Guest speakers are professionals from an industry related to a NAF academy course or theme who visit students in a classroom setting. Guest speaker visits are more than just a way to break up the classroom routine; they are a critical and valuable component of the curriculum and provide a foundation to the students’ career awareness.

Guest speakers share information about their training, what they like about their jobs, their typical work day, and the knowledge and skills required to pursue and be successful in their career. Students will have an opportunity to ask questions of the professionals. The visits also give students a chance to practice professional behavior and to elevate their comfort level in communicating with professionals.

Virtual Guest Speakers

**WHY? Student Learning Outcomes of awareness experiences:**

* Describe different careers and the basic pathways leading to a variety of careers
* Describe how basic skills such as math and reading are used in the workplace
* Explain the importance of post-secondary education and training following high school graduation

**HOW? Characteristics of awareness experiences:**

* Expose students to a variety of careers by connecting them with business partners (in-person or virtual)
* Allow students to begin identifying areas of career interest
* Allow students to observe, receive information, and ask questions to acquire knowledge and awareness
* Relate school with the world of work by connecting careers to academy and post-secondary education
* Can include classroom projects which emulate workplace projects

If coordinating partners to visit the classroom in person is problematic, you may consider using a video chat a program like Skype or Google video. This would allow for students to see the professionals in their own professional setting, and also allows students to ask questions and interact with the speaker.

**Recruiting Business Partners**

There are several sources you might consider consulting to find appropriate guest speakers. First, start with your academy advisory board. Members of the advisory board are often well suited to be guest speakers, but almost more importantly, they can help connect you with other professionals they know. Consider meeting with your advisory board and giving them the list of topics for guest speakers you need. Ask them to brainstorm together and give you as many ideas as possible of potential guest speakers, as well as have them reach out to appropriate professionals for you.

Check out Identify Potential Business Partners Activity in NAF Advisory Board Tools.

**Tools Available for Download:**

* [Guest Speaker Planning Timeline](file:///C:\Downloads\Guest%20Speaker%20Planning%20Timeline%204.10.2014.docx)
* Guest Speaker Request Email
* Work-Based Learning Tracking Spreadsheet
* Preparing Students for Guest Speaker
* Guest Speaker Confirmation Email - 6 Weeks Before
* [Working With Academy Students Guide](file:///C:\Users\shickert\ShareFile\My%20Files%20&%20Folders\Work-Based%20Learinng%20Field%20Guide\WBL%20Field%20Guide%20Tools\NAF%20%20Approach\Working%20With%20Academy%20Students%20Guide%204.4.2014.doc)
* Guest Speaker Research Activity
* Guest Speaker Confirmation Email - 1 Day Before
* Guest Speaker Thank You Email - 1 Day After
* Work-Based Learning Business Partner Evaluation
* Work-Based Learning Student Evaluation
* Guest Speaker Student Reflection
* Guest Speaker Student Thank You Note

In addition to the connections on your advisory board, consider these other sources for business partners:

* Career counselors at your school
* Career counselors at local community colleges
* Personal contacts
* Professional organizations in your community, Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club, Industry associations

Send a thank you letter the day following your in-person meeting with a new business partner. Even better, ask the student or advisory board member who attended the meeting with you to send a thank you letter, reiterating the clear call to action discussed during the meeting, including the logistical details for the engagement activity to which your new business partner committed.



