

Assignment Discovery Online Curriculum

Lesson title:

Careers in Health

Grade level:

6-8

Subject Area:

Health

Duration:

Two class periods (with several days to complete the interview)

Objectives:

Students will do the following:

1. Identify several professions in the healthcare field
2. Identify characteristics of effective healthcare providers
3. Consider if any of the occupations covered in class are appropriate paths for them

Materials:

- Computers with word-processing program and Internet access
- Photocopier
- Overhead projector

Procedures:

1. Tell students that they will spend time over the next couple of days exploring different careers in the health field. Begin by asking students to brainstorm professions that are associated with healthcare. Encourage them to name not only different types of doctors and nurses, but also those in related health professions (sometimes called allied health professions). You may want to share the following list on an overhead projector, which lists many common health professions:

*Doctors and Nurses
Specializing in Many
Different Fields:*
Allergist/immunologist
Anesthesiologist
Cardiologist
Dentist
Dermatologist
Emergency physician
Family Practitioner
Gastroenterologist
Hematologist

Internist
Medical geneticist
Neurologist
Obstetrician/
gynecologist
Oncologist
Ophthalmologist
Optometrist
Orthopedic surgeon
Pathologist
Pediatrician

Physical medicine &
rehabilitation (sports
medicine)
Plastic surgeon
Podiatrist
Psychiatrist
Rheumatologist
Radiologist
Surgeon
Urologist

Common Allied Health

Professions:

Athletic trainer
Audiology/speech pathologist
Blood bank technology—specialist
Cardiovascular technologist
Clinical laboratory scientist/medical technician
Counselor (marriage and family counselor, mental health counselor, school counselor)

Dental hygienist
Dietitian/nutritionist
Emergency medical technician—paramedic
Genetic counselor
Health information administrator
Medical assistant
Medical illustrator
Music therapist
Nuclear medicine technologist
Occupational therapist
Ophthalmic medical technician/technologist
Pathologist's assistant

Physician assistant
Physical therapist
Radiation therapist
Rehabilitation counselor
Respiratory therapist
Surgical technologist
Therapeutic recreation specialist

Other

Veterinarian
Pharmacist
Public health

2. Have students choose one health profession to explore further. They will begin by researching general information using library and Internet resources. These Web sites may serve as good starting points:

AMA: Medical Specialties

<<http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/2375.html>>

AMA: National Medical Specialty Societies

<<http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/article/3958-3928.html>>

AMA: Careers in Allied Health

<<http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/2322.html>>

As students research a profession, ask them to answer the following questions:

- What is the primary goal of this profession?
- What type of education or experience is required for this profession?
- What about this profession is most interesting to you?

3. Tell students that they will interview a person in their selected healthcare field outside of class. This assignment may take several days: first students will have to identify a person and set up an interview. To do so, they could ask family and friends for references. They could also contact a local hospital or search in the phone book or online.

4. Work with students to develop a list of interview questions, which may include the following:

- Describe the activities in a typical day in your job.
- How many hours do you work in a typical week?
- Tell me about your background, including education and experience.

- What kind of people do you work with? Who do you serve? Who are your colleagues?
 - Why are you interested in this particular field?
 - What do you enjoy most about your job?
 - What skills—such as communication and problem solving—are most important in your field? Describe a situation in which you use these skills.
 - Describe a challenging situation you've had in your job.
 - Describe your relationship with your patients or clients.
 - If I were interested in pursuing your career, what classes do you think I should be taking in high school? What extracurricular activities should I pursue?
 - What other healthcare professionals do you work with?
5. After students have completed an interview, have them write a one- or two-page summary of their findings. Their summary should include general information about the profession, personal anecdotes, and the characteristics necessary to work in that health field. Gather students' summaries into a packet, and make a page titled *Health Care Directory*. Make enough copies for each student to read one at home.
 6. The next day, have students discuss the attributes of healthcare workers. Which are most common? Which are more important in the field you researched? You may want to share the following list, which the American Medical Association cites as important attributes of a successful physician:
 - A high level of knowledge and clinical skills
 - Professionalism
 - Leadership skills
 - Ethics
 - Compassion
 - Ability to communicate with diverse patients and colleagues
 - Commitment to continued professional development

Discussion Questions:

1. What are the important attributes of healthcare workers in the field you studied? Which of these do you feel you have? Would this be an appropriate field for you to pursue? Why or why not?
2. Of the healthcare professions you learned about in class, describe one that seems to best fit your skills, personality, and attributes.
3. When deciding on a career path, what are some of the more important aspects of the job you should consider? What aspects of your own personality make you well suited or not to pursue a career in the health field?

Evaluation:

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate how well students research selected healthcare professions, conduct interviews, write summaries of what they've learned, and discuss attributes of healthcare workers:

Three points: demonstrated strong research skills and strong interviewing skills; created well-written and informative summaries; showed a strong ability to discuss attributes of healthcare workers.

Two points: demonstrated average research skills and average interviewing skills; created an on-grade-level article with an adequate amount of information; showed an average ability to discuss attributes of healthcare workers.

One point: demonstrated below-average research skills and below-average interviewing skills; created a weak summary with a minimal level of information; had difficulty discussing attributes of healthcare workers.

Extension:

Is Healthcare in Your Future?

As a class, discuss the aspects of different careers to consider when making a career choice. What types of skills are necessary? What type of people do you work with? What is a typical day like? What is the salary? How much education is required for this career? What is the outlook for this career in the future? (Encourage students to refer to their interviews and consider aspects that were surprising, appealing, unappealing, or even disturbing. Often, these aspects of a career define the people most well suited for it. For example, emergency medical technicians might be drawn to their job not solely because they are good at biology or like helping people. They also might thrive in an intense environment where work has a feeling of urgency.

Next, develop a self-assessment questionnaire that would help guide a career choice. For example, what interests you most? What are your favorite classes? What are your favorite activities? Do you like working on a project alone or in a group? Are you good at explaining difficult concepts? Are you comfortable helping someone you don't know? Have each student complete the questionnaire as honestly and thoroughly as possible. Finally, have students spend several days exploring the *Health Care Directory* created in class. If students are interested in a particular profession, encourage them to learn more about it and to begin thinking about what courses and extracurricular activities they should take in high school to prepare for that career.

The following Web sites provide information about careers:

What Do They Do?

<[http://www.whatdotheydo.com./](http://www.whatdotheydo.com/)>

Career Information

<http://stats.bls.gov/k12/html/edu_sci.htm>

Suggested Reading:

Careers in Nursing (VGM Professional Careers series)

Terence J. Sacks. McGraw Hill-NTC, 1998.

For an introduction to the many possibilities in the field of nursing, this book does the job. A brief overview and history of nursing is followed by a description of nursing duties and work settings. Choosing a nursing program and looking for a job after graduation are also covered. Appendices include nursing organizations, guidelines for certification, and more.

The First Year of Nursing: Real-World Stories from America's Nurses

Barbara Finkelstein, editor. Walker and Company, 1996.

There is nothing quite like descriptions of personal experiences to illuminate a topic. These first-person accounts, written by nurses about their experiences at the beginning of their careers, offer the reader a glimpse into the scary, difficult, and rewarding field of nursing.

Vocabulary:

allied health

Definition: Related health professions.

Context: Counseling, physical therapy, and nutrition are just a few of the many **allied health professions**.

health

Definition: The overall condition of the body.

Context: Public health professionals look at different factors that affect the **health** status of the community.

medicine

Definition: A science or art that deals with the prevention, cure, or easing of disease.

Context: The past few decades have seen many advances in **medicine**.

nurse

Definition: A person skilled or trained in caring for the sick especially under the supervision of a physician.

Context: After graduating from a school of nursing, **nurses** must pass a written exam to receive a license to practice in their particular state.

physician

Definition: A specialist in healing human diseases; a doctor of medicine.

Context: Dr. James became a **physician** because she was fascinated with the science of the human body and enjoyed helping people in need.

Academic Standards:

The following standards are from the American Association for Health Education for students in grades six through eight:

1. Students will analyze the influence of culture, media, technology, and other factors on health.
2. Students will demonstrate the ability to use goal-setting and decision-making skills to enhance health.

This lesson plan adheres to the standards set forth in the *National Science Education Standards*, in particular the category Science in Personal and Social Perspectives.

Credit: Joy Brewster, freelance writer and editor of educational material.

This lesson was created in consultation with Nancy Hudson, health education consultant.

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