



Find Your Experts

Objectives

1. Discover why expert perspectives enhance problem-solving.
2. Explore disciplines and UT departments and research groups.
3. Select experts to interview.
4. Prepare main interview questions.
5. Develop and practice interviewing skills.
6. Explore the Explore UT event website

Preparation

- IT check: laptop, computers, video projector, digital camera
- Check news and IT news for events you think may interest IT Girls: Google Health, Google Sci/Tech, ZDNet (<http://news.zdnet.com/>), <http://slashdot.org/>
- Review the UT department structure and academic units. Be able to navigate to the most likely departments (Engineering, Computer Sciences, Biology, etc)
 - o http://www.utexas.edu/academic/oir/statistical_handbook/05-06/pdf/0506orgcharts.pdf (page 2)
 - o <http://www.utexas.edu/dept/>
- Review the Explore UT web site: <http://www.utexas.edu/events/exploreut/>
- Set up the laptop and video projector, and log in to Google Communication Tools.

Activity

Welcome: greet IT Girls as they arrive. Make sure they pick up and wear their name tags.

Review progress: review accomplishments from lesson 3, "Going Public: Public Service Announcements."

Lead ahead: summarize the objectives for today's session. Tell IT Girls that they are moving into the next challenge cycle stage, *Get Multiple Perspectives*.

Why do YOU care what other people think?

Begin a whole group session with the question: *Why do YOU care what other people know and think?*

Record girls' unique responses on a blank PowerPoint slide, or in a Google Documents file.

If you think that the girls' have missed critical reasons/benefits for consulting experts about a problem and can't quite guide the girls to discover it, add it to the list and explain it.

Explain that seeking out perspectives from other people who may have expertise related to your problem enhances your understanding of the problem and helps you find new solutions.

Ask IT Girls for examples of situations where they sought expert help or advice, and the results.

Conclude the dialog by reviewing, revising or summarizing the responses.

Save the file and send it to the teams.

Who studies your topic?

This section focuses on thinking about all the different disciplines that are involved in their chosen topic. For example, if they chose Global Warming, disciplines like geology,



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geography, agriculture, anthropology, and zoology can be involved in looking at all of the effects on the globe. Thinking about the different disciplines will help them think more about all the different aspects of their topic.

Have the girls explore the UT website, finding all the colleges, departments, and research centers that are related to their topic. They should make a list of these and save it as a Google document. They can also make a list of local companies, government agencies, and professional associations within that field.

Find some experts

Given their list of disciplines, UT departments, companies, government agencies, and professional associations, the groups should be able to come up with a list of 4 – 5 experts that could talk about their topic. Girlstart will provide you with a list of experts we have already primed for talking to the girls. The list should include at least one university professor or researcher and at least one professional in the field. The list of experts should also include their title, their company, and their contact information (email, phone, and mailing address). Save the expert list to Google documents.

Have the girls rank the experts according to how much they work with the specific topic and how much the girls want to interview them. The last two will be backups if one of the first three has a schedule conflict with interview times. Email the document to the Program Leader.

Girlstart staff will do their best to schedule these experts for interviews. Make sure you get the expert lists to them as soon as possible.

Draft your interview

Help the girls prepare questions for experts that will help IT Girl teams better understand their challenge and create solutions. Each group should include a question about good resources of information and data for researching their challenge topic. They should also include a question about the person's job and career.

Have each group plan the way they will conduct the interviews and record the responses.

Interview role play

Set up a mock interview scenario between facilitators and IT Girls (as the interviewer, detective, or investigative reporter) for the whole group to see. Model excellent interviewing/questioning techniques in contrast to poor and unacceptable approaches.

Try this: Instead of using the concept *interview*, try *detective* or *investigator*: encourage IT Girls to think like a detective, or an investigative journalist.

Take pictures or video of the role play!

What is Explore UT?

Pass out copies of the Explore UT flyer for lesson 4.

Open a browser and navigate to the Explore UT website

(<http://www.utexas.edu/events/exploreut/>)



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Review the welcome message from UT Austin President Bill Powers. It sums up the purpose of Explore UT and upholds the third main objective of the IT Girl program: college preparation and career planning. Explore UT is a sincere invitation for IT Girls to consider The University of Texas a place they can continue to learn and grow after high school.

Explain to IT Girls that Explore UT is their opportunity to explore college life, university academics, and their challenge topic more.

Go to the main schedule page (<http://www.utexas.edu/events/exploreut/schedule.html>) and point out Dr. Mary Ann Rankin. She is the Dean of the College of Natural Sciences, and is responsible for the science (Astronomy, Biological Sciences, Computer Sciences, etc.) and Mathematics departments.

Optional: navigate to the College of Natural Sciences home page (<http://cns.utexas.edu/>). Point out some of the news items, and expand the list of departments in the *information about* sidebar.

Select the *Schedule of Activities* link and explain the search features. Tell IT Girls to pick *Prospective Students* if they search under *Events organized by unique interest*. Get them pumped about their Saturday at UT!

News Flashes

At the end of every lesson, encourage girls to check technology news sources on their own time and come in with “news flashes” about cool tech news. Give girls the opportunity at this point in the lesson.

Looking Forward

Let the girls know what you’ll be doing in the next lesson.

SAMPLE