

Welcome back to another year of opportunities for you and your students. Now is the time to start planning those special events to attract students to non-traditional career fields. Trailblazers provides support services to assist you with the planning and preparation of student events.

Here are a few events to consider:

"Live Wires" - A club focused on encouraging and supporting students interested in pursuing a nontraditional career track. Contact us to become a coordinator this year!

Career Fair - Let us assist you with improving your event through our materials.

Career Camps - It's not too early to start thinking about day-long and week-long activities for next spring and summer.

Career Expos - Get your community involved by showcasing your Nontraditional Career Pathways.

Visit our site for step-by-step guides to planning your event
www.ctetrailblazers.org/.

Email us at trailblazers@virginia.edu if you would like assistance using a "Best Practice" approach to your event this year.

MEET TRAILBLAZERS STAFF AT THESE UPCOMING CONFERENCES

2009 Career Coach Academy
 Charlottesville, Sept 16

VS- GIS Conference
 Richmond, Sept 21-23

American Career & Technical Education Association, Region II
 Georgia, Sept 26

Virginia Career & Technical Education Association,
 Staunton, Oct 6-9

Virginia Counselors Association Convention 2009
 Williamsburg, Nov 11-14

American Career & Technical Education Association, Region II
 Nashville, Nov 19-21

National Association for Partnerships in Equity
 Arlington, April 12-15

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Plan A More Successful Career Fair and Improve Your Students' Future Prospects

CAREER FAIRS

A well-organized, interesting Career Fair is a great way to introduce students to employers *and* to teach the basics of career development.

Starting with some of the recommendations in the November *Trailblazers* newsletter about Career Fairs, Cheryl Helmuth Logan, career coach at Harrisonburg High School, developed an instructive fair for spring 2009. She began with an innovative theme: *Passport to Your Future* and made "passports" for the students to use as a guide through the fair. The theme of international travel is a meaningful one in Harrisonburg, one of the most diverse districts in Virginia, but every school has valued characteristics that can be reinforced during a Career Fair.

Cheryl also partnered with DECA, the CTE Marketing student organization, to hold a school-wide "Dress for Success Day" along with the Career Fair. This gave students a chance to present a professional image to visiting employers.

In many fairs, exhibitors set up wherever they can find a space, an arrangement that's confusing and therefore not meaningful to students. Cheryl made sure her fair was organized and students were prepared in advance to learn from the experience. She arranged exhibits by career clusters with a signboard labeling each cluster area. This helped students to learn about clusters and the opportunities in each one. Students prepared for the fair in classrooms and stopped at a Guidance "welcome" table on the way in to pick up materials.

Here's how Cheryl organized this Fair:

1. Created a database of potential exhibitors with help from the divisional CTE director, local community colleges, and the chamber of commerce.
2. Emailed invitations to local employers in order to save paper and postage.
3. Kept in touch with exhibitors to provide them information on how to be an exhibitor).

4. Created welcome packets for exhibitors including a welcome letter, school map, evaluation survey, name tags with their names already written in, and pens and paper.
5. Partnered with Principal, Guidance Director, and the Director of CTE to select date for the fair and to solicit input and advice.
6. Kept in touch with teachers with email updates and reminders of the upcoming fair. Utilized the morning news broadcast to make announcements about the fair.
7. Partnered with DECA to simultaneously hold a "Dress for Success" day. DECA students researched career clusters and participating employers and helped to create passports with information about each one. They also created a scavenger hunt that gave students an activity at the fair and helped them learn how to approach individuals for information about careers. The exhibitors enjoyed the interaction and said it helped to pull students in to their booths and was a great tool for communication.
8. Guidance Counselors, and DECA students ran a guidance table and helped to distribute Passports and other information at the entrance of the fair.
9. Placed bulletin boards of career development information at the entrance including: the education requirements of various jobs, growing and declining occupations, job vacancies, workplace readiness skills, resume writing, and interviewing.
10. Asked Costco to donate food for the morning. They donated a TON!!!! A room was reserved in the library for exhibitors to sit and talk with each other during down times and to eat refreshments. It was a quiet place to regroup and to create interaction with each other across their varied disciplines. Food always helps to break the ice!
11. Invited teachers to do follow-up with students either by inviting Cheryl into their classes or doing specific lessons on career planning. Our website includes sample documents, more detailed information, and links to help you plan a better career fair.

Read more and download resources at:
www.ctetrailblazers.org/careerfairhburg

Employment rate for teens the lowest ever recorded since World War II

Teen Employment Is Falling Making CTE More Important Than Ever

The recession has shaken the workforce and across the country people are having a difficult time finding and keeping jobs. Teens, however, have felt the impact the most. The teen job market has been declining for decades, regardless of the state of the economy, and, with the recession, it has fallen even further. The sad truth is, the employment rate for teens is now the lowest ever recorded since World War II.

A recent report from Andrew Sum, professor at Northeastern University and director of the [Center for Labor Market Studies](#), presents depressing statistics on youth employment.

Less than 30 percent of the nation's teens now work, down 15 percent just since 2000. Girls are more likely to be working than boys; only 25 percent of male teens have jobs. Even more striking, poor teens are less likely to work than wealthy teens. Thirty-five percent of teens in families with incomes of \$100-125,000 are working, compared to only 23 percent of teens in families with incomes of less than \$20,000.

Work experience and workplace readiness skills developed at work, help young people succeed in school and in later employment. Working teens are more likely than their peers to

stay in school and graduate. They are more likely to receive employer training as adults. And they are less likely to be involved with the criminal justice system. All in all, Dr. Sum observes, work experience "improves the transition from high school to the labor market upon graduation from high school, including higher employment rates, higher wages, and earnings."

Fortunately, Virginia's Career and Technical Education programs address many of these issues for our teens. Jobs on the open market may be hard to come by, but school CTE programs give students work exposure, and, for those in co-op programs, the actual work experience, they need to become employable adults.

Dr. Sum recommends a number of projects to improve youth access to employment. He recommends: expanding funding for youth summer employment programs; school-to-work programs (such as, Jobs for America's Graduates); and Career Academy programs for high school students.

[The Collapse of the Nation's Labor Market for Teens and Young Adults \(20-24\): Designing A Set of Workforce Development Strategies to Improve the Immediate and Long-Term Employment Prospects of the Nation's Youth](#)

University of Virginia Researchers investigate implicit stereotypes about science and gender

Stereotypically, Science Is For Males

We all have unconscious biases and expectations about other people—about race, gender, religion, and other social categories. A dozen years of research and hundreds of different studies show that these "implicit" biases are often different from our conscious beliefs and intentions. You can discover your "implicit biases" at the [Project Implicit](#) website. Fred Smyth, research assistant professor at the University of Virginia, noted that people who take these tests "are often surprised to learn that they may have unconscious biases involving gender or race or religion that are quite different from their stated beliefs."

University of Virginia researchers have [studied implicit biases about science](#), looking at data from more than half a million participants in 34 countries. People were asked to quickly categorize words representing male, such as "he," "son" and "father"; or female, such as "she," "daughter" and "mother," with science; such as "physics," "biology" and "chemistry"; or liberal arts, such as "arts," "history" or "literature." Most participants were able to more quickly categorize male words with science items than female words with the same science items. Interestingly, this held true across genders – women and men associated science with males.

This *implicit* gender-science association has real world consequences. "We correlated our data with a measure of actual

science achievement among eighth-graders in those 34 countries and found that in the countries with the largest sex gap – where the boys were performing much better than girls in math and science – there also was the strongest implicit stereotyping of science as a male endeavor," explained lead investigator Brian Nosek, associate professor of psychology. Among nations represented in the study, the United States falls roughly in the middle in stereotyping science as male, and in the actual achievement of boys compared to girls at the eighth-grade level. Of the [34 countries considered](#), China had the strongest association of males with science and females with the arts, while Trinidad & Tobago had the weakest.

Nosek believes that "implicit stereotypes and sex gaps in science achievement are mutually reinforcing mechanisms." He suggests that "When people see patterns, such as men more often working in scientific fields and women more often in non-scientific fields, then a bias may develop in their minds that men may be better equipped to succeed in those fields, and women less so. Simultaneously, possessing a gender stereotype about science might affect one's own behavior toward others or considerations of one's own potential or career options."

Learn more about Brian Nosek and Project Implicit from: www.virginia.edu/uvatoday/newsRelease.php?id=9054

"There is no happiness except in the realization that we have accomplished something." - Henry Ford