

***In the Know: Interviewing the Admissions Counselor – Lesson Plan***

**Grade Level:** 10-12

**Suggested Duration:** 2 hours or 2 class periods

**Target Audience:** Students beginning their college search

**Educator Video:** “How I Got Here: Joseph—Educator-focused Video”

**§110.57. Public Speaking I, II, III**

**(b) Knowledge and Skills**

(1) Communication Process. The student demonstrates knowledge of various communication processes in professional and social contexts. The student is expected to:

(C) identify standards for making appropriate communication choices for self, listener, occasion, and task

(G) identify the components of the listening process.

(2) Interpersonal. The student uses appropriate interpersonal communication strategies in professional and social contexts. The student is expected to:

(D) use professional etiquette and protocol in situations such as making introductions, speaking on the telephone, and offering and receiving criticism

(E) ask appropriate and purposeful questions, and respond appropriately to the requests, directions, and questions of others

(F) participate appropriately in conversations

(G) communicate effectively in interviews.

**§110.33. English Language Arts and Reading, English III**

**(b) Knowledge and Skills**

(24) Listening and Speaking/Listening. Students will use comprehension skills to listen attentively to others in formal and informal settings. Students will continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to:

(A) listen responsively to a speaker by framing inquiries that reflect an understanding of the content.

*Reports indicate that students feel intimidated when speaking with college professors. That's not much different when it comes to high school students asking important questions of a college admissions counselor. This activity is framed so that students can develop relevant questions, role play with fellow students to simulate an interview, make changes to questions based on peer feedback and feel confident to make future calls to colleges and universities they're interested in attending using the questions they develop during this process.*

**Student Objective:** Students will develop fifteen questions to ask college admissions counselors. They will then conduct a mock interview with a partner, exchange feedback, and make changes to their original questions based on that feedback.

**Lesson Preparation:** While preparing for this lesson with your students, make sure to watch the “How I Got Here: Joseph—Educator-focused Video” available on both iTunes U and Project Share under the “Overcoming College Prep Obstacles with Texas GEAR UP” course. The video will provide guidance on how to navigate the lesson with your students and highlight the key messages for them to take away.

**Teacher Direction:**

Day/Class Period 1 – Question Development:

Start by talking to students about the role of a college admissions counselor. Be sure to mention the following important duties:

- Application assistance
- Assistance with questions about university life, clubs, housing, etc.
- High school visits
- Financial aid counseling

Play the “How I Got Here: Joseph—Student-focused Video” for your class or student. Video is available on both iTunes U and Project Share under the “Overcoming College Prep Obstacles with Texas GEAR UP” course.

Explain that this activity will help them to develop questions for an admissions counselor at a particular college or university, just like Joseph did in the video.

Possible Teacher Dialogue (directed to students):

*The college application process can be long and arduous at times. So. Many. Questions. But what about your questions? Finding the right college is a process in which both parties (you and the college) benefit when a good match is made. Some colleges may call and ask if you have questions for them, but some may not. Chances are, even if they do call you, it'll be difficult to think of questions on the spot.*

*In the video, Joseph found a perfect fit for him at Huston-Tillotson. He explains the importance of asking questions, interviewing, and visiting colleges. In this activity, you'll learn how to develop solid questions for college admissions counselors, and you'll even practice asking those questions with a partner.*

Begin by asking the students if they have ever been on a job interview. Ask them what types of questions they remember being asked and allow a few students to share.

Then ask what they said if they were asked if they had questions. If they say they didn't ask any, ask why not and briefly explain the importance of both parties asking questions to determine whether it's a good fit.

Distribute the *In the Know: Question Framing Guide* and *In The Know: Mock Interview Questions* worksheets to students.

Have students begin forming their own questions for two colleges/universities of their choosing that follow the CCS (clear, concise, specific) model outlined on the *Question Framing Guide*.

Students may have as many as five general questions to ask to both institutions, but five must be university-specific, based on information they've gained from research for a total of ten questions for each admissions counselor.

If students get stuck, remind them to review some of the question stems suggested on the *Question Framing Guide*.

Possible teacher dialogue (directed to students):

*Using the "Question Framing Guide" as a reference, come up with ten questions to ask a college admissions counselor at two colleges or universities you're interested in attending. Five may be more general (and can be asked of both counselors), but the others should be individual and related to that university specifically. Here's an example:*

*"I recently read that more CEOs in the U.S. are graduates from Texas A&M than even the Ivy League schools. In what way is the school of business growing to continue its stellar program?"*

When students finish, have them review the questions they created through the CCS lens. Is each question:

- Clear?
- Concise?
- Specific?

If not, have them make changes to the questions.

Day/Class Period 2 – The Mock Interview Partner Activity:

Pair students with a partner and distribute the *In The Know: Mock Interview Partner Activity* worksheets. Ask students to sit with their backs to one another so that they are forced to use strong verbal communication, just as one must do on a phone call. Have them take turns pretending to make a phone call, using the *In the Know: Mock Interview Questions* as a guide.

Be sure to point out that students should jot down some quick notes for their partner on the numbered space for each question.

Possible teacher dialogue (directed to student):

*Sit with your back to your partner. You won't see each other for this portion, because you'll need to rely only on your verbal communication (as you will on the telephone with the real admissions counselor).*

*Take turns conducting your mock interview. Be sure to:*

- *Pretend it's the real deal.*
- *The counselor probably won't answer the phone, so you'll need to ask for him or her.*
- *Introduce yourself.*
- *State your reason for calling.*
- *Ask if they are available for a few questions. If not, ask for a specific time you can call back.*
- *Speak clearly and professionally.*
- *Ask for clarification if needed. If you have questions about their answer, don't be afraid to ask them to elaborate.*

*Take notes about your partner's questions on the worksheet. You won't know the answers to the questions, obviously. You'll just be listening to how they ask the questions. Keep the CCS model in mind and write down any suggestions for improvement in the boxes for the questions below. The first five are the questions for both colleges.*

When both partners have conducted their mock interview, have them take turns sharing their feedback. Accepting constructive feedback is important, as well as giving them opportunities to use communication skills to ask for clarification, etc. While their partner shares suggestions and feedback, the student should take notes on his or her own paper in the space provided.

Once both students have shared feedback with each other, provide time for them to rephrase and make other changes to their questions based on their partner's suggestions. Ask your students to create a final draft of questions for both colleges on the provided *In The Know: Final Interview Questions* worksheets. Have them research and provide the admissions counselor's contact information and have students reach out to the counselors to schedule a confirmed phone interview.

Possible teacher dialogue (directed to student):

*Now that you've given and received feedback, take some time to edit your questions. Make changes based on your partner's suggestions, as well as what you learned during the interview.*

*Write a final draft of your questions on the following worksheets that can be used for your interview. We've included some space for you to take notes during the actual interview as well. Finally, look up the names and phone numbers of the admissions counselors you'll call and set a possible date and time for you to conduct your interviews.*