

Created by:

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Grade Level: Middle school to high school

Length: One class period

Materials Required: Copy of *LifeWorks™ Scavenger Hunt*, at least one computer with Internet access for every two students. Students may work in pairs or independently.

Background Information

LifeWorks™ is an interactive career exploration web site for middle and high school students. Users can browse for information on more than 100 medical science and health careers by title, education required, interest area, or median salary. Alternatively, the "Career Finder" can be used to generate a customized list of careers especially suited for users' skills and interests. *LifeWorks™* promotes awareness of the wide variety of occupations in health and medical sciences and the range of opportunities at different education levels. The site complements its factual career data by highlighting true stories of successful people. They illustrate the variety of real-life career pathways, from the carefully planned to the unpredictable.

One of the leading occupational choices for both male and females is health care. This fact is encouraging because nine of 20 occupations projected to grow the fastest over the next ten years are concentrated in this area (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2002, 2003; Thompson & Chao, 2003). However, despite their interest in health and medical science careers, students who choose this field more often than not state that they plan to be doctors and few can name other kinds of medical careers (CIEWD, 2002). In response to this finding, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Science Education (OSE) provides the *LifeWorks™* Web site as a tool for students to help raise their awareness about the broad range of health and medical science career pathways that are available to them and to help them make career decisions.

Career selection is a process influenced by a person's background, interests, goals, personal qualities, motivation, and environment (Farmer, 1987). Unfortunately, most students pursue career choices without access to reliable information about the variety and outlook of occupational opportunities (CIEWD, 2002). As a result, many high school students' critical decisions about their career paths are uninformed and misdirected. More active and thorough career guidance is often stated as the solution to more successful post-secondary planning (Fouad, 1995).

Teacher Notes

Please note that the answers to some questions on the scavenger hunt sheet may change with time. The *LifeWorks™* database is continually updated. The scavenger hunt requires students to access all parts of the *LifeWorks™* site, including the “Education Makes A Difference” link, the career finder, the alphabetical listing of jobs, the “Success Stories”, and “Preparing for College Early.” It is not expected that the teams of students will be able to complete the entire scavenger hunt within 15 minutes. This activity is an introduction to the information available through *LifeWorks™*.

Helpful Hints

Familiarize yourself with searching for information on *LifeWorks™*.

Either provide a link directly to *LifeWorks™* through your personal web site, or attempt to have the site bookmarked by technical support before the class. Either choice will cut down on the time students need to find the correct URL.

Students do not need to start at question #1 and proceed in order through the questions. As a team, they should offer suggestions to each other on how to proceed and use critical thinking skills to complete as many questions as accurately as possible in the given amount of time.

The median income listed on the site may be different from incomes in your geographical area. Urban areas usually command higher wages than rural ones.

Lesson Plan

Before the scavenger hunt, ask students the following questions:

1. What types of jobs are available in the medical and health science fields?
2. About what percentage of medically related jobs do you think require a PhD?
3. Can someone get a decent paying job in a medically related field with just a technical certificate?

Spend about 5 minutes showing students how to navigate through the site, including using the search tool, “Career Finder,” sorting occupations by “Education Required”, “Median Salary”, or “Interest Area.” Many questions on the scavenger hunt may be found using multiple paths.

Start scavenger hunt. Offer advice on completing different answers if the students seem stuck on one question.

After the scavenger hunt, ask students the following questions:

1. What was the most interesting thing you learned from this activity?
2. What was the most surprising thing you learned about health-related careers?
3. How could you use this information to help you plan your undergraduate career?
4. Now that you have looked at this site, have your opinions changed about your options for medical careers? If so, how?

Point out that all careers in medical and health science require the ability to work as a member of a team, critical thinking skills, and competent understanding of science and math concepts. Remind students that they used team skills and critical thinking skills to complete the scavenger hunt.

If time allows, spend a few moments discussing correct answers to the scavenger hunt. Encourage students to spend more time searching the site for careers that might interest them.

Extensions

Assign students a short (1 – 1½) page report on a career that interests them. Have them include what skills are required, what education is required, the median salary, the job outlook (found under “more information” in the job description), and any other pertinent information. Students could even evaluate where they are in their high school career and explain what they would need to do academically to meet their goal. A suggested outline for this paper is included with this guide.

Name: _____

My Future Career in Health Science

Using the “Career Finder” section of the NIH Office of Science Education *LifeWorks™* website (<http://science.education.nih.gov/LifeWorks>), complete the outlined sections below. Use this information to write a 1 – 1 ½ page report on a possible future career in health science or medicine. Include what skills are required, what education is required, the median salary, the job outlook (found under “more information” in the job description), and any other pertinent information. Evaluate where you are in your high school career and explain what you would need to do academically to meet your goal.

1) Job categories (choose at least ONE category – add more lines if needed)

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____
- d) _____

i I chose these categories because _____

2) Interest areas (choose at least ONE category – add more lines if needed)

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____

3) Content skills (choose at least ONE category – add more lines if needed)

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____
- d) _____
- e) _____

i I chose these skills because _____

4) Results (titles of possible careers – list 2 or 3)

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____

5) Job I am *most* interested in _____

- a) activities (what does this person do?) _____

b) outlook _____

c) median income _____

d) minimum education requirements _____

e) list 3 – 4 skills this person needs to do the job

- i _____
- ii _____
- iii _____
- iv _____

6) Recommended high school courses for this job (list them all)

7) Courses I need to take to meet the above recommendations (list any you haven't taken yet)

8) Other interesting information about this job

