

Creating Becoming an Effective Job-Seeker **A Multimedia Web-Based Unit for Job Seekers**

Christine Doody (cdoodv@roadrunner.nf.net),
Rob Power (robpower@hotmail.com) &
Bing Yu (byubeijing@hotmail.com)

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Introduction:

The premise for *Becoming an Effective Job Seeker* is to design a web-based multimedia unit that will assist job seekers in finding the right employment situation for them. Richard Nelson Bolles, in *What Color is Your Parachute?* (2003), says “The choice is between doing a traditional job-hunt or doing a life-changing job-hunt” (p. 1). The *Becoming an Effective Job Seeker* unit will give the students the opportunity to access the job search process in a comprehensive, sequential and constructive manner. The object for students participating in the unit is to construct their own sense of purpose in the job search process, and an end product that is both personally meaningful and purposeful—the attainment of the right job for that individual.

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The Project URL:

The web site for *Becoming an Effective Job-Seeker* can be found online at:

http://www.geocities.com/jobseekers_535/

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The Project Framework:

The framework for this unit is set in the context of a multimedia web site. The idea was to use multimedia technology to engage students in active, constructivist learning. We wanted to use multimedia to engage the student, and to provide the student with the resources needed to meet the objectives of the unit, and to construct their own knowledge about themselves, their career aptitudes and aspirations, and about the job-search process itself. By actually following the steps necessary to develop a personal career profile, a personal portfolio, and applying for and securing a job, it is expected that students can most effectively construct their own knowledge, and meet the objectives of the unit.

Because of this unit's emphasis on using multimedia, and Internet-based resources to engage the student in learning, and assist in the construction of knowledge, the web site shares many of the attributes common to the WebQuest framework. This was a deliberate choice in the instructional design process, as we recognise the potential of the WebQuest framework to increase student motivation, develop thinking skills and facilitate interactive, constructivist learning (Disney, n.d., *b*; Dodge, 1998; March, 1998). A WebQuest is a learning environment supported by extensive Internet and other resources which prompts learners to inquire and construct meaning through research, critical thinking and decision making (Janes, 2003).

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Learning Theory:

Constructivism is a philosophy of learning founded on the premise that, by reflecting on our experiences, we construct our own understanding of the world we live in. Each of us generates our own "rules" and "mental models," which we use to make sense of our experiences. Learning, therefore, is simply the process of adjusting our mental models to accommodate new experiences (Funderstanding, 2001). We were cognizant of constructivist learning theory and principles, and made a deliberate effort to incorporate them into the *Becoming an Effective Job-Seeker* unit. We feel that we have succeeded in this endeavor. The unit promotes student construction of self-knowledge, as well as construction of knowledge about the job-search process, the skills involved, and the reasons for these skills and processes. The unit is also designed to teach students valuable online researching skills, as well as skills associated with personal presentation and formal business practices, such as is seen with resume and cover letter writing, the construction of electronic portfolios, and formal interviews. By working through this unit, students are able to construct a knowledge base and skill set that can easily be transferred to the workplace.

In addition to the nature of student engagement, our web site contains numerous multimedia components that are consistent with constructivist learning environments. These include a combination of text, graphics, and hyperlinks to related resources. Finally, the last section of our multimedia unit allows students an opportunity to reflect upon their activities, both in working through the unit, and in following the actual job-search process. Again, such student reflection is consistent with constructivist learning environments.

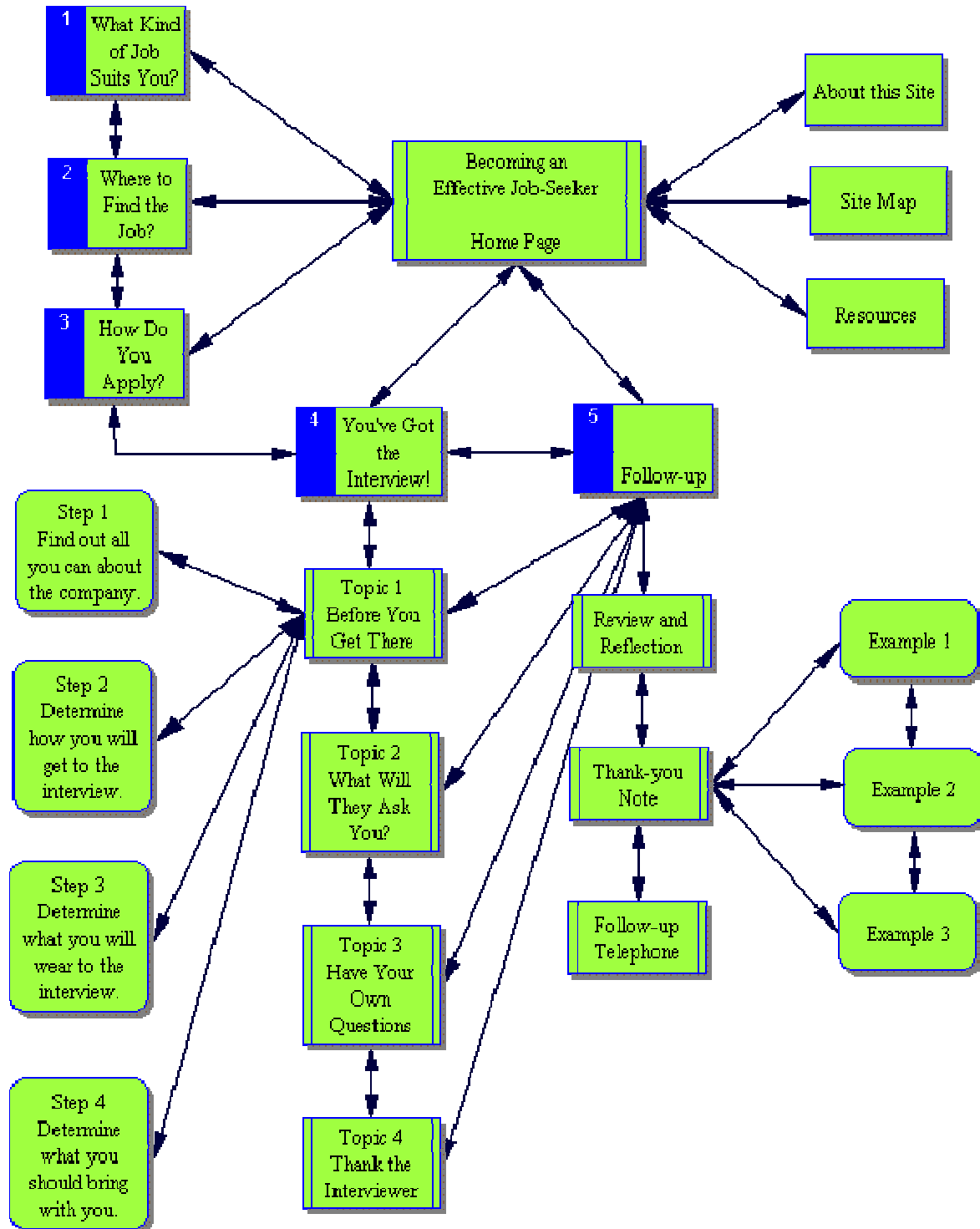
Project Creativity:

Creativity has been incorporated into this multimedia unit in a number of ways, ranging from the instructional design process, to the development of the unit web site, to the types of activities in which this unit expects learners to engage. In terms of the development of the unit web site, creativity can be seen in the decisions about the site layout—a result of collaborative, creative efforts using concept mapping techniques. It can also be seen in decisions about the wording of instructional materials, the types of images used to attract student attention and engage the learner in activities, and in the selection of a wide range of additional resources for learners, incorporated into the unit in hyperlink format.

In terms of the instructional design process and learner activities, this unit attempts to establish a constructivist learning environment. In such an environment, student creativity is fostered as they engage in constructing their own understanding and skill sets. While a cyclical sequence of steps is outlined for learners to work through as part of the job-search process, the directions that learners follow, and the ultimate outcomes of their activities, are open-ended. For example, students are free to demonstrate creativity in the construction of career aptitude and interest profiles, in the selection of resources used to find job-openings, in the creation of job-search aids such as electronic portfolios, and in the decisions about what to bring with them to actual job interviews. Another creative element of the instructional design process can be seen in the decision to create a unit that could be used strictly for educational purposes, or to assist learners in an actual job-search process. The decision to use a web-based format also allows learners to refer back to the resource at any point to refresh or extend their knowledge and skills.

The Project Layout:

(Concept Mapping, n.d.; Trochim, 2002; White, 2002)



Copyright Issues:

Copyright issues were not a problem during the creation of this web site. We did not use any copyrighted material. All material was freely available. The sites that were used are created specifically for the job seeker. All sites used were referenced accordingly on the web site.

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Project Lesson Plan:

Subject:

Becoming an Effective Job Seeker is based on a variety of curriculums including Career Exploration 1102 and Business English 3102. However, the unit is designed to operate independently of both. While it incorporates objectives and learning outcomes from Career Explorations 1102 and Business English 3102, the unit is designed so that the user can work independently. The web site can be used by secondary students, post-secondary students, or anyone new to the job market.

Learning Level:

While incorporating objectives from Career Exploration 1102 and Business English 3102, the unit is designed for secondary students, post-secondary students, or anyone new to the job market.

Authors:

Christine Doody, Rob Power, and Bing Yu (Education 535: Applications of Learning Theory in Education Multimedia Design).

Purpose:

The purpose of this web site is to assist students and others in researching and understanding the components involved in the job search process including: Identifying possible career opportunities.; Where to find a possible job.; How do you apply?; The interview process; and, The follow-up process.

Credits for Lesson Idea:

The core of the material for *Becoming an Effective Job Seeker* is from the course objectives for Career Exploration 1101. Business English 3102 is also used. Additional and supplementary material came from various web sites which are duly referenced on the web site.

Outcomes/Objectives:

The Department of Education, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador lists the following objectives for Career Exploration 1101 (Department of Education, 2003).

Students will be expected to understand the significance of achievements, attributes, and skills as related to career interests and opportunities.

- identify personal characteristics and achievements
- relate personal characteristics to stated career options
- research career opportunities in local, regional, and global labor market

Students will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of how individual motivation influences success.

- identify courses or school experiences in which they have been successful
- identify post-secondary education program in areas in which they have been successful
- identify areas of success outside the classroom
- identify occupational areas related to these successful areas

Students will be expected to understand the relationship between short term and long term educational and occupational goals.

- explain the importance of setting short and long term goals

- describe routes to follow to reach educational and occupational goals

Students will be expected to describe future views of themselves in a variety of roles and occupations.

- identify possible career goals
- describe future views of self
- identify some barriers that may interfere with reaching goals

Students will be expected to develop a well defined plan to achieve future views of self.

- develop individual educational plans
- identify skills, knowledge, and attitudes needed to complete plan

Students will be expected to demonstrate basic job seeking and maintenance skills.

- identify employability skills
- develop a list of acquired employability skills
- prepare and customize personal portfolio including a cover letter and resume
- identify skills for success in school

Students will be expected to demonstrate knowledge of the importance for transferable skill development to further employment and education.

- identify transferable skills and relate them to occupational and lifestyle choices
- search career databases and note employability skills that are common
- research the employability skills needed for your career options

Students will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of the need for a positive attitude in the workplace.

- identify the components of a positive attitude in the workplace
- compare personal school behaviors with personal management skills
- list examples of personal management skill as used in the school and at home

Students will be expected to develop organizational skills.

- define organizational skills
- discuss the importance of organizational skills
- demonstrate organizational skills in the portfolio

Students will be expected to think critically and act logically when solving problems and making decisions.

- evaluate and reassess personal plans

- research and evaluate educational routes for reaching goals
- learn to make appropriate decisions while using technology
- demonstrate an understanding of a decision-making model

Students will be expected to understand the relationship between technology and career development.

- identify how different forms of technology are used in today's workplace
- access web sites to do a career search
- identify emerging careers that result from technological change

Students will be expected to apply decision making models to educational and career plans.

- identify kinds of decisions made at various points throughout their lives
- apply a decision making model to hypothetical situations

Students will be expected to understand the value of networking in career development.

- define "networking"
- develop an understanding of "networking"
- understand the purpose of a "network web"
- identify community resources available for finding work

These objectives were taken from Business English 3201 and would be applied to the interview process (Department of Education, 2003).

Students will be expected to understand the value of verbal and non-verbal communication skills during the interview process.

- to understand the value of effective listening and speaking skills
- are able to analyze their own voice control and develop strategies to improve it
- are able to apply the communication model and problem-solving strategies to speaking situations
- are able to use feedback for effective speaking and listening.
- understand the importance of non-verbal communication oral contexts.
- give appropriate and informed answers to questions asked of them during a formal interview
- are able to make effective informal and formal presentations before a group and are able to use appropriate props effectively.

Background to Lesson:

While there is no specific background knowledge required for this project, it would be advantageous to students if they have a good working knowledge of word processing software and the Internet. Tips on searching out hidden jobs and applying for jobs would be including in Chapters 1 and 2 of the web site. Instructions on how to properly format business letters and a resume would be included as part of the objectives for Chapter 3 on the web site. Chapters 4 and 5 have links to appropriate sites and all necessary information included.

Tasks:

Throughout this unit, students will be expected to:

1. Discover potential career opportunities.
2. Search out and answer a job ad.
3. Prepare a properly formatted cover letter
4. Prepare an interesting and informative resume
5. Complete all tasks necessary for a successful interview including getting to the interview, researching the company, and preparing answers to the most commonly asked interview questions.
6. Use correct etiquette in following-up after the interview.

Interaction:

This unit is designed for students to complete on their own. If they choose, students could partner up and assist each other in all steps of the process. This would definitely be advantageous when reviewing interview questions. Students could conduct mock interviews with each other so that interview skills could be strengthened and “weaknesses” could be more easily identified.

Assessment:

Assessment for this unit can take one of two formats. If the web site is being used by a post-secondary or other person looking for a job, assessment would be self-assessment. This person would have to look at each step of the job search process to determine what areas they did well in and what areas could use improvement. Ultimate assessment would come from the employer who decides which candidate to hire.

A rubric has been developed for the evaluation of the tasks secondary students must complete while participating in *Becoming an Effective Job Seeker*. The grading outline includes a section for each of the five components: What kind of a Job Suits You?; Where to find a Job., How do you apply for a Job.; You've got the Interview!, Follow-up Procedures. These steps cover the material specified in the Career Exploration and the Business English guidelines. This rubric is presented in [Appendix A](#), below.

Tools:

Students will need access to the following:

1. Access to the library for searching newspapers
2. Computer with Internet access
3. Word processing software such as Word or WordPerfect.
4. Printer

Technology Integrated:

Technology has been integrated into this project in two ways. The first way is through the Internet. The Internet will be needed for reviewing sites referenced through links. In addition, students will be required to use word processing software to create a resume and a cover letter. Students may also wish to type up answers to potential interview questions.

Student Expectations:

1. Students will be expected to:
2. Develop potential career opportunities.
3. Search out prospective jobs.
4. Create a resume and a cover letter.
5. Participate in an interview.
6. Complete the follow-up process.

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(Including all references used for this supporting document and in the development of the multimedia project web site.)

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Appendix A: *Becoming an Effective Job-Seeker* Student Evaluation Rubric

	1	2	3	4	Mark
What kind of a Job Suits You?	Does no preparation or research. Applies for anything!!	Does a lackluster job. Checks out some newspapers but does no Internet research.	Does some research but only in one area. Could research a little more indepthly.	Follows interests and passions. Does some career aptitude testing. Hunts down jobs in sectors that appeal to them.	
Where do you find a job?	Does the bare minimum. Responds to one job ad only.	Checks out two or more sources.	Applies for several jobs but only those readily available. Does not seek out any "hidden" jobs.	Is inventive. Uses a variety of sources to locate potential employment opportunities.	
How do you apply: Resume	Not very creative. Does not use action verbs. Not attention getting. Content appears unfocused.	Provides some useful information but employer is left wondering about skills. Uninteresting.	Good format. A few spelling mistakes. Needs to generate a little more excitement.	Creative. Highlights abilities and skills perfectly. Presented well with no spelling or grammar errors.	
How do you apply: Cover Letter	Poor format with spelling errors. Obviously photocopied and not geared to this specific job.	Geared toward the job but poor letter format. Some spelling and grammar errors. Forgot to enclose resume!	Good, solid letter with no errors but does not generate any interest or excitement. Need to be a little more creative.	Perfect letter format – no spelling or grammar errors. Employer is interested in speaking with you.	
You've got the Interview!!	Late!! Dressed inappropriately. No prepared answers. Appears disorganized and sloppy.	Arrives on time but is poorly dressed. Forgot essential documents for interview. OK answers to questions but could be more prepared.	Good interview. Remembers to bring everything. Nervousness shows in answers and didn't ask questions of their own.	Perfect interview – Answers all questions well and asks questions of their own. Arrives 10 minutes early for interview.	
Follow up	Skips this step. Doesn't see it as necessary.	Types letter but it is sloppy with errors. Forgets to mail it.	Letter is handwritten but unfocused. Messy. Arrives day after candidate has been hired.	Sent a brief courteous email. Writes employer thanking them. Letter is handwritten with no spelling or grammar mistakes. Mailed the day after the interview.	