



CARTOONS AND CAREERS

Using cartoons is a natural fit
for career exploration in
elementary school.

BY KARA IEVA, PH.D., AND KRISTINA WEISS

School counselors play a critical role in the college- and career-ready process. According to the ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success, career development guides school counseling programs to help students gain the acquisition of knowledge, attitudes and skills enabling students to understand the connection between school and the world of work and plan for a successful transition from school to postsecondary education and/or the world of work, and from job to job across the life span.

Elementary school counselors can build foundational knowledge and skills for students to understand the career decision-making process.

Although secondary-level school counselors typically address these issues in detail, it is extremely relevant and important at the elementary level as well. Elementary school counselors can build foundational knowledge and skills for students to understand the career decision-making process.

In exploring creative ways to engage elementary school students in the career awareness process, we hit upon the idea of using cartoons. Cartoons tend to appeal to students of all ages, and specific characters (e.g., Dora the Explorer) resonate with children across the country.

There are four main parts to the career development process:

- Know yourself
- Explore options
- Get focused
- Take action

There are multiple ways to address to each of these steps in the process. Cartoons in general can be used for all of the steps; however the cartoons chosen

for this article are predominately used in the exploring options phase.

Why Cartoons?

Cartoons are powerful teaching tools for myriad reasons.

Brief: Cartoons tell a complex story in a few images, allowing you to use them in both a classroom or small-group setting, without taking up a lot of instructional time.

Differentiated: Cartoons work with a variety of learning styles. They provide images for visual learners and connect job-related interests and activities through direct (auditory learner) and indirect (visual) messages.

Current: Cartoons provide real-life examples related to current employment trends in career exploration without bias and/or stigma. Students are visually seeing and processing information without being told what to think about specific careers or jobs.

Relatable: Cartoons use easily identifiable characters most students already

Wentworth's Five Factors of Career Success

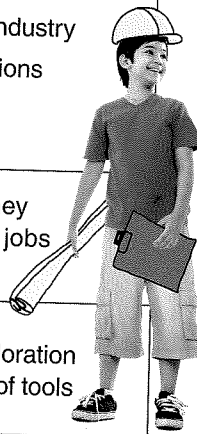
Wentworth offers a unique combination of five factors that help ensure career success through a seamlessly integrated program of learning, building, and doing. Yesterday's credentials are no match for the challenges of the future—only at Wentworth do all these factors converge and prepare you for the career you envision.



SUGGESTED CAREER-RELATED CARTOON EPISODES



CARTOON	EPISODE TITLE	FOCUS
Dora the Explorer	<i>Job Day</i>	A variety of careers
	<i>School Science Fair</i>	STEM fields
Doug	<i>Career Anxiety</i>	Displays the many options that can be overwhelming
	<i>Odd Jobs</i>	The world of work
Bubble Guppies	<i>On the Job Set!</i> Episodes Included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Tooth on the Loose • Fishketball! • Build me a Building • The Grumpfish Special • Call a Clambulance • Firefighter Gil to the Rescue! 	This entire series is job-specific; explores pathways, professionalism and vocabulary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dentist/health professions - Athletics - Architecture - Food service industry - Health professions - Civil service
Team Umizoomi	<i>Job Well Done</i>	Salary and money associated with jobs around town
Blaze and The Monster Machines	<i>Tool Duel</i>	Engineering exploration through the use of tools
PAW Patrol	<i>Pups Save and Ace/ Save a Wedding</i>	Aeronautics and meteorology
Blues Clues	<i>Contraptions</i>	Physics and problem solving
Hey Arnold	<i>Career Day</i>	The world of work



know. Even if students have outgrown certain cartoons, they are immediately taken back with characters with whom they have previously identified.

Professional: Cartoons show culture in action in the ways people are behaving and expected to behave in regard to careers. There are implicit messages that can shape professional behaviors.

Inclusive: Cartoons can display a multitude of careers you can use in conjunction with content courses (e.g., math, science, language arts). This helps students understand career clusters in specific context.

Diverse: There are more characters today that are reflective of the diverse world in which we live. Therefore, students are able to see the potential for diverse careers, with appropriate role models. It is also important to note that characters can also be dogs, trucks or robots, not just people.

Flexible: You can use cartoons in many ways for a lesson: as a catalyst/introduction for a lesson, as the lesson itself and/or as the summary to process a lesson about career development.

School-appropriate: For the most part, cartoons are developmentally appropriate and school-appropriate (e.g., language, content, characters, behaviors, emphasis on careers).

Cartoon-Based Lessons

Cartoons are a creative tool for career-development lesson plans. However, before starting it's important to first to decipher your main goal for the lesson. Are you interested in having your students begin to learn about the world of work? Are there specific career areas you are looking to highlight such as STEM? Do you want students to see a work environment and the way employees interact? Once you've answered these questions, you're ready to determine how you'll present the cartoon.

Regardless of whether you're using the cartoon simply to introduce the lesson or as the entire lesson, students need to understand the cartoon's purpose and what they will be taking away from this lesson. Additionally, students should be actively participating while viewing the cartoon. Student engagement with the cartoon will help to maintain focus and

awareness and can involve multisensory learning. Students may take notes during the video, use a pre-made worksheet to fill in information during the cartoon or directly interact with the video. This can be in the form of pausing the video to receive feedback after new information is presented, to allow students to predict what may occur next in the video or to further elaborate on a particular scene within the cartoon.

Ending a lesson with a cartoon can be a creative, entertaining way to summarize what students have learned. Cartoons at the end of a lesson help students visualize and further process the careers they've discussed and can bring the careers to life.

When selecting the cartoons, make sure you aren't violating the producer's copyright. Either contact the producer for permission to use the cartoon, or find ones available on YouTube for public use.

As you're developing your lesson plans, ask yourself the following questions:

- Is this cartoon developmentally

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appropriate for the audience? Make sure you watch the entire cartoon.

- Is there a content teacher/class I can collaborate with or connect to the content?
- In which part of the lesson should I include the cartoon? Remember, it's

more meaningful for students if you have a guided activity to complete while they're watching the cartoon.

- Are the characters and messages reflective of the students in my school?
- How am I going to connect this cartoon and lesson to the career-development process?
- What questions can I anticipate from students so I am as prepared as I could be?

Using cartoons in your career-development lessons can lead to a gold mine of ideas – and your students will love it. Visit the ASCA SCENE, www.school-counselor.org/scene for sample career-development lesson plans we've developed using cartoons. **SC**

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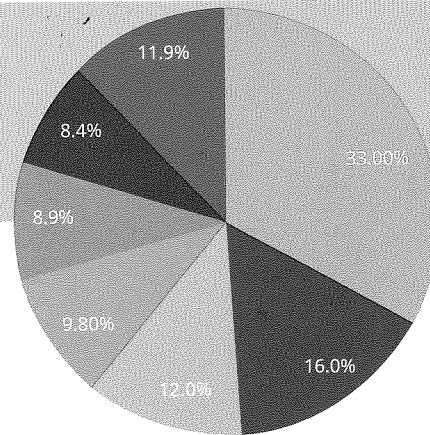
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*Data is based on 2015 SH&E Industry Safety Salary Survey conducted by BCSP and 5 other safety organizations, collecting 9,258 responses.