Examples of Experiential Learning

Experiential learning activities take place in the community, in the workplace, or in the school building. These activities help you connect classroom learning with the "real" world. Experiential learning allows you to practice the skills you have, learn new skills, and explore education and career options. These activities can also help you find mentors and role models in the community that can help you plan for your future.

Short-Term Experiences

Job Shadows
In a job shadow, you follow a person that works in a job you want to know more about. Job shadows usually last at least three hours. A business person or employee hosting your job shadow performs his or her regular work while talking to you. As the "shadow," you watch the employee and then "interview" the employee by asking questions about their work and education. You would write some of the questions before the job shadow, but you could ask more questions based upon what you learn during the experience. Job shadows are useful if you want to experience what it is like to work in a job or business or want to practice your communication skills.

Informational Interviews
An informational interview allows you to gather information about what it takes to work in an occupation. The interview can take place in person or by phone, and the interview usually lasts from a few minutes to an hour. You would prepare a list of questions you want to ask about an occupation. These questions usually ask how the person prepared for that occupation, the required knowledge the person must have, what the person likes about their occupation, and other interesting facts that you want to know. Informational interviews are useful if you want to know more about an occupation and want to practice your speaking and listening skills.

Community-Based Experiences

Service Learning/Volunteer Opportunities
As a volunteer, you give your time and skills to help make your community better. Volunteers usually volunteer with non-profit organizations, and volunteer work can be a one-day event or happen on a regular basis such as one afternoon every week. In service learning, you "try on" the different adult roles that are involved in helping make communities better. Service learning usually occurs after you have developed a relationship with a non-profit or government agency. Service learning demands responsibility and commitment and usually takes a significant
amount of time. Service learning and volunteer opportunities are useful if you want to learn more about your community and government while you also learn about occupations and secure valuable experience for your résumé.

**Part-Time Jobs**
A worker is a person that is paid for doing tasks. Typically workers are paid with money. You may already have a part-time job in your family or in the summers. Part-time jobs can take a few hours to a regular schedule over a long period of time. Part-time jobs are often available at many businesses and companies, and you may be able to secure a part-time job that is similar to occupations you are interested in knowing more about. To get a part-time job, you will need to complete a job application and possibly an interview. Part-time jobs can help you explore and experience occupations and businesses you might like.

**School-Based Experiences**

**School Volunteer Opportunities**
You can volunteer to help teachers, administrators, and other school staff accomplish important work by accepting specified responsibilities in a school. School volunteers usually have a set schedule. School volunteer opportunities are useful if you want to learn more about how your school works and the different types of occupations hired by the school district.

**Enterprise Opportunities**
Your school may have school-based enterprises and supported work programs. These enterprise opportunities allow you to practice running a business, coordinating a non-profit organization, or experience specific industries. If you want to be part of a school-based enterprise, you will likely need to commit to participating for a semester or a year at a time. Enterprise opportunities are useful because you will can work closely with community advisors and learn the skills you will need to succeed in the enterprise.