



Part 1, Module 1: Exploring College Opportunities

Lesson Overview:

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce students to searching for the college that is best for them. In the online learning module, students will explore the different aspects of college life and fill out their own College Search Plan Worksheet.

As a result of this lesson, students will:

- Describe the college they wish to attend.
- List the options of colleges they wish to consider attending.
- Differentiate between the options they have for college.
- Achieve an understanding of the college experience they wish to have.

Materials you will need to teach this lesson include:

- Brochures/Viewbooks of different universities, colleges, community colleges, vocational/technical schools, and other post-secondary educational options for students.
- Comparing Colleges Handout (download the PDF).

Students will need:

- Notebook and pen
- Brochures/Viewbooks of colleges they are considering

Instructions:

Discussion – Lead a classroom discussion on what students know about college life (family values about college, family members or friends who have attended different types of colleges, etc.). It's often helpful if the Instructor opens with a reflection on their personal expectations about going to college. Use questions/prompts like:

- How many of you have friends or family members who have attended college? What have they told you about college?
- What do you think college life will be like? What are you looking forward to? Is there anything you are concerned about?
- Students can also share the names of the colleges they are considering attending and why.

One-minute paper – Ask students to prepare a sheet of notebook paper and a pen. Tell students that they are going to write for one minute on the topic you are about to share. Advise students not to be concerned with grammar, or spelling and not to judge their thoughts – write whatever comes to mind. Share the topic: When I imagine my perfect college, this is what it is like. After one full minute has passed, tell students to put their pens down. Instruct students to read over their paper, making any quick revisions in spelling or grammar that may be required. Invite students to share their responses with the class.



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Comparing Colleges Handout – Ask students to prepare the college brochures/viewbooks of college they brought with them from home. If any student does not have their own materials, share some that you have. Have a brief discussion to define each category in the Comparing Colleges chart. Instruct students to use the information in their brochures/viewbooks to fill in the chart. Students may ask questions of their peers or the instructor as they work on this task. Allow students approximately 10 minutes to being filling in the chart. The rest of the chart can be completed as a homework assignment.

Summary Activity – Ask students to prepare a half-sheet of notebook paper. Instruct students to write a summary statement about what they learned from comparing information about different college options. The student should hand their (anonymous) statement to the instructor as their “ticket out of class”.

Variations on this lesson:

Invite a number of recruiters from surrounding colleges to visit the class. Students create a list of questions to ask the recruiters based on the Comparing Colleges Handout.

This activity could be a pre-cursor to attending a college fair. After completing the Comparing College Handout, students can rank the colleges they want to speak to at the college fair.

An additional homework assignment could be to make an appointment to visit a college based on the results of the Comparing Colleges Handout and then write a reflection paper about the college visit.



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Comparing Colleges Instructions: Use your brochures or viewbooks to fill in the information for some of the colleges you wish to compare.

Begin by entering the names of the colleges you wish to compare at the top of each column. If an item is not important to your choice of college, do not include that information in the chart.

	<i>Is this important to me?</i>	College 1:	College 2:	College 3:
Student and Professional Organizations <i>--List the one(s) you would want to join</i>				
Greek Life <i>--List the one(s) you would want to join</i>				
Academic Programs or Societies <i>--List the one(s) you would want to join</i>				
Student Government <i>--List position(s) you would like to hold</i>				
Student Union/Student Center <i>--List features that are attractive to you</i>				
Recreation/Fitness <i>--List opportunities you would want to participate in</i>				
Sports and Entertainment Events <i>--List events/games you would like to attend</i>				
Community <i>--Describe the community the college is in.</i>				
Employment <i>--Is the college near</i>				



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<i>employment opportunities?</i>				
Campus Housing <i>--List the rules/options for living on campus</i>				

This is just the beginning of your college comparison. In the online course you will find the **College Search Plan Worksheet** with many more categories for you to compare. Using the college websites will also help you find specific information that may not be listed in a brochure or viewbook.