

SUPERVISED CAREER - CONNECTIONS EXPERIENCES

Overview

Chapter 122 of the Texas Administrative Code includes supervised career-connections experiences as part of comprehensive and technical family and consumer sciences courses. The career-connections experience program allows for remediation, reinforcement, in-depth study, or enrichment related to essential knowledge and skills and classroom instruction. Although state guidelines set no minimum time the student should spend on each career-connections experience, it is unlikely that the program will be a valuable educational experience unless it is an ongoing effort throughout the semester. Early implementation of the program each semester and consistent supervision by the teacher with the student and parent/guardian are very important. Some school districts may choose to set a minimum time period that students should spend on career-connections experiences in order to encourage that progressive and significant learning experiences occur.

Teachers should guide students in selecting experiences that best meet the needs, individual differences, and capabilities of students. Career-connections experiences should be related to classroom instruction and to the essential knowledge and skills for the corresponding family and consumer sciences education course(s) in which the student is enrolled. The complexity and depth of the career-connections experiences determine the time length. Students should begin the experiences as soon as their needs can be identified at the beginning of the semester. Goals should be established by students identifying information they expect to learn and skills they wish to develop. Several smaller career-connections experiences that, in total, would be comparable to the quality and time involvement of a larger, single career-connections experience, may be preferable for some students; this is especially true for those students who need to know the results of the efforts quickly in order to sustain interest and motivation in their class work. Personal development and leadership development experiences offered through Family, Career and Community Leaders of America can be utilized to support related course content as a part of career-connections experiences. Career-connections experiences are to be included as part of the instruction in the Family and Consumer Sciences Summer Program as well as comprehensive or technical courses offered through summer school.

Funding Implications

Provisions of the Texas Education Agency's Student Attendance Accounting Handbook require that, to be eligible for career and technology contact hours and weighted funding, each student enrolled in comprehensive or technical family and consumer sciences courses must carry out a supervised career-connections experience. Records must be kept to document supervision by the teacher and results achieved by students.

Implementation

Whereas the career-connections experience can be utilized for remediation, reinforcement, in-depth study, or enrichment related to classroom instruction, the focus of experiences to achieve these ends may vary. Certainly the course essential knowledge and skills chosen for emphasis will influence the focus of the experience. Further, students enrolled in multiple courses which include career-connections experiences may focus on integrated content from those courses as the focus for a single experience.

Regardless of the content chosen for inclusion in the experience and whether the experience is designed for remediation, reinforcement, in-depth study, or enrichment, any one of the following techniques may form the framework for the experience.

1. Entrepreneurial activities in family and consumer sciences

Example: A student who is enrolled in the Family Health Needs course might research to determine what local resources are available to elderly individuals. The student might write a booklet that provides information about the aging process and contains a list of community and state resources available. After writing the booklet, the student might print and sell the booklet, which would promote entrepreneurship.

2. Work-based training in family and consumer sciences (includes home, community, and employment work sites)

Example: A student who is enrolled in either the Housing or the Interior Design technical course might secure employment (after school or as a part of Family and Consumer Sciences Career Preparation). Employment might be with an interior decorator or decorator workroom to make custom furnishings, a furniture store, or a home furnishings accessory store. The emphasis of the work-based training would be to apply the knowledge and skills gained in the technical course to the tasks in the marketplace.

Example: A student who is enrolled in either the Housing or the Interior Design technical course might apply the knowledge and skills gained in the technical course to evaluate the selection and placement of furniture and accessories for a room or rooms in their home. Attention would be placed on the use of the area, needs of family members utilizing the space, design principles, traffic patterns, and budgetary constraints. A plan of action for addressing any needed improvements would be proposed with feasible immediate action taken.

Example: A student enrolled in Preparation for Parenting and participating in Family, Career and Community Leaders of America community service initiatives researches laws and safety considerations related to child restraints in motor vehicles. The student coordinates a community service project disseminating information obtained in the research, securing donated car seats which meet safety requirements, and arranging for a community receipt/distribution center for an on-going program of accepting donated car seats and making them available for loan for children visiting in the community and low income residents.

3. Research and/or its application in family and consumer sciences

Example: A student did not attain an acceptable level of achievement of knowledge and skills related to nutrition in the Nutrition and Food Science course. For remediation, the student might establish goals that relate to the essential knowledge and skills in which the student lacks competence. The student might read and summarize articles on meeting dietary needs of individuals at various ages. In addition, the student might interview a dietitian and inquire about the importance of meeting nutritional needs of individuals at different ages and how to meet those needs.

Supervision and Evaluation

Teachers assigned to teach comprehensive and technical family and consumer sciences courses are expected to conduct parent/guardian conferences and to organize and supervise the career-connections experience for students. The purposes of the parent/guardian contacts are to identify student needs, supervise student progress, coordinate parent/guardian and teacher cooperation, enhance students' educational progress and achievement, and evaluate the career-connections experiences. Teacher supervision of the career-connections experiences must be an ongoing process rather than a task done at the end of the semester or end of the year only.

Career-connections experiences should be evaluated according to the individual differences and capabilities of students and their achievement of goals and plans established prior to the beginning of the program. Consideration should be given not only to the final results, report, and evaluation of the activity, but also project plans and periodic progress reports/evaluations. The grade emphasis placed on the career-connections experience is determined by the local school district. Prior to beginning the program, teachers should clearly describe to students the standards upon which grades will be based at the completion of the experience.

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