linkedlearning
PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER SUCCESS

Work-Based Learning: "Career Practicum"

Definitions, Quality Criteria, and Student Outcomes

Field Review Draft

February 2011

This draft document for field review was developed in partnership with the following organizations as well as the individuals listed on the inside of this cover.

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February 2011

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Definition of Work-Based Learning

Work-based learning is an educational strategy that provides a range of experiences that are intentionally designed to help students extend and deepen classroom work and make progress toward learning outcomes that are difficult to achieve through classroom or standard project-based learning alone.

Work-based learning is a continuum of experiences that encompasses Career Awareness, Career Exploration, Career Practicum, and Career Preparation.

- Career Awareness' primary goal is to build awareness of the variety of careers available and begin identifying areas of interest.
- Career Exploration's primary goal is to explore career options to motivate students and inform decision making.
- Career Practicum's primary goal is learning that extends and deepens classroom work and supports the development of college and career readiness knowledge and skills (higher-order thinking, academic skills, technical skills, and applied workplace skills) through real experience and engagement with adults outside of school.
- Career Preparation's primary goal is to prepare for employment in a specific occupation.

The term "work-based" does not mean the experience must occur at a workplace. Work-based learning may take place in a workplace, in the community, at school, virtually via technology, or across a combination of all these settings.
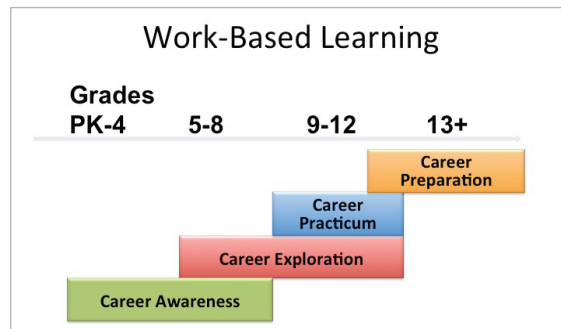
Definition of Career Practicum

Career Practicum is applied learning that extends and deepens classroom work and supports the development of college and career readiness knowledge and skills (higher-order thinking, academic skills, technical skills, and applied workplace skills) through real experience and engagement with adults outside of school.

Career Practicum experiences must have the following characteristics:

- The experience is an integrated part of a sequential preparation for college and career.
- Students have direct, systematic engagement with outside professionals and/or community members over a period of time.
- The depth and length of the experience is sufficient to enable students to develop and demonstrate specific knowledge and skills.
- The experience prioritizes development of transferable, applied workplace skills while also seeking to reinforce and provide opportunities to apply what is being learned in the classroom.
- The experience is explicitly connected to the student's academic and technical curriculum and reinforces basic and higher order academic skills as well as technical skills.

- Students engage in activities that have consequences beyond the class or value beyond success in school and are judged by outside professionals using professional standards.
- Students develop skills and knowledge applicable to multiple career and postsecondary education options.
- Career Practicum experiences do not have to occur at a workplace. They may take place in a workplace, in the community, at school, virtually via technology, or across a combination of all these settings.

Criteria for Assessing the Quality of a Career Practicum Experience

Purpose	Student, teacher, partner, and parent/guardian are aware that learning is the primary purpose and that the experience is an integrated part of a sequential preparation for college and career.
Outcomes	Working together the student, teacher, and partner use student learning outcomes and relevant college and career readiness standards to design the experience.
Relevance	The experience is relevant to the student's career interests, individual learning needs, and the pathway theme. The activity itself has consequences beyond the class or value beyond success in school.
Connection	Student, teacher, and partner explicitly connect the experience to the student's academic and technical curriculum.
Variety	Without compromising depth, teacher and partner arrange for the student to be involved in a variety of tasks and to work with multiple adults.
Preparation	The teacher team prepares the student in class and in previous less-intensive experiences with the academic, technical, and applied workplace skills needed for a Career Practicum experience. The teacher team orients the student to the learning expectations for the experience and to the individuals and/or organizations with which he/she will be engaged. The teacher team prepares partners prior to the experience with information about the student, the individual student learning outcomes, and other information relevant to the experience.
Engagement	The student engages directly with outside professionals and/or community members over a period of time.
Responsibility	Student, teacher, and partner all take responsibility for ensuring the student makes progress toward identified student learning outcomes.
Reflection	Throughout the experience and after it concludes the student engages in reflection and analysis to link the experience back to the student learning outcomes and to link it forward to career and postsecondary options.
Assessment	Student, teacher, and partner all contribute to the assessment of progress toward student learning outcomes and assess the work produced against college and career readiness standards and against context-specific professional standards.
Demonstration	The student demonstrates what was learned from the experience by documenting learning during the experience and presenting at the end to teachers and those with whom he/she has worked.

Student Learning Outcomes Supported by Career Practicum

All Career Practicum experiences should intentionally support as many of these student outcomes as possible such that over the course of a student's high school experience, the student has the opportunity to make progress toward all the learning outcomes.

Ideally all pathway students have at least one culminating Career Practicum or Career Preparation experience that supports the student in making progress toward all of these learning outcomes and others specific to the student in a single experience.

Category	Student Learning Outcome
	Student…
Communication	Pays attention to verbal information and instructions; listens and observes; articulates thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively both verbally and in written form; and uses technology appropriately for communication.
Collaboration	Builds collaborative relationships with colleagues and customers; is able to work with diverse teams, contributing appropriately to the team effort; negotiates and manages conflict; learns from and works collaboratively with individuals representing diverse cultures, races, ages, gender, religions, lifestyles, and viewpoints; and uses technology to support collaboration.
Creativity and Innovation	Demonstrates originality and inventiveness in work; communicates new ideas to others; and integrates knowledge across different disciplines.
Critical Thinking and Problem Solving	Demonstrates the following critical-thinking and problem-solving skills: exercises sound reasoning and analytical thinking; makes judgments and explains perspectives based on evidence and previous findings; and uses knowledge, facts, and data to solve workplace problems.
Professionalism and Ethics	Manages time effectively; is punctual; takes responsibility; prioritizes tasks; brings tasks and projects to completion; demonstrates integrity and ethical behavior; and acts responsibly with others in mind.
Initiative/ Self-Direction/ Resourcefulness	Takes initiative and is able to work independently as needed; looks for the means to solve problems; actively seeks out new knowledge and skills; monitors his/her own learning needs; learns from his/her mistakes; and seeks information about related career options and postsecondary training.
Workplace Context and Culture	Understands the workplace's culture, etiquette, and practices and knows how to navigate the organization; understands how to build, utilize, and maintain a professional network of relationships; and understands the role such a network plays in personal and professional success.
Information Management	Is open to learning and demonstrates the following information gathering skills: seeks out and locates information; understands and organizes information; evaluates information for quality of content, validity, credibility, and relevance; and references sources of information appropriately.
Technology	Selects and uses appropriate technology to accomplish tasks; applies technology skills to problem solving; uses computer programs easily; and is able to quickly access information from reliable sources online.
Applied Math	Uses math and quantitative reasoning to analyze and solve problems; performs basic mathematical computations quickly and accurately; thinks about how to describe and solve a problem; and understands how to use math and/or data to develop possible solutions.

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