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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses a workshop designed for career development professionals and paraprofessionals working in an educational environment. Participants in the workshop learn about educationally transforming ideas adaptable to a variety of teaching styles; new ways to use traditional classroom resources; and ways in which to acquire new skills for teaching in an electronic-based classroom. Content of the workshop includes: current changes in technology experienced by students in all facets of their lives, including the classroom; the changing role of workers, including career counselors in the 21st century; the value of technical support when teaching in a digital environment; and effective methods for using traditional and digital resources for a holistic approach to career/life planning. Search engines; educational Web sites; labor market and career related Web sites and software; and online career inventories and assessments are listed. (MKA)

21st Century Digital Resources for Career Planning across the Lifespan

by

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21st Century Digital Resources for Career Planning Across the Lifespan

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The look and the feel of a classroom today, including the career/life-planning classroom, has changed over the years. Today's *Baby-boomers* will recall chalkboards, mimeographed handouts, movie projectors, and a walk down the hall to the library. Chances are, if they were lucky, they had the opportunity to enroll in a *guidance* course.

Today's technology opens up a whole new world for students and instructors, alike. Instructors today might be using software programs, on-line assessments and web sites, in their career/life planning courses. Moreover, *guidance* classes, now known as career/life-planning classes, are widely available, due to necessity in today's age of information and global labor market. Today's students have access to cell phones, pagers, palm pilots, e-mail programs, on-line shopping and on-line education — instant information in an instant world.

Our workshop, *21st Century Digital Resources for Career Planning Across the Lifespan,* takes you to the next logical step in the classroom: a networked, real-time, 'smart' classroom. We will share our curriculum with you and we will demonstrate the digital-based resources used in this 21st century learning environment. Participants will discover educationally transforming ideas adaptable to a variety of teaching styles; new ways to use traditional classroom resources; and ways in which to acquire new skills for teaching in an electronic-based classroom.

Readers of this paper will gain a thorough overview of the workshop content, to include:

- Current changes in technology experienced by students in all facets of their lives, *including* the classroom.
- The changing role of workers, including career counselors, in the 21st Century.
- The value of technical support when teaching in a digital environment.
- Effective methods for using traditional and digital resources for a holistic approach to career/life planning.

Expected outcomes:

- Participants will be able to identify current changes in technology that affect the lives of students, in and out of the classroom; whether a student, worker, citizen, homemaker and/or leisurite, all share necessary technological competencies.
- Participants will be able to identify digital resources that illustrate the changing dynamics of the digital age, including the career/life-planning classroom.

- Participants will be able to identify and determine the degree and types of technical support necessary for their career-planning course on their campus.
- Participants will be able to incorporate traditional resources with technology-based resources for a holistic approach to teaching a career/life planning class.

This workshop is designed for career development professionals and paraprofessionals working in an educational environment, e.g., high school, community college, or four-year/graduate college and university. The format of the presentation will be beneficial to entry, intermediate and advanced practitioners. Practitioners at the intermediate and advanced level will be most familiar with the career and educational content, and technology resources discussed in the workshop.

Are you currently using career software programs as a resource for your career decision-making classes? Do you refer your students to Internet resources? Have you incorporated e-mail into your communication link with students? Have you used an LCD projector and computer in the classroom, as an instructional tool? Have you experienced the color and dynamics of PowerPoint presentations? Do you have access to teaching in an electronic classroom? Do you have access to technical support when problems arise?

You probably answered "yes" to some or many of these questions. If you are interested in a classroom-based, career education delivery format that engages the latest technology, inside and outside of the electronic classroom, then you will appreciate the content and presentation of this workshop. Whether you have no experience, limited experience, or extensive experience using technology in the classroom you will discover simple, enlightening, colorful, and educationally transforming ideas for your delivery style and format.

Common use of technology is only a few years old but it has already transformed our lives and our access to information. Technology affects the way in which we access career and educational information, the way in which we seek employment, and the way in which we do our jobs. Technology has changed the definitions and/or applied use of words and terms, such as *job*, *classroom*, *networking*, *the home office*, *learning environment*, *work environment*, and *job seeking*. As practitioners, we encourage our students to broaden their knowledge, to learn and use technology, and to be prepared for the ever-changing labor market. If we expect our students to use the most current and comprehensive resources, then we must provide them with contemporary methods for accessing information. We can provide a hands-on environment for our students and model the technology found in work and life environments. This workshop will give you the structure in which to begin creating this environment. We will focus on 21st century techniques for assisting students in identifying their life roles as students, employees, citizens, homemakers, or leisurites, as a part of their career planning process.

Persons reading this paper but not attending the workshop will not fully benefit from the workshop content. We will be demonstrating classroom use of technology-based, career and educational resources, such as PowerPoint presentations, the use of a smart board, software programs, Internet research, and e-mail. To begin implementing this, or a similar structure, the instructor/counselor must have basic skills in technology. Ideally, one would have access to a wired classroom and technical support, however, a single computer and an LCD projector can greatly enhance the instruction and learning in the traditional classroom.

In summary, *21st Century Digital Resources for Career Planning Across the Lifespan* will model and demonstrate a classroom-based structure for delivery of career and educational information, using the latest technology, to include the following:

- *Students are using technology at work, at home, for leisure and in the classroom.* We will assist participants in discovering new ways to use traditional classroom resources, and ways in which to acquire new skills, for teaching in an electronic-based classroom. Participants from academia, whether at the entry, intermediate or advanced level will gain the most from this workshop.

- We will *practice what we preach.* As practitioners, we encourage our students develop their technology skills and to use current and comprehensive resources for career and educational planning, and job search. Making the transition from the traditional classroom to the electronic classroom will be demonstrated. We will model the transition from the *over- head projector* to the *LCD projector;* from the *file folder* to the *desktop folder; from the DOT* to the *O'NET;* from the *career library to the WWW,* to name a few.

- The *challenges* faced when creating and maintaining a technology-based learning environment will be discussed and explored, as well as the importance and value of technical support. Technical support is a necessity when trouble-shooting problems; when hardware malfunctions occur; for the development of file management techniques in the classroom; and for student and instructor support. Other challenges might include the varied levels of computer proficiency among students; the need for administrative support and financial support; and access to technology based resources.

- Does a technology-based classroom overlook the value of traditional instruction? *When to use technology and when not to* will be explored.

Through a colorful, lively and informative PowerPoint presentation, we will demonstrate a structure for classroom based learning in a digital "smart" classroom. This model can also be adapted to the traditional classroom for which a computer and an LCD projector are available.

Curriculum and Instruction

The curriculum modeled in this workshop is designed for a 3-unit, lower-division class, consisting of fifty-four instruction hours. Career/life-planning topics taught historically, remain the same, but with a transition to technology-based resources. This format allow for enhanced, hands-on and collaborative learning. Examples of technology-based instruction include: a networked classroom, Power Point presentations, use of software programs, email, and Internet research.

Introduction to the Electronic Classroom and Electronic Resources

Early in the course, the instructor may want to reserve from 15 minutes to 1 hours to adequately introduce the electronic classroom and resources, and to survey students to determine their general level of computer proficiency. Pairing computer literate students with non-computer literate students can facilitate student interaction, a more evenly paced learning environment, and enhance student problem solving and peer teaching/team skills.

An introduction to the electronic classroom will generally include a step-by-step walk through of the networked classroom and a hands-on demonstration of the computer desktop

features, including the classroom resource folder and/or web site, software programs, Internet resources, and of the role of technical support staff available.

Technical Support

The need and availability of technical support will depend upon technical resources in the classroom, and the degree of institutional support. A networked classroom will require full technical support; the use of an LCD projector and a computer in a traditional classroom would require less, if any, support. Technical support can include:

- Student and instructor support, by assisting with the use of various computer applications, performing virus scans, saving files, and conducting research projects.
- Troubleshooting lost files, computer crashes and installation of specialized application programs.
- Problem solving hardware malfunctions with scanners, projects and printers.
- File management support including access to instructor files, securing folders in their drives, and retrieval of lost documents.
- Demonstration of digital cameras, scanners, remote keyboards, white boards, and smart boards.
- Upgrading the technology as needed: memory and computer hardware, for example.

Set-up and Use of E-mail

Whether an instructor teaches in a traditional or electronic classroom, an email program offers a fast and convenient communication avenue between the instructor and student, as well as between students. Likewise, the use of email for academic purposes mirrors its widespread use in social communication.

Several free email programs are available. The instructor should allow from 1/2 to 1 hour of class time, depending on the size of the class and the degree of computer literacy among students. A time saving tip: Assign as home work, the selection of an e-mail address and password prior to doing the in-class email set up. There are numerous advantages to using an email program.

- The instructor is able to model current workplace communication.
- E-mail offers an alternative form of communication between teacher and student, beyond the traditional office hour, and between students when working on group projects.
- E-mail allows for more timely communication regarding regular and make-up assignments.

On-Line Research Tools

Search Engines

This Internet resource will be used throughout the course as well as reflect the on-line research tools used in the work environment, at home, and for leisure. Examples of selected search engines include: www.hotbot.com; www.google.com; www.yahoo.com; www.altavista.com.

Educational Web Sites

Career decision-making can also involve educational planning and decision-making. Several web sites are available for educational information. Some examples include:

- Association of Independent Colleges and Universities: http://www.aiccu.edu
- College Source: http://collegesource.org
- Study abroad program: http://www.counciltravel.com
- US News College Rankings: http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/college/cohome.htm
- California Virtual University: http://www.california.edu

Educational web sites will also provide a resource for students outside of the classroom who wish to continue upgrading their job skills or personal learning through traditional, alternative and/or on-line educational avenues.

Labor Market Information Web Sites

Information about the new economy, new technology, employment and economic trends is vital to students' career and educational decision-making. Moreover, this kind of information can yield valuable economic information for students who wish to establish their own business, invest in local companies or buy property. Some examples include:

International Labor Market

- *http://www.bls.gov/oreother.htm* - lists about 58 statistical agencies covering employment, demographic and industry information
- http://www.ilo.org - highlights worldwide labor trend

National Labor Market

- http://bls.gov/ocohome.htm - national data on 250 occupations
- http://www.acinet.org/acinet - provides occupational and national information

Regional Labor Market

- http://www.calmis.cahwnet.gov - California State Employment Department web site
- http://www.commerce.ca.gov/california/economy - California Department of Trade and Commerce web site on growing industries and demographics in California
- http://www.soicc.ca.gov - California county employment and industry projections

Selected Career Related Web Sites

- http://careers.wsj.com - Wall Street Journal and National Business Employment Weekly
- http://www.jobweb.org - Database of US companies. National Assn. of Colleges & employers web site
- http://www.black-collegian.com/index.html - Industry surveys, employer profiles, job banks
- http://www.minorities-jb.com/ - Information for women and minorities; employer profiles
- http://www.americasemployers.com - Database for 60,000 companies

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

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