



Introduction:

***A Theme-Based Curriculum
for Youth As They Enter
the Workforce***



At 15 years of age, Juan Garcia worked eight hours a day, six days a week in an auto body shop near his home to help support his family. He sanded off old paint and prepared cars for paint jobs wearing only a paper mask. He went home each day with a headache and at the end of the week was paid \$100. "I thought I was getting so much money, and I didn't know much about safety on the job," recalled Juan. "I used to be so ignorant about such things." Now Juan knows about the minimum wage, child labor laws and OSHA after attending a class at his high school which incorporated this "Safe Jobs for Youth" curriculum.

Nowadays by the time most youth graduate from high school they have had one or more paying jobs. The money they earn most often goes towards clothes, gas and car insurance, a college fund, or to support their family. This curriculum is designed for these young people to give them the knowledge and life skills they need as they enter the workforce.

Who is This For and Why Offer it in School?

This curriculum unit was originally designed for ninth grade students, those who are 14–15 years of age. This is the age when young people typically start to enter the workforce. This is also the time when many schools require students to take a course on education/career planning or life skills development. All or parts of this curriculum can be easily incorporated into such a course. However, the curriculum has been written in such a way that it can easily be used as is, or adapted, for older students.

This unit focuses on a number of workplace-related issues, such as health and safety, sexual harassment, discrimination, and child labor laws. Employers often do not train youth in these areas, perhaps because they may not invest resources in young workers in the same way as they might for permanent employees. Consequently, there is a move afoot, with support from federal, state and other agencies, to reach youth with this information through the classroom.

This curriculum includes information about the major federal regulations which protect young workers and the agencies that enforce them. It also includes information specific to California. Any area in which California laws or agencies differ from the federal standards is specifically denoted. You should contact a career counselor or similar person at your school or in your district to determine

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whether information about child labor laws is available for teachers. If this information is not available at your school, and you teach outside California, you may need to contact your state department of labor/industrial relations to find out if your state has its own set of child labor laws which may be more protective than those enforced by the federal government. Contacts for agencies in each state are listed in Appendix A.

The primary emphasis of this unit is the development of problem-solving and communication skills useful in the workplace. While government agencies can provide information, and, in some cases, can intervene to support worker health and safety, they are also limited in their capacity to enforce workplace regulations. Moreover, some of the regulations themselves are weak or do not address certain issues that may arise (for example, favoritism or harassment that is unrelated to gender, race, or other characteristics defined by the law). For these reasons, it can be more effective to try to solve the problem within the workplace. Ultimately, it is up to employees to decide which strategies to use when faced with problems at work. It is our intention here to provide students with a variety of options.

You do not have to be an expert on these topics to teach this unit. The approach is learner-centered, where the students find out the information they need to know using a problem-solving approach. The “teacher’s supplements” in Sessions 1, 2, 5 and 8 are included to provide background information. Additional resources are cited in Appendix A which can be accessed as you prepare to teach.

What is the Problem?

More than once a week a young person under 18 dies at work, an average of 70 a year. A recent report from the National Research Council estimates that every 40 seconds a young worker is injured, a rate double that of adults. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health estimates that each year over 100,000 youth end up in hospital emergency rooms because of a work-related injury. Not surprisingly, almost 40% of workplace injuries occur during the first year of work. Federal and state child labor laws are designed to protect youth from many types of hazardous work. However, many employers and employees are not aware of the laws, and they are not adequately enforced. Approximately 41% of adolescent occupational deaths have been linked to work prohibited by child labor laws. Although considerable attention has been paid to the risks associated with teen driving and the use of firearms, the risks associated with job hazards have typically been ignored. There is clearly a need to teach young people about their workplace rights and what they can do to protect themselves.

This Manual: What Does it Provide?

This unit consists of 10 sessions, each of which takes approximately 1 to 1 ½ class periods. While some of the sessions build upon one another, others can stand alone. For example, Sessions 1–4, which introduce students to workplace issues through the lenses of personal and/or historical experiences, can each stand on their own. Sessions 5–9 use role play activities to motivate students to become more proactive and confident in their problem-solving and communication abilities. These sessions progressively build on the prior activities and on one another. For those teachers who have limited time, we have adapted the unit so that the basics can be covered over the course of three sessions (see “Three-Session Mini-Unit Overview” on page xi).

This manual contains a lesson plan for each session. Included in the lesson plan is a session summary, an activity grid, the objectives, evaluation/assessment criteria, advance preparation instructions, and detailed instructions for each of the activities. Some of the sessions include teacher’s supplements, which provide further background information. Transparencies and masters of handouts are included in the clear pouches at the end of each session. A three-ring binder format has been chosen so that information can be easily added or updated by the teacher. For example, state and federal child labor laws will change over time, and these changes should be added to the curriculum.

The Approach: Learner-Centered Teaching

This unit uses a learner-centered participatory education approach in which students gain an understanding of common issues they are currently facing, or will face in the workplace, and together they develop, implement and evaluate solutions. This “popular education” approach originated in Brazil with the work of educator Paulo Freire. Lessons are designed so that students will:

- ◆ Draw from their own experiences and those of family and friends;
- ◆ Develop creative thinking, analytical skills to identify solutions to work-related issues;
- ◆ Apply the knowledge and skills they gain to real life situations;
- ◆ Develop confidence to speak up about problems they face at work.

When we piloted this curriculum we had peer educators from the eleventh and twelfth grades co-teach this course with the teacher. The students responded very positively to having young people of their age teaching this class; in fact, it inspired some of them to later become peer educators.

Evaluating Progress

There are a number of ways to evaluate students' progress throughout this curriculum. An assessment questionnaire is provided in Session 1 which functions as both a pre- and a post-test for evaluation of overall content retention. Beyond providing specific information about workplace health and safety issues, the curriculum is also intended to improve communication and problem-solving skills. Most of the primary activities involve group role-plays. Thus teamwork and active participation are a crucial factor in the course's effectiveness. Some teachers have asked students to do a group self-evaluation for each role-play activity based on their cooperation, participation and communication abilities. The criteria for effective communication listed on Handout 5.2 in Session 5 has been used as the basis for this self-evaluation. These evaluations have supplemented the teachers' own assessment of each student's progress.

Also, while the curriculum has an oral problem-solving emphasis, it includes a number of writing exercises designed to improve analytical and language arts skills. For evaluation purposes, and to help students organize the material, we recommend that students each keep a 3-ring notebook in which they store handouts, assignments, and relevant reference material. The notebook could contain a daily log, including the title and objectives of the session, as well as class work and readings from that day and graded homework assignments. This material can serve as a reference for the student when faced with related issues in the workplace. It can also be turned in for a grade at the end of the course.

A Note on Teaching Immigrant Students

This curriculum was pilot-tested primarily in ninth grade Education and Career Planning classes in the Los Angeles Unified School District. It was used both with students who had English as their first and second language. It will need to be simplified for students whose English language skills are not well developed. Regarding literacy, we have attempted to de-emphasize the use of much written text in order to make this unit appropriate for students who do not have strong reading skills.

Young workers from some newly arrived immigrant populations, particularly those who are undocumented, may be at a higher risk for injury, illness, and exploitation on the job due to the unregulated nature of the jobs available to them. These workers may also be less likely to speak up due to fears of deportation. *It is important to emphasize to students that all workers in the US have the same rights to work in a safe and healthful environment.* Recent changes in the law protect undocumented workers who file complaints with the federal Department

of Labor from being reported to the Immigration and Naturalization Service. However, while undocumented workers have the right to report employers for violating the law, they do not have the right to be reinstated if they are fired for their activities.

Who to Contact for Additional Assistance

If you would like more information, or to talk with other teachers who have taught this unit, please contact the UCLA Labor Occupational Safety and Health (LOSH) Program at 310/794-5964 for a referral. See Appendix A for information on how to contact other organizations and agencies working on these issues.

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Unit Overview

The following are summaries of each session to give an overview of how the unit flows.

Session 1: Introduction to Workplace Health and Safety

This session introduces students to workplace issues. It starts with a warm-up game in which they find out about each other's work experiences. They receive a handout that explains the purpose of the unit and describes some of the learning activities. Students then fill out a short pre-test to evaluate their knowledge of the information to be covered in the unit. They watch a video that gives an overview of job health and safety for teenagers and then answer discussion questions. Lastly, they receive a handout explaining child labor laws and play a game to help them retain the information.

Session 2: Child Labor Laws

This session starts with a group brainstorm about a photograph of a child laborer at the turn of the century. Students use their observations to complete a writing exercise about child labor conditions in the United States at that time. They repeat this exercise using a photograph of a child laborer in the 1990s. This is followed by a discussion of the history of child labor laws and their relevance to US teens. Students can then complete an optional writing exercise. For homework, they read and respond to a story about forced child labor abroad and what young people are doing to oppose it. They then write a letter from the perspective of a young person who is speaking out against child slavery.

Session 3: Learning from Workers' Experiences

In this session, students draw on their own collective knowledge by conducting “talk show” style interviews with those in the class who have had work experiences. For homework, they interview a friend or family member about their work experiences, thus learning from the people in their community.

Session 4: Identifying Hazards and Solutions

In this session, students work together to create “risk maps” of the possible hazards that they have faced on the job. From the risk maps, they create lists of the hazards identified and brainstorm possible ways to eliminate them. The teacher leads a discussion of how to come up with solutions to health and safety problems. For homework, students read scenarios about workplace problems and identify the hazards and possible solutions.

Session 5: Problem-Solving for Health and Safety

In this session, students read a cartoon story about workplace hazards and brainstorm possible solutions. The teacher then leads a discussion of effective communication techniques when speaking with a supervisor about a problem on the job. Using these techniques, students practice ways to approach a supervisor in preparation for Session 6. For homework, they read and respond to a cartoon story explaining workers' compensation.

Session 6: Approaching Your Supervisor

In this session, the teacher reviews the steps one takes to get workers' compensation and what benefits one can receive. Students then perform the role-play/skit they planned in Session 5 by approaching the supervisor (the teacher) as a group of 4-5 people. They are evaluated by the class using the criteria discussed in the previous session. If any students have experienced, or are experiencing, problems at work, the class can help them brainstorm solutions through an optional role play activity.

Session 7: Wages and Hours

In this session, students read a cartoon story about a youth who was expected to work later than child labor laws permit. Certain prohibited hazardous work such as delivering pizzas is also discussed. In groups, they prepare and perform skits to resolve the problem the student faces.

Session 8: Sexual Harassment and Discrimination on the Job

In this session, the class defines sexual harassment and discusses whether it is a safety hazard. Using a cartoon story about a case of sexual harassment, students identify steps to take to stop this type of behavior and to protect themselves. Students then discuss other forms of illegal discrimination and what they can do about it. Finally, they perform a role-play activity in which they practice responding to discrimination in the workplace.

Session 9: Unions

In this session, students read a narrative about a young worker who considers unions as a means to resolving her problems on the job, and they write a short essay about her situation. In small groups, students decide how to finish the story and present their solution to the class in the form of a skit, a storyboard or another creative activity.

Session 10: Bringing It All Together

This session contains two games for students to review some of the most important information in this unit. Students play Job Safety Charades, in which groups of three students act out job hazards, effects and solutions as the others guess what they are doing. The class then plays a game of Workplace Bingo. Optionally, students can do a project in which they create a newspaper summarizing what they have learned. Finally, students complete a post-test to evaluate what they have learned.

Unit Overview Activity Grid

Session	Activities	Time Estimated	Materials
1. Introduction to Workplace Health and Safety	<p>A. Unit Pre-Test</p> <p>B. Icebreaker Game</p> <p>C. Introduction to Unit</p> <p>D. Video: <i>Your Work: Keepin' It Safe</i></p> <p>E. Question and Answer Game: Are You a Working Teen?</p>	<p>10 min.</p> <p>10 min.</p> <p>5 min.</p> <p>20+ min.</p> <p>10 min.</p> <p><u>55+ min.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Handout 1.1 ◆ Handout 1.2 ◆ Handout 1.3 ◆ Video, TV, VCR, Teacher's Supplement 1C ◆ Handout 1.4
2. Child Labor Laws	<p>A. Opening Activity: Group Brainstorm</p> <p>B. Writing Exercise: Child Labor Then and Now</p> <p>C. Instructional Activity: Child Labor Laws</p> <p>D. <i>Optional Writing Exercise: The Importance of Protective Laws</i></p> <p>E. Homework Assignment: Child Labor Internationally</p>	<p>15 min.</p> <p>30 min.</p> <p>10 min.</p> <p>5-25 min.</p> <p>5 min.</p> <p><u>60 (or 85) min.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Transparency 2.1, overhead projector ◆ Transparency 2.2, overhead projector ◆ Teacher's Supplement 2A, Handout 1.4 ◆ <i>Handout 1.4</i> ◆ Handout 2.1
3. Learning from Workers' Experiences	<p>A. Homework Review: Child Labor Internationally</p> <p>B. Guided Group Practice: Worker Interview Talk Show</p> <p>C. Homework Assignment: Worker Interview</p>	<p>10 min.</p> <p>45 min.</p> <p>5 min.</p> <p><u>60 min.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Completed assignments ◆ Handout 3.1 – one for each group ◆ Handout 3.1 – one for each student
4. Identifying Hazards and Solutions	<p>A. Homework Review: Worker Interview</p> <p>B. Preparatory Activity: What are Job Hazards?</p> <p>C. Guided Group Practice: Risk Maps</p> <p>D. Retention Activity: Generating Solutions</p> <p>E. Preparatory Activity: Identifying Solutions to Job Hazards</p> <p>F. Homework Assignment: Job Hazard Scenarios</p>	<p>10 min.</p> <p>5 min.</p> <p>30 min.</p> <p>10 min.</p> <p>10 min.</p> <p>5 min.</p> <p><u>70 min.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Completed assignments ◆ Handouts 4.1 and/or 4.2, 4.3, or 4.4 ◆ Transparencies 4.1-4.3, overhead projector, flipchart paper, markers ◆ Completed risk maps, notebook paper ◆ Transparency 4.5, Handout 4.5, overhead projector ◆ Handout 4.6

Unit Overview Activity Grid (continued)

Session		Activities	Time Estimated	Materials
5. Problem Solving for Health and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Homework Review: Job Hazard Scenarios B. Guided Group Practice: Your Right to a Safe Workplace C. Preparatory Activity: Effective Communication Techniques D. Guided Group Practice: Getting Support from Co-Workers E. Homework Assignment: Understanding Workers' Compensation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 min. 15 min. 10 min. 20 min. 5 min _____ 55 min. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Completed assignments ◆ Handout 5.1 ◆ Transparency 5.1, projector, Handout 5.2 ◆ Handout 5.3 and 5.4 	
6. Approaching Your Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Homework Review: Understanding Workers' Compensation B. Role Play Activity: Approaching Your Supervisor C. <i>Optional Role Play: Addressing Students' Problems at Work</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 min. 40 min. 30 min. 50 (or 80) min. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Completed assignments ◆ Handout 5.2 	
7. Wages and Hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Instructional Activity: Wages and Hours B. Guided Group Practice: Finishing the Story 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 min. 40 min. 50 min. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Handout 7.1, Handout 1.4 	
8. Sexual Harassment and Discrimination on the Job	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Opening Discussion: Defining Sexual Harassment B. Guided Group Practice: Sexual Harassment on the Job C. Instructional Activity: Job Discrimination D. Role Play: Confronting Discrimination on the Job 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 min. 20 min. 10 min. 20 min. 60 min. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Handout 8.1, video if available ◆ Handout 8.2 	
9. Unions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Writing Exercise: Ana's Story B. Guided Group Practice: Finishing the Story 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20 min. 30 min. 50 min. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Handout 9.1 ◆ Teacher's Supplement IB 	
10. Bringing It All Together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Retention Activity: Job Safety Charades B. Retention Activity: Workplace Bingo C. <i>Optional Project: Young Workers' Newspaper</i> D. Assessment: Unit Post-Test 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20 min. 20 min. 2 periods 10 min. 50 min. (or 3 pds.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Handout 10.1, a box or bag ◆ Handout 10.2, Handout 1.4 ◆ <i>Handout 10.3, 11" x 17" paper</i> ◆ Handout 1.1 	

Three Session Mini-Unit Overview

For teachers who have a limited time in which to teach this unit, we have created a three session version, outlined in the chart below. These lesson plans include some of the core activities in the unit. Activity numbers indicate the regular sessions in which those activities can be found.

Session	Activities	Time Estimated	Materials
1. Introduction to Workplace Health and Safety for Teens	1B. Unit Pre-Test 1D. Video: <i>Your Work: Keepin' It Safe</i> 1E. Question and Answer Game: Are You a Working Teen? 3C. Homework Assignment: Worker Interview	10 min. 20+ min. 10 min. 5 min. <hr/> 45+ min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Handout 1.1 ◆ Video, TV, VCR, Teacher's Supplement 1C ◆ Handout 1.4 ◆ Handout 3.1
2. Identifying Hazards and Solutions on the Job	4A. Homework Review: Worker Interview* 4B. Preparatory Activity: What are Job Hazards? 4C. Guided Group Practice: Risk Maps 4D. Retention Activity: Generating Solutions 5C. Preparatory Activity: Effective Communication Techniques	5 min. 5 min. 30 min. 10 min. 10 min. <hr/> 60 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Completed assignments ◆ Handout 4.1 and/or 4.2, 4.3, 4.4 ◆ Transparencies 4.1–4.3, overhead projector, flipchart paper, markers ◆ Completed risk maps, notebook paper ◆ Transparency 5.1, overhead projector, Handout 5.2
3. Problem Solving for Health and Safety	5D. Guided Group Practice: Getting Support from Co-Workers [†] 6B. Role Play Activity: Approaching Your Supervisor [†] 10D. Assessment: Unit Post-Test	20 min. 40 min 10 min. <hr/> 70 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Handouts 5.1, 5.3, 7.1, 8.2 (different one for each group) ◆ Handout 5.2 from previous session ◆ Handout 1.1

* Note: For Activity 4A, in the longer unit, the teacher compares the adult worker interviews done as homework with the teen worker interviews done in class (Activity 3B). In this three-session version, there are no in-class interviews. Therefore, the teacher should just solicit information from students regarding what they learned in interviewing adults, e.g., the kinds of jobs adults have, what hazards they face, whether there are unions at their workplaces, etc.

[†] Note: In the longer unit, Activity 5D (Guided Group Practice: Getting Support from Co-Workers) and Activity 6B (Role Play: Approaching Your Supervisor) are related to the cartoon story in Handout 5.1 (*Your Right to a Safe Workplace*). In the Three Session Mini-Unit, students will use all four *Safe Jobs for Youth* cartoon stories on the third day. These include Handout 5.1, Handout 5.3, Handout 7.1, and Handout 8.2. Activities 5D and 6B can be done as follows: Break the students into groups of four, with each group receiving a different cartoon story (some groups will have the same story). Follow the instructions in Class Sessions 5 and 6, except have students prepare their skits using the story they have been given. During the skit, each group should role-play two scenes. The first scene should reenact the scenario in the cartoon story. In the second scene, all students in the group should act as if they were a group of co-workers approaching the supervisor (played by the teacher).