

SCHOOL CHUMS Business, educators join forces A class with a difference `The loneliest job in town'; [FINAL EDITION]

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Abstract (Document Summary)

"We want kids to understand, from a purely job interest, this is where the jobs are," said Tom Valentino, a Batavia High School teacher whose Principles of Technology classroom is a lab at Chemical Waste Management in Batavia.

The technology class is a cooperative effort of local school districts (four this year and seven in the fall), Waubensee Community College in Sugar Grove, the Corridor Partnership for Excellence in Education (CPEE) and Chemical Waste.

Full Text (347 words)

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Sidebar.

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"To work the line at Caterpillar today, you have to know trigonometry," Valentino said.

The technology class is a cooperative effort of local school districts (four this year and seven in the fall), Waubensee Community College in Sugar Grove, the Corridor Partnership for Excellence in Education (CPEE) and Chemical Waste.

With twice as many labs as a regular physics class, field trips to local businesses and mentoring by Chemical Waste employees, the two-credit applied physics course combines a hands-on look at the underpinnings of technology with exposure to the working world.

"The ultimate outcome," according to the course description, "is people who will not be made obsolete by changing and emerging technology."

"I don't think there's anybody I know in the U.S. who's doing this, a regular high school course in a corporate setting," Valentino said.

Fran Beauman, manager of innovation and performance section, Illinois State Board of Education, said, "Several research reports have said that students in (Principles of Technology) are doing as well or better than other students, particularly those in a regular physics class."

"It's not a blow-off course," said Eric Davis, 18, a Geneva senior. "You see what people are actually doing with what they learned so it answers the question, `What am I going to do with this?' "

The class is designed for the "forgotten half," students in the 25th to 75th percentile who don't necessarily fit into college prep, which until now was America's only path to high-tech careers.

This puts Principles of Technology at the forefront of one of the hottest concepts in Illinois

education today, "tech prep," an attempt to retrieve those lost workers.

Nineteen school districts in the area covered by Aurora-based CPEE are designing tech prep courses.

CAPTION:

PHOTO: Brian Peoples, Pam Larson and Mark Johnson conduct an experiment at Chemical Waste. Photo by James Crump.

[Illustration]
PHOTO

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