life after high
        school?

   1   2   3   4   5

28.   Which of the following postsecondary options have you considered?
   Military   University   Technical Schools   Distance/Online Education

29.   Do you feel as if your school will benefit from this workshop?
        A) Yes   B) No   C) I'm not sure

30.   What do you feel most nervous about in regards to graduating high school? (Fill in the blank)

APPENDIX C

Webster County High School College and Career Readiness Workshop
Post-Workshop Evaluations

Please rate the following, with (1) meaning strongly disagree, (2) meaning disagree, (3) meaning no opinion or the same as before, (4) meaning agree, and (5) meaning strongly agree.

	1	2	3	4	5
I felt like this workshop was well organized and planned out.					
The content of the workshop was applicable to my own life.					
I am more likely to apply to or attend college than I was before this workshop.					
I would recommend this workshop for other high school seniors in my state.					
I feel more prepared to pursue my goals after high school.					
I feel like this workshop benefitted myself and my school.					

If you could add any topic to the curriculum of this workshop, what would it be?

Were there any topics that you found irrelevant or unnecessary?

What activity or lesson did you find most valuable to your life?

Additional comments or questions:

Thank you for participating in this workshop! We hope you enjoyed your experience.

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