

Teacher Tip Sheet

Work Experience

A tip sheet for teachers on how to help students get the most out of a Work Experience. Work Experience presents a unique opportunity to support and augment the curriculum and get students more deeply engaged in their learning. If you are coordinating a Work Experience, have a look at the Coordinator Tip Sheet in the WBL Toolkit.

Work Experience

Work Experience is a Career Preparation activity in which a student is at a worksite doing real work for pay. The student is held to the same expectations as all employees and will be evaluated by the workplace supervisor based on workplace expectations and performance. Work Experiences range from regular, paid employment in summer and/or year-round jobs to subsidized employment. There are a range of Work Experience program types defined at the state and federal levels. High-quality Work Experiences are structured and supported to meet specific learning outcomes, be educationally rich, and build awareness of the business and the career options it provides.

Work Experiences are designed to promote:

- Exposure to careers and jobs
- Development of work-readiness professional skills
- Occupational knowledge and technical skills
- Awareness of workplace hazards and how to protect oneself on the job

Teacher Tips

Work Experience Success Factors

When planning and implementing a Work Experience, keep the following success factors in mind.

Before the Work Experience

- Identify how and when Work Experience might enhance a particular lesson or activity in the classroom.
- Familiarize yourself with the purpose and goals of Work Experience.
 - ✓ Assess how Work Experience can help meet curriculum goals.
 - ✓ Identify and document desired student learning outcomes.
 - ✓ Review the Work Experience Guide.
- Prepare students to maximize learning.
 - ✓ Discuss expectations for the experience and what students may learn from it.
 - ✓ Discuss what students know and want to know about the company.
 - ✓ Have them research the employer website.
- Address logistics. Work with the P-TECH coordinator to address the following:
 - ✓ Find out if certain dress or safety gear is required and communicate any requirements to students.
 - ✓ Collect any required forms.

During the Work Experience

- Make the classroom connection.
 - ✓ Design and coordinate concurrent learning activities in the classroom, so the Work Experience is not an isolated activity but is connected to academic learning.
 - ✓ Provide opportunities for students to reflect on the experience in the classroom, both verbally and in writing.

After the Work Experience

- Reflect on learning.
 - ✓ Provide individual and group reflection activities for students.
 - ✓ Help students make the connection between training topics and the workplace.
 - ✓ Support students in determining their next steps in learning about careers.
- Conduct follow-up activities.
 - ✓ Assess the impact and value of the Work Experience.
 - ✓ Utilize employer, program staff and student feedback to improve future Work Experiences.
- Document and archive information about the Work Experience.

Go Deeper

Here are some suggested activities to deepen the impact of a Work Experience.

- Have students learn about the whole company and what it does and prepare a presentation for the class.
- Have the student research a particular aspect of the business,
- Publicize the Work Experience and the business by placing a story in the local newspaper or posting on the school or agency webpage.
- Consider other potential public relations benefits and opportunities.