

Career Development Continuum

Life is a constantly evolving story. As such, Career Development is most effective when learners² are provided a natural progression of activities that address career awareness, exploration and development. The Career Development Continuum is designed to help teachers/faculty and youth practitioners understand and implement an intentional and connected series of career development experiences for the young people they support.

All Earn & Learn community partners provide a sequenced continuum of career development activities and experiences that address Career Awareness, Career Exploration and Career Preparation. This is accomplished through the provision of a series of work-based classroom activities, community experiences and workplace exposure for all learners over time. While generally learners begin awareness activities at earlier ages or grade levels and progress through exploration and into preparation as they get older, there are cases where those who are younger participate in preparation activities, and conversely, where older learners would participate in an awareness activity. Work-Based Learning activities should align to the learner's stage of development and address defined career development objectives.

The Three Levels of the Career Development Continuum

Career Awareness

Career Awareness activities are designed to promote awareness of careers, workplace norms and employer expectations, as well as personal interests and aptitudes. In the workplace, Career Awareness activities include Career Mentoring and Workplace Tours.

- **Career Mentoring:** A Career Awareness activity in which a learner is matched one-on-one (or in small groups) with an adult professional to learn about potential careers and related educational and training requirements.
- **Workplace Tour:** A Career Awareness activity in which small groups of learners visit a workplace, learn about the business, meet employees, ask questions and observe work in progress.
- **Guest Speaker:** A Career Awareness activity in which learners listen to a presentation given by an adult professional to learn about the industry, career options within the industry and the specifics of particular occupations. Guest speakers may also support particular academic concepts with real-world applications.

"I understand what's out there and am discovering the kinds of things I might want to do."

Career Exploration

Career Exploration activities are designed to promote a deeper understanding of potential careers, and to provide opportunities for an investigation of a particular industry, career or occupation of interest. In the workplace, Career Exploration activities include Informational Interviews and Job Shadowing.

- **Informational Interview:** A Career Exploration activity in which a learner formally

² Learners include K-12, community college and college students; youth and young adults engaged in workforce development programs; and adults participating in career development activities.

interviews an adult professional in an area of career interest to learn about the industry, career options within the industry and the specifics of particular occupations.

- **Job Shadow:** A Career Exploration activity in which a learner is paired with an employee of a partner business and follows that employee during much of a regular workday. A Job Shadow provides learners the opportunity to experience the workplace, understand the various roles and duties of a particular occupation, learn about the business, connect with a working adult and observe work in progress.

"I'm interested in this field and am beginning to understand what it's all about and what I need to do to pursue a career in the industry."

Career Preparation

Career Preparation activities are designed to provide an in-depth discovery of a particular career, the development of occupational skills and promote an understanding of the education or training needed in a particular industry or occupation. In the workplace, Career Preparation activities include Workplace Challenges, Internships, Work Experience (including Co-Operative Work Experience) and Apprenticeships.

- **Workplace Challenge:** A Career Preparation activity where small groups of learners (four to six per team) are engaged in solving a real-world problem or a challenge issued by an employer. The challenge is identified by the employer in consultation with the work-based learning connector and a classroom teacher or faculty member. The structure of the challenge is based upon effective project-based learning approaches, enhanced by a focus on the targeted career pathway and an authentic problem or issue faced by an employer partner.
- **Work Experience:** A Career Preparation activity in which a learner is placed in a workplace doing real work for pay. They are held to the same expectations as all employees. The workplace supervisor conducts evaluations based on workplace expectations and performance. Learners have the opportunity to develop and demonstrate professional and occupational skills by addressing a core business function and doing productive work. In some cases, Work Experience is supported by specific classroom activities.
- **Internship:** A Career Preparation activity in which a learner is placed in a business for a defined period of time to participate in and observe work firsthand within a given industry. Internships are highly structured, time-limited experiences that occur at a worksite. Internships may be paid or unpaid, depending on whether the intern is performing productive work for the employer and other defined factors. Unlike work experience, internships often allow for work in teams, or a rotation through a number of departments and job functions.
- **Apprenticeship:** A Career Preparation activity designed to prepare an individual, generally a high school graduate, for a variety of careers, including the skilled crafts and trades. Apprenticeships consist of paid, on-the-job training supplemented by related classroom instruction. In California, apprenticeship training in more than 450 occupations is formally recognized by the state Division of Apprenticeship Standards.

"I know the kinds of things I want to do and am getting the chance to learn new skills and practice applying those skills."