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## **A Handy Tip to consider when booking career speakers for your students**

Oftentimes district leaders and educators invite industry professionals to speak to their students about their career experiences. Career speakers can offer insight into navigating careers and pathways. There is no one size fits all when it comes to inviting career speakers to your classroom or district. The following is one idea/approach to consider when preparing students for life after high school.

An overlooked demographic when inviting career speakers tends to be inviting the early career professional (roughly ages 22-30). By inviting early career professionals, high school students would benefit from getting a glimpse into what life looks like after college and entering the workforce for what could potentially be the first time.

Early career professionals are in the stage of “emerging adulthood”, a distinct developmental stage marked 5 key features: the age of identity explorations; the age of instability; the self-focused age; the age of feeling in-between; and the age of possibilities. The goal is to gain self-sufficiency before committing to enduring roles like fully committed careers and marriage. During emerging adulthood, early career professionals begin to accept more responsibility, make independent decisions that can be higher stakes than in high school and college, and work to gain financial independence.

By inviting career speakers who are also emerging adults, high school students could learn about the differences in expectations between high school and the workforce from a person who has much more recent memory of the experience of being in high school. Additionally, emerging adult career speakers could highlight the experiences that early career professionals navigate as they enter the workforce which would help high school students be more prepared for what to expect.