**Statement of Purpose**

“Marcia can’t understand why she lost her last two jobs as a receptionist. She does a good job, handles phone calls well, knows where and when to refer customers, and gets along well with other staff members. However, Marcia is frequently late for work and dresses inappropriately for the work she is doing. Marcia doesn’t understand that she is the ﬁrst point of contact for the company and that ﬁrst impressions are important.  
  
Now, Marcia has an interview for a third receptionist job. Showing up late for that interview dressed in ripped jeans and a tight tank top will not bode well for Marcia getting that job. Even if Marcia has the necessary occupational skills, the employer may not hire her.”  
 -excerpt from Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services website

There is an almost endless amount of research and data that suggest that upon graduation from high school, students do not have the necessary skill and abilities to perform at the college level and that they lack the occupational skills to compete in the 21st Century workforce. The excerpt above illustrates that many of today’s youth also lack the ability adequately go through the hiring process to obtain a job in the first place. This can lead to a vicious cycle. We have all heard it stated that “You can’t get this job because you do not have any experience.” How can someone get the experience they need if they cannot get a job to gain that experience. It is crucial for students to gain a better understanding of the hiring process to improve their ability to gain on-the-job experience. I propose that this unit be incorporated into the high school economic and financial literacy coursework, ideally targeted towards 11th and 12th grade students.

The Ohio Department of Education mandates for the graduating classes of 2014 and beyond that “All students must receive instruction in economics and financial literacy during grades 9-12…” Although it is extremely important for student to learn about budgeting, bank, insurances, credit etc., the current Model Curricula Standards are missing the key components of providing instruction to assist students in the hiring process and providing them meaningful career research and exploration. The job market is becoming more and more challenging, particularly for younger workers and minorities. With “official” national unemployment rates hovering around 10% (real unemployment/underemployment rates around 25+%), these numbers are more than doubled for workers aged 16-19. According to The U.S. Department of Labor, January 2012 unemployment rates for individuals age 16-19 is 22.1% for whites and 40.3% for blacks. Students need to be armed with abilities and strategies that will provide them with the best possible chances of getting into the workforce. Students need to develop application and resume completion skills as well as training to perform in a job interview. Students also need instruction and guidance in completing meaningful, in-depth career research and exploration to examine potential careers that match their personal preferences and interests. According to a MSNBC article, “50% of those that declare a major, change majors – with many doing so 2 or 3 times during their college years”. Many of us can personally relate to this fact. The article also states that “roughly 40 percent of those who start a four-year degree program still have not earned one after year six”. These numbers do not address the numbers of students that decide to go back to college after obtaining their first degree and career occupation because they are not pleased with a career once they enter into it. This trend leads to increased cost of education and more debt for students if/when they do finally obtain their degree. It also affects the ability for incoming college students to get into college. The longer it takes a student to graduate, the fewer slots are available for incoming students. We need to better prepare student for making this transition following high school.

This unit would be relevant and applicable to virtually every single student that comes through our schools. The hiring process is something that almost every individual will have to go through multiple times in their life for various types of careers. The career exploration subunit is designed for each individual student to determine career fields and pathways that best match their personal desires allowing the students to determine the direction they take this unit. It also provides students with information on activities and opportunities other than on-the-job training that can help them gain valuable experiences in their preferred areas of interest. This can help to end the cycle of not being able to get a job due to lack of experience and not being able to gain experience because they cannot get a job. The ultimate results of this unit would provide students with a much clearer answers to those questions we have all faced (and some still do)… “What do I want to be when I grow up?” and “How do I get there?”

**References**

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