Skills-Based Approach: Blue Collar Workers

*Simplicity. Adaptability. Longevity.*

Skills Based Approach is useful for a broader sector of the workforce
Introduction

Where the jobs are:
The new blue collar

“More than 2.5 million good-paying jobs will be created in the next few years (representing nearly 40% of all job growth), will workers know how to get them. Source USA News
Discussion Points

• Definition: ‘Blue Collar’.

• Significant growth in demand for ‘blue collar’ jobs.

• There are fast track programs to develop related employability skills.

• Large segment (63%) of adult workers who have ‘low basic skills’ are employed.

• Might be a ‘stepping stone’ job to a future career.

• Focus on ‘breadth of skills’ as opposed to ‘depth of skills’.

• Create awareness of middle skill jobs. Use Skills-Based Approach to acquire skills.
‘Blue Collar’ Definition

- We have moved from a ‘manufacturing’ to a ‘service (knowledge)’ economy. So we need a broad definition for blue collar workers:
  
  - ‘Blue-collar’ jobs do not require a bachelor’s degree.
  - Generally speaking, focus on ‘breadth of their skill set’.
  - May involve manual labor and therefore physical skills.
Blue Collar Skills

• Mechanical Skills
  • Handling machinery

• Problem Solving
  • Respond to problems with equipment, customer service, networks, etc.

• Physical Skills

• Computerized Equipment Skills

• Social Skills
  • Often face customers directly.
Removing the Stigma

• Need to remove the association of ‘blue collar’ work and a class.
  • Good pay for skilled trades. Plumbers, electricians, and repairman can make over $100,000 a year.
  • Still acquire and develop skills, just different ones.
  • Career security.

• Create awareness of middle skill jobs and paths to acquire them.
  • Impressionable high school students have to know how to get necessary training. What are other options besides college.
    • Should consider ROI while making comparisons.
    • Mature decision. Most students enroll in college without declaring a major – so are undecided with what they want to do with their career.
STEM, Blue Collar Jobs

Here are examples of jobs that do not require a college degree. Companies might offer apprenticeships. Students may acquire necessary skills through a community college or an online program.
Fast Track Programs

• There are a growing number of ‘fast track’ programs, including:

  • Micro-credential paths.
    • Example – an accountant finish coursework and take the CPA in less than a year.
  • Certification / License programs.
    • Example – a machinist can finish necessary coursework in 42 weeks.
  • Bootcamp programs.
    • Example – coding camps take less than 3 months.
  • Apprenticeships.
    • Early exposure to applied learning and receiving compensation for work.
Seventy-three percent of workers say someone with less education than they had could develop the skills and knowledge needed to do their job.

Source: Pew Research The State of American Jobs
Professionals With Certification / License

PERCENT EMPLOYED PERSONS 25 YEARS OR OLDER WITH A LICENSE OR CERTIFICATION, BY EDUCATION LEVEL, 2015

- With a certification, but no license
- With a license

Less than a high school diploma
- With a certification, but no license: 1.1%
- With a license: 7.3%

High school diploma, no college
- With a certification, but no license: 2.1%
- With a license: 14.3%

Some college, no degree
- With a certification, but no license: 3.3%
- With a license: 19.9%

Associate degree
- With a certification, but no license: 4.6%
- With a license: 31.4%

Bachelor's degree only
- With a certification, but no license: 3.9%
- With a license: 26.4%

Advanced degree
- With a certification, but no license: 4.7%
- With a license: 47.3%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

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Bootcamp Programs

• Rapid skill trainings, typically lasts three months or less.
• Teaching process follows a ‘project-based approach’ and experiential learning.
  • Includes basic 21\textsuperscript{st}-century skills
• Strongly connected to employability (skills in demand).

“This characteristic of supply and demand of practical skills for the industry and the emphasis on practical 21st-century skills makes the bootcamp model that can be extended beyond tech” (Source: World Bank Blog)

(Source: World Bank Blog)
Apprenticeships (Impart Skills Directly)

• Popular in Europe, Apprenticeships are gaining acceptance in the US.
  • DOL recently announced 50.5 million dollars to fund ApprenticeshipUSA State Expansion Grants. DOL anticipates awarding grants to 33 states from $700,000 to $3.2 million for planning activities over 18 months.

• Mentors are masters who pass on their methods.

• For many skilled professions, it is the fastest (and sometimes the only) way to pass on technical skills.
Lifelong Learning For All Workers

• Large segment (63%) of adults with ‘low basic skills’ are employed.
  • Employers should invest in learning programs for workers.
    • Fund and allocate resources (time) towards learning programs.
    • Have a captive audience – workers.
    • Have applied knowledge – mentors.
  • Most workers (‘white collar’ and ‘blue collar’) expect learning throughout their careers.
‘Stepping Stone’ Job

• A professional may move from ‘blue collar’ work to ‘white color’ work.
  • A young professional does a coding bootcamp and gets hired to code website and mobile apps. After years of applied coding experience, this professional may have developed skills enough to compete for a ‘white collar’ jobs; for example, designing applications or managing a team of coders.
  • A young professional may learn a skilled trade. After years of experience, this same worker might become a business owner or supervisor.
  • (If we make the delineation of ‘blue collar jobs’ not requiring a bachelor’s degree, then accountants and medical professionals fall into this category. An accountant can get a CPA in a year, without getting a degree, and have a successful career.)
Focus on ‘breadth of skills’

• Many of the ‘middle skill’ jobs in manufacturing require interchangeability, workers substitute for each other – so must expand their skill sets.

• Workers in ‘skilled trades’, such as plumbers and electricians, have to directly face customers and problem solve so have to have a wider range of basic skills.
Skills Based Approach: A Solution
What is Skills-Based Approach?

• Skills-Based Approach is a methodology centered on the development of a skill set throughout a person’s lifetime.
  • This encompasses education, higher education, and professional and career development.

• There are four stages: Planning, Building, Presenting, And Validating.
  • Planning Stage: Come up with a list of skills and an action plan to achieve desired expertise.
  • Building Stage: Setting up a learning process to acquire skills over a period of time.
  • Presenting Stage: Communicating your skill set to ‘internal’ and ‘external’ connections.
  • Validating Stage: Earning credentials to verify skill competency achievements.
What is Skills-Based Approach (continued)?

• Students / professionals constantly cycle through the four stages in periods called instances.
  • For a student, an instance might be the beginning of a semester.
  • For a professional, an instance might be part of onboarding, mentoring, or a performance review.

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Micro Benefits of Skills Based Approach

• Simplifies education and career planning.
• Way to track learning progress in and out of the classroom; way to track learning progress from one grade to another and subsequently from high school to college. Way to track lifelong learning.
• Career onboarding and performance reviews are often ineffective for the recipient (and unstructured for the supervisor). Thinking in skill sets and moving through stages is a useful platform for career development.
Macro Benefits of Skills Based Approach

• Easier to address ‘skills gap’. Professionals know what technical skills are in demand and can move through Skills-Based Approach to efficiently acquire them.

• Lifelong learning has become a requirement for most professionals. Targeting relevant technical skills is effective.

• Learning in grade levels is imprecise. Skill-Based Approach implies building skill competencies, so adaptive and personalized learning becomes part of an education plan.

• Higher education costs are rising rapidly. A Skills-Based Approach suggests breaking down everything into skills, rather than degrees. Therefore, students can and should use alternative ways to build necessary skills.

• Big disconnect between education (degrees) and career planning. Thinking in skills and competencies is advantageous because it is a 'single language' to bridge education with careers expectations.
Advantages Of Skill Based Approach (over other methods)

• **Simplicity.** Being able to summarize education, employment, and other experiences into a fluent skill set, then move through four stages is simple. Always dealing with skills, behaviors, and values is simple.

• **Longevity.** Effective in education (K-12), higher education, and professional and career development.

• **Adaptability.** As the latest technologies and applications are adopted, simply plug them into related stage.
Middle Skill Job – Electrician (1 – Find)
Middle Skill Job – Electrician (2 – Assign)

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<tr>
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<th>Building</th>
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ACTUAL SCREENSHOT SKILLS-BASED APPROACH

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Middle Skill Job – Electrician (3 – Task)

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Middle Skill Job - Web Developer (1 - Find)

ACTUAL SCREENSHOTS FROM WEBSITE APPLICATION: WWW.SKILLSBASEDAPPROACH.COM
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Middle Skill Job - Web Developer (2 - Assign)

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Conclusion

• Building awareness of ‘middle skill’ jobs and paths to acquire them. (Perhaps the single biggest hurdle.)
  • Impressionable high school students need to know these jobs exist, their value, what skills they require and available training and education programs.

• Provide HS students with tools to make an informed, mature career decision.
  • Applying Skills-Based Approach is ideal because it is evolving, so users can adapt to external (changing demand for skills) and internal (success, progress, or failure in acquiring skills).

• ‘Blue collar’ work can have an unwarranted stigma attached to it.

• Skills Based Approach works effectively with ‘middle skill’ workers to plan, track, and acquire a skill set needed to be successful.
Call To Action

• Investors / Potential Partners (ryan@theprofessionalwebsite.com)
• Educational Institutions / Providers of Training Programs / Workforce Development Organizations
  • Join the community online: www.skillsbasedapproach.com / www.skillsculture.com
• Follow the discussion on Twitter: www.twitter.com/skillsapproach
• Share / Like / Follow on Facebook: www.facebook.com/skillsbasedapproach

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