The Career Path Less Taken

Screening Toolkit & Discussion Guide

Introduction

THE CAREER PATH LESS TAKEN is a half-hour documentary co-presented by Ohio's public television stations CET, ideastream, and WOSU Public Media as a part of **American Graduate: Getting to Work**. The three stations are partnering to produce content focused on the changing workplace and the educational pathways to skilled jobs.

Against the backdrop of Ohio's looming skills gap the documentary travels across the state to innovative career-tech education programs (CTE) that are preparing young people for the jobs of tomorrow. *THE CAREER PATH LESS TAKEN* challenges traditional notions of success by demonstrating that there are many pathways to skilled jobs that do not require a four-year college degree. It also explores the history of CTE and how students are finding their way back into these programs after decades of misunderstanding and stigma.

While the documentary will air on public television stations across the state, it is also designed for sharing with your local community, offering an opportunity to create dialogue and help raise awareness about career pathways. Public libraries, community colleges, career tech campuses and high schools are just some of the locations where screenings and discussions can be held. With this Screening Toolkit & Discussion Guide, anyone can host an event and be prepared to facilitate a conversation about the topics included.

Making Your Screening a Success	**2**
The Screening: Discussion Ideas & Suggestions	**4**
Social Media and Marketing Suggestions	**6**
Screening Checklist	**7**
Facilitator's Event Evaluation Form	**8**

Making Your Screening a Success

Congratulations! You're planning a screening. Here are some ideas on how to plan and execute a successful event.

Step 1: Watch the documentary online at one of the three presenting stations:

CET: **cincy-americangraduate.org**

ideastream: **ideastream.org/careerpath**

WOSU: **wosu.org/careerpath**

THE CAREER PATH LESS TAKEN may be shown in its entirety or if time is limited, a selected chapter or two may be screened. Below are the chapters with run times.

Chapter	Description	Runtime
1	**Introduction and Setup and Data Foundations** – A visit to the Skills USA Ohio State Championship sets up the topic of 21st Century careers and introduces the current and future "skills gap" faced by the workforce. **[Watch video]**	6:25
2	**Student Profile: A Pre-Engineering Student** – At Colerain High School in Cincinnati, we meet Brittany Ashcraft, a senior, who takes an advanced honors course load, but who is also earning college credit and participating in CTE (pre-engineering) through a Butler Tech satellite program. **[Watch video]**	6:00
3	The Role of Business and Industry – We examine how industry and business are finding positive outcomes from aligning and working directly with schools to find, and train, their workers. **[Watch video]**	3:45
4	**History and Equity of CTE** – Dr. Terrence Robinson helps us understand the negative practices (tracking) that have historically been associated with vocational education as we shine a light on the not-so-bright spots of its legacy. **[Watch video]**	3:16
5	**Student Profile: An IT Trainee** – At John Marshall School of information Technology in Cleveland, we are introduced to Kobe Ballard, the first student to choose nearly every pathway the school offered—including dual-enrollment at the local community college. **[Watch video]**	3:35
6	**Conclusion and Skills USA** – We return to the Skills USA Ohio State Competition as winners are announced, reiterating the importance of being clear-eyed about these careers, the need for skilled workers, and why this issue is important for Ohioans, the businesses around the state, and ultimately the state's economic viability. **[Watch video]**	3:42

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THE CAREER PATH LESS TAKEN

Making Your Screening a Success

Step 2: Decide on the details of your screening.

We encourage you to utilize this opportunity to engage your community in an important dialogue that addresses the issues of workforce development and preparing the next generation of learners for career success.

If you decide to make your screening an event, you can consider doing a welcome and introduction. You may also consider having a discussion or Q&A after the film with community members or experts. We have provided some suggested discussion questions in the next section.

Consider inviting a guest speaker. Reach out to nonprofits, community colleges, workforce development boards, career and technical education programs, or someone from your group of partners who is doing good work. Ask if that person would lead a post-viewing discussion.

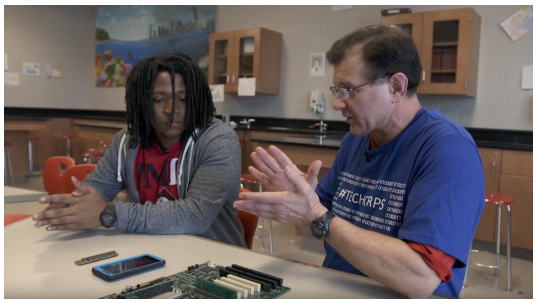
Step 3: Contact one of the three presenting stations.

Let us know that you will be holding a screening. We want to know how our audiences are using the documentary and related resources.

CET: Jason Dennison, jdennison@cetconnect.org

ideastream: Celena Roebuck, celena.roebuck ideastream.org

WOSU: Brent Davis, brent.davis@wosu.org



Step 4: Publicize your event.

Customize the screening flyer to include the time, date and location of your event. Consider putting it up at local libraries and other visible places.

Ask if your local newspaper will list your screening in its calendar of events. You might also ask if the paper wants to send a reporter to cover the event. Alternately, perhaps they will allow you to submit photos or a short piece for publication before or after the event.

Create a Facebook Event or Post, Tweet about it, post on Pinterest, or use any other social media platform of your choice. See samples below.

Send an email, mass text, or consider sending an invitation through an online event-planning website like Eventbrite.

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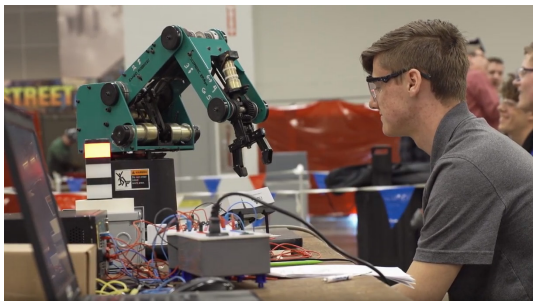
THE CAREER PATH LESS TAKEN

The Screening: Discussion Ideas & Suggestions

This section will provide some ideas for you to implement for your screening. Depending on your audience or the format you choose for your post-screening discussion (an audience-driven discussion, a panel of experts, etc.), the questions may vary. However, everyone should be encouraged to participate.

Inviting guest speakers or a panel of experts can be very useful for discussions. Some guests to consider might be representatives from your local chamber of commerce, members of your regional workforce development board, or staff from your local community college or CTE program.



Sample Pre-screening Welcome Script

Welcome to this screening of THE CAREER PATH LESS TAKEN. I'm your host _____. We're here today to watch this short but illustrative documentary produced by Ohio public television stations as a part of the national American Graduate initiative. The focus of the documentary and the discussion to follow is on our young people—preparing them for a lifetime of success and exploring pathways to get them there. For decades, the measure of "success" for young people entering the workforce has been whether or not they had earned a Bachelor's Degree. As many of you know, or have experienced, that 4-year college degree can come with a hefty price tag and still not prepare the graduate with the skills that employers are looking for.

You are about to watch a (30-minute) documentary that looks at one pathway to success—namely Career Technical Education, or CTE—that has been stigmatized or looked down upon for more than a generation. Once referred to as 'vocational education," we can all probably remember comments made by our teachers, friends, or even our parents about how "vocational" programs were for students who couldn't be successful in a traditional high school classroom. Whether or not that was ever true is debatable, but today's CTE programs are certainly not a place where unmotivated students can find an easy pass. With access to cutting-edge technology, hands-on experience, rigorous academic and certificate programs, and burgeoning partnerships with industry leaders, CTE programs are preparing young people to discover their passions, acquire meaningful knowledge and skills, and redefine success for the 21st century.

After the screening, we'll have a discussion about some of the issues raised in the film. Thank you again for coming.

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THE CAREER PATH LESS TAKEN

The Screening: Discussion Ideas & Suggestions

After watching *THE CAREER PATH LESS TAKEN*, introduce your panel (if applicable) and invite them to speak about their experiences with CTE. Allow time for follow-up questions and discussion from the audience. If there are no guest speakers or panel and the discussion is more informal, just follow up with any of these suggestions.

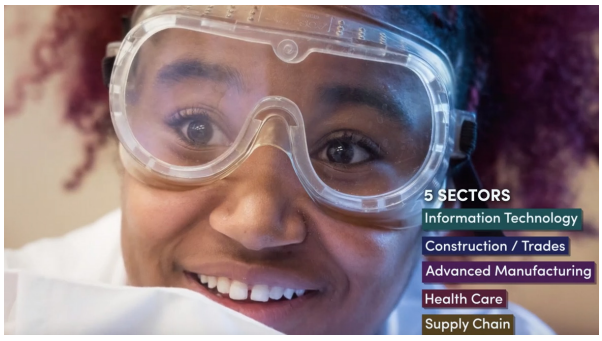
Our American Graduate home pages at CET, ideastream and WOSU all have career videos and other resources that you may find useful and a good place to start. There is even an interactive map of Ohio that tells you where the closest training site is to your home.

Suggested Discussion Questions for a Guest/Panelist

- What scenes or moments in the documentary had the biggest impact on you?
- Do you know students like Brittney and Kobe? How are they perceived in our community and what pathway do you think they would take?
- Do you agree with the portrayal of career technical education in the documentary? What does it look like our community?
- Do you believe most students know about CTE? Why or why not?
- What ideas might you suggest for familiarizing or refamiliarizing students and families to CTE?
- Can a CTE schedule fit into the HS student day and who can you seek to ask questions, visit a class or seek assistance in order for CTE courses to fit into the HS schedule?
- There are many forms of CTE depending on the industry. Can you describe some of them and why they are important to your company or profession—such as student apprenticeships, certificate programs, etc.?
- What skills are employers looking for?
- Describe the work-study component of CTE and its value.
- What is the relationship between businesses and career tech education in our community?
- What are the trends that you see in career tech education?
- If a student or a parent isn't sure if a career tech pathway is the right choice, what would you recommend?
- What role do counselors play? Parents?
- What is the value or risk of college entrance with CTE courses on your HS transcript and the effect upon college acceptance/entrance?
- Can high school CTE courses be accepted for college credit at state colleges and universities?

Suggested Discussion Questions for the Audience

- What surprised you most from watching this program?
- What is your biggest take-away?
- Is anyone here a product of a CTE program? What was your experience like and how did it prepare you for what came next?
- Is anyone from a family for which a 4-year college degree was the ONLY acceptable path after high school?
  - If so, how did that play out?
  - Is that case for YOUR children? What if they informed you they wanted to do a CTE program, an apprenticeship or a certificate program?
  - What factors influence/influenced your decision?
- What questions do you have for our panel/ guest speaker?
- Do any of you feel differently now about career tech education?
- What else would you like to know about CTE?



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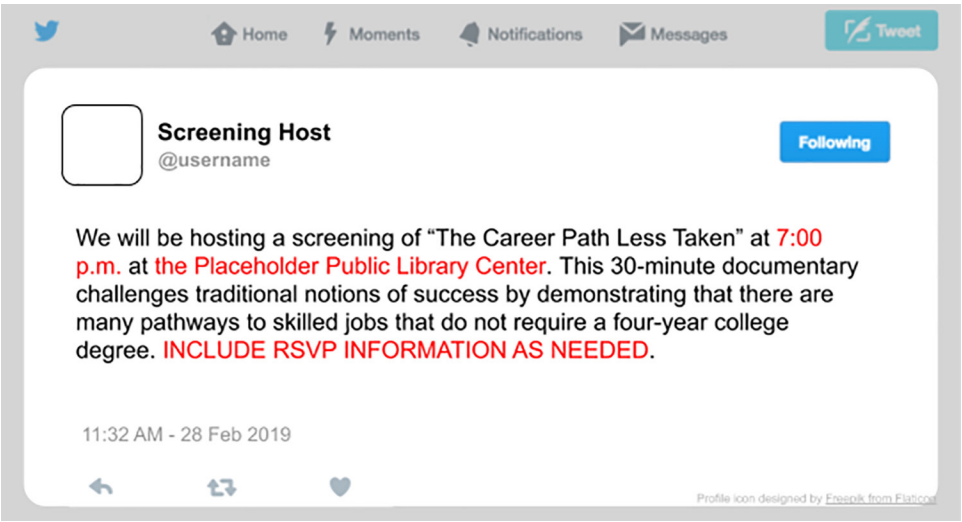
THE CAREER PATH LESS TAKEN

Social Media and Marketing Suggestions

We have provided a few suggested social media posts below to help promote your screening event. We highly recommend using a video link or graphic for higher levels of engagement. Ask members of your panel or other community partners to share your posts. For additional marketing materials or information, please visit one of the websites on Page 2 or feel free to contact one of the three station contacts on Page 3.



We will be hosting a screening of "The Career Path Less Taken" at ___time____ on ____date_____ at___location_____. This 30-minute documentary challenges traditional notions of success by demonstrating that there are many pathways to skilled jobs that do not require a four-year college degree. INCLUDE RSVP INFORMATION AS NEEDED.

If you think earning a 4-year degree is the only way to find a successful career, you're wrong. Come learn about the many pathways to success at _____ on _____ at_____. We will be screening "The Career Path Less Taken" followed by a community Q&A with _____. INCLUDE RSVP INFORMATION AS NEEDED.

Finding a successful 4-year degree doesn't always start with a traditional path to college or a mountain of debt. Join us for a screening and community conversation around the 30-minute documentary "The Career Path Less Taken," which challenges traditional notions of success by demonstrating that there are many pathways to skilled jobs. The event will be at _____ on _____ at_____. INCLUDE RSVP INFORMATION AS NEEDED.

Screening Checklist

One month before the screening

☐ Pick a date, time and venue

☐ Obtain access to the documentary via the website one of the presenting stations' websites.

☐ Start compiling your invitation list

Two weeks before the screening

☐ Create and distribute your flyers

☐ Create and send your email invitation

☐ Create a Facebook invite

☐ Use your Facebook event invitation as a hub for screening updates, directions, resources, and photos and video from your screening.

One week before the screening

☐ Test your equipment. Make sure you have good audio.

☐ Watch the complete documentary (twice!) to familiarize yourself with the stories and the issues

☐ Review the Discussion Guide

Two days before the screening

☐ Send reminders to everyone you invited

☐ Print and/or copy materials for your screening: scripts, handouts and surveys

☐ Arrange any refreshments or snacks for your guests

☐ Get your camera and video equipment ready to document your screening

Day of the screening

Before the screening

☐ Re-test your equipment on the morning of the screening

☐ Ask guests to sign in when they arrive

☐ Read the welcome script

☐ Take pictures and video

After the screening

☐ Lead the post-screening activity

☐ Collect surveys

Day after the screening

☐ Share photos and video of your screening online: be sure to tag them #CareerPathOH

☐ Scan and email the Facilitator's Event Evaluation Form, along with any other feedback, to one of the station contacts listed on Page 3

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THE CAREER PATH LESS TAKEN

Facilitator's Event Evaluation Form

THE CAREER PATH LESS TAKEN

Location: _____ Date & Time: _____

Attendance #: _____ Facilitator: _____

1. Please indicate how satisfied you are OVERALL, as the facilitator, with today's screening event.

Not at all satisfied Extremely satisfied

( ) 0 ( ) 1 ( ) 2 ( ) 3 ( ) 4 ( ) 5 ( ) 6 ( ) 7 ( ) 8 ( ) 9 ( ) 10

2. Please determine, by a show of hands, how many people agree or disagree with the following:

Suggested intro: "Thank you very much for coming. I have a few questions to ask before we close. I would appreciate a show of hands to indicate if you agree, disagree, or have no opinion on four points.'

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
I have an increased understanding that there are a variety of well-paying jobs in the skilled trades			
I have additional information about the requirements for jobs in the future and what employers are looking for			
I have a greater understanding of pathways to the well-paying jobs of today and tomorrow			
I am more likely to consider career technical education as a viable career path for young people			

3. Again, by a show of hands from your audience: "*Has your perception of Career Technical Education changed as a result of this screening event?*"

☐ Yes ☐ No

4. Please share any other thoughts or comments you have on this documentary or screening event.

_____

_____

_____

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