

Opening Doors to Career Opportunities

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If August arrives and you don't have a teaching position, what should you do? Don't panic! It's important to be flexible when your preferred school districts have not extended an offer. For example, some schools are coping with budget cuts that may eliminate or delay job offers. Meanwhile, it's time to apply some of your teaching skills to the job search. As you consider your employment options—both within education and in alternative settings—be resourceful and apply some problem-solving techniques.

Increase Your Marketability for Classroom Teaching

If you want to continue to pursue teaching opportunities, review your job search approach. Were you comprehensive or did you limit yourself to a particular grade level, geographic preference, or traditional public education? Consider broadening your search. Look for openings in private, charter, and cyber schools. Explore substitute teaching until a permanent position becomes available.

Substitute teaching offers candidates additional experience in the classroom covering a variety of subjects. If possible try to sub on a long-term basis. This will provide a steady income and increase your familiarity with a specific employer. Then, when you apply for a full-time teaching position at that school/district, you may know the administrators, many staff members, and quite a few students as well.

Check in with several of your top-choice districts and let them know that you are available for mid-year openings or positions

other than full-time teaching. Or, you may decide that you need to expand your geographical preferences to include another state or region. Review the AAEE Supply and Demand Survey to identify high-need areas.

Beyond the K-12 Classroom

You might consider teaching, volunteering, or tutoring in alternative settings such as child care centers, academic enrichment centers, reading improvement schools, online education programs, language centers, English as a Second Language schools, adult literacy centers, and youth programs such as the YMCA /YWCA. Patience and listening skills are an asset while working with children and adults in these education-related settings.

Because an educator's skills and values transfer well to social services and mental health positions, you will find many former K-12 educators in the human service profession. The ability to communicate, counsel, write, research, and teach others are valuable strengths for program advisors, day care administrators, tutors, youth directors, basic life skills teachers, community education teachers, librarians, child life specialists, and language arts consultants. While some of these roles may require additional coursework, they are intriguing areas to explore.

At the postsecondary level, you may find employment that allows you to provide guidance and support to others. If you obtain a master's degree, some positions in higher education are accessible. Colleges and universities seek candidates who

have experience working with diverse populations, coordinating programs, administering tests, and advising. For example, areas to explore include: student affairs, admissions, financial aid, academic advising, career services, leadership development, tutoring centers, and volunteer/community programs.

Transferable Skills for a Career Change

If you decide that teaching is not an appropriate fit, what are your options? The numerous tasks performed by an educator develop transferable skills that can lead to a variety of career paths. First, review employment listings to pinpoint specific duties that attract you. Then, update your résumé to include any related experience to market skills related to your employment objective. The résumé should "sell" your skill set beyond teaching. Your college career services office can assist you with this process.

Identify your strengths! Your skills are marketable to other professions. Education majors have core skills, such as:

- Communicate and prepare reports effectively, both verbally and in writing
- Sensitivity to the needs of others, respecting their individual rights, and supporting their development
- Adapt to using new technologies with confidence when appropriate
- Identify the developmental needs of others
- Coach, mentor, or otherwise help others to improve their knowledge or skills

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- Analyze information and evaluate results to choose the best solution and solve problems
- Effective research and assessment techniques, reporting results.

While additional training and experience may be required, an educator's core skills are transferable to the following potential career areas:

Business—Teachers organize and deliver oral presentations every day! Public speaking is an asset at professional presentations, conferences, and committee meetings. Consulting firms and public and private corporations desire candidates who possess strong communication skills in training, human resources, and customer service departments.

Sales/Marketing—Educators are effective at marketing and sales. The imagination and creativity required to engage students translate to the ability to sell ideas and persuade others. Motivational skills promote products, encourage employees, and stimulate consumers.

Writing—Exceptional writing skills can lead to careers in journalism, media, publishing and technical fields. You can find opportunities to write books, blogs, newsletters, and magazine articles.

Government—Public service opportunities are varied, requiring diverse skill sets. Research opportunities with federal, state and local government agencies, particularly in the areas of administration, education, planning, evaluation, and management are available.

Opening Doors

As you think about your plans either to pursue teaching or related positions, keep in mind there are countless fields and occupations to explore. Don't limit yourself. As you continue to job search, your education degree will open doors to wonderful possibilities!

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