

4-H Youth Development

Developing Responsible Youth

PREPARING FOR AN EMPLOYABLE FUTURE

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SITUATION STATEMENT

Education is an inalienable right of every individual. A literate and knowledgeable populace is a basic goal of universal education. In the technological and socio-economic reality of the 21st century, however, education must do more than provide oratory, reading, writing, and arithmetic skills. It must also provide work competencies and life skills that will help every youth fulfill their human potential. Two phenomena have transformed the world of the 21st century. The first is globalization. The world is now converging more connected – technologically and economically – than ever before. The revolution in information technology, telecommunication, and other advanced technology has lowered national boundaries, creating a knowledge-based, trade-driven, market economy that spans the world (Yergin, Vietor and Evans, 2000). The second phenomenon is the persistent inequality between the rich and the poor. The poor in many parts of the world do not share in the benefits of globalization (Chen and Ravallion, 2002). Technological progress has become a powerful wedge in widening the gap between the have's and the have-nots.

The proliferation of telecommunication, networking, and computer hardware has created a digital divide in access to technology. But more importantly, it has created a cognitive divide – the capacity to analyze and use information in a knowledge-based economy. This new workplace requires a new kind of worker, one with the ability to learn continuously and adapt to new technologies and with the capacity to solve increasingly sophisticated problems that are inevitable with technological growth.

RESEARCH

Americans have become increasingly obsessed with good health. So, why is it that so many of our youth are given a daily dose of educational junk food? The American Education Diet is in dire need of assistance. What follows is a broad and detailed look at what has led us to this place and a diagnosis.

Consider these facts:

- ❖ The U.S. ranks 21st out of 29 countries in mathematics scores, with nearly one-quarter of students unable to solve the easiest level of questions (OECD, 2004).
- ❖ Mean verbal SAT scores have spiraled downward between 1972 and 2005. The trend continued in 2006, when SAT scores experienced their largest single drop in 31 years, with verbal scores falling 5 points over the previous year.
- ❖ Between 1990 and 2005, federal, state and local education spending for grades K-12 has more than doubled from \$248.9 billion to \$538 billion. In that same time period SAT scores remained flat (OECD Indicators, 2005).

- ❖ An estimated 1.2 million teenagers failed to earn a high school diploma in 2005. Among all public school students in the class of 2002-2003, the average freshman graduation rate was 73.9 percent. NC currently ranks 42nd in that nation in high school completion rate (63% of NC youth complete high school).

American schools are cracking down on sugary drinks and junk food in school cafeterias. Now it's time for a new vision for education. A vision that empowers every youth to improve the way that they learn, work and live.

THE IMPACT FELT AT HOME

Today's economy provides neither the stability nor the job security enjoyed by earlier generations of American workers. Now, the most significant indicator of potential earnings and employability is lifelong access to education and skills training. Those who fail to comprehend this are the most vulnerable to dislocation and disruption. Youth who can adapt to the changing workplace, acquire new information and skills, are most likely to find continued employability and greater financial security. Thus, today's youth must become renaissance learners.

What are the demands of the new global workplace? Rather than working on the assembly line in mass production factories characteristic of the industrial revolution, workers in the knowledge revolution participate in production teams, work on several projects/products at the same time, respond quickly to change, and have the capacity to learn as the situation requires it. Training focusing on a single skill is no longer adequate in the global workplace. Skills in communication, processing, critical thinking, and problem solving – the skills normally required of scientists, managers, designers, and engineers – are being demanded of technical workers as well. Our clear challenge is to “professionalize” the workforce by teaching youth not only technical skills, but also higher order thinking skills, such as abstraction, system thinking, intellectual inquiry, estimation, and team work (Wong and Hsueh, 1998).

There are implications for North Carolina youth. The increasingly competitive global marketplace demands the development of a highly trained and adaptable workforce. Public schools, which at one time adequately prepared vast numbers of youth for careers in low-skilled manufacturing job generated by the industrial economy, have not kept pace with the demands or the expectations of the postindustrial marketplace. North Carolina ranks 42nd in the nation in high school completion rates (63% of NC youth complete high school). In addition, the well-paying and relatively secure low-skill jobs that enabled earlier generations of marginally educated young adults to start and support families, purchase homes, and raise their economic status have largely disappeared. Thus, too many of North Carolina's young people are under prepared and face economic frustration and insecurity.

North Carolina's competitiveness in the global economy as well as the future of local economies depends upon a workforce competent, innovative, and entrepreneurial in use of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) skills and broader skills such as problem solving, systems thinking, and teamwork recommended by the SCANS report. Employers in the technology industry and government agencies such as the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) anticipate a shortfall in qualified engineers and scientists as “Baby Boom” employees retire and new jobs increase demand for highly skilled workers. Science and

technology is the *everyday experience* of youth who employ cell phones to stay in touch with family and friends, PDAs to manage homework, jobs, and social activities, GIS to guide a road trips. Science and technology is the *future* of youth who will manage computerized inventories, monitor equipment, or operate transportation or medical systems...or design the high-tech hardware, software, and systems that increase the productivity and quality of life of others.

It is not enough for young people to gain literacy; they must develop the technological skills required to succeed in the global economy. It's not sufficient for young people to know how to operate machinery; they must be able to compose a resume and develop a business plan. It's not adequate for young people to have all of those academic and vocational skills; they need to learn to channel their emotions, dreams and talents into productive endeavors in turn creating a stronger, healthier economy and community for North Carolina.

Supporting Research

The essential capabilities for future American workers have been established by national experts and published in a landmark 1991 report by the U.S. Secretary of Labor's Commission in Achieving Necessary Skills (the SCANS Report for America 2000). The study identified three foundational skill sets and five workplace competencies identified below.

SCANS Foundation Skills

Basic Skills: Reads, writes, performs arithmetic and mathematical operations, listens, and speaks

- Reading - locates, understands, and interprets written information in prose and in documents such as manuals, graphs, and schedules
- Writing - communicates thoughts, ideas, information, and messages in writing; and creates documents such as letters, directions, manuals, reports, graphs, and flow charts
- Arithmetic/mathematics - performs basic computations and approaches practical problems by choosing appropriately from a variety of mathematical techniques
- Listening - receives, attends to, interprets, and responds to verbal messages and other cues
- Speaking - organizes ideas and communicates orally

Thinking Skills: Thinks creatively, makes decisions, solves problems, visualizes, knows how to learn, and reasons

- Creative thinking - generates new ideas
- Decision making - specifies goals and constraints, generates alternatives, considers risks, and evaluates and chooses best alternatives
- Problem solving - recognizes problems and devises and implements plan of action
- Visualizing - organizes and processes symbols

- Knowing how to learn - uses efficient learning techniques to acquire and apply new knowledge and skills
- Reasoning - discovers a rule or principle underlying the relationship between two or more objects and applies it when solving a problem

Personal Qualities: Responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, integrity, and honesty

- Responsibility - exerts a high level of effort and perseveres towards goal attainment
- Self-esteem - believes in own self-worth and maintains a positive view of self
- Sociability - demonstrates understanding, friendliness, adaptability, empathy, and politeness in group settings
- Self-management - assesses self accurately, sets personal goals, monitors progress, and exhibits self-control
- Integrity/honesty - chooses ethical courses of action

SCANS Workplace Competencies

Resources: Identifies, organizes, plans, and allocates resources

- Time - selects goal-relevant activities, ranks them, allocates time, and prepares and follows schedules
- Money - uses or prepares budgets, makes forecasts, keeps records, and makes adjustments to meet objectives
- Material and facilities - acquires, stores, allocates, and uses materials or space efficiently
- Human resources - assesses skills and distributes work accordingly, evaluates performance and provides feedback

Interpersonal: Works with others

- Participates as member of a team - contributes to group effort
- Teaches others new skills
- Services clients/customers - works to satisfy customers expectations
- Exercises leadership - communicates ideas to justify position, persuades and convinces others, responsibly challenges existing procedures and policies
- Negotiates - works toward agreements involving exchange of resources, resolves divergent interests
- Works with diversity - works well with men and women from diverse backgrounds

Information: Acquires and evaluates information

- Acquires and evaluates information
- Organizes and maintains information
- Interprets and communicates information
- Uses computers to process information

Systems: Understands complex interrelationships

- Understands systems - knows how social, organizational, and technological systems work and operates effectively with them
- Monitors and corrects performance - distinguishes trends, predicts impacts on system operations, diagnoses deviations in systems performance and corrects malfunctions
- Improves or designs systems - suggests modifications to existing systems and develops new or alternative systems to improve performance

Technology: Works with a variety of technologies

- Selects technology - chooses procedures, tools, or equipment including computers and related technologies
- Applies technology to task - understands intent and proper procedures for setup and operation of equipment
- Maintains and troubleshoots equipment - prevents, identifies, or solves problems with equipment, including computers and other technologies

Youth Entrepreneurship

The workplace represents an important setting for the development of youth. Youth entrepreneurship programs represent an essential vehicle through which the economic self-sufficiency of youth may be improved. Research on this topic is relatively new, and clearly further empirical research is needed to clarify some of the mixed results in some of the studies (Rasheed, 2000).

The question of how youth entrepreneurship program affect youth development is embedded within a broader set of issues about the nature of youth development, and the growth of competence and responsibility during this phase of life (Steinberg & Cauffman, 1995). Employed teens may feel themselves to be more dependable and responsible than those who are not employed and are perceived to be more independent (Brown, 2001). In general, entrepreneurship education during adolescence has generally been felt to be a character-building exercise, and youth who work during this phase of live evidence changes in domains such as self-reliance, self-esteem, and practical knowledge, while showing reductions in problem behaviors such as delinquency and alcohol abuse. In sum, there is evidence that entrepreneurship, school-to-work and ovation programs can positively influence youth development. Such programs can promote positive economic, intellectual, social and

psychological outcomes. These programs can have positive influences on academic success as a result of “hand-on” experiences which help build self-esteem, feeling of self efficacy (a sense of being able to make a difference), leadership skills (e.g., planning and implementing projects, positive risk taking, and problem solving), interactions with others, and promoting an overall decrease in problem behaviors (Leffert, et al. 1996). Youth entrepreneurship program can also encourage career exploration, decrease overall youth unemployment, and improve self-confidence.

LRFA OBJECTIVES

Framing Statement: NC youth will develop and strengthen knowledge and life skills required for an employable future making them competitive in a global economy.

OBJ 1: Youth will gain knowledge and skills regarding career pathways.

- # of youth gaining knowledge regarding career pathways
- # of youth increasing their awareness of potential career pathways through job shadowing/internship/service learning programs.
- # of youth identifying their career aspirations (measured by a pre and post test).

- ❖ # of youth obtaining employment and/or participating in Job Shadowing/Internship/Service Learning programs. (*Behavior / Decision*)
- ❖ # of youth setting career goals. (*Behavior / Decision*)
- ❖ # of youth planning on pursuing post secondary education. (*Behavior / Decision*)
- ❖ # of youth (motivated to) staying in school. (*Behavior / Decision*)

OBJ 2: Youth will gain knowledge and skills regarding entrepreneurship.

- # of youth gaining knowledge regarding entrepreneurship (measured by a pre and post test).
- # of youth demonstrating knowledge and skills by participating in an entrepreneurship business.
- # of youth increasing their awareness of the economic and social impacts entrepreneurs have on society.
- # of youth who aspire to own their own business.
- # of youth gaining knowledge regarding financial literacy (measured by pre and post test).

- ❖ # of youth starting and entrepreneurial business. (*Behavior Decision / Social / Economic*)
- ❖ # of youth developing a business plan. (*Behavior / Decision*)
- ❖ # of youth presenting in the careers & entrepreneurship and presentation category. (*Behavior / Decision*)

OBJ 3: Youth will gain life skills.

- # of youth gaining knowledge and life skills in the following areas:
 - _____ Critical Thinking (as measured by pre and post test)
 - _____ Decision Making (as measured by pre and post test)
 - _____ Communication (as measured by pre and post test)
 - _____ Goal Setting (as measured by pre and post test)

_____ Problem Solving (as measured by pre and post test)

- ❖ # of youth who use more than one source of information before making a decision. (*Behavior / Decision*)
- ❖ # of youth who organize their thoughts before speaking. (*Behavior / Decision*)
- ❖ # of youth who look at all possible solutions to problems before action. (*Behavior / Decision*)
- ❖ # of youth establishing goals. (*Behavior / Decision*)

OBJ 4: Youth will gain knowledge and interest regarding current and future trends in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) related career fields.

- # of youth gaining knowledge in the following STEAM Program areas:

_____ Science
_____ Technology
_____ Engineering
_____ Math

- ❖ # of youth aspiring a career in science related field of study. (*Behavior / Decision*)
- ❖ # of youth planning on pursuing post secondary education in a scientific field of study. (*Behavior / Decision*)

Target Audience

The target audience for this objective will include youth, Agents/PA's and volunteers working within the 4-H Youth Development Program.

Curricula and/or Teaching Points

4-H professionals, youth and volunteers can gain access to the following:

Workforce Development Curriculum

Be the "e"
Get in the Act
Mini Society
Making a Job
Career Smarts
R.I.S.E. (Respect, Integrity through Skills and Education)
Subject matter curricula

Possible Program Teaching Points

Presentation / Public Speaking Programs
How to complete evaluation instruments
How data will be used to advance the 4-H program
Future Trends
Life Skills
Target Audiences
Partnership Building
Funding WFD Programs

Program Delivery Strategies (examples)

4-H Clubs
After-School
Camps
School Voc. Programs
ARI
Teen Conferences / Summits
NC and National 4-H Congress
Teen Retreats
County Events
County Council
County Workshops/Trainings
Summer Special Interest Programs
Web-based Educational Modules, etc.

Evaluation Strategies

Evaluation will be accomplished through the administration of pre, post and in some cases a post then test to determine behavior change in youth as it relates to workplace and employability skills.

EMERGING TRENDS

One of the most pressing social issues we face in North Carolina is how to provide our youth with a solid foundation for life. The evidence that the foundation is fragile appears year after year in newspaper articles and scientific studies. That call attention to the challenge and problems facing too many youth: persistently high rates of alcohol and other drug use, teenage pregnancy, violence, school failure, and many more.¹ Simultaneously, new concerns are being voiced about whether we are building the kinds of skills and competencies needed to ensure a competent workforce and an engaged citizenry. Put simply, we are failing to offer our youngest generations the solid footing they need to grow safely and successfully into adulthood.

RELEVANCE OF TRENDS TO COUNTY PROGRAMS

The challenges and opportunities identified in this trend analysis speak to all types of youth, all types of communities, all types of families. In terms of life skill development and developmental assets, no group of youth is far better off or far worse off than other groups. No group is immune; no group is cursed. All young people – including those who “have everything” and those who have little – need society to pay more attention to their care and development.¹

Thus, the vast majority of young people are building their lives on a foundation that truly is fragile. Some – perhaps most – young people will still manage to navigate through adolescence into adulthood relatively unscathed, despite their circumstance and some of the harmful choices they make. Too many will not, however. For them, experiences in early years will leave scars that will take years to heal, if they heal at all. And some will become trapped in negative cycles

of violence, addiction, and hopelessness that will deprive them and their community of potential and contribution.

But this is not the end of the story. The mosaic of young people's lives has a hopeful theme. That hope becomes evident in the potential that life skills and developmental assets have to shape young people's choices. Intentionally working to ensure that more young people experience many of the life skills and assets offers a positive, hopeful path to a brighter future for young people and society.

SOURCES OF SUPPORTING DATA FOR USE BY COUNTIES:

<http://www.nydic.org/nydic> – National Youth Development Information center

<http://www.search-institute.org> – Search Institute: Raising Caring Responsible Children and Teenagers

<http://www.search-institute.org/norms/gg2002.pdf> –Grading Grown-Up: How do American kinds and adults relate?

<http://www.alliance1.org> – Alliance For Children & Families

<http://www.search-institute.org/hchy> – Healthy Community Healthy Youth Conference (October 23-25, 2003)

http://www.iay.org/youth_update – The Institute for the study of Antisocial Behavior in Youth

<http://www.kidscount.org> – Kids Count Data Book: State Profiles of Child Well-Being

<http://iisd1.iisd.ca/youth/ysbk000.htm> – Youth Source Book on Sustainable Development

<http://www.yar.org> – Center For Youth As Resources

<http://www.fourhcouncil.edu> – National 4-H Council

<http://www.nichcy.org> – National Information Center For Children and Youth With Disabilities

<http://childstats.gov/americaschildren> – Childstats.gov – America's Children 2002

<http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/fourh> – NC 4-H Youth Development

<http://www.dhhs.state.nc.us> – NC Department of Health & Human Services

<http://www.americaspromise.org> – America's Promise: The Alliance for Youth

<http://www.cisnet.org> – Communities In Schools

<http://www.ncfy.com/resource-yd.htm> – The Administration for Children and Families

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