



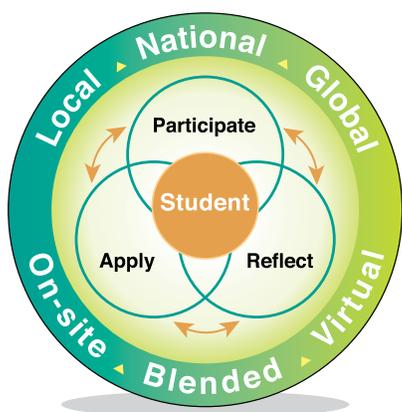
Providing workplace experiences to develop job-ready employees

EMPLOYER'S GUIDE





The Experiential Learning Cycle



Source: Adapted from Rolfe, Freshwater, & Jasper, 2001.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES PROVIDED BY LOCAL EMPLOYERS

- GUEST SPEAKER
- TOURS
- TAKE YOUR KID TO WORK DAY
- JOB SHADOWING
- MENTORING
- HIGH SCHOOL CO-OP
- WORK PLACEMENT
- ONTARIO YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM (OYAP)

“ The thing I appreciate most about working with students is the fresh perspectives they bring to the work. It has helped me challenge myself while getting to watch them develop their ideas, their perspectives, and their individual voices. ”

Community Partner, Markham

WHAT IS EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING?

Experiential learning opportunities are hands-on learning experiences that help students prepare for future employment. Examples of experiential learning could include a co-op placement, an internship, an apprenticeship, an extra-curricular activity, a volunteer experience, an industry expert presenting to a class, a field trip, or a job shadowing experience. It involves learning by doing, making connections to classroom theory,¹ and to career education and career life planning.

The experiential learning cycle that appears as a three-stage process, is dynamic and highly personal.

Three questions - **What?**, **So what?**, and **Now what?** - are associated with each stage of the process, as follows:

Participate: What? Students are immersed in an experience, acknowledging what they are doing, what they are thinking, and what they are feeling during the experience.

Reflect: So what? Students think about their experience, guided by reflective questions and prompts, and identify what they learned as a result of the experience - about themselves, other people, the world, their opportunities, or the subject of study.

Apply: Now what? Students describe how their learning stimulates further inquiry; how it has influenced - or may influence - their decisions, opinions, goals, and plans; and what they might do differently if they have a similar experience in future.²

There are a variety of experiential learning activities available that have different placement lengths and learning goals. This means that you'll be able to find an opportunity that fits your workplace needs. Keep reading to see how you can get involved in hosting a placement that is meaningful for you!



WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF OFFERING AN EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITY?

- You can engage the future workforce by showing off innovative projects, machinery and processes.
- You can test out a potential future employee on the job.
- A placement can serve as a mentorship opportunity for your staff who are looking to further their professional development.
- Hosting placements is good publicity for your company and allows you to give back to your community.
- Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) has incentives available for participating employers.
- Adding a new member to your team will be beneficial for your workload in busier seasons.
- Students are often loyal to companies that give them a chance early on in their careers.³
- Students bring a fresh perspective and technological intuitiveness.



“ It’s an excellent way to get support at a small cost of time and effort. We have been so lucky to be matched with so many excellent students and can’t praise these programs enough. It’s important to us to provide a valuable workplace learning experience for our students, and we’ve been able to do that and get support in our goals and programs as well. It’s a win win situation! ”

Employer

ENGAGED EMPLOYERS



RANGE OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Short-Term (one hour to one day)

- Career talks/classroom visits
- Career fairs/career days
- Workplace tours
- Job shadowing /job twinning
- Take Our Kids to Work Day

Medium-Term (about a month)

- Work experience
- Mentoring
- Project based learning

Long-Term (a few months)

- Cooperative education (Co-op)
- Specialist High Skills Major
- Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP)

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Get in touch with a program coordinator at the school board if you are interested in hosting a student.

Consider discussing the following with them:

- Program guidelines (time frames, start/end dates)
- Health and safety procedures
- The Ministry of Education provides WSIB coverage for students who are placed with an employer to gain practical work experience.
- Workplace standards
- Necessary paperwork
- Learning expectations of students
- Interview processes
- Proper workplace training and orientation
- Financial incentives (e.g. Young Canada Works Program)
- Evaluation requirements

Are you unsure of what experiential learning opportunity is best for you? Please refer to the list of Experiential Learning Activities you can engage with our future workforce.





HOW TO OFFER AN EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITY

IDENTIFY AND PLAN THE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITY FOR THE STUDENT

- Have a detailed job description in advance of the interview, including roles, responsibilities, tasks, etc. This will help the student to understand what is expected of them.
- Conduct an initial candidate screening, and plan the interview process.

SET EXPECTATIONS FOR THE STUDENT AND INFORM THEM OF THESE EXPECTATIONS

- Communicate with the program coordinator about your expectations and processes for any issues that arise. For example: What should the student do if they are sick one day? Establishing solid communication lines will be beneficial for when the unexpected comes up.
- Ensure that the immediate placement supervisor is aware of expectations and learning outcomes.
- Facilitate informal and formal opportunities to share feedback with the student and their program coordinator. This could be as simple as having a conversation over a cup of coffee. Learn about the student's ambitions and career goals and think about how this person could play a role in advancing your company.

HAVE THE STUDENT WORK ON A MEANINGFUL ACTIVITY THROUGHOUT THEIR PLACEMENT

- Do you have a special project that has been pending for sometime? You now have someone who you can assign it.
- What problems has your company been facing lately? Someone who is new to the team can bring some great perspective on the issue and potential solutions.
- Keep in mind, the student's workload should be challenging enough that they can develop and use new skills.



“ This is great way to get a fresh perspective in your organization and ‘test drive’ new talent ”

Employer

ENGAGED EMPLOYERS



HOW TO OFFER AN EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITY

As an employer think back to the person who gave you your first start in the work world. This is your chance to be that person for a member of our future workforce!

“ Placements bring new ideas and an opportunity for staff to mentor the students. They are enthusiastic and open to learning new skills.”

Employer

INCLUDE THE STUDENT IN TEAM ACTIVITIES

- Have the student join in and learn alongside other employees during training workshops.
- Give the student an opportunity to explore various departments and observe different jobs throughout the organization.
- Encourage other employees to share their knowledge with the student so that they can make further connections and learn more about potential career paths.

WHEN OFFERING AN EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITY, MAKE CONNECTIONS WITH THE WORK THEY ARE DOING AND CLASSROOM LEARNING

- Not sure what students are learning these days? Then ask them! Their program coordinator (teacher) can assist with this, too.
- Make sure to highlight the job skills and techniques that they need to succeed in your company and in your industry.
- Provide suggestions for future courses and training that they can take to enter the industry.

EVALUATE THE PROGRAM AND PLACEMENT AFTER COMPLETED

- A student's grade may be hinging on the completion of required paperwork, so be sure to follow designated time-lines.
 - Share your honest feedback with the student and their program coordinator throughout and following the placement.
 - Introduce and connect the student to other employers.

ENGAGED EMPLOYERS





We want you!

CONTACTS

Connect with local school educators and coordinators to find an Experiential Learning opportunity that meets your needs.

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Phone: 905-727-3141

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www.yrdsb.ca

www.yrdsb.ca/programs

 @YRDSB

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Fax: 905-713-1272

www.ycdsb.ca

www.ycdsb.ca/pathways

 @PathwaysYCDSB

For more information on the local labour market and resources for, check out:

Workforce Planning Board of York Region www.wpboard.ca

REFERENCES

1. Ontario Ministry of Education. (2018). Experiential Learning. [online] Available at: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/job/passport/experiential.html#Cycle>
2. Lee, Scott. "A comparison of student perceptions of learning in their co-op and internship experiences and the classroom environment: A study of hospitality management students." PhD diss. University of Central Florida, Orlando, 2006

Disclaimer: Adapted with permission from "AN EDUCATOR'S TOOLKIT FOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING" by Workforce Development Board Windsor Essex. 2018.

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