



Carol Ann Duke  
cduke@txk.k12.ar.us



Jerry Shipp  
jerrys@txk.k12.ar.us



Robin Stover  
robins@txk.k12.ar.us

## Campus Unification— The Passport Project

### The Idea

The building design of many comprehensive high schools can hamper communication and collaboration between academic and career and technical teachers. Leaders at Texarkana Area Vocational Center and Arkansas High School, two parts of a large campus in the Texarkana Arkansas School District, launched a successful effort to unify the campus and strengthen relationships among staff members. The project prompted teachers to understand their students better and to design more interdisciplinary projects to combine academic and career studies.

First, teachers from the primarily academic North Campus received an invitation to visit technology teachers on the South Campus during their conference periods. Academic teachers were asked to keep a record of their travels into the technology region of the campus. As they moved from class to class, they recorded things they saw that they could use in their own classrooms, ideas for integrated projects with technology teachers, and other comments about their experiences. They were required to move through “Customs” at the close of their visit to be sure all their travel papers were in order for the return trip to their classrooms.

Within a few weeks, technology teachers from the South Campus received an invitation to follow the same process in the academic classrooms of the North Campus. They were able to observe the high levels of English, mathematics, and science that students are expected to know in order to graduate. At the same time, they saw the need to reinforce those skills in career and technical studies.

All teachers completed an evaluation form on which they said whether the visit was helpful and informative, listed three things they saw or heard that they would like to implement and/or investigate for their own classrooms, and told what they would need from school leaders to make it happen.

Administrators and teachers from both campuses used the information from their visits to develop integrated projects. Some of the ideas included connecting English with graphic arts, geometry with welding, biology with agriculture, chemistry with cosmetology and/or food science, anatomy with parenting, and fine arts with clothing and interior design.

In addition to the teachers learning more about each others’ focus areas, the District Administration, Board of Education members, and representatives from postsecondary partners also participated.

Next steps call for inviting junior high and feeder-school teachers to participate and develop integrated projects.

### Impact

Representatives from the school say that students are engaged in real-world math and literacy activities on a more regular basis, which has allowed them to focus on how these academic skills fit into their career plans and will assist them in the future. Students are also reading, writing, and calculating on a weekly basis in their technology courses to support their academic coursework while learning practical applications of these skills.

In addition to the student benefits, one of the Whole Faculty Study Groups has focused on integrated projects to help the district advertise and catalog integrated curricula. This team of teachers assists with the planning, implementation, and promotion of integrated projects and lessons; many teachers are using their planning periods to develop integrated lessons; and lessons are spotlighted monthly at staff meetings.

Evaluations showed that 98% of participating teachers enjoyed, supported, and implemented Passport-based activities and hope to have more “travel days” provided each school year. The District Administration and Board of Education members agreed and both support continuing and even expanding the project. A partnership with Southern Arkansas University Systems will allow the expansion of the project to both the two-year and the four-year colleges in the SAU System.

## Participant Comments

An English teacher reported that, “Walking into Collision Repair to see what my students were doing was like Christmas morning for them! The students thought I was there just to see them and their work; now I have new ways of engaging them in English by using their love of cars as a springboard.”

Other teachers said they had no idea the vocational center offered so many programs. “It was powerful to see our students in other settings and to discover how they interact in other classes,” one teacher said.

Robin Stover, Arkansas High School Principal, sees the program as fostering a sense of shared responsibility for teachers and students. “This project meets many of the 10 key practices we are striving to implement in the High Schools That Work initiative,” says Stover. “It shows our students how much our teachers care about the entire high school experience, not just what happens in one classroom.”

## Logistics

- **In what career and technical educational program area does this project take place?**  
Campus wide
- **What was the topic area covered by this project?**  
Curriculum Integration
- **What grade level did this project address?**  
9-12

- **How much did this project cost?**  
Depends on the size of faculty. Expenses included printing materials, providing lunch, and door prizes.
- **How much time is needed to prepare for this activity?**  
6-10 hours
- **How much time is needed to deliver this project or activity?**  
6-10 hours
- **How was the curriculum for this project secured?**  
It was developed in house.
- **Please describe any collaboration, if any, related to this project.**  
Outside of the high school personnel, our postsecondary partner was an important part of this project as having them participate helped promote the articulation agreement and postsecondary opportunities for students.
- **What national, state, or local standards were addressed by this project?**  
Perkins standards related to literacy and numeracy. Arkansas Department of Workforce Education and Arkansas Department of Education standards.
- **Was this project linked to improving technical skills?**  
Yes, it was. Academic teachers now have tools with which to integrate career and technical relevance into their lesson plans and develop integrated projects with career and technical education teachers.
- **Was this project linked to improving academic skills?**  
Yes, it was. Career and technical education teachers now have tools with which to integrate academic rigor into their lesson plans and develop integrated projects with academic teachers.
- **Was this project linked to improving workforce readiness skills?**  
No, it was not.
- **Please describe any other benefits this project might have had.**  
It helped improve the climate and culture of our campus by strengthening the support system between and among faculty. It also allowed all faculty to see what their co-workers do daily and the programs available to students, both academically and in career and technical education.
- **Did you evaluate the impact of this project or activity?**  
Yes, we did. We completed an exit evaluation tool with each teacher. Nearly all (98%) found the experience worthwhile and are anxious to take the next steps of developing and piloting integrated projects.