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Career Exploration Unit: Learning Outcomes

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## **Career Exploration Unit**

The overall goal of a career exploration course is for students to gain interest and excitement in their future. The global objective of career education is to support students as they build a strong educational foundation in order to become productive, independent citizens who contribute to society. Within an introductory career exploration course, the educational objectives primarily are to help students gain knowledge about career possibilities and plan the steps necessary to successfully achieve career goals. The Ohio School Counselor Association (OSCA) provides comprehensive school counseling guidelines for school counselors to model as we advocate for all students. The career development benchmarks state that students will gain career awareness, articulate career goals, and develop a plan to achieve career goals (Ohio School Counselor Association). The main goals of the eighth grade career class used for the concept map and curriculum design project address the OSCA learning outcomes. Specifically examining the “exploration unit” in the career class, the eighth grade students discover the financial cost of living on their own, identify their skills and interests, and explore various career options and requirements. The career exploration unit not only focuses on learning outcomes in the school counseling domains, but the learning outcomes also build on Bloom’s taxonomy of cognitive learning domains. In addition, this particular career unit incorporates a number of online resources in order to foster an academic atmosphere that supports twenty-first century skill development and improves learning outcomes.

### **Cognitive Domain Outcomes: Understand and Apply**

The first lesson in the career exploration unit is entitled “Reality Check.” The learning outcomes of this lesson challenge students to understand the real world costs of their daily/monthly expenses and how various careers can support these costs. Students start to

develop career awareness and analyze the relationship between career choices and establishing a satisfactory lifestyle as they complete this lesson. The learning outcomes not only support OSCA guidelines A and C, but they are also contextual in design and build on the cognitive domain that encourages students to understand a problem (creating an independent future). The second lesson is entitled “Career Cluster Inventory.” The learning outcomes encourage students to increase their knowledge of related career clusters and acquire career information. The learning outcomes meet OSCA guidelines A and B. The outcomes also encourage students to apply their reality check outcomes to the career cluster inventory results to determine what careers may support their future financial responsibilities. Overall, lessons one and two challenge students to build connections between their existing schema about the world and new knowledge about careers that can support an independent lifestyle. The lessons also create a contextual education atmosphere that promotes real world application.

### **Cognitive Domain Outcomes: Analyze and Evaluate**

The third lesson in the career exploration unit is entitled “Examine a Career.” In this lesson students dig deeper into career exploration by analyzing a career of interest. The learning outcomes call for students to increase their knowledge of personal interests and identify education opportunities needed in particular career fields. The learning outcomes not only match OSCA guidelines A and B, but they also build on the cognitive domain that challenges students to analyze a career of interest. The fourth career exploration lesson is entitled “Career Interview” and students are expected to expand their awareness of career choices through a career interview and define educational opportunities that are needed to achieve their career goals. The learning outcomes address OSCA guidelines A and B. Students also evaluate career possibilities in lesson four, which builds on the cognitive domain that promotes critical evaluation of possible career

paths. Overall, lessons three and four build on the foundational knowledge that students gain in the earlier lessons; in these lessons students analyze the career information they already understand and evaluate their interest in possible career fields.

**Cognitive Domain Outcome: Create**

The final lesson in the career exploration unit is entitled “Keeping Your Options Open.” The learning outcomes of this lesson call for students to increase their knowledge of personal aptitudes and acquire additional career information, which are part of OSCA guidelines A and B. In addition, students are encouraged to build a strong foundation now in order to create a future of possibilities. Students also create a career portfolio as they complete the five lessons in the career exploration unit; all of the students’ assessments and career searches are saved in an online portfolio on the Ohio Career Information System. Students are able to continue to build their career portfolio as they gain new experiences in high school. These career resources help support students as they build a strong educational foundation in order to become productive, independent citizens who contribute to society.

**References**

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- Ohio School Counselor Association (2007, November). The Ohio comprehensive school counseling program. Retrieved from <http://www.ohioschoolcounselor.org>