



Attainment's Get a Job CURRICULUM



Corinne Thomas-Kersting, CCC-SLP
Dona Schumacher, OTR/L

Get a Job Curriculum CD for Windows or Macintosh

Also included with this book is a CD containing this complete book in PDF form for you to review and print out pages from your computer. This PDF (portable document format) requires Acrobat Reader to access.

- If you have Acrobat Reader software already on your computer, open Acrobat Reader, then open the Get-a-Job-Curriculum.pdf on the CD.
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- To install Acrobat Reader for Mac, run Acrobat Reader Installer. After installation, open Acrobat Reader, then open Get-a-Job-Curriculum.pdf



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About the Authors

Corinne Thomas-Kersting, CCC-SLP

I am the program assistant for Portland Public Schools' Community Transition Program and have worked as a speech-language pathologist in the public schools for twenty-five years. I have enjoyed serving students of all ages in a wide variety of settings and programs, and the transition years have always been especially appealing to me. I appreciate being around young people as they explore their identities and prepare for good lives as adults.



Dona Schumacher, OTR/L

I have practiced in the field of special education for thirty years. I was a special education teacher for the first ten years, and then an occupational therapist for Portland Public Schools. I am always learning; every day I learn something new from my students and my colleagues. This workbook is a part of that great learning journey. It's a work in progress.



We first began to develop the **Get a Job** ideas and materials while working collaboratively with a high school life skills and transition program in 1990. Working with this curriculum has proven to be an exciting opportunity to work closely with teams and refine our skills as educators.



Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

How To Use This Curriculum

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

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

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

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

Incorporates Evaluation as an Integral Part of Learning:

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

Activity-Based:

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

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

Most of the Handouts Include these Elements:

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

Individualized:

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

Supports the Development of Student Portfolios:

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

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

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



Steps To Success

Project Outline for Teachers

Class _____ Date _____

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



Get Ready to Learn

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



Make a Great First Impression

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



Know Yourself

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

| continued 



Know Your Skills

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



Finish in Style

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



Practice Some More

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



Good Endings

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



Steps To Success

Individual Project Outline for Students

Student _____ Date _____

Vocational Interest Area _____

I will successfully interview for a job which interests me.



Get Ready to Learn

- ___ **Objective 1.** I will complete videotaping of a practice job interview.
- ___ **Objective 2.** I will interview an expert about job interviews.
- ___ **Objective 3.** I will look at the videotape of my practice interview, look at the **Interview Checklist** and choose skills that I want to improve.



Make a Great First Impression

- ___ **Objective 1.** I will identify appropriate clothing and grooming for an interview and problem-solve how to improve my appearance.
- ___ **Objective 2.** I will demonstrate confidence in introducing myself, shaking hands, and maintaining eye contact.
- ___ **Objective 3.** I will sit in a relaxed and dignified manner.



Know Yourself

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



Know Your Skills

- ___ **Objective 1.** I will answer, "What work experience do you have?" including job titles, places, and description of work.
- ___ **Objective 2.** I will answer, "How has school prepared you for this job?"
- ___ **Objective 3.** I will answer, "What kinds of tools, machines and equipment can you use?"
- ___ **Objective 4.** I will be able to describe the supports and accommodations that can help me on the job.

| continued



Finish in Style

___ **Objective 1.** I will ask the interviewer appropriate questions.

___ **Objective 2.** I will leave the interview in a gracious way (handshake, eye contact, thanks).



Practice Some More

___ **Objective 1.** I will remember to use my new skills and complete another practice job interview and ask for feedback.

___ **Objective 2.** Students will identify three areas needing additional practice, set goals and work to improve these areas.

I will _____.

I will _____.

I will _____.



Good Endings

___ **Objective 1.** I will complete another videotaping of a practice interview and do my very best.

___ **Objective 2.** I will complete the **Interview Checklist** and compare how I did in the first taped interview to how I did in the last interview.

___ **Objective 3.** I will celebrate successes and plan for becoming even better!

I am successful in these areas	I will continue to work on
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

_____ Student's signature	_____ Date
------------------------------	---------------

_____ Teacher's signature	_____ Date
------------------------------	---------------



5th Goal
**Finish
in Style**



Finish in Style

Objective 1—Ask Questions

Student will generate questions to ask the interviewer.

Purpose

Students will benefit from learning how you can be active in gaining information.

Suggested Activities

1. Instructor takes the role of the person being interviewed during a mock job interview. The instructor models how not to answer the question:
 - * Do not say “No, no questions.”
 - * As a general rule, do not ask about wages, salary or benefits on the first interview unless the employer brings the subject up.
2. Next, discuss ways to answer the question:
 - * Be positive
 - * Show interest in the company or business
3. Instructor takes the role of the person being interviewed during a mock interview and students take turns being the interviewer. The student interviewer asks one of the questions practiced thus far and then asks the interviewee, “Do you have any questions?” The instructor models negative and positive ways to respond to this question. After the mock interview, the students critique the instructor. What impression did the person being interviewed give the interviewer?

Examples	Response	Impression
	“Don’t know”	This person doesn’t care.
	“How much is the pay?”	This person just cares about money.
	“What is the dress code?”	This person cares about company rules and appearance.

4. Describe or demonstrate a job interviewing scenario (job title, brief description of duties, etc). Have students work in pairs or small groups and generate possible questions that could be asked at the job interview.



Handout

Be Ready to Ask a Question at a Job Interview

This activity will allow the student some additional opportunity to think about an appropriate question he/she could ask at a job interview.

Be Ready to Ask a Question at a Job Interview



Name _____ Date _____

Asking questions means I am interested in learning.

I can ask questions and show people that I like to learn.

Asking appropriate questions at an interview is important.

The person interviewing you asks “Do you have any questions?”

Circle best way you can respond to the question.

How much money will I make?

No...no questions

What do people wear to work here?

Reflection: What is a good question that I could ask at a job interview?



Finish in Style

Objective 2—Leave Graciously

Student will demonstrate the ability to leave the interview in a gracious way (handshake, eye contact, thanks).

Purpose

Students will benefit from being able to bring closure to an interaction.

Suggested Activities

1. Instructor takes the role of the person being interviewed during a mock job interview and models how not to close an interview:
 - * No handshake, limp handshake or handshake too rigorous
 - * Eyes looking down or around the room
 - * No “thank-you” communicated
2. Next, discuss appropriate ways to bring closure to the interview:
 - * Firm handshake
 - * Eyes directed towards the person
 - * Friendly “thank you” communicated
3. Practice these skills in pairs throughout the classroom and then have the students role play in front of the group followed by critique from the group at large.





Practice Some More

Objective 1— Complete a Practice Interview

Student will complete a practice interview in front of peers and ask for feedback.

Purpose

Students will benefit from being able to rehearse the entire job interview again, using all the skills they have been practicing.

Suggested Activities

1. Set up for practice interviews and remind students to use all the skills they have been working on for this activity. This practice interview may also be videotaped, for additional feedback.
2. The interviewer may be an instructor, other staff person or community volunteer. Select a staff person who is less familiar with the students or a guest from the business community. The interviewer should ask the same questions asked in the initial interview.
3. Instruct students to interview for the same job that they did for the initial mock interview. This should be a job which is realistic and for which they have the entry-level skills.
4. After the interview, have students ask for feedback from their peers. Facilitate the group looking again at the skills listed on the **Interview Checklist**, which was completed for the pre-evaluation (1st Goal, Objective 3). Encourage students to give specific feedback. They should receive compliments for successes and information about skills they need to improve.





Practice Some More

Objective 2— Set Goals and Refine Skills

Student will identify three areas needing additional practice, set goals and work to improve these areas.

Purpose

Students will benefit from evaluating themselves and actively choosing the areas which are most important for them to improve.

Suggested Activities

1. Based upon the feedback from the last practice interview and the results of the **Interview Checklist**, have students review the areas still needing improvement and select the three which are most important to them.
2. Have students write goals which address these three targeted areas. The goals are listed on the student's **Steps to Success Project Outline**. Additionally, the students can create a visual reminder about their goals through writing or drawing.
3. Have students share their goals with one another and offer each other suggestions.
4. Design additional practice and role-playing with the students to address these additional areas, if needed.



Handout

Practice Makes Perfect

This handout is provided as a way for students to document how to continue using the skills they have learned for success.

Practice Makes Perfect



Name _____ Date _____

Practice is a way I can learn or perfect a skill.

Practice will make me a great communicator.

I have learned a lot about job interviews.

I am going to keep practicing and working to do my best.

Draw a picture or write words that describe things to work on.

I am going to keep working on....