

# CHAPTER 3:

## Career Preparation and Work-Based Learning Experiences

This chapter examines the second *Guidepost*, Career Preparation and Work-Based Learning Experiences, and includes information on assessments, developing soft skills, exposure to postsecondary education options, industry site visits, job shadowing, and internships opportunities as core activities. This chapter also includes information on entrepreneurship, an optional activity that has been developed by a few and should be explored by all HS/HT programs because of the unique opportunity it affords and the many useful lessons that can be learned. It is important to keep in mind that each *Guidepost* is co-dependent on the other *Guideposts*, a fact that will become clear when developing a HS/HT program based on the *Guideposts*.

### Component 1: Career Assessment

Career assessment is the process through which students explore career options for the purpose of identifying those that are compatible with their personal goals, interests, and abilities. It is a key step in a continuous process to help young people make informed choices about their futures. HS/HT program operators must collect information regarding the young person's likes, dislikes, interpersonal relations, skills, abilities, capabilities, interests, personality traits, and responses to specific environmental conditions. The career assessment process differs for each student.

To address different learning styles, cultural differences, language barriers, academic difficulties, and challenges, there are three basic types of assessment that are used to assist youth in this process: formal assessment, informal assessment, and work-based learning experiences.

**Formal (standardized) assessments** are those that are typically administered, scored, and interpreted only by people who have been trained to do so (e.g., psychologists, vocational evaluators, qualified vocational rehabilitation counselors, etc.). While there are four key domains of assessment (i.e., Educational Domain, Psychological Domain, Vocational Domain, and Vocational and Medical Domain), HS/HT should be primarily interested in assessments within the vocational domain to address this *Guidepost*.

To learn more about formal assessments, check out one of NCWD/Youth's most popular and requested documents reflecting the most up-to-date developments in assessments entitled, *Career Planning Begins with Assessment: A Guide for Professionals Serving Youth with Educational & Career Development Challenges*. This revised version of the Assessment Guide can be purchased from NCWD/Youth or downloaded for free at [http://www.ncwd-youth.info/resources\\_&\\_Publications/assessment.html](http://www.ncwd-youth.info/resources_&_Publications/assessment.html).

**Informal assessments** include, but are not limited to, online inventories, interviews with youth and family

members, and career portfolios. They are typically conducted in unstructured settings to help individuals identify their career interests, improve their performance, and identify possible learning disabilities. The HS/HT program operator may gather information about the young person by interviewing the youth and/or members of his/her family, observing the youth in class, and reviewing records and other formal assessment results. Often, information gathered during informal assessments leads to referrals for formal assessments and becomes part of the formal assessment record when preparing comprehensive reports or career profiles. (See Exhibit 3.2 for *Sample Online Career Assessment*.)

HS/HT program operators can get additional information about a young person's interests, skills, and abilities by conducting their own informal career assessment activities. Exhibit 3.3 provides examples of informal assessment activities that HS/HT programs can undertake to determine the career interests and basic work performance skills of participating students.

**"I love art! It's my passion!!" says Beth W., a junior at a high school in Frankford, Delaware. She has the talent to support her passion too! Beth is a Delaware HS/HT student who has become one of approximately 10 featured artists at the school. Her work is on display for all students, faculty, and visitors to see. Her section of the "gallery" includes a self-portrait, a portrait of our 16th President, Abraham Lincoln, and a still life. Beth participated in a HS/HT activity called "Smart Options" (purchased software that is used to research job clusters) and discovered that she loves painting and drawing and that she is an image-, logic- and music-smart person. She enjoys arts and crafts, building model houses and planes, and reading short stories, fiction, and *Chicken Soup* books. She hopes to pursue a career in fashion design or art so that she can put her talents to use. Beth learned a lot about herself while participating in HS/HT and is looking forward to having a career that matches her strengths and interests.**

## Component 2: Structured Exposure to Postsecondary Education and Other Life-Long Learning Opportunities

An increasing number of jobs in today's labor market require education and/or training beyond high school. While many people view vocational training beyond high school as an appropriate option for youth with disabilities, a college education is not always seen in the same light. Unfortunately, due to low expectations, many people do not expect youth with disabilities to go to college. When these low expectations are communicated to youth, either directly or indirectly, such youth are not likely to view postsecondary education as an option. This situation can and should change, and HS/HT programs can be a major factor in facilitating such a change.

The exploration of postsecondary education options is an important aspect of every HS/HT program. There are several options within the realm of postsecondary education: career and technical education, community colleges, and four-year colleges and universities. Technical schools, community colleges, and four-year colleges and universities differ in three important areas: (1) the type of programs offered, (2) the type of degree earned, and (3) the cost of attending. In addition to looking at career and technical education options, HS/HT coordinators should assist their students in exploring the differences in two-year community colleges, four-year colleges and universities.

### Online Resources to Consider

**ACT Prep Course Options**, sponsored by The Princeton Review, provides information on the ACT test and options for preparing for the ACT test based on a student's learning style. The options include: classroom courses, online courses, private tutoring, small group tutoring, and books. Visit <http://www.princetonreview.com/college/testprep/testprep.asp?TPRPAGE=2&TYPE=ACT-HOME>.

**College MatchMaker** can be used to search for two- and four-year schools, colleges and universities that meet individual needs. Visit [http://apps.collegeboard.com/search/adv\\_typeofschool.jsp](http://apps.collegeboard.com/search/adv_typeofschool.jsp).

**College Preparation Timeline** will help you prepare a time line as you consider and think about applying for college. Visit <[http://64.233.167.104/search?q=cache:5PD3aj\\_igsoJ:www.uwcu.org/products/studentloans/Student\\_Loan\\_timeline.pdf+college+preparation+timeline&hl=en&gl=us&ct=clnk&cd=1](http://64.233.167.104/search?q=cache:5PD3aj_igsoJ:www.uwcu.org/products/studentloans/Student_Loan_timeline.pdf+college+preparation+timeline&hl=en&gl=us&ct=clnk&cd=1)>.

**Colleges and Technical Schools** provides ideas on questions to ask before enrolling in a career college or a technical school (e.g., is the school accredited by an agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education or licensed by the state in which it is located). This section of the Department’s website can help in choosing the right school to meet one’s career goals. Visit <<http://www.ed.gov/students/prep/college/consumerinfo/index.html>>.

**Financial Aid for College** provides information on the “Free Application for Federal Student Aid.” Visit <<http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>>.

**Getting Ready for College: Advising High School Students with Learning Disabilities** provides information specific to youth with learning disabilities who are preparing for college. This resource is sponsored by the HEATH Resource Center. Visit <<http://www.kidsource.com/Heath/gr.html>>.

**Peterson’s College Search** provides information about majors at two-year and four-year colleges. Visit <<http://www.petersons.com/ugrad/select/u2majors.html>> and <<http://www.petersons.com/ugrad/select/u4majors.html>>.

**Post-ITT: Postsecondary Innovative Transition and Technology Project**, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, contains a collection of resources and activities established to aid students, parents, educators, and disability services coordinators in the task of planning for a student’s transition from secondary to postsecondary education. It contains activities and planning worksheets for students as well as a teacher’s manual. Visit <<http://postitt.org/>>.

**SAT Preparation** is the College Board website that includes all kinds of information on the SAT test, including an SAT Preparation Center, an SAT Subject

Test Center, and a Learning Center. It also includes information on planning for, finding, applying for, and paying for college. Visit <[www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/reg.html](http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/reg.html)>.

**The American Association of Community Colleges** provides information on two-year colleges. Visit <<http://www.aacc.nche.edu/>>.

**The Community College Resources** at the College Board website provides information on two-year colleges. Visit <<http://www.collegeboard.com/communitycollege/>> and <<http://www.collegeboard.com/article/0,,4-21-0-48391,00.html>>.

### Component 3: Exposure to Career Opportunities

Exposure to career opportunities is the process of exposing youth to information about the job market; job-related skills; minimum requirements such as education level; characteristics of different work environments; and the overall culture of specific occupations. Unfortunately, most young people, including youth with disabilities, have little knowledge of the range of jobs and careers that make up today’s labor market. Also at issue is that youth with disabilities have historically been steered towards certain types of jobs based on low expectations. These jobs, often referred to as the “6 F’s”, include food (food services), filth (garbage or custodial jobs), filing (administrative/clerical work), flowers (grounds keeping), fetching (errand boy/girl), or folding (housekeeping and retail stockroom work). While all work is worthwhile and these types of jobs are frequently first jobs for youth, many of these jobs offer little in the way of a career ladder. As a result, youth with disabilities end up looking at jobs rather than careers.

HS/HT programs are changing these trends by providing students with disabilities with opportunities to explore a wide range of careers, including the STEM careers. HS/HT activities are structured specifically to help youth with disabilities see the STEM careers and other technology-focused professions as options that are available to them.

The following are some suggested ways to expose HS/HT students to the wide array of opportunities within the STEM careers and to the pervasiveness of the use of technology in many of the jobs in today's labor market.

1. Guest speakers are an important part of the HS/HT year-round program. They can offer participants specific information about the STEM careers; guidance in identifying and planning for future goals; and a chance to discuss the skills necessary for successfully engaging in different types of work. It is critically important to include professionals with disabilities among the guest speakers you recruit. Beyond that, the range of speakers and topics is limited only by the interests of the audience and the creativity of the program operator. Guest speaker workshops or presentations can be held in various sites—at the local high school or university, a worksite, or other community location. You may be able to get additional support for your HS/HT program by extending invitations to family members and guardians.

- Contact your local Chamber of Commerce or other business organizations involved in promoting business/education partnerships. They may have a speakers bureau that can provide you with ideas about potential speakers. To find your local Chamber, visit <<http://www.uschamber.com/default>>. Asking employers to speak at a HS/HT event is a great way to get them in the door. They are more likely to commit to additional activities once they learn more about the program.
- Include a wide variety of topics, including the following: marketable technology skills; technology careers; work ethics and soft skills; information on how to talk to a supervisor; how to discuss your disability with an employer; how to ask for a reasonable accommodation in the workplace; benefits planning; finding and securing financial aid; setting attainable goals; the value of internships (both paid and unpaid); tips for your first internship or job; study skills; computer literacy; motivation; resume writing; and independent living options.

**HS/HT students enrolled in a Transition course at South High School in Colorado were taught how to advocate for themselves as they explored job opportunities and careers during the Cherry Creek Mall Career Quest. The event used a “Mission Impossible” theme, where the “mission” was to meet as many possible employers and learn as much about their professions as possible. Prior to the event the teacher prepared the students with lessons and role-plays such as how to meet a potential employer, how to introduce themselves for the first time, and how to dress professionally. Participating students had the chance to explore a variety of jobs such as health care professions, technical professions, telecommunications, retail sales and management, public safety, and the publication industry. Students used a “Career Collector Card” to record information on each job, including the name of the company, the company representative’s contact information, the prerequisite education/degree(s) for the job, the experience needed to be hired, the expected salary, and information on what the student liked and didn’t like about the job. The cards, which also provided prompts to the student as to what questions to ask, were designed to be used as a resource later when**

**the student actually looked for work. Two students were paired up with an adult who accompanied them. Adults consisted of HS/HT coordinators, educators, and family members.**

**Each student pair received a “mission” that had the names of the businesses and the people they were to seek out to interview. The adults were encouraged to hang back and let the students take the lead in asking questions and talking to employer representatives. Students were encouraged to seek out more businesses that were not on their list and collect more cards if they had time. Some participating employers agreed to take participating students on a tour of their facilities and to talk to them more in depth about the jobs available there. Students got excited about opportunities they had never considered. Employers were engaged in sharing information with the students about their jobs and encouraging them to pursue their goals. Students increased their self-confidence and motivation as they began to venture out on their own without adult encouragement. Students developed social and problem-solving skills as they had to approach strangers and ask probing questions.**

- Brief your speakers on disability etiquette including using acceptable language; speaking directly to the person, not to the person’s interpreter; reading a Power Point presentation out loud if anyone in the audience is visually impaired; and not leaning on the chair when talking to a person who uses a wheelchair. (See Exhibit 3.4 for additional suggestions related to disability etiquette.)

**Create obtainable goals and objectives for each event where a guest speaker is part of the program.**

1. The primary goal of this event is...
2. The learning objectives (for HS/HT program participants) are...
3. The expected outcome of this event is...
4. The intended audience is...
5. As a follow-up, I will...
6. As a follow-up, HS/HT participants will...

2. Informational interviews are one of the best sources for gathering information about what is happening in a specific occupation or industry. Young people can initiate an informational interview by contacting professionals working in that particular field and asking questions about the careers associated with that field. Remember, the purpose of an informational interview is to obtain career information, not to get a job. (Exhibit 3.5 outlines Steps to Follow to Conduct an Effective Informational Interview and Exhibit 3.6 provides 20 Questions for an Effective Informational Interview.)

**Top 5 reasons to conduct informational interviews:**

1. Explore careers, clarify career goals, and identify career strengths and needs;
2. Discover unadvertised opportunities;
3. Expand personal networks;
4. Build confidence for future job interviews; and
5. Reveal up-to-date career information.

3. Research-based activities include scanning professional magazines, periodicals, newspapers, and the Internet. These are all excellent ways for young people to learn about specific occupations while using critical academic skills to gather and sort through such information.
4. Community resource mapping is another way to acquaint youth with the culture, resources, barriers, and potential partners within their community. Consider creating a scavenger hunt and include clues relating to local businesses and employment opportunities (i.e., the local Chamber of Commerce), transportation (including accessible transportation), community resources (recreational, religious, etc.), human resources (public and private service agencies, community colleges, etc.), and employment and training services (One-Stop Career Centers, the state Vocational Rehabilitation agency, Independent Living Centers, etc.).

Remember to follow up with your speakers, those granting informational interviews, and any partners who have provided research-based activities. Write a letter of thanks and ask each young person to write one as well.

**Online Resources to Consider**

In addition to researching job openings in the newspaper and on the Internet, these links may be helpful in assisting HS/HT students as they explore different career paths.

**America’s CareerInfoNet** is a One-Stop Career Center that contains a wealth of information on the knowledge, skills, abilities, and tasks for selected occupations; skills credentialing; informed career decision-making; training and education; labor market trends; and career tools. It also contains links to career videos and state-specific career information. Visit <[http://www.acinet.org/acinet/default.asp?soccode=&stfips=>](http://www.acinet.org/acinet/default.asp?soccode=&stfips=).

**America’s Job Bank** is the nation’s largest online labor exchange. Businesses can post job listings, create customized job orders, and search resumes. Job seekers post resumes and search for jobs that fit their career goals. Visit <<http://www.ajb.org>>.

**America's Service Locator** helps people find a range of local services including workforce centers, unemployment benefits, job training, education opportunities, and other workforce services. Visit <<http://www.ServiceLocator.org>>.

**Birkman Quiz** helps students explore their personality and skills. The quiz can help guide students as they embark on career planning. Visit <[http://www.princetonreview.com/cte/quiz/career\\_quiz1.asp](http://www.princetonreview.com/cte/quiz/career_quiz1.asp)>.

**CareerBuilder** puts jobs in front of poised job seekers, wherever they are – at home or at work – in print and on the Internet. It is one of the nation's leading recruitment resources, with presence in more than 130 local newspapers. Visit <<http://www.careerbuilder.com>>.

**Career Exploration** provides online exploration activities related to vocational and technical careers at the Vocational Information Center's website. Each career path page includes links to various career descriptions as well as links to educational sites relating to the specific career, such as tutorials, directories, associations, industry news, glossaries, and related academics. Visit <<http://www.khake.com/page2.html>>.

**Career Interests Game** is sponsored by the University of Missouri. Based on Dr. John Holland's theory that people and work environments can be loosely classified into six groups (Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, or Conventional), the Career Interests Game is designed to help match an individual's interests and skills with relevant careers. It focuses on how personalities fit into specific work environments and careers. Sample jobs are directly linked to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook website for detailed job outlook information. Visit <<http://career.missouri.edu/students/explore/thecareerinterestsgame.php>>.

**Career Key** is an online interest assessment that measures skills, abilities, values, and interests. It allows the user to identify promising jobs and locate accurate information about them. Visit <<http://www.careerkey.org/english/>>.

**Career Voyages** is a collaborative effort of the U.S. Department of Labor and the U.S. Department of Education that provides information on high growth, in-demand occupations along with the skills and education needed to attain those jobs. It includes information on training and education available to assist people in preparing for these occupations and to help people advance in different careers. Visit <<http://www.careervoyages.gov/>>.

**Hire Disability Solutions, LLC** is a national organization that specializes in job services and placement for individuals with disabilities, in collaboration with the online job search site Monster.com. The career resources section of their website contains information for job seekers with disabilities and for businesses seeking information on hiring individuals with disabilities. It permits the posting of resumes and job opportunities, and contains information on workplace accessibility and various pieces of legislation that impact the employment and education of individuals with disabilities. Visit <<http://hireDS.com>>.

**JobWeb**, sponsored by the National Association of Colleges and Employers, includes links to Find an Employer, Search JobWeb, Articles Library, Contact JobWeb, Shop JobWeb, Online Career Fair, Resumes & Interviews, Career Development, Internships/Co-ops, Salary Information, Job Market Research, and After College. Also included is an "Ask the Expert" section which houses archived questions related to disability. Visit <<http://www.jobweb.org/>>.

**LifeWorks**, sponsored by the National Institutes of Health's Office of Science Education, explores careers in health and medical sciences. See interviews with more than 70 professionals and learn what their typical workday involves and why they chose their career. Find out which careers match your interests and skills. Visit <<http://science.education.nih.gov/LifeWorks>>.

**NCDA** is the National Career Development Association, a division of the American Counseling Association (ACA). NCDA provides service to the public and professionals involved with or interested in career development. Internet links provide information on self-assessment, career development process, occupational information, employment trends, military

information, distance education, etc. Visit <http://www.ncda.org/>.

**O\*NET** is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor and provides the general public with broad access to a large database of occupational information and labor market research. It includes information on skills, abilities, knowledge, work activities, and interests associated with approximately 1,000 occupations. Visit <http://online.onetcenter.org/>.

**Teacher’s Guide to the Occupational Outlook Handbook** is a handbook sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics that describes hundreds of occupations. For each occupation, it tells what workers do, what the working conditions are, the training and education needed, earnings potential, and expected job prospects. Job search tips, state-specific job market information, articles about specific occupations and industries, and additional career information are also included. Visit [http://www.bls.gov/oco/teachers\\_guide.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oco/teachers_guide.htm).

**U.S. Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics** provides detailed information on the job market, including trends and forecasts for the future. Visit <http://www.bls.gov/oco/>.

**Vocational Information Center** is a central online location for career and technical education students and educational professionals to access links, resources, and lesson plans in areas such as: career activities, preparing for career and school (including portfolios and related resources), applied academics (including math and science), exploring different industries, and work-related activities. Visit <http://www.khake.com/page94.html>.

**Your Employment Selections (YES!)** is a motion-video, Internet-based job preference program for youth and adults with disabilities. It allows youth and adult participants with limited or no reading skills to watch videos of jobs, to listen as a narrator describes key tasks in each job, and to select preferred ones. Produced by the Technology, Research, and Innovation in Special Education (TRISPED) Project at Utah State University, the program includes videos for 120 different jobs. Visit <http://www.yesjobsearch.com/index.cfm>.

## The following websites are examples of STEM related jobs and careers.

**Architects**, visit <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos038.htm>.

**Astronauts**, visit <http://liftoff.msfc.nasa.gov/academy/astronauts/wannabe.html>.

**Meteorologists**, visit <http://www.weatherwizkids.com/becoming.htm>.

**Music Production**, visit <http://cnvi.com/applause/>.

**Pharmacists or Toxicologists**, visit <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos079.htm> and <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toxicology>.

**Professional Chefs**, visit <http://www.princetonreview.com/cte/profiles/dayInLife.asp?careerID=32>.

**Veterinarians**, visit <http://netvet.wustl.edu/vcareer.htm>.

**Web Development/Information Technology**, visit [http://www.dashes.com/ani/2005/09/06/web\\_development](http://www.dashes.com/ani/2005/09/06/web_development).

**Zoo Keepers**, visit <http://www.jobprofiles.org/> (look under the “Ag and Nature” tab).

## Component 4: Developing Work-Readiness Skills

Work-readiness skills are the basic “soft skills” that complement the technical knowledge and skills (e.g., reading comprehension, mathematics, science, computer skills, etc.) needed to perform a job. Work-readiness skills have consistently been documented by employers as the weakest link between graduates of both high school and college and the world of work. In 2006, four organizations (The Conference Board, Corporate Voices for Working Families, the Partnership for 21st Century Skills, and the Society for Human Resource Management) collaborated on a survey of over 400 employers across the United States to determine the skill sets employers were seeking when bringing new employees into the workforce, particularly when hiring recent graduates from high schools, community colleges, technical schools and four-year colleges. According to their findings

employers value applied skills (e.g., professionalism/work ethics, oral and written communication skills, teamwork/collaboration, and critical thinking/problem-solving), more than educational attainment and basic knowledge of specific subjects such as math and reading comprehension. The survey also indicated growing frustration among employers over the lack of these applied skills in the new people entering the workforce.

### Soft Skills Development Activities

“Soft skills” refer to the cluster of personality traits, social graces, language skills, personal habits, work habits, and attitudes that are characteristic of people across all occupations to varying degrees and that are necessary to succeed in the workplace. Soft skills, which complement a person’s ability to perform the technical requirements of a job, include a variety of things that can be learned such as good oral communication skills, honesty, self-motivation/taking initiative, creativity, organizational skills, problem-solving skills, a willingness to learn, teamwork/collaboration skills, leadership skills, interpersonal skills, flexibility/adaptability, ability to work under pressure, dependability, punctuality, customer service skills, and social etiquette skills (e.g., dressing and acting appropriately).

Although it is important to interweave learning soft skills into educational activities generally, there is often not enough time in the school day to emphasize all these important skills. Consequently, HS/HT programs need to devote substantial time and resources to addressing this well recognized weakness in all youth in order to help youth with disabilities compete in the world of work. After-school and summer activities sponsored by HS/HT provide excellent opportunities to assist youth with disabilities in developing these all important work-readiness skills.

In developing HS/HT activities/curriculum to address the development of soft skills, opportunities should be provided for students to practice the following:

- **Teamwork.** Encourage team projects and team activities, such as writing a quarterly newsletter, jointly interviewing potential guest speakers, working as part of a team that is creating something,

undertaking a community services project, or creating a website.

- **Communication.** Organize opportunities for students to practice presenting themselves to employers. Ask guest speakers to provide mock interviews for students. Videotape these interviews and provide immediate feedback. Take students to a local career fair where they can gain experience talking to potential employers. Have students present a project they have completed.
- **Problem-Solving.** Arrange for students to create and manage hands-on projects. Present students with a problem and divide them into groups to solve it. Ask the groups to report back to the larger group.
- **Customer Service.** Provide role-playing opportunities that allow students to respond to requests from potential “customers” through face-to-face contact, email, and telephone.
- **Social and Business Etiquette.** Model socially effective work behaviors like good manners, appropriate body language, arriving on time to work or meetings, appropriate dress, and good grooming. It is important to clearly communicate the expectation for social and business etiquette.

It is particularly important to address these skills prior to approving any HS/HT student’s participation in an internship (either paid or unpaid). Acquiring these soft skills can be a critical factor in ensuring the success of an internship or of a job placement.

**Florida HS/HT received \$10,000 from Darden Restaurants to provide customer service workshops and support paid summer internships for HS/HT students.**



## Job Search Skills Activities

Students can also benefit greatly from opportunities to explore and expand their job search skills. HS/HT coordinators should assist students in learning about the different types of resumes and help them develop an effective resume. All youth may not understand that conveying their experiences such as baby sitting, caring for a neighbor's animals, or cutting grass can provide valuable information to employers. Additionally, emphasize the value of volunteer work and community service, as such experiences are also viewed as basic work experience.

### *Suggested Activities*

- **Create Resumes:** Have sample resume templates available on a computer. As some young people will have more work experience than others, make functional (skills-based) resume templates available in addition to chronological ones.

#### **“Experience” resumes may include**

- name, address, phone/fax numbers, e-mail address;
- career objective;
- education (dates, institution, city, degree/major, specialties);
- employment (dates, company, city, job title, details of position, description of accomplishments—include internships and volunteer jobs!);
- summary of qualifications;
- languages;
- computer skills (programs you can operate);
- awards received;
- interests/activities; and
- references (supervisors and teachers).

#### **“Skills” resumes may include**

- name, address, phone/fax numbers, e-mail address;
- career objective;
- functional skills summary (includes skills from school, positive personality traits, grades if good, special projects, etc.);
- volunteer experience (dates, locations, city, details of position, description of accomplishments—include in-school jobs!);
- languages;
- computer skills (programs you can operate);
- awards received;
- interests/activities; and
- references (from supervisors and teachers).

- **Write Cover Letters:** Basic job seeking skills also include developing an appropriate cover letter that highlights things relevant to the job being sought. HS/HT programs should provide opportunities for youth to draft cover letters for specific jobs of interests and to respond to questions that are likely to be asked during interviews for different types of jobs.
- **Practice Interviews:** Students often practice mock interviews in groups of twos and provide feedback to one another. In some programs, HS/HT staff videotape these mock interviews as a means of providing constructive feedback. It is particularly useful when peers provide concrete examples of what the young person did well and identify areas for improvement. Some HS/HT programs ask employers to come in, conduct the mock interviews, and provide feedback to participating students.
- **Discuss Disclosure:** Don't forget to discuss issues surrounding disability disclosure and what a young person might expect during a job interview with regard to their disability. Talk about appropriate and inappropriate questions regarding one's disability. Discuss disability disclosure as it applies to a job interview as opposed to actual acceptance of a job and the need to request reasonable accommodations.

Deciding if and when to disclose a disability is a highly personal decision and can be challenging. Much depends on individual preference and the disability involved. **Program operators should never disclose a HS/HT participant's disability to an employer.** It is up to the young person to disclose this information. Training may be needed in order to practice disability disclosure. (See Exhibit 3.7 for information on Disability Disclosure: Advantages and Disadvantages.)

**When practicing disability disclosure, help the young person focus on what s/he CAN do (abilities)—and what s/he has to OFFER a potential employer. The more positive a young person is, the more s/he will convey, “I am a qualified candidate for this position.”**

A great source of information on disability disclosure is the *411 on Disability Disclosure: A Workbook for Youth with Disabilities*, produced by NCWD/Youth. This workbook is designed for youth, and adults working with them, to learn about disability disclosure. It helps young people make informed decisions about whether or not to disclose their disability and understand how that decision may impact their education, employment, and social lives. Based on the premise that disclosure is a very personal decision, the workbook helps young people think about and practice disclosing their disability. This workbook guides adults as they help young people disclose. The workbook can be used in one-on-one situations or in classrooms and group settings. The *411* can be purchased or downloaded free of charge at [http://www.ncwd-youth.info/resources\\_&\\_Publications/411.html](http://www.ncwd-youth.info/resources_&_Publications/411.html).

### Online Resources to Consider

Below are some links that can assist HS/HT students as they prepare resumes, write cover letters, prepare for job interviews, and think about disclosing their disabilities.

**Career City: Ten Key Ingredients of the Cover Letter** provides assistance in developing a cover letter. Visit <http://www.careercity.com/hot/index.asp?f=getinter/cvltr/10keys.asp>.

**Guide to Resume Writing** takes the user through the preliminary steps to building and writing a resume with the following online “teaching” tools: How to prepare an effective resume; Action words; Sample resumes; and What employers want. Visit [http://www.jobweb.com/Resumes\\_Interviews/resume\\_guide/restips.html](http://www.jobweb.com/Resumes_Interviews/resume_guide/restips.html).

**Job Accommodation Network (JAN)** is a service of the Office of Disability Employment Policy of the U.S. Department of Labor. JAN’s mission is to facilitate the employment and retention of workers with disabilities by making information on job accommodations, self-employment, and small business opportunities readily available to interested parties. The website includes information on disability disclosure. Visit <http://www.jan.wvu.edu/>.

**Jobsmart: Resumes & Cover Letters** provides assistance in developing a resume. Visit <http://jobsmart.org/tools/resume/index.htm>.

**Life Skills for Vocational Success (LSVS)** contains over 60 lesson plans for educators, counselors, job coaches, and other professionals working to increase the employability of people with disabilities. Lessons focus on social skills, decision-making skills, employability, money management, transportation, health, family responsibilities, basic understanding of the law, and telephone skills. Visit <http://www.workshopsinc.com/manual/index.html>.

**So You Wanna Write a Cover Letter?** provides assistance in developing a cover letter. Visit <http://www.soyouwanna.com/site/syws/coverletter/coverletter.html>.

**Using the Internet to Get a Job** provides instruction on how to create an electronic resume. Visit <http://www.oakton.edu/resource/stuserv/netjobs/resumes/>.

**WorkabilityIV** is a pre-employment program for San Jose State University students with disabilities. The website includes rules for a good disclosure. Visit <http://www.work4.sjsu.edu/jobsearchtips/disclosure/disclosure.html>.

## Component 5: Industry Site Visits and Tours

Industry site visits and tours typically involve a group of young people (accompanied by adult chaperones) visiting various job sites to be exposed to and learn about real-life work environments. Such visits give students an overview of many facets of a particular business or industry and often provide them with their first exposure to the day-to-day operations of technology-related careers. The itinerary for any site visit should depend on the interests of the students involved and on the host organization’s programs or facilities. Visits and tours are generally scheduled for a few hours or one full day. No matter how much time is spent at the site, it is crucial to work closely with the host organization’s representative to develop a clear understanding of expectations and intended outcomes.

It is also important to inform the staff hosting the visit about any accommodations that might be needed by participating students. Finally, it is extremely important to clearly communicate to students your expectations of them during an industry site tour.

Site visits and tours can be especially enriching and motivating for students. For example, talking with a company employee may spark a student's interest in a particular occupation, while seeing a research lab in action may help another student develop a better overall understanding of science careers and methods to conduct investigations and research.

As an added benefit, contact with host organization representatives can be a foundation for strong, lasting relationships that may result in additional involvement in the future such as providing internships or other enrichment opportunities for youth. Site visits provide opportunities for employers to view young people with disabilities as potential members of the future workforce.

### **Examples of HS/HT Site Visits and Industry Tours**

- **Medical technology facilities at hospitals**
- **Science and natural history museums**
- **Planetariums and observatories**
- **Aerospace firms**
- **Medical instrument manufacturing companies**
- **Bio-engineering research firms**
- **Biomedical research firms**
- **Electric utility companies**
- **Bank data centers**
- **TV and radio stations**
- **Chemical manufacturing plants**
- **Agricultural research facilities**
- **Marine research facilities**
- **Technology training institutes**
- **Universities**
- **NASA space flight facilities**
- **Computerized libraries**
- **Private research and development laboratories**
- **Government laboratories and research facilities**

### **What to Do When Coordinating Site Visits and Industry Tours**

1. Ask your industry representative to
  - provide a tour of the facility,
  - explain the responsibilities of various departments of the organization,
  - describe a typical day of an employee in the organization,
  - answer questions about the site specifically and the industry in general, and
  - provide an opportunity for youth to talk with a variety of employees.
2. HS/HT program operators should
  - identify the goals and learning objectives of the visit,
  - create an interesting and enriching visit for young people,
  - relate the visit to high-tech careers,
  - mesh the visit with other program components,
  - create an itinerary including time required (door to door) and lunch or refreshment necessities,
  - decide how many participants can be accommodated on the visit,
  - obtain signed permission forms from parents or guardians,
  - arrange overnight accommodations if necessary,
  - conduct an accessibility assessment to make sure the site is "disability friendly,"
  - coordinate transportation and chaperones,
  - determine follow up assignments for students, and
  - plan an evaluation of the visit.



### 3. HS/HT participants should

- research the company (industry) in advance and develop a list of relevant questions,
- articulate the purpose of the site visit as well as appropriate rules for behavior, and
- complete any follow up assignments.

The possibilities for HS/HT site visits should originate from your community or region. If some youth are interested in careers not available within your geographic location, consideration should be given to developing a field trip to another community—even for one youth if s/he has taken responsibility for researching that particular career. This may require working with the parents, finding funds to support travel expenses, and coordinating transportation. In the spirit of HS/HT, geography should not be a limiting factor, if at all possible. Also, consider a virtual site visit where a telephone call with a representative of an industry of interest is combined with a guided tour of their website.

**Ohio HS/HT has partnered with a local business, the IDEAL Group, Inc., to expand their use of technology. The mission of the IDEAL Group is to promote and support the use of mainstream market forces to drive the design of more accessible information and communications technology. Among other things, this company provides a means for groups to meet online and conduct fully-accessible conferencing, training, and collaboration services over the Internet. In conjunction with HS/HT, the IDEAL Group is conducting state partnership meetings over the Internet and facilitating e-mentoring relationships between HS/HT students in Ohio and mentors from other countries. In addition, they are experimenting with technology-based virtual job interviews, job shadowing, industry site tours, and tutoring activities. This exciting new use of accessible Internet technology is something other HS/HT programs may want to explore. For more information on the technology used to conduct these experimental activities, visit <<http://www.onlineconferencingsystems.com>>.**

## Component 6: Job Shadowing

Job shadowing is a motivating activity designed to give youth an up-close look at the world of work and to bridge the gap between academics and the adult world. During a job shadow, students accompany employees as they do their work, providing an opportunity for the students to learn about a specific occupation or industry. Job shadowing gives students the opportunity to explore various facets of a career field and can help students select or narrow their career focus. A job shadow is a good way to team an experienced worker with a student, and to provide students with adult role models. Often times, job shadows can lead to internships or mentoring opportunities.

Youth should be required to note different aspects of the workers' activities and performance so they can be discussed during follow-up or debriefing meetings with other HS/HT participants and program operators.

When setting up job shadowing experiences, be sure to delineate for all parties involved the expectations of the activity, such as ensuring that the youth is able to observe actual work and not just be taken on a tour of the facility. Remember, job shadowing is a valuable way for a student to gain closer insight into a particular technical job or a facet of that job.

### What to Do When Coordinating Job Shadowing Opportunities

1. Ask the business or community partner to
  - explain to the HS/HT program staff what will be observed;
  - clarify logistics, responsibilities, safety, health, security, and/or confidentiality issues related to the employment site with the program staff;
  - identify an employee who wishes to provide the job shadow experience;
  - brief that employee on the goals of the activity; and
  - ensure the employee will be doing something from which the youth can see and learn.

For a number of years, Jake was an active Boy Scout in Grand Rapids, Michigan. In addition to the leadership and other skills Jake has developed as a result of scouting, his mother believes that his involvement with MiConnections of Kent County (a local site HS/HT site in Michigan) helped him gain even more self-confidence. During the summer of 2006 Jake worked as a camp counselor and lived away from home for the first time in his life. This experience gave him the opportunity to earn the last badge he needed to become an Eagle Scout.

Jake has dyslexia and, for years, his classroom was a special education resource room. He was referred to MiConnections during his freshman year and immediately began participating in a number of activities including an outdoor challenge course with team-building exercises and a tour of the Michigan Works! One-Stop Career Center and the Tassell Michigan Technical Education Center. Jake and other MiConnections youth toured Grand Valley State University, including a visit to their environmental lab located on a boat on Lake Michigan. They shadowed scientists conducting experiments to study the lake's water quality. Jake also toured a community media center and, as a result, took a class in video production.

In the spring of 2006, Jake and a couple of friends from the video production class traveled to Lansing to the state capitol building to attend a disability awareness rally. They filmed the rally and then produced a video. During the rally, there was a tornado warning and everyone in the capitol needed to be evacuated, including a large number of people with mobility problems which created a real challenge. Jake took the lead with his friends, figured out an alternative evacuation route and assisted a number of rally members in exiting safely. He later received a Medal of Merit awarded by the Governor for his quick thinking and successful efforts to get people to safety.

Jake's parents believe that his MiConnections involvement directly led to full inclusion in general education classes during his sophomore year. Although he began the school year utilizing the resource room services, his self-confidence and positive attitude were so strong that his reading level dramatically increased to the point that he could handle a full schedule of general education classes. During the year, he also participated in an assessment for the career technical center and entered the automotive technology program in the fall of 2006.

## 2. HS/HT program operators should

- coordinate the job shadowing experience with the business or community partner;
- take care of administrative details for the work-based learning experience, including abiding by any federal, state, and/or local policies, requirements and regulations. Check with your local Chamber of Commerce or school district to obtain this type of information;
- design activities that relate academic content to the job shadowing opportunity;
- prepare the students in advance by clarifying and reviewing any logistics, responsibilities, safety, health, security, and/or confidentiality issues; and
- arrange for transportation.

## 3. HS/HT program participants should

- provide a positive attitude and a commitment to learning more about the targeted job being observed,
- dress properly and abide by appropriate rules for behavior,
- ask questions (see sidebar on next page), and
- write a letter of thanks to the individual shadowed.



## Sample job shadow questions for students

1. What is your title or position?
2. What are your responsibilities in this position?
3. What were the minimum requirements for your job?
4. How are technology, computers, and electronics used in your job?
5. What training, education, and experience do you have?
6. What is your work environment like? Stressful? Laid back?
7. What is the hardest part of your job?
8. What do you like the most about your job?
9. What do you like least about your job?
10. What do you think makes you successful at your job?
11. Do you have opportunities for professional development?
12. Are there opportunities for advancement at your company?
13. What suggestions do you have for someone who wants to get a job like yours?

### Time Commitment

Generally, a job shadowing experience will last from three to six hours in the course of one day, although some may last as long as a week. Often the job shadow will last an entire day. In addition, the person coordinating the job shadow may expect to spend two to five hours helping to arrange the job shadowing opportunity. This time may include speaking to department heads, supervisors, and employees within the organization about the job shadow; reviewing details with the school staff coordinator; and preparing any pertinent background information.

### Online Resources to Consider

**Disability Mentoring Day (DMD)**, sponsored by the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD), is a nationally coordinated effort to secure job shadowing opportunities for youth with disabilities. Although DMD began as a single day set aside in October, (i.e., National Disability Employment Awareness Month), localities now have the option of coordinating a kickoff event such as a career fair in October, as a means of introducing youth with disabilities to employers who may subsequently be willing to become involved in a year-round relationship such as mentoring or job shadowing. In several states, HS/HT functions as the coordinator for the statewide effort. Visit <http://www.dmd-aapd.org/>.

**Groundhog Job Shadow Day**, sponsored by the National Job Shadowing Coalition, gives students an up-close look at the world of work. The program, which is a joint venture of America's Promise-Alliance for Youth, Junior Achievement, the U.S. Department of Education, and the U.S. Department of Labor, begins each year with a nationwide kickoff and continues throughout the school year. As students all over America "shadow" workplace mentors through a normal day on the job, they get to see firsthand how the skills learned in school relate to the workplace. Additional sponsors and supporters (e.g., Hyatt, Monster.com, and the News Corporation) have joined the effort during the program's ten-year history as the program has grown to have more than one million students and 100,000 businesses participate nationwide. For more information, visit <http://www.jobshadow.org/>.

**Job Shadowing** includes information and resources related to job shadowing experiences. It includes a sample Student Evaluation Form, Student Reflection Form, questionnaire to determine what a student learned during a job shadowing experience, and thank-you letter to an employer, as well as tips for succeeding in the workplace. Visit <http://asai.indstate.edu/Guiding%20All%20Kids%20-%20Lesson%20Plans/Job%20Shadowing.doc>.

## Florida Disability Mentoring Day: A Growing Success

In October 2006, The Able Trust which houses the Florida HS/HT program partnered with several organizations (i.e., the Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Darden Restaurants, Clear Channel Radio, Volunteer Florida, and the Florida Mentoring Partnership) to host Florida's fifth annual Disability Mentoring Day (DMD). More than 700 students and job seekers with disabilities were matched with business professionals to learn about careers in technology, communications, law, finance, healthcare and other careers in their areas of interest. In addition to the hosting organizations, NASA, Kennedy Space Center, the Florida Supreme Court, SunTrust Bank, the Florida's Governor and Lieutenant Governor's offices, and many other businesses participated. More than 100 volunteer community liaisons from across the state successfully paired student and job seekers with business professional, allowing students the opportunity to experience first-hand workplace activities in their fields of interest. The event began with a kick-off celebration in Miami where Marc Buoniconti, son of NFL Hall of Fame linebacker Nick Buoniconti and Ambassador for the Miami Project to Cure Paralysis, served as Honorary Chair for the celebration.

Florida DMD is part of the American Association of People with Disabilities' (AAPD) national, broad-based effort to promote career development for students and job seekers with disabilities by matching them with employers for an on-site job shadowing experience, a day of opportunity for students and job seekers with disabilities to shadow a business mentor. As a result of Florida DMD, several students and job seekers were offered internships, employment, volunteer opportunities and continued mentoring relationships.



## Component 7: Volunteer Work and Service-Learning

Work-based learning experiences involve both paid and unpaid work opportunities. While volunteer work and service-learning opportunities are generally unpaid, they still represent excellent ways to expose students to the soft skills associated with the world of work and give them opportunities to develop the basic skills needed to get and keep a job. Recognizing the value of volunteer work, many high schools and middle schools now require each student to participate in a certain number of hours of volunteer work as a requirement for graduation. Service-learning has also become very popular. It offers opportunities for students to get involved with their communities in a tangible way by integrating service projects with classroom learning. Service-learning engages students in the educational process, using what they learn in the classroom to solve real-life problems.

When youth are involved in volunteer work and/or service-learning, they can make the connection between what they are learning in school and how it will apply in the world of work. They get to observe the practical application of science, math, writing skills, and oral communication skills in different areas of community work, thereby enriching the content of student learning. Volunteer work and service-learning are a developmentally appropriate way for youth to begin exploring different types of jobs and, in some cases, to re-affirm their career choices. Such opportunities can be used to begin building a young person's resume. Some HS/HT programs use such opportunities as one of the progressive steps a HS/HT student must go through to be eligible to participate in a paid internship.

### Online Resources to Consider

**Learn and Serve America**, sponsored by the Corporation for National and Community Services, supports and encourages service-learning throughout the United States, and enables over one million students to make meaningful contributions to their community while building their academic and civic skills. For more information, visit <http://www.learnandserve.org/>.

## Component 8: Internships

An internship is a situation in which a student works for an employer for a specific period of time to learn about a particular industry or occupation. Activities undertaken by interns may include special projects, a sample of tasks from different jobs, or tasks from one specific job. Internships provide opportunities for youth to obtain direct exposure to different careers in a structured paid or unpaid work setting.

Through internships, students see a variety of applications of what they are learning. They discover more about their talents and their skills. Although internships are intended to provide a structured work experience for youth in a career field that is of interest to them, participation in an internship may help a young person discover that they are really not interested in a particular type of work. Such experiences can be extremely valuable in formulating initial career choices. Although internships are usually short-term, typically lasting for a few weeks to a few months, youth benefit by developing an understanding of what is required to be a successful employee as they are introduced to the performance expectations of the “real world.”

Internship programs often generate both formal and informal workplace mentors. A formal mentor relationship requires a pre-assigned match (see Chapter 5, Connecting Activities). Informal mentor relationships tend to be established at the worksite and may be coordinated by the employer for the duration of the internship. They may also be unprompted, more naturally occurring relationships that develop without direct, guided involvement from the HS/HT program operator. These relationships may be based on work or non-work issues and may develop from casual relationships and interactions.

Although developing and monitoring internships requires a significant investment of time, it is one of the most important predictors of success after school. Internship experiences (both paid and unpaid) are an ongoing, regular component of career development in the HS/HT program. Some HS/HT programs have explored the idea of internships for school credit.

**Cyrus B, a high school senior with moderate mental retardation, was an active participant in the Florida HS/HT program for four years. Cyrus was involved in a couple of summer internships, but working with the City Gas Utility Department was different. His attitude, personality, and skills were a great match for the overall work culture of the department. As a result, the work crew and supervisor were impressed with his skills and work ethic. The department attempted to hire him full time. Although Cyrus’ job application and resume looked great, he unfortunately did not have enough years of experience for the position. Through continued efforts of the HS/HT project coordinator, the City Manager’s Office, the City Gas Utility Department and the City’s HR Department, a temporary position was created for this young man! The supervisor and crew were delighted to have him back as part of the team. After working for two years in this temporary position, Cyrus was offered a permanent position with the city and was promoted to an assistant supervisor position in less than three years. Cyrus has remained involved with the local HS/HT site selling tickets for a fundraiser. He will also serve as a mentor for new HS/HT interns who are placed with the City Gas Utility Department.**

In developing effective internships experiences, most HS/HT programs do some or all of the following:

- Establish criteria for students’ participation in both paid and unpaid internships. For example, paid internships may be used as rewards by reserving them for participants who have shown responsibility by regularly attending HS/HT meetings and events, maintaining a specific grade point average, and participating in an orientation to internships.
- Institute criteria that explain the differences between paid and unpaid internships and that lay out the order of internships (for example, requiring successful completion of an unpaid internship before becoming eligible for a paid internship).
- Identify students who are interested in participating and have demonstrated the level of maturity necessary to successfully complete an internship. Most HS/HT programs reserve internships for



students who are juniors or seniors in high school.

- Advise students on available internship opportunities and help them select options they will find stimulating and relevant to their interests. Remember that the quality of the work activity is paramount.
- Draft an “Agreement” or “Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)” to use with employers who are willing to provide internship opportunities. You may obtain a sample MOU from the local Chamber of Commerce, a school-based partnership, or a Vocational Technical Center, and adjust it to meet the needs of HS/HT. (See Exhibit 3.8 for a Sample Internship Learning Agreement.)
- As necessary, determine who will pay for any assistive technology that the student requires. The employer may pay for this directly or it can be done through collaboration with a Vocational Rehabilitation agency or the school.
- Educate work supervisors at the internship sites about the HS/HT program and the goals of the internship program. This might be accomplished through one-on-one meetings with an employer who has agreed to provide an internship, or by holding a breakfast meeting for employers who might be willing to provide internship opportunities.
- Ask the young person, his or her parents, and the employer to complete a letter of agreement specifying the terms of the internship. (See Exhibit 3.9 for a Sample Internship Agreement.)
- Communicate with both the employer and the HS/HT student during the course of the internship to monitor the youth’s progress and the satisfaction of both the youth and the employer. A work log should be used to record the hours the student is involved in the internship, as well as relevant weekly activities. (See Exhibit 3.10 for a Sample Internship Work Log and Exhibit 3.11 for a Sample Internship Time Sheet.)
- Celebrate accomplishments and the employer’s contributions. For example, host an appreciation breakfast or lunch to recognize and thank the youth and employers who have been involved in internships.

- Send thank-you letters to key personnel at the worksites of all interns and encourage the interns to send letters as well.
- Develop methods to evaluate the internship from the youth’s, parent’s, and employer’s perspective. Evaluation data could be gathered using student/employer evaluation and feedback forms. (See Exhibits 3.12 - 3.14 for sample evaluation/survey forms.)
- Analyze the evaluation data, share it with your advisory council and partners, and make changes or improvements as determined necessary.

### Some Additional Strategies for Developing HS/HT Internships

1. Ask the business or community partner to
  - explain to the HS/HT program staff the various areas and departments within the organization;
  - identify what would be available and appropriate for an internship;
  - identify and provide training to youth on any logistics, responsibilities, safety, health, confidentiality, and/or security issues related to this experience;
  - establish what the student will do and what the expected outcomes will be;
  - instruct, supervise, support, and evaluate the youth during the internship; and
  - involve the union (if any) in planning.
2. HS/HT program operators should
  - coordinate the internship with the business or community partner;
  - take care of administrative details for the internship experience, making sure to attend to any federal, state, and/or local policies, regulations, and/or requirements;
  - work with the employer and youth to set clear objectives for the internship;



- prepare the youth in advance by reviewing any logistics, responsibilities, safety, health, confidentiality, and/or security concerns;
- assist youth in connecting workplace experiences to coursework;
- provide support to the youth and employer by being a program-based mentor; and
- assist the youth in arranging transportation.

### 3. HS/HT participants should

- sign a formal agreement stipulating the rules, behaviors, dress, and task expectations of the worksite;
- request assistance from the designated supervisor as needed;
- view themselves as employees with the responsibilities and consequences associated with actually holding the job; and
- keep a journal of experiences and tasks, especially if earning credit for school.

### Time Commitment

An internship may be full-time or part-time and last anywhere from 3 to 18 weeks. In addition, the person coordinating the internship for the organization may spend time in establishing the objectives of the experience. This may include speaking to department heads, supervisors, and employees within the organization about the internship; reviewing details with the school staff coordinator; preparing any pertinent background information; and mentoring the youth.

Summer is a logical time for youth to engage in both unpaid and paid internships, though they can occur throughout the year - particularly if your site serves a large number of out-of-school youth, if students are in a school that uses block scheduling, or if the internship is a part of a career-technical education program of study. When an internship is part of career-technical education, it is often undertaken as a for-credit experience that is applied towards the student's graduation requirements. The internship duration varies depending on the number of hours worked each

week and the worker's and internship supervisor's preferences. Ideally, the young person should work at least 25 hours per week during the course of a summer internship, for a minimum of six weeks.

**John C. started with HS/HT in March of 2004. He was a senior at Fairview High School in Boulder, Colorado, and graduated in May of 2004. He was the first student to receive a HS/HT summer internship in Boulder and he was very excited when the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) offered him this opportunity, particularly when John was able to leave a bussing job at a local restaurant to work at NOAA. NOAA offered him two different positions in their office, equaling 40 hours a week and starting at \$10 an hour. One of the requirements of working at NOAA is that personnel need to be enrolled in college courses. John was extremely excited to find out that NOAA was willing to pay for his college courses, and eagerly signed up for classes at Front Range Community College and Colorado University Continuing Education Courses.**

**John's mother sent a letter to the HS/HT state coordinator and his local HS/HT coordinator, indicating that HS/HT had saved her son's life. The program gave him opportunities that he had never received in school where, because of his "hidden disabilities," he had gotten lost in the system. John continued to work part-time at NOAA and go to community college for two years until his family relocated to Massachusetts. Because of John's great work, NOAA took on another summer internship for a HS/HT student in 2005 and 2006, and plans to continue supporting HS/HT in the future.**

Selection of an internship should be made by the youth, in consultation with the HS/HT program operator. Internships should be a coordinated effort of employers, youth, and program management. In many sites, youth apply for and are interviewed for an internship position just as they would for any job. When helping a young person identify and select an internship opportunity, remember that the quality of the work activity is more important than the quantity of work experience. In most cases, the young person

will be working at the employer's worksite, although telecommuting from home may be a viable option in some situations.

### Benefits Associated with Internships

Internship benefits for HS/HT students include

- learning skills, including computer skills, directly related to jobs in the STEM careers;
- gaining self-confidence;
- earning a paycheck, often for the first time, and learning how to manage the money earned;
- gaining an understanding of the benefits of work and how individual effort contributes to a common goal;
- gaining an understanding of how what they are learning in school is relevant to the world of work;
- learning to use public transportation or to travel independently;
- developing a resume and obtain recommendations;
- learning about the importance of punctuality, appropriate attire, and professional behavior;
- establishing relationships that may lead to internships and permanent or future employment;
- meeting people who are successful in the STEM careers;
- receiving feedback from supervisors and co-workers about college choices and future training plans;
- learning what careers are not of interest;
- learning accommodation needs in the work world;
- connecting with workers who have disabilities; and
- obtaining credit towards graduation requirements as appropriate.

Internship benefits for employers include

- providing assistance for permanent staff on projects;
- undertaking projects postponed for lack of time and/or staff resources;

- developing awareness about the potential for youth with disabilities to be successful, productive workers;
- increasing the organization's overall comfort with persons with disabilities;
- improving their understanding of reasonable accommodations in the workplace; and
- fulfilling a corporate community responsibility role.

Internship benefits for partnering funding sources include

- increased awareness about the capabilities of youth with disabilities;
- gaining information about individual participants' skills and achievements; and
- developing a better understanding of the academic and work-related requirements of the business community, particularly high-tech employers.

*Source: Goddard/NASA Space Flight Center/UCP Prince George's & Montgomery County (Maryland) and the National Employer Leadership Council.*

### Online Resources to Consider

**Work-Based Learning** is one way youth can identify interests, strengths, skills, and needs related to career development. To access the brief, *Work-Based Learning and Future Employment for Youth: A Guide for Parents and Guardians*, by the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET), visit <http://www.ncset.org/publications/viewdesc.asp?id=1222>.



When Sean D. rolled into the National Weather Service (NWS) office in Greenville, South Carolina, during the summer of 2005, he didn't know much about the weather except that it happens every day. Then a rising senior at Hillcrest High School, Sean was the NWS office's first HS/HT student intern and the first person with a disability to work there. Injured in a car accident in 2003 when he was just shy of 15, he sustained a spinal cord injury and became a wheelchair user. Computers were Sean's passion.

Sean worked about eight hours a week during the summer of 2005, learning the ropes, doing callbacks to verify the accuracy of warnings, and issuing a couple of severe weather alerts. DiCarlo, the meteorologist who served as Sean's mentor, saw Sean's potential and encouraged him to create a program on lightning safety. The PowerPoint slide show that Sean created was presented to the Spartanburg County School Districts. "Lightning safety has been on the back burner recently," DiCarlo said. "This will help raise awareness."

DiCarlo was so impressed with Sean's work that he found some money in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) student

temporary employee program to hire him for the spring semester. During the summer of 2006, Sean was invited back to the NWS, this time participating in an internship funded under a partnership between NCWD/Youth and NOAA.

In line with his interest in engineering, Sean enrolled in Piedmont Technical College in the fall of 2006. He hopes to also attend ITT Tech and eventually, would like to go to Clemson University. "I'd recommend this program to anybody," Sean said. "It gets you out there and gives you real job experience. You get more of a picture of a real job than you would in a fast food place. And you meet great people." Sean's father was also enthusiastic about his son's opportunity. "I can't say enough about the program or the people," he said. "Sean's been through a lot and it's good to see him involved in this."

According to DiCarlo, the HS/HT program benefits NOAA by providing a source of future employees. "NOAA is a large organization. We employ oceanographers, hydrologists, climatologists, meteorologists and people with a wide range of other skills," said DiCarlo. "Most high school kids are not thinking along those lines."

## Component 9: Entrepreneurship

Business ownership has always maintained its place in our country as part of the American dream. Entrepreneurial firms contribute to the U.S. economy in two ways. They provide change and competition, while also providing opportunities for many people to enter the mainstream economy. The U.S. economy's recent success comes from change and competition as large firms adapt to new conditions (Kuratko, 2003). As new firms are created to capture new opportunities, this has led more women, minorities, immigrants, and other populations to enter the economy. In fact, minority groups and women are increasing their business ownership at a much higher rate than the national average (U.S. Census Bureau 2005).

Interest in entrepreneurship and self-employment is

everywhere. Youth, including those with disabilities, can gain self sufficiency through self-employment and entrepreneurship. A poll conducted by Junior Achievement (JA) in 2005 found that 68.6 percent of teenagers interviewed wanted to become entrepreneurs, even though they knew that it is a difficult proposition. While entrepreneurship and self-employment are not for everyone, such activities can help in the development of a young person as they transition to becoming an adult.

Some HS/HT programs have experimented with entrepreneurial ventures to provide their students with a different view of employment. The possibility of earning money and the responsibility associated with running a business can be great motivators and incentives for youth. In addition, by sponsoring HS/HT students, small businesses provide an opportunity for youth to learn entrepreneurial and organizational skills.

Young people can create and operate a small business often with a consultant from the local business community, through Junior Achievement, or under the auspices of a school-based enterprise in retail, construction, hospitality, and a variety of other careers. Although there are many enterprises developed without the assistance of business, the support of local businesses is invaluable to youth. In thinking ahead to leadership development activities, business consultants can also serve as role models and mentors.

As HS/HT continues to grow and expand, many programs have adopted a multi-year program model. Within these multi-year programs, a program-sponsored small business is a particularly effective way to link students, curriculum, and the world of work. A HS/HT small business venture is a work-based learning opportunity in which a group of youth produces goods or services for sale, participates in multiple aspects of a business, and relates service and production activities to academics. Thus, these small businesses provide “real world” experiences in which youth play key roles as they produce and deliver products and services. Properly designed, a HS/HT entrepreneurial venture can effectively teach youth both academic and work-related skills. As young entrepreneurs design and operate businesses, they learn and apply academics while practicing leadership, teamwork, problem-solving, and analytic thinking skills. Their collective and individual performance has a decisive impact on the business’ operation.

1. If you choose to work with an outside business or community partner to support your business, identify an individual who is willing to
  - consult with the HS/HT program on running a business in a school environment and on a school schedule,
  - describe the basic management skills necessary to run the identified business,
  - assist the HS/HT program operator and youth in learning about the industry,
  - collaborate with HS/HT staff to determine the participation of students in the program-based enterprise, and
  - serve as a resource for HS/HT staff.

## HS/HT Entrepreneurship Ventures in Oklahoma

A growing number of Tech-Now sites in Oklahoma have incorporated entrepreneurial projects into their HS/HT program. At Midwest City High School (MCHS), Tech-Now students have developed a business using computers and multi-media tools to design individual sports cards for their athletic programs. The students photograph the athletes in their uniforms and compile a brief bio sheet of information to be printed on the cards. In partnership with the district’s Career Tech Center, they print and cut the cards. They opened an activity account and developed a contract to split the profits with the individual sports programs. At the end of the school year, the students voted to use some of their profits to award one of the participating students a scholarship for college. The recipient of the scholarship chose to attend a local junior college.

Students at MCHS also decided to use Tech-Now’s digital cameras and Corel Photo Paint to design 2006 Christmas Calendars. Each student designed personalized calendars to give away as Christmas gifts. They also designed MCHS Tech-Now t-shirts to sell to family and friends, and used the profits to pay for a group trip after the holidays.

Tech-Now students at Wagoner High School started an early morning Cappuccino Café. They sell cups of cappuccino to students and teachers to raise money for their Tech-Now field trips. This entrepreneurial effort has sparked interest in the program throughout the school and has given the students an opportunity to earn money and recognition.

Students at Piedmont High School used Tech-Now’s digital camera, chroma key process, and digital editing equipment to take individual and group photographs during the school Christmas Dance. The students provided a variety of unique backgrounds and sold the printed pictures for \$5.00 a piece. The money they earned was used to pay for an out-of-state trip to Chicago.

2. HS/HT staff will need to

- assist youth to research appropriate and interesting business opportunities;
- contact local small business entities and invite them to speak at a HS/HT activity;
- locate start-up funding to get entrepreneurial activities up and running;
- find staff (paid or volunteer);
- connect the activities outlined in developing the business to the student's academic program;
- maintain ongoing communication with any employer partners; and
- identify and assist in the development of training on safety, health, and/or security concerns.

### Entrepreneurial Success in Ohio

At the Easter Seals Work Resource Center (WRC) in Cincinnati, Ohio, HS/HT students teamed up with adult learners to create a successful business, the Fish and Flowers Project. Fish and Flowers began when participants in WRC's SmartLab began learning about hydroponics and aquaponics. Through research on the Internet and at local gardening centers and aquarium stores, the students decided to combine the two areas and came up with a product they call "Fish and Flowers," a vase with a fish and plant that together live in a symbiotic relationship. In order to participate in the Fish and Flowers program, students develop a business plan that includes researching the price of materials, creating a timeline, and marketing their product. All products are sold and proceeds go back toward the hydroponics lab. The success of this program is due in large part to the peer-to-peer teaching. Through the project, the students hone their skills in the areas of researching, keeping spreadsheets, working under a deadline, performing customer service, and working with a diverse team. In 2003 and 2004, the students turned this entrepreneurship into a service-learning project after they received a grant to donate Fish and Flowers vases to low-income residents in a nursing home and a Shriners Hospital as a part of National Youth Service Day.

### Time Commitment

The time commitment necessary to pursue an entrepreneurship will depend on the nature of the program-based enterprise being developed. In some cases, the HS/HT staff assigned to the program-based enterprise will need to work within the school's schedule. In addition, given the nature of the business and its location, it may not be possible to run the business year-round. It will be very important to clearly define the extent and hours of the business.

Young people who work in small business entrepreneurs learn and apply a myriad of business skills that employers seek in new applicants. For example, youth

- use current technology found in many businesses (spreadsheets, databases, online sales);
- learn to develop a business plan;
- become familiar with real-world business practices (e.g., ordering supplies, controlling inventory, implementing standard accounting and money management practices, developing and carrying out marketing/advertising strategies, developing and maintaining positive customer relations);
- learn and implement quality control procedures as applied both to the product/service and to the mathematical, written, and verbal processes used for operation;
- form, sustain, and work within teams;
- supervise and provide feedback about the performance of others;
- communicate effectively with a wide range of individuals, including both peers and adults in the community;
- make key decisions regarding products/services;
- conduct marketing and feasibility studies;
- work with HS/HT staff and local business leaders to create business plans;
- develop governing structure, personnel policies, and hiring policies, practices, and procedures;

- screen, interview, and select new or additional participants;
- help design incentive structures for participating students;
- determine how, when, and by whom the product/service will be produced and delivered (including costs, price structures, production, advertising, and distribution); and
- deal effectively and appropriately with the myriad of interpersonal, communication, scheduling, and other issues inherent in a new business venture.

### Online Resources to Consider

**Abilities Fund** is the first and only nationwide community developer targeted exclusively to advancing entrepreneurial opportunities for Americans with disabilities. Services are designed specifically for individuals with disabilities interested in business ownership and the organizations that serve them. Services focus on three primary markets: entrepreneurs with disabilities, microenterprise development organizations, and vocational rehabilitation agencies and other disability-related organizations. Visit <<http://www.abilitiesfund.org/>>.

**Association for Enterprise Opportunity (AEO)** is the national association of organizations committed to microenterprise development. AEO provides its members with a forum, information, and a voice to promote enterprise opportunities for people and communities with limited access to economic resources. A listing of programs can be found on the website at <<http://www.microenterpriseworks.org/>>.

**Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education** is a national membership organization that provides leadership and advocacy for the growth of the field of entrepreneurship education as a lifelong learning process. Visit <<http://www.entre-ed.org/index.htm>>.

**Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation** works with partners to encourage entrepreneurship across America and to promote entrepreneurial success at all levels. The Foundation works to further understand the phenomenon of entrepreneurship, to advance entrepreneurship education and training efforts, to promote entrepreneurship-friendly policies, and to

assist entrepreneurs and others in commercializing new technologies that promise to improve the economic welfare of our nation. Visit <<http://www.kauffman.org/>>.

**Junior Achievement (JA)** uses hands-on experiences to help young people understand the economics of life. In partnership with business and educators, JA brings the real world to students, opening their minds to their potential. Visit <<http://www.ja.org/>>.

**Mind Your Own Business** was created by the U.S. Small Business Administration and Junior Achievement to provide a place where people can go to help turn their entrepreneurial dreams into reality. The site outlines five easy steps to business ownership and includes information on the challenges and rewards of being an entrepreneur. Visit <<http://www.mindyourownbiz.org/default.shtml>>.

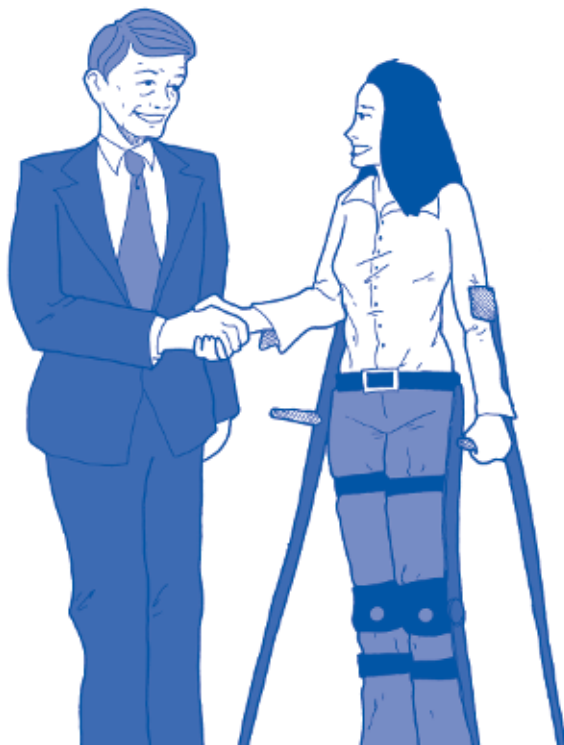
**Self-Employment for People with Disabilities Listserv** was established by Diversity World to promote the development of more self-employment opportunities for people with disabilities. It is intended to be a networking forum for entrepreneurs with disabilities and individuals or organizations who have an interest or role in this arena. Members are invited to post comments and questions and promote related events, publications, organizations and similar resources. Visit <[http://groups.yahoo.com/group/pwd\\_self-employment](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/pwd_self-employment)>.

**Small Business and Self-Employment Service (SBSES)** has a group of consultants who can provide ongoing business development supports and links to specific mentoring resources in your area. Contact them directly for additional information at 1-800-526-7234, or visit <<http://www.jan.wvu.edu/sbses/index.htm>>.

**START-UP/USA (Self-Employment Technical Assistance, Resources, & Training)** is a partnership between Virginia Commonwealth University and Griffin-Hammis and Associates, LLC. It is funded by a cooperative agreement from the Office of Disability Employment Policy in the U.S. Department of Labor. START-UP/USA provides technical assistance and disseminates resources nationally to individuals interested in pursuing self-employment. It sponsors a live web cast series with successful entrepreneurs sharing their secrets for success. Visit <<http://www.start-up-usa.biz/>>.

**The Future Entrepreneurs Program** contains downloadable curriculum from the Council of Entrepreneurial Development. It includes seven lesson plans on entrepreneurship, including What is an Entrepreneur?; Finding a Business Opportunity; Market Research; Introduction to Marketing—Product, Price, Place; Introduction to Marketing—Promotion and Advertising; Starting up Your Business—Finances, Personnel, and Location; and Sales and Customer Service. Visit <[http://www.cednc.org/initiatives/student\\_programs/future\\_entrepreneurs/](http://www.cednc.org/initiatives/student_programs/future_entrepreneurs/)>.

**Road to Self-Sufficiency: Guide to Entrepreneurship for Youth with Disabilities** is a publication by NCWD/Youth that promotes the benefits of entrepreneurship education and self-employment for all youth, including youth with disabilities. It also provides tools to assist those working in this area in providing quality programs. This Guide may be purchased from NCWD/Youth or downloaded from their website at <<http://www.ncwd-youth.info/>>.



## Getting Organized

The following things will help you create exciting and rewarding work-based opportunities and learning experiences for HS/HT participants.

- **Familiarize** yourself with your local labor market statistics and the STEM employment opportunities in your community.
- **Contact** business leaders in your community through organizations such as the local Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club, Lions Club, Business Leadership Network (BLN), Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), American Society for Training and Development (ASTD), and industry associations such as the Information Technology Association of America. Ask questions such as
  - ~What are the key information technology skill requirements for most of your businesses?
  - ~What is your preferred process for establishing a partnership with education and training programs?
  - ~What would you expect from such a partnership?
- **Team** with career and technology coordinators in your local public schools to pool your work-based/job search partnering resources.
- **Familiarize** yourself with the local business media to seek potential work-based partnerships and publicity.
- **Seek** a variety of employer partners that represent a diverse range of companies (large corporations, small business, self-employment situations, private companies, non-profits, faith-based organizations, state and local government agencies, etc.).
- **Evaluate** the disability-friendliness of potential employer partners. Is the building physically accessible? Are the rest rooms accessible? Is Braille on the elevator panels? Has the organization offered disability awareness training to staff?
- **Provide** employers with information about working with youth with disabilities (e.g., tax incentives, etc.) that can be obtained from your local Business Leadership Network (BLN), local One-Stop Career Center, or Vocational Rehabilitation office.



## Supporting Research: Work-Based Learning Experiences

There are many effective strategies HS/HT program operators may employ to provide youth with meaningful work-based experiences. Moving outside of traditional classroom settings to community and workplace environments is an invaluable experiential component of career development for young people, regardless of whether they have disabilities. A number of studies about effective strategies to improve postsecondary outcomes for youth with disabilities have emphasized the importance of providing students with work-based learning experiences and opportunities. In addition, a number of proven and promising work-based experiences have been shown to strengthen the relationship between educational experiences and adult world employment expectations, including site visits, job shadowing, volunteer work, and paid and unpaid internships, as well as other activities such as entrepreneurial opportunities and apprenticeships.

There has been considerable attention given to transition planning and the postsecondary outcomes of youth with disabilities since the enactment and subsequent reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). An examination of the postsecondary outcomes of youth with disabilities indicates legislative initiatives have yet to achieve their intended impact (Luecking & Fabian, 2000). Persistently low employment rates continue to be experienced by youth with disabilities as they exit secondary schools.

Effective career development approaches that integrate academic and non-academic components include (a) a process for career planning and goal setting (Benz, Yovanoff, & Doren, 1997; Goldberger, Keough, & Almeida, 2001), (b) alignment of school-based career preparatory experiences with employer and occupational requirements and with postsecondary education plans (Bremer & Madzar, 1995; Carnevale & Desrochers, 2003; Haimson & Bellotti, 2001), and (c) teaching of basic skills needed for career success and growth (Haimson & Bellotti, 2001; Luecking & Fabian, 2000; Phelps & Hanley-Maxwell, 1997).

If youth with disabilities are to develop the knowledge and skills that will enable them to be fully enfranchised within the workforce, they need full, meaningful, and equitable access to opportunities offered by high-quality, work-based experiences established to prepare all students for careers. Substantial evidence supports the value of work experience as a critical educational intervention that is effective in improving the postsecondary employment of youth with disabilities. Some experts call for expanded work experience opportunities in high school for all youth (Benz & Lindstrom, 1997).

Goldberger and Kasis (1996) highlight several benefits of work-based learning (a) providing an authentic laboratory for developing and exercising complex problem-solving skills; (b) providing a reality check about different types of work settings and work roles; (c) providing an appreciation for the importance of learning as an aspect of what constitutes work; and (d) assisting in the development of youth contacts with employers, mentors, and career pathways, which provide support and possible job connections.

Substantial evidence exists to support the value of work experience as a critical educational intervention effective in improving the postsecondary employment of youth with disabilities (Blackorby & Wagnor, 1996; Colley & Jamison, 1998; Kohler, 1993; Kohler & Rusch, 1995; Luecking & Fabian, 2000; Morningstar, 1997; Rogan, 1997; Wehman, 1996).

Many employers who have experience in hiring individuals with disabilities have indicated that the presence or absence of a disability was not a particular concern when making hiring decisions. One study found that regardless of the nature or severity of the disability or the need for accommodations, approximately 77 percent of youth who completed a standardized work-based internship program in high school were offered ongoing employment by their host companies, even though the companies were under no obligation to retain the interns beyond the internship period (Luecking & Fabian, 2000).

As the number of schools that are partnering with employers to create work-based experiences for youth is increasing, participating businesses are beginning to see the value of work-based learning experiences for youth in terms of better-prepared future employees, reducing the costs associated with recruitment, and reductions in employee turnover (Wills, 1998). In addition, working closely with employers helps schools define the knowledge and skills necessary for graduates to successfully perform in college and the workplace (Achieve, 2004).

A great deal is known about the value of using the environment to enhance and solidify learning. A growing body of research has suggested that training in context is important for skills to be useful and maintained over time in work and community settings (Bransford et al., 1999; Clark, 1994; Gaylord-Ross & Holovet, 1985; Halpern, 1992; McDonnell et al., 1997; Snell & Brown, 1993). Based on the analysis of several career and technical education programs that served and graduated youth with disabilities, Phelps (1992) concludes that effective approaches to contextual learning for students with disabilities include the following elements: (a) providing

## EXHIBIT 3.1

students with teamwork or cooperative learning experiences comparable to those they would encounter in community or work settings, (b) increasing the meaning of academic learning through real-world applications, and (c) using experiential learning (e.g., job shadowing experiences, school-supervised work experiences, internships) to connect school- and work-based learning.

The extent to which youth with disabilities participate and succeed in postsecondary education is also directly related to well-established and systematic work-based experiences instituted throughout a school career. Findings by Wagner et al. (1993), suggest that youth participation in work-based learning experiences holds high promise for improving secondary school performance and postsecondary outcomes.

Other research supports including (a) school-supervised work experience programs with varying amounts of on-site training in community employment sites and assessments of student performance across a range of training alternatives (Benz, Yovanoff, & Doren, 1997; DeStefano & Wermuth, 1992; Kregel & Wehman, 1996; McDonnell, Ferguson, & Mathot-Bucker, 1992; Phelps & Hanley-Maxwell, 1997; Phelps & Wermuth, 1992), (b) part-time paying jobs during the school year and summer that are coordinated directly with instructional and career

exploration goals for individual students (Benz & Halpern, 1993; Benz et al., 1997; Fourqurean & LaCourt, 1991; Phelps & Wermuth, 1992; Scuccimarra & Speece, 1990; Sitlington & Frank, 1990), and (c) structured internship experiences that have been found to be beneficial for youth with disabilities regardless of their demographic characteristics, disability type and severity, and educational placement (Luecking & Fabian, 2000). Evaluations of the effects of internships on youth outcomes reveal an increase in technical competence and a better understanding of how the academic concepts the students learn in school relate to their work experiences (Wang & Owens, 1995 a & b).

In summary, numerous studies about effective strategies for improving postsecondary outcomes for youth with disabilities have emphasized the importance of providing students with work-based learning experiences and opportunities. Work-based experiences have been shown to strengthen the relationship between educational experiences and the expectations of employers. Thus, one can reasonably conclude that the integration of work-based learning into traditional academic programs will have a positive impact on the educational, attitudinal, and employment outcomes of youth.



## Sample Online Career Assessments

Online career assessments can be fun and informative, but many have not been evaluated for reliability and validity, including those that are abbreviated versions of pencil and paper tests. Many sites do not provide interpretations of results. Be sure that the results are considered along with other career preparation activities and information.

***Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment***—These free assessments evaluate youth life skills. They are completed online and automatically scored. Visit <[http://www.caseylifeskills.org/pages/assess/assess\\_index.htm](http://www.caseylifeskills.org/pages/assess/assess_index.htm)>.

***The Career Key***—This assessment tool was developed to help people with career choices—career changes, career planning, job skills, and choosing a college major or educational program. It is based on the best science and practices of career counseling, and the most complete and accurate information available. It has been used by career counselors for over 20 years. Millions of students and adults use this website. More than 1,000 schools, colleges, libraries, and career services link to it. Visit <[www.careerkey.org/english](http://www.careerkey.org/english)>.

***Type Focus Personality Type Profile***—This quick and easy 66-question assessment reports a Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and offers a bit of career direction. Visit <<http://www.typefocus.com>>.

*This list of online assessments is for informational and educational purposes only and should NOT be interpreted as a recommendation for any test instrument.*



## Examples of Informal Career Assessment Activities

The following represent some examples of informal career assessment activities that HS/HT staff can use with students to identify their career interests, explore their work styles, and gauge their understanding of the soft skills needed to succeed in the workplace.

1. Create generic interest surveys and structured interviews using questions and prompts such as the following to obtain information about HS/HT participants.
  - List three occupations of interest.
  - What do you see yourself doing after high school?
  - List two jobs at which you think you could succeed.
  - What skills would you like to learn while still in school?
  - What do you do in your free time?
2. Use rating scales to assess school and work performance. For the purpose of the HS/HT program, these questions might be in the areas of employment, independent living, and personal/work-related skills. Rating scales might include a self-assessment where the young person assesses his or her skills independently. Alternatively, a parent/guardian or other appropriate representative (such as a teacher or transition counselor) may be asked to complete a short form with a list of specific questions about the young person's performance in other environments. Rating scales can be purchased commercially or can be easily developed by program operators. Consider questions targeted to obtain information on such things as
  - Attendance and punctuality
    - \_\_\_ Misses less than 3 days per quarter
    - \_\_\_ Misses 4-5 days per quarter
    - \_\_\_ Misses 6-7 days per quarter
    - \_\_\_ Misses 8-9 days per quarter
  - Communication skills
    - \_\_\_ Freely expresses thoughts and needs
    - \_\_\_ Expresses thoughts and needs with prompts
    - \_\_\_ Experiences difficulty expressing thoughts and needs
  - Initiative
    - \_\_\_ Seeks out work as needed without needing to be asked
    - \_\_\_ Will do extra work if asked, asks questions to clarify
    - \_\_\_ Completes duties as assigned without prompting
    - \_\_\_ Requires prompts to move to the next task assignment
  - Quality of work
    - \_\_\_ Displays consistent quality of work; independently spots and corrects mistakes
    - \_\_\_ Displays consistent quality of work/usually does not spot errors
    - \_\_\_ Displays inconsistent quality of work
3. Consider creating informal work samples to discover pre-existing knowledge (or present levels of performance) in the following areas:
  - Computer operations such as word processing, spreadsheets, and PowerPoint;
  - Math skills and technical writing; and
  - Ability to follow tasks requiring multiple-step directions.
4. Notice environmental conditions when engaging participants in activities, noting under what conditions they work best. For instance, does the young person prefer and/or perform best when
  - In a group or alone?
  - In a noisy or quiet environment?
  - Receiving visual (written) or auditory (spoken) directions?
  - In a fast paced or a more relaxed pace?
  - Completing routine or varied multiple tasks?

## EXHIBIT 3.3

5. Use the Internet for career-related, interest, and personality assessments. Since some relevant websites will be more useful and applicable than others, HS/HT program operators should preview all websites prior to use by program participants in an effort to determine the value, the time needed for administration, etc. When deemed appropriate, online assessments are not only convenient and fun, but also provide for computer and technology-related learning experiences as well as opportunities for observing the computer or keyboarding skills of youth participating in HS/HT (see Exhibit 3.2).
6. Consider disability-related accommodation needs. Some youth with disabilities may require specific accommodations in order to generate accurate assessment results. Questions to consider during the career assessment process include:

Does the student have the physical and/or sensory abilities to perform the tasks? If not, what modifications or accommodations are needed to enable the student to perform the tasks? If needed, are the modifications readily available, and if not, how long will it take to secure or develop them?

How should instruction be delivered, or is the purpose to learn more about how the individual learns best? Is the use of picture cues, lists, or other such prompts needed? If so, are these already in place or will they need to be developed during the course of the assessment?

Has an accommodation been documented in the young person's Individualized Education Program, Individualized Transition Plan, 504 Plan, Individualized Plan for Employment, etc. (if necessary)?



## Disability Etiquette

**S**peak directly to the person, rather than to a companion or sign language interpreter who may be present.

Offer to shake hands when introduced. People with limited hand use or an artificial limb can usually shake hands and offering the left hand is an acceptable greeting.

Always identify yourself and others who may be with you when meeting someone with a visual disability. When conversing in a group, remember to identify the person to whom you are speaking. When dining with a friend who has a vision disability, ask if you can describe what is on his or her plate.

If you offer assistance, wait until the offer is accepted. Then listen or ask for instructions.

Treat adults as adults. Address people with disabilities by their first names only when extending that same familiarity to all others. Never patronize people in wheelchairs.

Do not lean against or hang on someone's wheelchair. Bear in mind that people with disabilities treat their chairs as extensions of their bodies; so do people with guide dogs and service dogs. Never distract a work animal from his or her job without the owner's permission.

Listen attentively when talking with people who have difficulty speaking and wait for them to finish. If necessary, ask short questions that require short answers or a nod of the head. Never pretend to understand; instead repeat what you have understood and allow the person to respond.

Whenever possible, place yourself at eye level when speaking with someone in a wheelchair or on crutches.

Tap a person who has a hearing disability on the shoulder or wave your hand to get his or her attention. Look directly at the person and speak clearly, slowly, and expressively to establish if the person can read your lips. If so, try to factor the light source and keep hands, cigarettes, and food away from your mouth when speaking. If a person is wearing a hearing aid, don't assume that he or she has the ability to discriminate your speaking voice. Never shout at a person; speak in a normal tone of voice.

Relax. Don't be embarrassed if you happen to use common expressions such as "See you later" or "Did you hear about this?" that seem to relate to a person's disability.

*Source: Irene M. Ward & Associates. (1994). The ten commandments of communicating with people with disabilities.*

## Steps to Follow to Conduct an Effective Informational Interview

**1. Identify the occupation or industry you wish to explore.**

In what occupation are you interested?

**2. Prepare for the interview.** Read something about the field prior to the interview. Decide what information you would like to know about the specific job. Prepare a list of questions that you would like to have answered.

**3. Identify people to interview.** Start with a list of people you already know—friends, relatives, teachers, neighbors, members of your church, etc. Look through the Yellow Pages for additional ideas. Try to get a contact person's name before calling a specific business.

**4. Arrange for the interview.** Contact the person to set up an interview by telephone, by e-mail, or by having someone who knows the person make the appointment for you.

**5. Conduct the interview.** Dress appropriately, arrive on time, be polite, and professional. Refer to your list of prepared questions, stay on track, but allow for discussion. Before leaving, ask your contact to suggest names of others who might be helpful to you and ask permission to use your contact's name when contacting these people.

**6. Follow up.** Immediately following the interview, record the information gathered. Be sure to send a thank-you note to your contact within one week of the interview.

Note: After considering the information you have received, you may want to adjust your job search, resume, and/or career objective to reflect what you learned about the job and about your continued interest in that area of work.

*Source: Job Service Wisconsin, Wisconsin Department of Industry Labor and Human Relations.*



## 20 Questions for an Effective Informational Interview

Prepare a list of your own questions for your informational interview.

The following are some sample questions for your consideration.

1. On a typical day in this position, what do you do?
2. What training or education is required for this type of work?
3. What personal qualities or abilities are important to being successful in this job?
4. What part of this job do you find most satisfying? Most challenging?
5. How did you get your job?
6. What opportunities for advancement are there in this field?
7. What entry-level jobs are best for learning as much as possible?
8. What is the salary range for various positions in this field?
9. How do you see jobs in this field changing in the future?
10. Is there a demand for people in this occupation?
11. What special advice would you give a person entering this field?
12. What types of training do companies offer persons entering this field?
13. What are the basic prerequisites for different jobs/positions in this field?
14. Which professional journals and organizations would help me learn more about this field?
15. What do you think of the experience I've had as it would apply to my entering this field?
16. From your perspective, what are the problems you see working in this field?
17. If you could do things all over again, would you choose the same career path for yourself? Why? What would you change, if anything?
18. With the information you have about my education, skills, and experience, what other fields or jobs would you suggest I research before I make a final decision?
19. What do you think of my resume? Do you see any problem areas? How would you suggest I change it?
20. Whom should I talk to next? When I contact him/her, may I use your name?

*Source: Job Service Wisconsin, Wisconsin Department of Industry Labor and Human Relations*



## Disability Disclosure: Advantages and Disadvantages

### Advantages of Disclosure

- Disclosure allows a young person to receive reasonable accommodations so that s/he can pursue work, school, or community activities more effectively.
- Disclosure provides legal protection against discrimination (as specified in the Americans with Disabilities Act).
- Disclosure reduces stress, since protecting a “secret” can take a lot of energy.
- Disclosure gives a young person a clearer impression of what kinds of expectations people may have of him/her and his/her abilities.
- Disclosure ensures that a young person is getting what s/he needs in order to be successful (for example, through an accommodation or medication).
- Disclosure provides full freedom to examine and question health insurance and other benefits.
- Disclosure provides greater freedom to communicate should a young person face changes in his/her particular situation.
- Disclosure improves a young person’s self-image through self-advocacy.
- Disclosure allows a young person to involve other professionals (for example, educators and employment service providers) in the learning of skills and the development of accommodations.
- Disclosure increases a young person’s comfort level.

### Disadvantages of Disclosure

- Disclosure can cause a young person to relive bad past experiences that resulted in the loss of a job or negative responses from his/her peers.
- Disclosure can lead to the experience of exclusion.
- Disclosure can cause a young person to become an object of curiosity.
- Disclosure can lead to a young person being blamed if something doesn’t go right.
- Disclosure can lead to a young person being treated differently than other youth.
- Disclosure can bring up conflicting feelings about a young person’s self-image.
- Disclosure can lead to a young person being viewed as needy, not self-sufficient, or unable to perform on par with peers.
- Disclosure could cause a young person to be overlooked for a job, team, group, or organization.
- Disclosing personal and sensitive information can be extremely difficult and embarrassing.

*Source: National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth. (2005). The 411 on disability disclosure: A workbook for youth with disabilities.*



## Sample Internship Learning Agreement

This agreement must be read, understood, and signed by the intern and the person who will be acting as the intern’s supervisor. It will also be signed by HS/HT staff and the parent, if appropriate, to ensure that all parties concur with the goals and expectations of the internship. (Please attach additional sheets if necessary.)

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Company/Organization: \_\_\_\_\_ Dept. \_\_\_\_\_

Address of Internship Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

The internship is set up for a minimum of \_\_\_\_ hours per week for \_\_\_\_ weeks.

**Internship Schedule:**

Begins \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Ends \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Planned Absences: \_\_\_\_\_

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

The student will report to:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Internship Goals/Learning Objectives:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**General Responsibilities and Duties:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Specific Projects and Products:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Student:**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to the following expectations:

- 1. To attend regularly and on time for my assigned internship.
- 2. To adhere to the regulations of the organization in which I am interning.
- 3. To notify my supervisor on days that I will be absent.
- 4. To notify my HS/HT program operator if any problems or concerns arise.

**Supervisor:**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to do the following:

- 1. Provide assignments and duties that contribute to the learning experience of the student.
- 2. Provide mentoring for the student.
- 3. Provide assessment and feedback to the HS/HT program operator, as requested.
- 4. Notify the HS/HT program operator at any time if work performance is unsatisfactory or there are any problems with the placement.
- 5. Notify the HS/HT program operator if the supervising manager changes.
- 6. Review the youth’s training progress at regular intervals to determine whether the internship should become paid (i.e., if it is an unpaid internship).

***Internship Training Plan***

The following specific resources and strategies will be used to achieve the goals listed in the internship agreement:

Goal 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Goal 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Goal 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## Sample Internship Agreement

For many youth, this will be the first internship and for others it may be the first paid internship experience. Please read this information carefully. Print or type all information.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

In case of an emergency, please contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency phone number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

READ AND INITIAL EACH STATEMENT BELOW:

\_\_\_\_\_ I will arrive at my job site at my scheduled time.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will work a maximum of \_\_\_\_ hours per week and record my hours correctly on my time sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_ If I obtain a paid internship, I will receive payment only for the actual amount of time I have worked during the pay period.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will dress appropriately according to the standards set by my job site.

\_\_\_\_\_ My supervisor's name is: \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ My mentor's name, if different than my supervisor, is: \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will make every effort to attend all special activities that have been planned for me.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will take the appropriate time allowed for lunch and check in with my supervisor/mentor before I leave and when I return.

\_\_\_\_\_ If I am sick, I will immediately contact my supervisor/mentor at \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ If an accident or injury occurs, I will notify my supervisor/mentor and the HS/HT program operator immediately.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will not make or receive personal phone calls from the worksite or use worksite equipment or supplies for personal use. I understand that if I am assigned to a computer workstation, I will not abuse my privileges by using my system for games, chat rooms, or sending unauthorized electronic messages.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that I may be suspended or released from my job if I have three or more unexcused absences, have repeated tardiness, leave work without permission, or break any of the behavior standards of the organization.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Adapted from the Florida HS/HT Summer Internship Manual.*

### Sample Internship Work Log

Please copy this form (one for each week).

Complete and return to \_\_\_\_\_  
 at the end of \_\_\_\_ each work week \_\_\_\_ or every two weeks of work.

Intern Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Week(s) of: \_\_\_\_\_

Duties Performed: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

New Skills Learned: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Dates Worked:**

(Month/Day/Year)	Hours (from – to)	Total Hours

**Total Hours Worked:**

Supervisor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor Name (Print): \_\_\_\_\_

*Adapted from the Florida HS/HT Summer Internship Manual.*

### Sample Internship Time Sheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor/Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_

	Date (mm/dd/yy)	Time in	Lunch *	Time out	Total Hours
<i>Example</i>	10/10/02	9:00	12-12:45	3:00	5.25
Monday					
Tuesday					
Wednesday					
Thursday					
Friday					
Saturday					

*\*Lunch breaks are NOT working hours & should not be included in Total Hours recorded.*

Total Hours: \_\_\_\_\_

Your time should be calculated as follows:

- 1 hour = 1.0
- 3/4 hour = .75
- 1/2 hour = .50
- 1/4 hour = .25

I certify that the above information is true and correct.

HS/HT Participant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor/Authorized Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

All time sheets are due to the HS/HT program operator on \_\_\_\_\_ (day), by \_\_\_\_\_ (time).

*Adapted from the Florida HS/HT Summer Internship Manual.*

## Sample Internship Evaluation

To be completed by the supervisor/mentor:

HS/HT Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Business Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Duties—List the top four job duties below:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

On the list below, rate the young person using the following number scale. Please compare to your average employee:

4 = Exceptional    3 = Above average    2 = Average    1 = Below average    N/A = does not apply

### Work Habits and Skills

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>___ 1. Constructive criticism. Takes it in stride and tries to improve.</p> <p>___ 2. Appearance: Clean and wears suitable clothing to work each day.</p> <p>___ 3. Attendance: Shows up and regularly returns from lunch and breaks on time.</p> <p>___ 4. Attitude: Shows interest and pride in work and is willing to complete assigned tasks.</p> <p>___ 5. Communication: Asks job-specific questions and interacts appropriately.</p> <p>___ 6. Creativity: Demonstrates the aptitude to create new procedures if necessary.</p> <p>___ 7. Follows instructions: Performs tasks assigned and follows procedures step by step.</p> <p>___ 8. Follows rules: Obeys all work-site regulations and safety rules.</p> <p>___ 9. Independence: Able to work without supervision.</p> | <p>___ 10. Initiative: A self-starter, willing to go on to the next step or asks for more work.</p> <p>___ 11. On task: Pays attention to the task (even if routine) and keeps busy the entire work day.</p> <p>___ 12. Problem-solving skills: Makes appropriate decisions when needed.</p> <p>___ 13. Quality: Completes tasks in a timely manner and of acceptable quality.</p> <p>___ 14. Remembers instructions: Performs routine tasks on a daily basis without prompting.</p> <p>___ 15. Social skills: Interacts well with other co-workers; demonstrates cooperation and maturity.</p> <p>___ 16. Use of equipment: Uses and cares for all equipment properly.</p> |
|---|---|

**OVERALL RATING:** \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor's or Mentor's Name & Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for completing this evaluation & providing a youth-based internship. Your participation in our HS/HT program is appreciated!*

*Adapted from the Florida HS/HT Summer Internship Manual.*

### Sample Mid-Internship Youth Survey

(to be completed by the HS/HT Student.)

Please take a few moments to complete this survey. We will use this information to plan the rest of your internship experience.  
Please return it to the HS/HT program operator.

What have you learned (or observed) about the use of technology on your job or within the agency where you are working?

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What types of technology have you used while participating in this internship? \_\_\_\_\_

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What skills have you developed or improved through your participation in this High School/High Tech summer internship? \_\_\_\_\_

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Are there any opportunities you would like to explore in the remaining weeks of this internship? \_\_\_\_\_

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Job Site: \_\_\_\_\_

Job Position: \_\_\_\_\_

*Adapted from the Florida HS/HT Summer Internship Manual.*



### Sample Internship Parent Survey

Please complete this survey and return it to: \_\_\_\_\_

Were your expectations for your son/daughter's HS/HT internship met?

(Circle one)      YES              NO

If "no" please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Describe the benefits your child received from his/her participation in this internship. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Describe the benefits you received from his/her participation in this internship. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Would you recommend a HS/HT summer internship to other parents and students? (Circle one)      YES      NO

Please explain why or why not: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What changes would have made this internship more beneficial for your son/daughter? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Job Position: \_\_\_\_\_

*Adapted from the Florida HS/HT Summer Internship Manual.*

