

# Career Network

A Fully-Developed Interdisciplinary Project Using the Power of Technology to Increase Learning for Grades 9 through 12

## Overview

An interdisciplinary project for grades 9-12, Career Development and Occupational Studies is a central theme of every high school classroom. The Career Network project engages students in preparing for future careers through engaging activities that will help them determine future paths and in mapping out a direction for gaining the skills and knowledge necessary for their future success. Career Network has a real-world focus and natural emphasis on quality student work as students explore the basic principles of career planning such as decision-making, self-evaluation, and goal setting.



The Career Network project calls for cooperative groups of students to conduct in-depth, meaningful investigations into the world of work and career options, as they relate personal skills, aptitudes, and abilities to future career decisions. This project addresses performance standards in Career Development and Occupational Studies, as well as the standards of several other disciplines. Students use technology resources for solving problems and making informed decisions. They employ technology in the development of strategies for solving problems in the real world.

## Project Scope

Career Network is divided into three distinct but interrelated learning units followed by a culminating presentation:

**Phase One: Where Am I Going?** – Students engage in a series of activities that help them assess their personal goals and matches these goals to a career option. They will research at least three specific jobs in their chosen career area and prepare an inventory of the acquired skills, qualities, and experiences necessary for successful employment as well as the job outlook (decline/growth) and possible earnings. They publish their findings as informational pamphlets.



**Phase Two: How Will I Get There?** – Students demonstrate how academic knowledge and skills are applied in the workplace and other settings. They interview a person in their career option and/or prospective employers to help them identify the necessary application of academic knowledge and technical skills that are required for particular careers. They develop a multimedia presentation to demonstrate how concepts from mathematics, science, social studies, English language arts and/or other disciplines are applied in a particular career option.

## Phase Three:

**Welcome to the Real World!** – Students demonstrate mastery of foundational skills through a series of career building activities. They use multiple resources to research available jobs that meet their chosen career goals. They write a resume and a variety of cover letters and conduct mock-job interviews. Students also design a personal school to work plan containing specific stops toward attainment of a career goal.



## About Project Based Learning

Project-based learning is a comprehensive approach to instruction. As students participate in engaging, multi-faceted investigations, they develop an array of interdisciplinary skills. Project-based learning allows teachers to create tasks whose complexity and openness mimic problems in the real world. Students collaborate with peers to tackle real-world problems.



### Key Components

The key components to project-based learning are clear objectives, student autonomy, investigative activities, and real-world results:

- Teachers clearly define the instructional objectives: The first step to creating your own project is to define your objectives. Knowing where the project is going is more important to reaching the destination than any other single variable.
- Students direct their own work and take control over their own learning: Students work independently as well as participate in flexible cooperative groupings. Rather than divide students by abilities, allow students with similar interests to work cooperatively. As the range of materials and interests of the students develop and expand, so will the need for different kinds of collaborations and group interactions.
- Students conduct multi-faceted investigations: Students use authentic tools (including technology), seek resources, and solve problems in response to an overall challenge. Students learn that knowing how to find information and making connections is more important than memorizing the facts. They use primary source documents, conduct experiments, construct models, and conduct interviews and surveys.
- Students create real-world products: Students make choices about how to demonstrate learning and are accountable for the choices they make. Products can include multimedia presentations, letters, posters, brochures, newsletters, maps, videos, and more.



Career Network is an example of project-based learning with all of the above components. You can use this project as a model to create your own projects based on specific content and curriculum by adapting many of the activities.

### Orientation on Project Based Learning Summary

- Establish an Essential Question for the group to answer.
- Teacher laptops or desktops used for research on the essential question. How to training is in real time and in context.
- Grouping; 4 to 5 Teacher Students working towards the same essential question.
- Teachers will experience Cooperative Learning using different strengths of colleagues for final product.
- Inquiry Based Learning exercised to reflect research and decisions and answers to the essential question.
- Differentiated Learning; how each student individually shows understanding with final product presentation.
- Engaging thematic activities through collaboration, creativity and decision making.
- Final Activity Product created on the essential question to present at the end of the day.

[www.jdlhorizons.com](http://www.jdlhorizons.com)

8201 Norman Center Drive  
Bloomington, MN 55437

Tel: (952) 697-0550

Fax: (952) 697-0551

For more detailed Information, contact **JDL Horizons**

Tom Lapping - (952) 697-0555 - [tlapping@jdlhorizons.com](mailto:tlapping@jdlhorizons.com)