

Programs

Employability Skills Curriculum

Vital Link Curriculum provides teachers with activities to assist students in developing Employability Skills, including:

- Speaking
- Listening
- Conflict Resolution
- Problem Solving
- Group Participation/Teamwork

The curriculum provides teachers a way to integrate Life Skills training into the classroom. The curriculum is aligned with California Academic Standards and the SCAN Skills.

Portfolio Curriculum

The Portfolio curriculum is a comprehensive guide designed to prepare students for their first, entry-level job. The workbook focuses on providing students with a way to evaluate and document their current skills (through personal evaluation and activities). It allows the student to plan ahead and recognize the steps needed to reach their career goals.

As an addition to this workbook, Vital Link developed the Pocket Portfolio to further aid the preparation process. In a unique one-page format, it contains an Information Sheet where students can fill in their personal information and references. It also contains an Interview Checklist, Hints for Interviews and Commonly Asked Interview Questions, among others. Folded into a compact, credit-card sized case, it is convenient to carry to any interview.

Job Bank

The Job Bank was created as a support tool to be used in the high school, Regional Occupational Programs and community college career centers. It is designed to help entry-level students, ages 16-21, search for full-time, part-time and internship opportunities throughout Orange County. The Job Bank is useful for students and employers alike. Employers have the ability to find the entry-level employees they need, and students have an Internet site that exclusively serves first time job seekers.

Advisory Board Meeting Facilitation

Vital Link facilitates Orange County ROP Advisory Board meetings and creates the link between educators and business professionals. The meetings bring current industry information into vocational education classrooms. The industry professionals who participate in the meetings provide information to teachers covering skills needed, industry trends, labor statistics and workforce demand. In 2004-05, Vital Link hosted Advisory Board meetings for five industries: Digital Design, Business Technology, Medical, Automotive and Public Safety. Resource and presentation materials for each subject were compiled on a CD for classroom use.

Support Services

Vital Link provides support services to Orange County high schools, Regional Occupational Programs and community colleges in the area of career awareness, workforce preparation, and business and education partnership development.

Vital Link services include:

- Teacher training that involves life skills and career preparation curriculum
- Speakers for Career Days
- Facilitation of grants for programs,
- Consultation services for businesses and educators to create partnerships
- Support for career center activities

Career Awareness Forums

The Career Awareness Forums are unique opportunities for students to witness professionals reenact an aspect of their workday. The forum presentations demonstrate the skills needed for various careers within an industry and how those careers relate to one another. Throughout the presentation, the professionals share with the students their personal career story. This condensed form of Job Shadowing experience provides students with a close up look into the world of work.

In 2004-05, Vital Link hosted five Career Awareness Forums: Banking, Public Safety, Medical (2) and Construction.

2004-05 Accomplishments

Organization

On September 15, 2004, Vital Link hosted its 15th Anniversary and Recognition event, "Celebrate the Vision", at our new office. Founding members and friends from the last 15 years joined us for lunch and a Recognition Program. Thank you all for your support and good wishes.

Vital Link completed its three year Strategic Plan with the assistance of the MBA Student Intern group from UCI. We received coaching from Orange County Executive Coaches and were the recipient of the Coaching Network Leadership Program from the Fieldstone Foundation. We also completed a Corporate Branding project, designing a new logo and tag line.

We continue to settle into our new offices and make improvements. We will have a storage shed (compliments of a Coastline ROP Construction class at Laguna Hills HS) this summer.

Curriculum Development

Vital Link developed the Pocket Portfolio— an Information Sheet that is a unique way for a student to store and carry important information about job and interview skills. It folds into a credit-card sized holder and fits conveniently in a pocket or purse. We have distributed 5,053 to date.

Career Connections

The Career Awareness Forums reached a total of 1,250 students and educators with five forums this year. The forums focused on the Banking, Public Safety, Medical (2) and Construction industries. Students met business role models who inspired them to identify their career direction and set goals for their future.

Business/Education Partnership

Vital Link facilitated five Advisory Boards for the Regional Occupation Programs in Orange County where business professionals shared their expertise with educators. Advisory Board subjects this year were Digital Design, Business Technology, Medical, Public Safety and Automotive. 322 teachers and counselors attended. Resource and presentation materials for each subject were compiled on a CD for classroom use.

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