

Increasing Employment for At-Risk Youth through Professional Writing Classes

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Proposed Educational Module

In the professional world, it is crucial to know how to correspond professionally and efficiently through verbal and written communication. However, many people have trouble communicating in both aspects due to the lack of proper instruction. Most high schools and colleges do not mandate professional writing in their curriculum. With the Silicon Valley continuously growing to be one of the top locations for job seekers, more and more companies are on the search for the best qualified candidates. Employers are drawn to applicants who are able to produce well written and organized documents in order to communicate information clearly.

I propose to create a professional writing class tailored to young adults who are looking to enhance their communication skills in order to succeed in today's workplace. This class will be taught by professors from local colleges who would like to volunteer to service their community.

This 6-week class will primarily focus on written and verbal methods of communication that are commonly used in the workplace. Class projects will include creating professional documents that are relatable to real world applications and giving professional presentations in front of an audience.

Justification for Educational Module

One of the main concerns for young adults is landing a successful job. However, many have extreme difficulties in getting an interview, even if they are appropriately qualified for a position. Equipping young adults with the proper tools will give them the confidence they need in order to be successful when entering the workplace. After completion of the professional writing class, students will be able to communicate in both verbal and written aspects. They will know how to compose professional e-mails and memos, create impressive resumes, and deliver powerful presentations.

Offering a class that focuses on professional writing gives young adults a chance to develop essential skills in landing successful positions in the workplace. The ability to communicate an idea or concept clearly to an audience is fundamental in the professional world.

Students will be able to demonstrate the ability to:

- Write clear and effective documents appropriate to specific users.
- Apply the conventions of professional writing in documents.
- Demonstrate critical thinking through researched projects.
- Deliver professional presentations to an audience.
- Clearly explain technical topics to non-experts.

Overview of Class Projects & Assignments

Each assignment in this course is tailored to real world applications and produce realistic deliverables with the sole purpose to prepare students for employment. As most students are busy outside of the classroom, they are given one week to complete each assignment. There will be six assignments in total with the last project requiring students to create a professional portfolio for job applications.

ASSIGNMENT #1: KHAN ACADEMY GRAMMAR EXERCISES

In this assignment, students will complete grammar exercises using Khan Academy's free grammar course, which cover syntax and conventions of standard English.

ASSIGNMENT #2: INFORMATIONAL ARTICLE

Students will research and choose a current event and write an unbiased article that explains the topic using factual evidence and references.

ASSIGNMENT #3: DEVELOP A TUTORIAL

For this project, students will create a tutorial document for a smartphone app that clearly explains a technical process, step by step. Documents should be easily understandable to follow. Students will conduct two user tests and write up a report summarizing the results.

ASSIGNMENT #4: COVER LETTER & RESUME

Students will find a real job advertisement that they are interested in and create a professional cover letter and resume responding to it.

ASSIGNMENT #5: GROUP PRESENTATIONS

The classroom will be divided into groups and deliver a presentation explaining a technical topic to the class. Each group is responsible for creating a PowerPoint and writing individual self-assessment sheets.

ASSIGNMENT #6: PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO

For this final assignment, students will gather all the documents that were done in class (and from other coursework, if desired) to create a professional portfolio.

Budget

Most materials needed for this professional writing class can be purchased at a dollar store to minimize costs. The largest expenses would be laptops for students and a classroom printer. Most assignments are recommended to be printed so that students can use them for job applications and to create a professional portfolio. Instructor fees are not included into the budget because the course will be taught by volunteers who are looking to gain teaching experience or those who are simply interested in serving their community.

Materials	Unit Price	Qty	Total Price
Yellow No. 2 Pencils, 16-ct. Packs	\$1.00	3	\$3.00
Unison Ballpoint Pens, 12-ct. Packs	\$1.00	4	\$4.00
Mead College-Ruled Spiral Notebooks	\$1.00	30	\$30.00
2-Pocket Folders	\$1.00	30	\$30.00
8.5 x 11" Copy Paper 20lb / 1,500 Sheets	\$16.80	1	\$16.80
Acer 15.6" Chromebook	\$149.18	25	\$3,729.50
HP OfficeJet Pro 6978 All-in-One Wireless Printer	\$84.99	1	\$84.99
Black High Yield Original Ink Cartridge (For Printer)	\$38.89	1	\$38.89
Color Ink Cartridges, 3-ct. Packs (For Printer)	\$32.89	1	\$32.89
Total Costs			\$3,970.07

Work Schedule

The class will begin at the start of the new year. Students and instructors will have time before the class starts due to the holiday season, which provides enough time to prepare for the course.

Task	Estimated Time	Completion Date
Post volunteer ad for instructors	Six weeks	October 11
Interview & hire instructors	Three weeks	November 1
Advertise for class	Four weeks	November 29
Conduct instructor orientation	One week	December 6
Purchase class materials	Three days	December 9
Open student enrollment	Two weeks	December 23
Class Begins		January 7

Qualifications

As a student at San José State University with a major in English concentrating in Professional and Technical writing, I have acquired knowledge in writing essays, editing papers, and designing professional documents. With experience as a student, I understand the workload and capable of setting realistic goals for young adults. In addition, the coursework that I have completed have provided me insight into relevant assignments and projects that are useful for seeking employment.

Measure of Success

Students who enroll in this professional writing class will be more prepared and knowledgeable to have the confidence for successful employment. Because at-risk youth have disadvantages from a lack of resources and instruction, this course will be extremely helpful in reducing at-risk youth unemployment. As the Silicon Valley booms with technology, young adults need to be prepared for the workplace. This six-week program will equip them with valuable skills for success. The costs to start this program are minimal, but it will produce enormous benefits. Promotions from successful students could potentially bring in sponsorships and endorsements. This program sets realistic deadlines for the students to aim for completion and success, and also provides experience and volunteer work for instructors.