

WORK BASED ACTIVITIES

Work based learning activities provide individuals enrolled in various classroom activities (ESOL, Basic Education, Job Skills Training) with a planned program of world of work instruction. The goal of work based learning activities is to tie classroom and worksite together in order to provide the trainee with a stronger understanding of the occupational and interpersonal requirements of a work situation. In addition, basic education or occupational instruction can be contextualized or presented in the context of the worksite. Research and field experience have demonstrated when work and learning are linked, students benefit more from the experience than when either component is presented separately. Lastly, work based learning can provide the participant and program with an excellent foundation for conducting job placement or job search by providing the client; additional references from supervisors, work experience citations for their resume and greater confidence for participating in job interviews.

EDGE Skills Practicum - Non/CWEP Work Experience

Skills Practicum (Work experience) components are hands-on opportunities for learning outside the school program environment. The critical elements of skills practicum work experience components are:

- o Designed to meet the career goals of the student.
- o Connected to the school based education and training program.
- o Provide a realistic setting for the student to demonstrate acquired academic knowledge, job skills, appropriate job and social behaviors, attitudes (components also serve as an opportunity for students to continue to acquire higher levels of knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviors).
- o Structured, and supervised by the program provider in collaboration with each agency providing a work experience site.
- o Orientation and training of employers and mentors is required.
- o Standards are in place and are used for assessment and evaluation of student progress.

Listed below is a description of work based learning activities.

Job Shadowing

Usually involves one or more visits to a worksite during which time a student through observation, can explore different possibilities for jobs, and develop an interest in the work environment. Observation is the primary learning activity during the visits while students shadow an employee.

There is a direct one-to-one relationship between the student and employee which allows for discussion, and perhaps even some participation in some simple workplace tasks and events. Students are not paid for their time at the workplace. Job shadowing is considered to be a short term activity generally ranging from one to ten weeks.

Internship/Externship

An internship or externship integrates classroom learning with practical work experience in a field of the student's particular interest. Skills and mastery are specified or identified in a formal training plan developed at the beginning of the component by the employer, the teacher, work experience or job coordinator, and the student. Training plans are crucial for identifying goals, establishing criteria, guiding training and evaluation processes, and maintaining communication among all partners in the plan. At worksites students work directly with a supervisor over a period of time to observe, assist, and accomplish work tasks.

Such components are planned by the educational agency in collaboration with the agency serving as the worksite agency. Quality assurance requires visits to worksites and constant communication, in addition to evaluation of the student's work performance. Scheduled student attendance at the worksite is required. At the worksite, there is usually an employee or other individual (approved by the employer, owner, manager, director, etc.,) who guides the student or serves as a mentor. This employee or mentor works in consultation with classroom teachers, the workplace coordinator and the worksite agency. This employee or mentor possesses the skills and knowledge to be mastered by the student, and instructs and critiques the performance of the student at the worksite. Mentors are role models who can help instill, reinforce, and equate to successful employment the importance of behaviors such as positive attitudes, integrity and ethics, human relations, teamwork, promptness, timelines, and other good work related positive behaviors.