

Foundations of Transition

Session 3 - Think Outside the Box:
Creative Educational & Employment Options

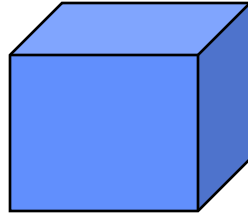
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Highlander Inn
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“THIN



KING”

About Career Preparation

- Employer Class Speakers
- Business Field Trips / Tours
- Informational Interviews
- Job Shadows
 - In-School Jobs
 - School-Sponsored Enterprises
 - Internship in Community Businesses
 - Age 19-20: School-Supported Jobs

Work Experience Types

- Employer Class Speakers
- Business Field Trips / Tours
- Informational Interviews
- Job Shadows
 - In-School Jobs
 - School-Sponsored Enterprises
 - Internship in Community Businesses
 - Age 19-20: School-Supported Jobs

Seamless Transition

1. Work and other community-based experiences begin in high school and hours per week increase over time.
2. Changes in *source of support*
 - school paraprofessional > adult service staffand *funding*
 - school > VR > developmental servicesare smoothly coordinated or happen “behind the curtain”.

Purposes

1. Early High School Years:

- Exploration
- Orientation to workplace expectations
- Basic skills
 - part-time, within school day
 - unpaid

2. Approx. 19-20 year Old Students:

- Occupational Preparation
- References
- Career “Launching”
 - full or part time: Can replace school attendance
 - can transition to paid employment

Worksite Development

Purpose #1 Worksites:

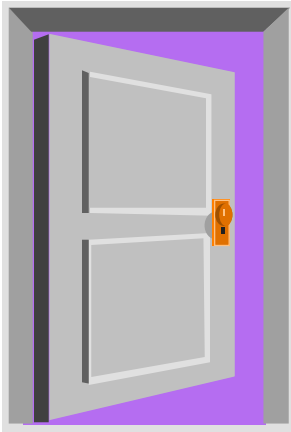
- Rotating “slots” negotiated with local employers

Purpose #2 Worksites:

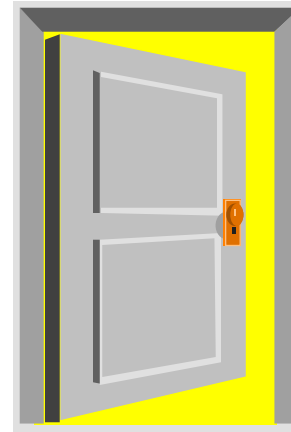
- Individualized for the student
 - matched to interests, skills, transportation from home

Employer Contacts

“Cold Calling”



“Warm Calling”



- Phone, Letter, or Stop In
- Labor Market Surveys

- Referral based on personal contacts

Contact Employers Based On

- Ease of transportation
- Variety of occupational areas
 - hint: use interest inventory list
- Employer reputation
- Projected labor demand

Labor Market Survey

- Sends businesslike message
- Easy for employers to say “Yes”
- Mail with postage-paid return envelope. Items:
 - name, contact info.
 - products or services
 - number of current employees
 - number of current openings if any
 - anticipate labor needs next 12 mos. by job position and #
 - most important qualities desired in new employees
 - most frequent source of new employees
 - (optional: experience hiring employees with disabilities)
 - interested in participating in our school’s work experience program?

Warm Contacts

- Produce the majority (55%) of job leads
- Process:
 - notice to all school personnel, Board members, families
 - general or specific request as needed
 - consider offering a small prize, e.g restaurant gift certificate
 - get contact information for a specific person, find out their relationship with person giving the lead
 - make “name-dropping” calls & schedule appointment

What to Say - Unpaid Experience

- Your name, school, position
- (Referral source if “warm”)
- We believe it is important to prepare our students to understand the world of work and the expectations of employers
- We have / are starting a work experience program; Here is the basic idea (1 minute explanation)
- Your business is (state a complimentary reason for your interest: Has good reputation, is one of the largest/oldest...)
- I would be interested in working with you to identify some tasks that would be useful to you and also give students a valuable experience. You may have some possibilities in mind already, or I could spend some time observing and may be able to make some suggestions.

What to Bring to Initial Meeting - Unpaid Experience

- Referral letters from other satisfied employers
- List of participating businesses or Employer Advisory Committee
- Flyer or brochure
- Job analysis form

If Developing Paid Experience

- Bring student resume
- Bring student letters of recommendation or list of reference contacts from previous unpaid experiences
- Explain student's relevant skills and interests
- Request an interview or meeting

Other Employer Involvement

- Employer Advisory Committee
 - 2 - 4 meetings / yr.
 - review marketing materials, guide development
- Job shadowing / informational interviewing
- Class speakers
- Mock interview for job seeking skills training, or resume feedback

Job (Position) Analysis

- A complete picture of the student job
- Develop based on interviews and observation
- Share with employer; becomes basis of
 - agreement among the parties
 - student progress evaluation

Work Experience Agreement

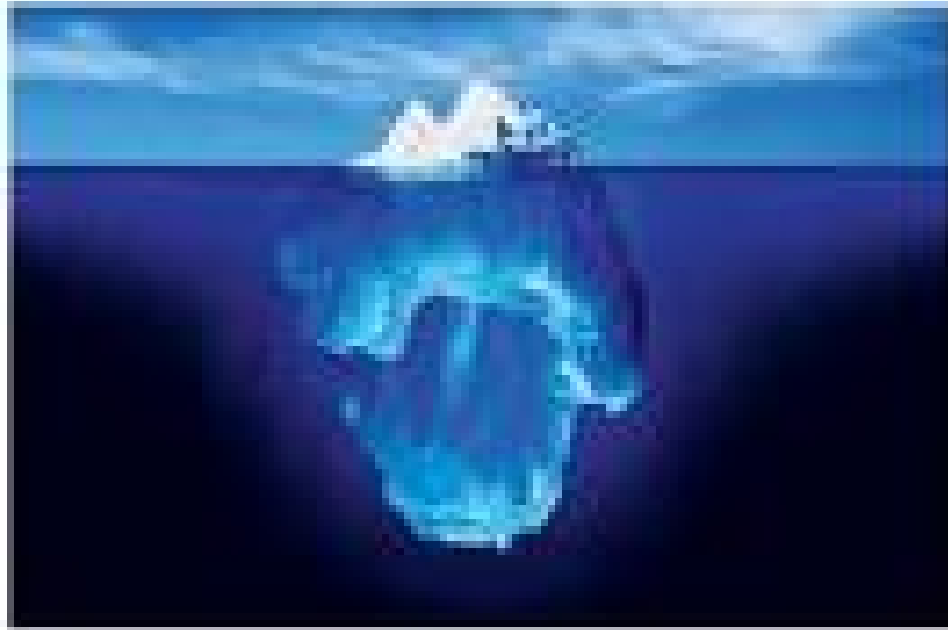
- Start and end dates and work schedule (no more than 120 hrs. unpaid)
- Transportation
- Dress code
- Responsibilities of school, employer, student
- Contact information
- Statement of liability coverage if requested

Worksite Support - 1

- The employer becomes a second “customer”
- Usually a paraprofessional is assigned to accompany the student. Other option: contract with an adult service provider
 - should receive training specific to supporting students at community sites
- Maintain frequent contact with the worksite supervisor / manager
- Periodic progress notes should document:
 - student strengths and weaknesses
 - tasks & environments with high, medium and low interest.

Worksite Support - 2

- Include instruction in the informal and sometimes hidden social customs at the worksite.



Worksite Support - 3

- Gradually find ways to involve “natural supports” in instruction and supervision.

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Final Details

- Businesses should provide a written performance evaluation plus --
- Letter of recommendation or agree to be used as a reference if the experience was positive.
- Make sure complete record of work experiences is provided to adult service representatives on the team.

Further Reading

- Griffin, C., Hammis, D. & Geary, T. (2007). *The job developer's handbook: Practical tactics for customized employment*. Baltimore MD: Brookes.
- Hagner, D. & Lounsbury, D. (2007). Work-based learning: Developing school sponsored work experiences for transitioning students. In F. Rusch (Ed.) *Beyond high school: Preparing adolescents for tomorrow's challenges* (pp. 200 – 223). Belmont CA: Wadsworth.
- Hoff, D., Gandolfo, C., Gold, M. & Jordan, M. (2000). *Demystifying job development*. St. Augustine FL: TRN Press.