

*I*ntroduction



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FOREWORD

During the past three years, Oklahoma has made tremendous progress in building its statewide school-to-work system. We owe the many educators, community leaders, and partners who have been involved in this successful launch a great deal of gratitude. They have worked hard to achieve what some considered an impossible task.

While the implementation of Oklahoma's school-to-work system is well underway, there is still much to be done. We are now in the process of teaching all stakeholders about the various components of school-to-work. To accelerate this process, we have developed a contextual learning workshop series, with train-the-trainer toolboxes, to use with our partners at the local level.

This workshop toolbox series will help you develop a cascading taskforce to assist you in providing exciting professional development opportunities to educators and partners within your local partnership. This series of train-the-trainer workshops includes a toolbox full of tools and resources that educators and partners can use to implement major components of school-to-work. Each toolbox workshop is designed around a major component of school-based or work-based learning. Each toolbox contains content materials, sample workshop agendas, workshop lesson design templates, presentation design templates, and workshop impact evaluation processes.

The design of these toolboxes is an initiative of the Professional Development Division of the Oklahoma Department of Vocational and Technical Education in collaboration with the School-to-Work and Guidance Divisions. The content of each workshop was developed by a committee of experts and successful

practitioners from across the state who identified the major factors of success for their assigned component of school-to-work. We commend and appreciate their efforts. Janet Hawkins and Dwight Thurmond, career specialists in the ODVTE Guidance Division, served this committee as facilitators. We thank them and the following committee members for giving educators this tool to provide hands-on learning activities related to career exploration and education.

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We hope that the Contextual Learning Workshop Toolbox series will provide strong, practical resources for our local partners. We appreciate your vision for School-to-Work at the local level and your desire to increase student learning and teacher effectiveness for all students.

Karen Warner
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Technical Education

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Oklahoma Department of Vocational and Technical Education acknowledges and commends the efforts of many agency staff members who made vital contributions to this project. Such a comprehensive effort requires the expertise of many individuals. Special thanks go to Renae Lomenick for efficient handling of the forms for committee meetings, Linda Houck for word processing the preliminary draft, Gloria Koch for typesetting and formatting the toolbox, Kathryn Anderson for editing, and Kathy Lee Battles for designing the cover. Thanks also are expressed to LaMecia Stiles for assisting with the follow-up section of each toolbox and to Karen Warner for her input and direction.

This publication could not have been printed without the expertise and commitment of the Printing Plant staff under the supervision of Danny Darrow. Delivery of the final product was the responsibility of the staff at the CIMC Warehouse, under the direction of Darrell Stiles and Lana Austin. To each of these ODVTE staff members and others from all across the state who have contributed to this publication, we offer our thanks.

The Oklahoma Department of Vocational and Technical Education also expresses special thanks to the following contributors.

Job Skills Contract and Career Project
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Career Classes and Resource Centers was adapted from the publication *Developing a Career Center: The Complete Handbook*, Second Edition, 1998, to serve the needs of the state of Oklahoma. The referenced manual was funded through a grant from the New Mexico State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee and written, compiled, and edited by J. Scott Fowler and Barbara E. McDonald of New Mexico State University at Alamogordo. The referenced portions of *Developing a Career Center: The Complete Handbook* are used only for non-commercial and educational purposes.

To make this material Oklahoma-specific, several individuals contributed articles. We express our appreciation to the following:

Curtis Shumaker, Oklahoma State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee

Barclay Brumley, ASVAB Test Program Manager

Joyce Hart, Career Information Coordinator,
 Career Information, Oklahoma Department of Vocational and Technical Education

Carri Hoffman, Oklahoma Career Search, Career Systems Specialist, Oklahoma Department of Vocational and Technical Education

PURPOSE

We are presently in a paradigm shift in education to prepare young people for the twenty-first century. The classroom of the future can no longer be contained within the four walls of a school. It can no longer evolve around a teacher but must be student-centered. The teacher should become a facilitator of resources. However, these resources will not be able to be generated and contained within the classroom. They will be created from partnerships within our communities and involve business/industries on the local, national, and even international levels. Our students must be able to move beyond the skill level of the instructor. The teacher must be able to make a smooth transition from being an expert, to being a coach, to being a cheerleader. Internships, when done properly, are a gateway to a world of resources beyond the classroom.

According to the experts, the key to unlocking learning is not within the teacher but within the student. We must learn how to appropriately teach students by appealing to their preferred mode for receiving information. Next, we must move from teacher-based instruction to student-based construction by teaching students how to use information to learn and solve problems. For example, business and industry partnerships can be an intriguing ticket out of the classroom to an abundance of resources and relevant knowledge. It allows the student to see the use of knowledge in a holistic framework, not isolated bits of information. Claims are abundant that students will be much more committed to learning when they see a connection between what they are expected to do in school and their lives in the future. Teachers must realize that every student brings talents, experiences, and knowledge to the classroom. Partnerships can assist a teacher in showing respect for a student's potential and accessing the interest, skills and knowledge possessed by our students. Thinking that

teachers have time to teach to the unique styles of each and every student is unrealistic. However, a real partnership, especially with business and industry, will provide more resources to develop the quality and quantity of learning strategies necessary to engage students to the highest level possible.

One author states that a teacher, who cannot provide immediate examples of how a subject relates to the real world, lacks the competence to engage students in a quest for knowledge. Another expert claims that school, by its very structure, eliminates a child's natural love for learning. A child learns by engaging all the senses. It is only upon entering school that a child's interest, creativity, and rate of learning rapidly declines. Business and industry can provide an opportunity for students to do more than just memorize; students must learn to think, apply, and realize a need for lifelong learning. It is an excellent opportunity to match interests to careers and to provide meaningful, relevant information that has purpose. All these factors are keys to developing a successful school experience for our young people. According to the Oklahoma Regents for Higher Education, of the 100 students who enter the ninth grade, 75 graduate and 25 drop out before graduation. Of the 75 who graduate, 25 will enter the military, go straight to work, or remain unemployed. Fifty will enter Oklahoma colleges and universities. However, only 10 will stay in school and complete a degree. Therefore, the need for schools and communities to partner for education is crucial. We must learn to develop a real partnership in which both business and education receive a tangible product. The returns for both parties will be better schools, better employees, better communities, more jobs, and a better economy for all.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOLBOX

- Teachers can use this toolbox to design and implement career classes and a career resource center.
- Career class lesson plans can be adjusted to accommodate the different age levels and time constraints. Within each lesson are related activities. Teachers also have the opportunity to choose other activities related to the topic.
- Lessons can be infused within career classes or in related subject areas.
- Career resource center information can be housed in a small, limited space or in a large multiroom suite. It can be adapted to make use of the space available.
- Items listed in the appendix augment lesson plans and provide additional career-related activities.
- Additional career resource materials may be added to the three-ring binder.

PURPOSE

Provide teachers with a comprehensive career guide to implement a career resource and instructional program.

GOALS

- Encourage teacher involvement in career development for student success.
- Increase career awareness involvement throughout the school.
- Establish and enhance a community network.
- Achieve effective career development with less preparation time.

EDUCATOR BENEFITS AND EXPECTATIONS

- Provides easy correlations to current curriculum.
- Brings in guest speakers and promotes good public relations.
- Establishes a working relationship between business and education.
- Motivates students to broaden their career goals.
- Increases relevance of subject matter.
- Encourages interdisciplinary (infusion) approach to instruction.
- Provides broad spectrum of career-related instructional activities.
- Provides relevant up-to-date career information.

STUDENT BENEFITS AND EXPECTATIONS

- Provides opportunity for students to broaden their career goals.
- Builds problem-solving skills through real-life experiences.
- Adds real-life experience to learning.
- Achieves success through discovery learning.
- Builds desirable work ethics.
- Enhances career opportunities through job shadowing and service learning.
- Builds rapport with business and industry.
- Obtains relevant up-to-date career information.

COMMUNITY BENEFITS AND EXPECTATIONS

- Increases awareness of educator's role.
- Increases awareness of the business and industry opportunities available to the school.
- Provides opportunity to promote work ethics and interpersonal skills.
- Supplies positive perceptions of business and industry.
- Heightens awareness of current job expectations.

OBJECTIVES

- Provide ready-made, user friendly materials for educators to use in career instruction.
- Combine appropriate lesson plans with innovative teaching strategies that will meet the career and academic objectives.
- Identify resources and methods to establish or enhance existing career resource centers.
- Provide materials to assist career development within classrooms and resource centers.
- Utilize the expertise of community members in real-life application.
- Define processes and practices for integrating career information into core curriculum.

