

## **Community School Interviews: helping students understand the wider world**

A two session speaker series to develop and strengthen skills of inquiry, awareness of the wider world, and connections within the school and to the community. These are facilitated by an award-winning teacher, now executive director of Community School Interviews Society. The speakers are community and business leaders, innovators, and experts from the area.

Community School Interviews have worked with classes from grade 6 to post secondary, from gifted to at risk students. The support we give each student would also allow us to work with elementary students as well.

### **Evaluation:**

Teachers will have clear observational data which can be used to evaluate student's skills in questioning and , problem-solving and critical thinking. The journal, biography , and note writing provide evidence for metacognition, self reflection, note taking and evaluative writing..

### **How teachers can use this active learning experience:**

By being present in the Series sessions, teachers can use the time to complete own observation-based assessments of their students . Reviewing the student workbooks provides more evidence.

### **What it looks like:**

Day 1: The CSI facilitator meets with students in a computer lab to hear about the program

The students join the project's online network: Meetingbuddy School Net ( [www.meetingbuddy.com/mbsn](http://www.meetingbuddy.com/mbsn) )

Each student is given a workbook ( run off by the school) with introductions to each of three speakers who are coming to the school on Day 2.

The students post these questions on line, and write a journal reflecting on the learning from the session.

Questions are created for each speaker based on the themes in their intro

Day 2: 15 minute interviews of each speaker is facilitated by the CSI rep.

The speakers respond to questions of the students around the themes from each of their intro bios.

Depending on the number of classes in the school taking part in a Series, Day 2 interviews may be done by several classes at one time.

Students take notes in their workbook, and write a journal on our web site, giving feedback to each of the three speakers.

### **A Sample of the themes our guests bring to the classroom**

Care about people first.. and you'll always come in first

Getting support for tough decisions

Getting noticed, getting breaks.

Deciding who you're going to hang out with and do business with

Identifying and moving beyond handicaps

Developing the skills that help the environment

Being your own person

Getting an idea and going for it with passion

Getting through tough situations

### **Responsibilities of the teacher**

Outside of selecting the classes and promoting the Series the teacher need take on no additional tasks. During the sessions he or she is free to participate to whatever degree they wish, but need make no other arrangements.

### **The premise and aspects of the project**

1. Students in the project would be expected to complete a CS Interview Series Workbook.

2. Everything counts ( as in life) : participation, on-line journals, profiles ( on our secure web site)

3. Evaluation of each student can be tied directly from the CSI involvement.

**CS Interviews funding** comes from community sponsors , PACs , and donations from schools.

**Background:**

CS Interviews is a registered charitable organization that has been providing workshops for schools on Vancouver Island for four years. Its executive director is an award winning teacher with k-12 experience.

CSI has over 120 speakers who are available for classroom interviews. We help : prepare students for each interview, facilitate the interviews and provide opportunity for reflective follow up on each. A series takes two class sessions. The process is closely connected to course IRP's

**What students say:**

It was stimulating to try and think up questions to ask the 4 speakers today. Up until now, I had no idea how questions are so important and can lead to such great conversations. I'll definitely keep this in mind in the future; how to learn so much more about people just by the questions you ask. - grade 6

All these people have inspired me to live more sustainably, be more aware of what others face in their day-to-day lives, and to learn to help more people around the world. - grade 7

The CSI was very inspiring. I have learned a lot from Justin, Briony and Chuck. Many ideas stood out to me, such as how making friends can help you succeed whatever you want to do in life. You can't do everything perfectly, but you can try to make it as best as possible. Another really important one is that the little things you do in life to help save the environment will impact the entire world. - grade 8

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I learned not only directly, but indirectly as well. I was really "turned on" by presenters who opened up, said ridiculous things. I liked it when the presenter elaborated on a story, told us about their weaknesses as well as strengths. We focus too much on the success of an individual We got a chance to be the interviewers. We were given the power to pry, to assess the presentations of adult professionals. Now that's new, backwards, and refreshing. - grade 12

**What teachers say:**

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to be involved in the project. I have been getting lots of good feedback from my students They got to see a divergent group of speakers, and seeing the differences was valuable.= Eng. 10 teacher

This process, this activity, not only connects students, it connects the school to its community. Strong school communities should be integral, vibrant participants in their general community. - Assistant Superintendent.

This is an invaluable resource for a teacher as you have an evaluation tool par excellence to help you remember students and their projects. - University professor

**What speakers say:**

It is me who should be thanking you for letting me take part in this experience

**For further information** please visit [csinterviews.ca](http://csinterviews.ca) or contact Christopher Bowers at 250 213 5340 View an 8 minute documentary , or videos of some of our one-on-one interviews with speakers.