

Career Assignments & Activities Career Center - Riverside City College

RCC faculty can alter and use the career assignments and activities below in their courses. These assignments can help faculty incorporate equity-minded career research, career readiness, and life-planning activities into their courses to help students make informed career and educational decisions as they pursue career and educational goals at RCC.

Career Assignment Examples for English Courses

Assignment 1: Examining Concepts (Formal Writing Assignment)

Instructions for Students

Mike Rose's article "Blue-Collar Brilliance," discusses how "generalizations about intelligence, work, and social class deeply affect our assumptions about ourselves and each other" (34). This can be true specifically when we discuss the career we are in or are pursuing. One may say that happiness in a job or career is relative.

However, American culture definitely posits certain "standards" that might determine a "good career," even though depending on the perspective, these standards may vary drastically! **How should one define a "good career"? Make sure to justify your definition choice and explain why other definitions did not make your criteria and/or why other definitions may be problematic.**

Assignment 2: Examining Norms (Formal Writing Assignment)

Instructions for Students

In the same article as listed above, Mike Rose further states that when it comes to the working class, "our cultural iconography promotes the muscled arm, sleeve rolled tight against the biceps, but no brightness behind the eye, no image that links hand and brain" (43). **Consider the relationship between blue- and white-collar work. Contrast the particular rules and norms that teach us how to think about each of these two categories.** How is each type of work typically defined? What tasks, skills, or abilities are we told each conventionally involves? And, perhaps most important, how are we taught to value these types of work differently? Are these distinctions fair? Accurate? How or how not?

Assignment 3: Examining Career & Positionality (Formal Writing Assignment)

Instructions for Students

Think about how Bell Hooks discusses the intersection of race and class in her text "Learning in the Shadow of Race and Class." Consider the title of her piece. **What are the "shadows" that, according to Hooks, most directly affect or shape one's experiences of school and career path?** To what extent do

these “shadows” impact a person’s life as powerful, unspoken scripts, drawing the lines around particular roles that people in culture are allowed (or not allowed) to play?

Career Assignment Examples for Any Course

Assignment 1: Share/Storytelling Activity

Instructions for Students

Write about (or discuss) a memorable event in your life dealing with a job that you have had or an incident that sparked your interest in a particular career path. What did you learn from that event? How did that event influence your views of that career?

Assignment 2: Discussion/Community Building

Instructions for Students

Consider the two articles you read by Sullivan and Crawford about work culture in the United States. Make sure to use evidence from the text to support your discussion.

- What makes a job “worthwhile”? What kinds of benefits should one expect from work?
 - How important is money in your consideration? What makes it either more or less important to you?
 - Can you think of any priorities that should rank more highly? For what reasons?
 - There is a dichotomy in American working culture: career “importance” vs. personal contentment. Which one do you think is more important?
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Assignment 3: TEDTalk Reflection

Details

Have students watch and take notes on a TEDTalk video that relates to general life planning, career exploration, or a career-related discussion (can connect to your discipline or can be general).

Instructions for Students

Write a 200-300 word reflection on your thoughts on the video. Some questions to help you reflect on the video are below.

1. How do the ideas in the video relate to your chosen career path, or your current path of interest?
2. What ideas or statements from the presenter really stuck with you? Why?
3. Do any of the ideas shared in the video surprise you? Why?
4. How do you engage in some of the ideas shared in the video within your life?

5. After watching this video, are you able to identify activities in your life that you would like to focus on to help you accomplish your academic and career goals? If so, what are they and how will you engage in these activities over the next 6 months?
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Assignment 4: Introductory Career Research (Option #1)

Details

Students can research two careers/occupations that are related or unrelated to the course subject area. They can research careers by using the Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH) available online through the Bureau of Labor Statistics website.

Instructions for Students

Step 1:

View the handbook by navigating to the [OOH website \(https://www.bls.gov/ooh/\)](https://www.bls.gov/ooh/) and use the "Search Handbook" search box (located on the upper right side of the page next to the Occupational Outlook Handbook title block) to find the appropriate information page for a chosen occupation. You can also use the "Occupation Groups" section on the left side of the page to research different career areas, or you can browse according to "Highest Paying," "Fastest Growing," and more.

Once a career or occupation is selected, read the summary of the occupation, what people do in the job, the work environment, how to become a professional in that area, pay, job outlook, and more (see tabs under the occupation title/name).

Faculty Note:

Once the steps above are complete, students should share their findings. Provide the students with a list of targeted questions related to the specific areas they will read about on the OOH website (i.e. What career did you choose to research? What type of work environment do individuals in your career work in? What type of National and California pay should a professional in this field expect? What about this career resonates with you the most? etc.), then set assignment parameters.

Assignment 5: Introductory Career Research (Option #2)

Details

Some students have an idea of a major pathway they want to follow, but they do not have an idea of the career options that align with that subject area. The following assignment can help students research careers/occupations using a new web tool offered through the Career Center, "What Can I Do With This Major?"

For this assignment, students can research two careers/occupations that are related to their major of interest. Once they identify the careers/occupations using the "What Can I Do With This Major?" tool, they can find additional information about those careers using the Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH) available online through the Bureau of Labor Statistics website.

Instructions for Students

Step 1:

Access the “What Can I Do With This Major?” web resource by navigating to the [Career Center webpage \(https://www.rcc.edu/student-support/career-center.html#exploration\)](https://www.rcc.edu/student-support/career-center.html#exploration) scroll down to the “Career Research and Skill Building” section, click the dropdown titled “What Can I Do With This Major?”, and click “Get started today.” On the following webpage, scroll down to view areas of interest, select a dropdown option, and select the major(s) of interest. Then view the career information on the following page. Go to “Step 2” once you select a career of interest.

Step 2:

View the Occupational Outlook Handbook by navigating to the [OOH website \(https://www.bls.gov/ooh/\)](https://www.bls.gov/ooh/) and use the "Search Handbook" search box (located on the upper right side of the page next to the Occupational Outlook Handbook title block) to find the appropriate information page for the career/occupation you chose when reviewing the “What Can I Do With This Major?” resource. You can also use the “Occupation Groups” section on the left side of the page to research different career areas, or you can browse according to “Highest Paying,” “Fastest Growing,” and more.

Once a career or occupation is selected in the OOH, read the summary of the occupation, what individuals do in the job, the work environment, how to become a professional in that area, pay, job outlook, and more (see tabs under the occupation title/name on the webpage).

Faculty Note:

Once the steps above are complete, students should share their findings. Provide the students with a list of targeted questions related to the specific areas they will read about on the OOH website (i.e. What career did you choose to research? What type of work environment do individuals in your career work in? What type of National and California pay should a professional in this field expect? What about this career resonates with you the most? etc.), then set assignment parameters.

Assignment 6: Job Search Assignment

Details

Job search skills are important to student career readiness. This assignment lets students familiarize themselves with the job search process, position descriptions, and employment opportunities in general.

Instructions for Students

Step 1:

Research 3 entry-level jobs that a psychology major (Faculty note: insert your subject area here, or ask students to look up a job they are currently qualified for overall) would be qualified for using at least one of the job boards below.

(Faculty member can give examples depending on how they choose to modify this assignment for their class. For example, most students would qualify for an entry level customer service job. Some examples would be customer service roles at department stores or in the food service industry.)

Some job boards you can view are linked below.

- [Indeed.com](https://www.indeed.com)
- [LinkedIn.com](https://www.linkedin.com)
- [Glassdoor.com](https://www.glassdoor.com)
- [Idealist.com](https://www.idealist.com)

Step 2:

Submit the following information for each of the 3 jobs:

- Company Name
- Location
- Job Title
- Salary/Pay and other benefits listed
- URL of website where job was found
- Job duties/skills needed
- Why you like the job?
- How your current skills/traits match the job duties?
- What person in your current network can help you get this job and why?

Assignment 7: Informational Interviews – Building Your Network

Details

Have students identify and interview a professional in a career or field that interests them (or modify target population as needed). Use the information below the instructions as a resource/guide for students. The information includes a sample contact script and questions students can use. Consider ways students can ask for and share contacts with one another to help build their network.

Instructions for Students

Have Students Prepare to Conduct an Informational Interview

Step 1:

Watch the following videos:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=m6Pa4ZB4mvQ&feature=youtu.be> – Designing Your Career: The Informational Interview
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=ixbhtm8l0sl&feature=youtu.be> - The Dos and Don'ts of Informational Interviews

Step 2:

Complete Reflection Questions 1 – 3 to identify potential interviewees.

1. Speak to family members, friends, peers, and/or others in your social sphere to see if they know someone who is in your career of interest or is in a career that is similar to your career of interest. If no one in your social sphere is connected to anyone in your career of interest, contact local organizations who have individuals working in your area of interest to see if

they can help connect you to someone to interview. After you have a list of potential connections, select two who you plan to reach out to. Write their names, companies, and position titles as your answer to this section.

2. Schedule an appointment to meet with these individuals through video conference (such as Zoom) or phone for a specific length of time (30 minutes is a good amount of time for an interview). This meeting should occur before Sunday, May 23rd (identify appropriate deadline for this portion of the assignment) which will give you a week to complete your summary outlined in “Step 4” by Sunday, May 30th (identify deadline for this portion of the assignment). Write the date and time of each meeting. If you do not have a specific date/time scheduled before this reflection is due, please add a projected date and time for the interview.
3. Make a list of specific questions to ask. You should have between 5-8 questions. Examples of questions can be found in the “Sample Questions” section below.

Step 3:

Conduct the scheduled informational interview.

Step 4:

Submit a summary of your interviewing experience by answering the questions below. Also, be sure to list your interview questions at the end of your summary.

- Who did you interview and was your meeting held over video conference (Zoom, Skype, etc.) or phone? What kind of effect did this have on your interview?
- Where and when did the interview take place?
- What particularly stuck out to you about what they said (focus on two main points)? How did your discussion shape your thoughts about the career?
- Does the stereotype/perception of the career match the information you received from the professional? If not, why? What new information did you learn?
- What is your overall impression of that career after having the interview? Did the interview create more excitement about the career or did it have the opposite effect?

Sample Contact Script

"Hello, my name is _____. I am a student at Riverside City College. I am calling (or “writing” if communicating through email) to see if you would be available to meet with me to discuss the work you do and your profession overall. I have an interest in _____ (state career/occupation). Do you have time to arrange a meeting?"

If yes: Proceed with the conversation (arrange time to meet, etc.). If appropriate and/or needed, get directions and parking information.

If not, ask: “When would be a good time to call back?”

Via email: You could propose a few days/times or ask them to do the same.

Sample Questions

1. How did you get started in this job?
2. What training or education did you have before beginning this job?

3. What skills, training, education, and experience are necessary to enter this field today?
4. Where is the best place to get training necessary for this field?
5. Is this industry headed in any new directions?
6. What do you see as the employment outlook for this type of job in the next five years?
7. How has your job changed since you first started working here?
8. What are your responsibilities?
9. Tell me about a typical day.
10. What is the earning potential in this field? (DO NOT ask how much the person makes!)
11. What do you LIKE about your job?
12. What is the most difficult aspect of your job?
13. What advice do you have for someone interested in training for this career?
14. As a student, what could I be doing NOW that might help me prepare for this career?
15. Is there someone else in this field you would recommend me to contact?

Helpful Tips

- Be prepared and dress professionally if you are meeting someone in-person. If unsure about appropriate dress, ask!
- Respect the person's time by being on time and limiting the meeting to the agreed-upon timeframe.
- Have questions prepared.
- Ask if you may contact them again for future questions and names of other people to meet to gain different perspectives.
- Always send a thank you note. One of the most valuable things people can share is time.

Assignment 8: Reality Check and Collage Presentation

Details

This assignment is meant to help students "visualize" themselves and their future life. Visualization is an important life success strategy, and has helped all types of professionals picture their future, and motivate them to seek it out. In addition to creating a visual of their future life, this assignment will help them understand the cost of living their future life requires and if their potential career options will allow them to pay for that lifestyle.

Instructions for Students

Step 1:

Follow the instructions below to complete your Reality Check and Collage.

1. Go to CA Career Zone's [Make Money Choices - https://www.cacareerzone.org/budget/](https://www.cacareerzone.org/budget/)
2. Click on "Budget how much money you'll need"
3. Complete each of the steps in the online exercise (i.e. choose where you want to live, your housing costs, utility costs, etc.). Make sure each choice reflects the lifestyle you want to live 5+ years after graduation.
4. Print/Save your "Total Expenses" page (the last page that lists your expenses, including a graph).

Step 2:

Create a collage on a PowerPoint Slide or on a poster board that represents the type of lifestyle you want to lead. Consider all of the different aspects of your “reality check” from the "Budget how much money you'll need" online exercise. Make sure that your collage includes at least 10 images (or more) that reflect your future lifestyle and make sure your collage reflects at least 2 careers that you are most interested in at this time.

Submit a 2-3-minute video recording of yourself presenting your collage. Be sure to discuss the following in your recorded presentation:

- Each image you added to the collage and what they mean to your future lifestyle.
 - The two careers you chose and have reflected in images on your collage. Also share the average salary range for **each position** in the state you chose to live in.
 - The total cost of your yearly expenses and whether each of the two careers you chose for this assignment will allow you to afford the lifestyle you reflected on your collage.
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