



Get a Job Curriculum

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Get a Job Handouts

Steps To Success Project Outline for Teachers 10

Steps To Success Individual Project Outline for Students 12

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Introduction

As educators, we are responsible to help all students prepare to meet the challenges of the work place. Technical skills and specific job training are important, but the majority of workers do not lose jobs because of lack of these specific skills. Workers regularly lose jobs because of difficulties in social situations that inevitably arise in the job setting. Difficulties in communicating and maintaining appropriate appearance often are the largest barriers to securing and maintaining employment for young adults.

Job-related social and self-management skills may be especially important for students with special needs. In order to be successful, students with learning problems or physical disabilities often need to bring special effort and courage to the job interview and work setting. Consequently, they may need additional time to learn and practice vocational skills. Vocational competencies that need to be developed include the ability to honestly examine one's strengths and weaknesses, creative problem-solving, self-confidence and assertiveness, advocacy skills and accepting responsibility.

IDEA 2004 addresses this and requires that transition services begin no later than the first Individual Education Plan (IEP) when the student turns 16 and that this plan is updated annually. IEPs must have appropriate measurable post-secondary goals based on age appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, independent living skills and employment.

Employment competencies can best be achieved through an activity-based curriculum which emphasizes problem-solving and self-evaluation. Students need more than information and tips about how to behave on the job. They need to have ample opportunity to experience and practice steps which lead to a successful job experience.


The **Get a Job** curriculum addresses these skills by preparing the student for the job interview. The communication and social skills taught, however, are of value beyond the interview process; competencies in these areas not only increase the likelihood of getting a job, but keeping the job. The interviewing format was chosen as a model because the basic skills for success in the job interview are the same core skills for success in the work setting.

This project has helped its developers better understand the complexity and process of preparing for a job and they have been encouraged by the positive results for students who have participated in this curriculum. It is our belief that **Get a Job** will be a dynamic resource for educators.

How To Use This Curriculum

This curriculum has been used in a variety of high school and post high school settings with students who have significant learning disabilities, behavioral difficulties, cognitive challenges and physical disabilities. The activities were implemented in a variety of classroom settings, including classes with a life skills focus and a community transition program for students with disabilities. This curriculum was designed to be implemented primarily by the classroom teacher. Other service providers, such as the occupational therapist, speech-language pathologist and work experience coordinator may contribute by coteaching and supporting specific activities.

The materials in **Get a Job** could be addressed over a period of one to four quarters in a school year, depending upon the particular needs of the classroom students. It is recommended that time is devoted to these activities at least once per week, to allow for continuity.

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The **Get a Job** curriculum is divided into seven goals with objectives, which are summarized in the **Steps to Success Project Outlines** which follow. The curriculum activities relate to discrete and identifiable steps to improve job interviewing skills, and were developed with the following characteristics in mind:

- Incorporates evaluation as an integral part of learning
- Activity-based
- Individualized
- Supports the development of student portfolios

Incorporates Evaluation as an Integral Part of Learning:

Self-evaluation and the ability for the teacher to assess the student's progress are important aspects throughout the program. Students are videotaped frequently and examine their successes and areas needing improvement. Students are given the language to describe what works and what they need to work on. A pre- and post-evaluation process is documented with the **Interview Checklist** and this provides the teacher and student with concrete information to direct the training.

Activity-Based:

Throughout this curriculum, the students are given ample opportunity to practice and rehearse specific components of the job interview. Students are also taught how to critique themselves and each other and use the information to actively improve their performance.

Group-based activities and handouts accompany the learning objectives. The handouts are designed to be guided experiences and individualized for your specific students and classes. The activities that are described in the handouts are not intended to be worksheets completed in isolation. These handouts and activities are to be completed in an atmosphere of group interaction, discussion and guidance by facilitators.

Most of the Handouts Include these Elements:

- A brief definition of a key concept (e.g., "A job interview is when I talk to a supervisor about getting a job").
- An affirmation to actively engage the learner (e.g., "I can get ready to interview so I can get a job")
- A challenge to motivate and prepare the learner for the activity (e.g. "What job will I practice interviewing for?").
- A "reflection" to allow the learner to synthesize and personalize the information.

Individualized:

Not all goals and objectives in the **Get a Job** curriculum may be relevant for every student. Students should be guided through activities which directly relate to their individual needs. The activities may be modified for the individual student's ability to participate. Students should be encouraged to use the vernacular that is meaningful and accessible to them when they are completing activities for this curriculum. For example, some students who have reading difficulties may want to draw pictures or choose graphics from a set of designs when completing their handouts. Some students may want to write or highlight only key words that they are able to read.

Supports the Development of Student Portfolios:

The handouts and project outlines may be retained and compiled as a valuable resource for students so they can actively monitor their own progress. These items may contribute to student portfolios, which are increasingly required by school districts for graduation purposes. Portfolios provide:

- Documentation of the progression of student's skills
- A way to share with families, coaches, friends and support people
- A way to review what students have learned and have a reference to look back at later

The authors have found that a personalized portfolio is a powerful and valuable tool that many students refer back to years after they graduate from public school.



Steps To Success

Project Outline for Teachers

Class _____ Date _____

Students will successfully complete a job interview for a realistic vocation of interest to them.



Get Ready to Learn

- ___ **Objective 1.** Students will complete videotaping of a practice job interview.
- ___ **Objective 2.** Students will interview an expert regarding the nature of a job interview.
- ___ **Objective 3.** Students will review the videotape of the practice interview, review the **Interview Checklist** and identify areas to target for improvement, with the instructor's input (pre-evaluation).




Make a Great First Impression

- ___ **Objective 1.** Students will identify appropriate attire and grooming for an interview and problem-solve how to improve appearance.
- ___ **Objective 2.** Students will demonstrate competence in introducing self, including shaking hands and eye contact.
- ___ **Objective 3.** Students will demonstrate the ability to sit in a relaxed and dignified manner during the interview.



Know Yourself

- ___ **Objective 1.** When asked, "Tell me about yourself," students will relate at least two positive facts.
- ___ **Objective 2.** Students will answer, "What are your goals in the next five years?"
- ___ **Objective 3.** Students will answer, "Why do you want to work here?"

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Know Your Skills

- ___ **Objective 1.** Students will answer, “What work experience do you have?” including job titles, places and description of work.
- ___ **Objective 2.** Students will answer, “How has school prepared you for this job?”
- ___ **Objective 3.** Students will answer, “What kind of tools, machines and equipment can you use?”
- ___ **Objective 4.** Students will be able to describe the supports and accommodations that are helpful for them on the job.



Finish in Style

- ___ **Objective 1.** Students will generate appropriate questions to ask the interviewer.
- ___ **Objective 2.** Students will demonstrate the ability to leave the interview in a gracious way (handshake, eye contact, thanks).



Practice Some More

- ___ **Objective 1.** Students will complete another practice interview and ask for feedback.
- ___ **Objective 2.** Students will identify three areas needing additional practice, set goals and work to improve these areas.



Good Endings

- ___ **Objective 1.** Students will complete another videotaping of a practice interview.
- ___ **Objective 2.** Students will compare pre- and post-tapes and complete the **Interview Checklist** with the instructor’s input (post-evaluation).
- ___ **Objective 3.** Students will celebrate successes and plan for future refinement of skills.