

JOB CORPS— SUCCESSFUL CAREER PREPARATION

SUCCESS STORY

“The Cisco Networking Academy Program presents a wealth of knowledge in rich multimedia content, and the Flash animations help make learning easier for new students. Also, access to the curriculum from any computer with Internet connectivity simplifies juggling a career with school.

“Before, I could use a computer, the Internet, and other programs. But now, after completing the four CCNA modules, I can multitask, understand why and how, and, most important, correctly use the power of an intranet, the Internet, and everything in between. Terms such as: WANs, LANs, and algorithms become an understanding, and no longer look like alphabet soup.”



—Alex Cramer,
Former Job Corp
Student, currently
employed as a
Microcomputer
Specialist at
Mountain College

Collbran, Colorado

“Our primary goal in offering the Cisco Networking Academy Program is to prepare students for better job placement.” Karen Currier, Instructor



Job Corps is a program administered by the U.S. Department of Labor that provides no-cost educational and vocational training to young people

between the ages of 16 and 24. With more than 120 centers throughout the United States, the goal of the program is to prepare students for a successful career.

One of these centers is the Collbran Job Corps Center located in Collbran, CO. In 2000, Karen Currier was assigned to research programs that were more progressive than the advanced business technologies courses she was currently teaching. Karen felt that the Cisco® Networking Academy® Program offered the best opportunity for her students, and a proposal was accepted by the Department of Labor. The CCNA® curriculum was taught for the first time in September 2000. Karen also was the first Job Corps Center teacher to begin teaching HP IT Essentials in late 2002. Recently her first student completed HP IT Essentials I, HP IT Essentials II, and CCNA courses 1–4.

Karen has approximately 30 students in the program at Collbran at any given time. Students attend class all day, five days a week. In addition to the Networking Academy program, they are taught other courses including employability skills. If students currently are enrolled in high school, they spend one week with Karen on the Networking Academy program and one week in high school classes on the Job Corps campus. This is a residential campus in rural Colorado and students come from the Denver and Colorado Springs area as well as rural communities.



BEST PRACTICE

In addition to Academy curriculum, concepts that support job readiness, leadership skills, and teamwork are also taught at Collbran Job Corps Center.

— *Karen Currier, Instructor*

Most of the students that choose the center at Collbran are planning a career in some form of technology. Their reading and math scores must be good enough to enter the program; however, they can take remedial reading and math courses at the Center to ensure that they are successful.

One of Karen's biggest challenges is scheduling, because students can enroll at a Job Corps Center at any time. She attempts to make this work by placing students who enroll at similar times in groups, so that they can work at the same pace. In addition, they are mentored by an advanced student. Slower students are merged together in a group. The concepts that Karen has put in place support job readiness, leadership skills, and teamwork for her students.

Collbran uses success metrics and students are ranked on performance. To achieve a "gold" rating, they must complete an assessment every five days. As teams, they complete labs to meet their goals, and their performances have been excellent in all areas. According to Karen, "the challenge has been fun for them."

To date, the Collbran Center has had at least four students receive their CCNA certification and two have received their A+ certification. Eighty-four percent of the students have completed the program and 100 percent have been placed in jobs for the year ending June 30, 2004.