**5-Module Curriculum for Job Exploration for Pre-Employment Transition Services**

**Course Overview:**

This 5-module curriculum is designed to help students with disabilities (SWDs) explore career options and understand the skills, environments, and expectations for various occupations. The curriculum aims to engage students in career exploration using vocational interest inventories, soft skills development, and exposure to both traditional and non-traditional career pathways. Additionally, students will be introduced to labor market information and have opportunities for career exposure through speakers and informational interviews.

**Module 1: Understanding the Labor Market and In-Demand Industry Sectors**

**Objective:**  
Students will explore different occupations, including those that are in-demand, to understand the labor market and future job opportunities.

**Key Topics:**

1. **Introduction to the Labor Market**
   * Overview of the labor market and the importance of understanding job trends.
   * Identifying high-demand industries and occupations (e.g., healthcare, technology, manufacturing, education).
   * Exploring the concept of "in-demand" occupations and their relevance to future employment opportunities.
2. **Understanding Job Growth and Skills Requirements**
   * How certain jobs grow in demand and what skills are needed to succeed in these industries.
   * Introduction to job projections and how students can align their interests with the future job market.
3. **Exploring Occupations in Various Sectors**
   * Breakdown of key sectors: healthcare, technology, trades, service industries, and more.
   * Career options in these sectors including roles that require college degrees, certificates, and vocational training.

**Activities:**

* Research a specific in-demand industry and its current and future job opportunities.
* Discuss and present findings on what skills are required for jobs in high-demand sectors.
* Use labor market tools and websites to explore careers in different sectors (e.g., O\*NET, Bureau of Labor Statistics).

**Module 2: Non-Traditional Employment Options**

**Objective:**  
Students will explore non-traditional career options such as military service, entrepreneurship, and self-employment, and understand how these paths can align with their interests and abilities.

**Key Topics:**

1. **Non-Traditional Career Paths**
   * Introduction to military careers and the benefits of military service (skills training, leadership, and career development).
   * Exploring entrepreneurship: What does it mean to own a business or work as a freelancer?
   * Self-employment: The benefits and challenges of starting your own business or pursuing freelance work.
2. **Identifying Skills for Non-Traditional Careers**
   * Identifying personal strengths that align with non-traditional career paths.
   * Skills needed for entrepreneurship and self-employment (e.g., time management, financial planning, marketing).
3. **Real-Life Examples**
   * Invite a guest speaker or watch videos about individuals who have succeeded in non-traditional careers (entrepreneurs, military personnel, self-employed professionals).

**Activities:**

* Brainstorm non-traditional career paths that might be a good fit based on individual interests and skills.
* Interview a local entrepreneur or military representative to learn about the challenges and benefits of non-traditional work.
* Explore online resources or virtual tours of military or entrepreneurship programs.

**Module 3: Vocational Interest Inventories and Career Pathways**

**Objective:**  
Students will complete vocational interest inventories to help identify potential career pathways based on their skills, interests, and abilities.

**Key Topics:**

1. **Introduction to Vocational Interest Inventories**
   * What is a vocational interest inventory? Why is it important?
   * How can inventories help identify career options that match personal interests and abilities?
2. **Identifying Career Pathways**
   * Use of interest inventories to match students’ interests with potential career paths.
   * Discuss the importance of considering personal strengths and weaknesses when selecting a career pathway.
3. **Interpreting Results and Aligning with Career Goals**
   * How to read and understand the results from vocational interest inventories.
   * Connecting the results to actual career opportunities (e.g., healthcare, technology, arts, trades).

**Activities:**

* Administer a vocational interest inventory (e.g., Career Interest Profiler, O\*NET Interest Profiler).
* Group discussion on results and how they can align with potential career pathways.
* Create a personal “Career Pathway Map” showing the different pathways based on individual interests.

**Module 4: Soft Skills, Workplace Expectations, and Career Exploration**

**Objective:**  
Students will develop essential soft skills that are important in any workplace and explore the skills, duties, environments, and expectations for specific occupations.

**Key Topics:**

1. **Introduction to Soft Skills (Universal Skills)**
   * What are soft skills and why are they important? (e.g., communication, teamwork, problem-solving, adaptability).
   * Role-playing exercises to practice essential soft skills in the workplace.
2. **Understanding Workplace Expectations**
   * Key workplace expectations: time management, professionalism, communication, and responsibility.
   * How employers value soft skills in addition to technical knowledge.
3. **Exploring Specific Occupations**
   * Exploring the skills, duties, environments, and expectations for different occupations (e.g., healthcare worker, teacher, plumber, computer programmer).
   * Understanding the typical work environment for different careers (e.g., office, fieldwork, hospital, construction site).

**Activities:**

* Conduct soft skills exercises (e.g., mock job interviews, team collaboration activities).
* Research a specific job and create a presentation that explains the duties, environment, and skills required for that job.
* Group discussion on what makes someone successful in the workplace.

**Module 5: Career Exploration Opportunities & Resources**

**Objective:**  
Students will explore opportunities to meet professionals, attend career events, and connect with local resources to better understand career options.

**Key Topics:**

1. **Career Speakers and Informational Interviews**
   * The value of hearing from professionals in various fields about their careers and experiences.
   * How to conduct an informational interview: Questions to ask, what to learn, and how to connect.
2. **Exploring Career Organizations**
   * Introduction to organizations that support specific careers or industries (e.g., National Association of Nurses, Technology Associations).
   * How students can get involved with professional organizations early in their careers.
3. **One-Stop Career Centers and Online Resources**
   * Introduction to local One-Stop Career Centers/American Job Centers and how they support career exploration.
   * Overview of online Department of Labor services and job-search tools for students (e.g., job postings, career planning resources).

**Activities:**

* Invite a local professional or career speaker to talk about their job and career path.
* Organize an informational interview with a local professional (either in person or via video chat).
* Register students at a local One-Stop Career Center and explore online career planning resources through the Department of Labor.

**Assessment & Reflection:**

* **Reflection Journal:** After each module, students will write a short reflection on what they learned and how it applies to their own career interests and goals.
* **Career Portfolio:** Students will create a career exploration portfolio, which includes their vocational interest inventory results, career research, and soft skills exercises. This portfolio will serve as a tool for ongoing career exploration in the future.

This curriculum is designed to engage students with disabilities in the process of career exploration through interactive activities, exposure to a variety of career pathways, and development of essential workplace skills. By incorporating practical experiences, informational interviews, and access to resources like local career centers and job search tools, students will be well-equipped to start thinking about their futures and exploring career possibilities.