

BACKGROUND

An apprenticeship is a system for training a new generation of practitioners of a trade or profession with on-the-job training and often some accompanying study (classroom work and reading). Apprenticeships can also enable practitioners to gain a license to practice in a regulated occupation. Most of their training is done while working for an employer who helps the apprentices learn their trade or profession, in exchange for their continued labor for an agreed period after they have achieved measurable competencies. Apprenticeship lengths vary significantly across sectors, professions, roles and cultures. In some cases people who successfully complete an apprenticeship can reach the "journeyman" or professional certification level of competence. In other cases they can be offered a permanent job at the company that provided the placement. [\[source\]](#)

The application of apprenticeships is rapidly changing to embrace a wider variety of industries and a wider diversity of eligible individuals. The reasons for this increased interest are many. To maintain a vibrant economy, Michigan, with its strength in manufacturing, construction, agriculture, food processing, and logistics, has a need for a large number of skilled individuals in hands-on careers such as welders, electricians, carpenters, truck drivers, plumbers and pipefitters. These are careers traditionally associated with an apprenticeship. But, today, there are many careers available for apprenticeships that were looked over in the past. Employers such as jewelry makers, computer game developers, craft brewers, computer technicians, wind turbine technicians, hotels, restaurants and banks are among the many businesses that have registered apprenticeship programs.

Lesson: Apprenticeships

The lesson has three parts:

1. Learning about apprenticeships and **Setting the Stage** for the Talent Tour Video.
2. The **Talent Tour Video** highlights apprenticeships and ways to become highly employable.
3. **Follow-up activities** help students synthesize information about apprenticeships and learn by doing. Students can take on the role of an expert training an apprentice in the field.

Michigan has an organized system of support for standardizing apprenticeships. The benefits to both career seekers and employers are other reasons attributed to the increase in registered apprenticeships in Michigan. [\[source\]](#)

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF APPRENTICESHIP?

BENEFITS TO CAREER SEEKERS:

- Wages earned while training
- Improved skills and competencies
- Higher wages as skills increase
- National, portable credentials
- Career advancement

BENEFITS TO EMPLOYERS:

- Highly skilled employees
- Reduced turnover costs
- Lower investment in recruitment
- Higher productivity
- More diverse workforce

The rationale for the apprenticeship perspective is that there are many skills that are best learned by "doing." For example, tying a shoe, riding a bike, building a fire or drawing blood are all new skills best learned by doing. Driver education, flight training and sports training all use the apprenticeship perspective for learning specified skills. This method of instruction provides a pathway for kinesthetic learners to excel.

Some classroom, or more traditional "book learning," must accompany this hands-on approach in order for students to be prepared with understanding safety, tools of the trade basics, policies and procedures, and industry standards before a student goes to work. The balance of classroom (today much can be done online) with worksite learning is outlined in a training agreement.



This lesson is designed to help students understand an apprenticeship and the apprenticeship perspective as they complete some classroom work to learn basic vocabulary and resources then participate in a simulated worksite application. The simulated worksite will involve older students (acting as journeyman) teaching younger students (acting as apprentices) a skill.

Excellent handouts for students –

[Career Seeker Fact Sheet \(pdf\)](#)

[Youth Apprenticeship Fact Sheet \(pdf\)](#)

1. Set the stage with students: (20 minutes)

For interest, display the PowerPoint, Apprenticeships Make the News, on a loop as students are entering the room and classroom maintenance is taking place.

Refer to the PowerPoint. **Apprenticeships are becoming one of the most effective ways to help solve the current hiring crisis in the state of Michigan as well as across the United States. What is an apprenticeship?**

Put up the KWL teaching strategy chart. It will be used again in the closure to the lesson so chart paper, a saved document for projection, or a reserved board site is suggested.

Record student knowledge (their responses to **what is an apprenticeship**), in the “K” section of the chart as What I Know. Don’t expect that there will be a lot of pre-knowledge on this topic.

K-W-L Chart

TOPIC	K What I Know	W What I Wonder	L What I Learned



We are going to watch a video to hear about what is happening in our area with apprenticeships. As you view the video, think about what more someone might want to know as he or she considers the possibility of an apprenticeship as part of a career path

2. You are now ready to view the “Making you highly employable” video! (50 minutes, including video and research)

[Share the apprenticeship video](#)

After the video ask students about their questions regarding apprenticeships. Illicit questions for the What I Wonder section of the KWL chart, such as, “What is a credential or a certificate?” “What is a journeyman?” “How does someone start before they graduate?” “What careers can start with an apprenticeship?” “Why would an employer pay an apprentice to work AND pay for his schooling?”

To answer these questions and learn more you will do a little research. Distribute Student response sheets pgs 1, 2, and 3. Suggest students work with a partner. **As you find answers to our chart questions, highlight them on your response sheets for adding them to our chart later.**

Provide online time to work.

Go over responses with students and fill in chart answers in the What I Learned section of the KWL chart. Not all questions from the What I Wonder section may be answered. **There is always more to learn.**

3. Learn by Doing (3-4 class periods: 1 period choosing a skill, 1-2 practicing the teaching of the skill, 1 teaching younger students the skill.)

Ask students to take on the role of a journeyman by working with an apprentice. The older students will be the “journeyman.” The older students might work in pairs, ensuring a more socially confident student is paired with a shyer student for more successful communications.

After finding a colleague in your district to share younger students to act as apprentices, brainstorm skills the students might need or want to learn. The skill needs to be one that the older students are experts on. Remember, a journeyman is an expert in his field.

For very young students in elementary school the new skill might be learning a nursery rhyme or song, building a strong toothpick tower, making balloon rockets or race cars, or counting coins.

For older elementary students it might be riding a skateboard, adding fractions, writing a letter, learning the school fight song, making no-bake cookies or healthy snacks.

The older students will need some instruction on teaching.

Go back to the video and replay what employers are looking for as basic skills in every job (3:40 into the video). **“Energy, enthusiasm, be a team player, willing to learn something new” This applies to teaching. Show the younger students you are happy to be sharing with them, that you are a team so their questions and comments will be respected, and that learning is fun.**

Remember, a journeyman is an expert in his field. What you are doing is part of your own learning, too.

Robert Zajonc, a psychologist at Stanford University, said “Explaining something to a younger student solidifies the older student’s knowledge and allows that student to grow more extensively,” he added. “The younger one is asking questions and challenging meanings and explanations, and that will contribute to the intellectual maturity of the older one.”



Suggest students use the I do, we do, you do strategy. **The journeyman shows the apprentice the skill. Maybe more than once. Then they try the skill together. Maybe more than once. Then, when the journeyman feels confident that the apprentice will be successful, the apprentice uses the skill alone. This is called gradual release of responsibility.** Emphasize being a team player (patience), using good communication skills (praise, rephrasing, etc), and problem solving (if it is obvious your directions are not working, change them).

If possible, set up a visitation in which the older students teach the skill to the younger students. If face to face instruction is not reasonable, zoom class might be an option, or ask the older students to make videos of their instruction to share with younger students. The younger students can then be videoed following the instructions, asking for clarifications, and there can be interactions between the apprentices and the journeyman.

Closure:

Evaluate the apprenticeship process. **What soft skills are important to learn and use as an apprentice** (active listening, respectful questioning, persistence, responding to constructive criticism, cooperation, staying on task, time management)? **What soft skills are important to learn and use as a journeyman** (patience, active listening, providing constructive criticism, staying on task, time management)? **Notice how learning many of the same soft skills, just like the technical skills, as an apprentice will make for a successful journeyman.**

3. Extensions:

Stanford Research Institute International determined that 75% of the long-term success in a given job role is based on a mastery of soft skills, and only 25% of that job success comes from technical skills. Learning soft skills can be an important task in career preparation.

Soft skills tend to be more personality-focused, as opposed to being based on qualifications, technical skills, or vocational experience. That includes things like people skills, social skills, interpersonal skills, and transferable skills.

Share from the following resource:

<https://estio.co.uk/soft-skills-how-they-can-give-an-apprentice-the-edge/>

Choose from the many youth activities in the U.S. Department of Labor publication, Skills to Pay the Bills: <https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/odep/topics/youth/softskills/softskills.pdf>