



# Fundamental Elements for an Employer-Driven Work-Based Learning Experience:

## Five Steps to a Successful High School Student Experience

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**Ivy Tech Community College – Integrated Technology Education Program (ITEP)** -A best practice model developed by an employer/partner will provide guidance for the preparation, coordination, and evaluation of a student’s work-based learning experience. Aspects covered will be employer/educator/student expectations of job readiness, the interview process, employer orientation, on-the-job mentoring, continuous improvement, and celebrations.

### **Work-Based Learning in the ITEP/YCC Grant Program**

The work-based learning experience for students in the Integrated Technology Education Program (ITEP)/Youth CareerConnect Grant program (YCC) is planned for the second semester of the student’s senior year of high school. This experience is a minimum of 64-contact hours in an industry and students receive college credit for this experience. Through the ITEP/YCC Grant Program, the College works collaboratively with our area high school and career center partners as well as our employer partners to prepare the students for a hands-on experience.

The following will provide insight into the expectations of one of our employer partners.

#### **STEP 1: Entry-Level Qualifications:**

- Achievement of the Certified Production Technical Credential
  - The dual credit courses offered during the sophomore and junior year of the ITEP/YCC program provide the students with six (6) college credits and also embed the four components of the Manufacturing Skills Standards Council (MSSC) Certified Production Technician credential. Successful outcomes for students who achieve the CPT is the first qualification for consideration of a work-based learning experience with this company.
- Prior attendance at the facility’s Safety DoJo
  - Prior to the fall semester of the senior year, students from partner schools will visit the Safety DoJo. This visit will consist of a pre- and post-test for each student prior to and directly after the 2-hour experience. The students will have a mini-experience of what a new employee encounters for initial safety training at this company. Some of the outcomes expressed by the students from this initial visit are the following:
    - Always be aware of your surroundings to be aware of unsafe conditions and report unsafe conditions to your supervisor
    - Different gloves are used for certain type of jobs
      - For example cut protection vs. heat protect
    - There is a correct way to wear a safety harness and a correct way to recover if you fall in one
    - Don’t catch a part when it falls out of a machine to avoid an injury to the machine operator
    - Colors and symbols for environmental warnings on containers have certain meanings to workers
    - Make sure to make eye contact with fork truck drivers to ensure they see you throughout the plant
    - Basic Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is required for all
- Job Readiness Preparation
  - A minimum of a 2.0 grade point average in all high school classes is required. If the grade point average is lower than a 2.0, a determination is made that the student is absent, tardy, a non-contributor to the class, and a non-team member.
  - Community Service and extra-curricular activities represent desirable traits in youth to indicate levels of responsibility
  - Teacher recommendation for the work-based experience is sought

- Students prepare a resume which is submitted with consent from the student/parent to the employer for review prior to offering an interview
- Students meeting criteria are interviewed for the potential work-based learning experience

## **STEP 2: Selection and Orientation**

- Interview Committee
  - A committee is established consisting of human resource personnel and maintenance supervisors from the plant(s) to interview the students
  - A standard set of questions is asked of all of the students
  - Selection for the work-based learning experience is based on all requirements listed above and the assessment of the results of the interview
- Selection and Orientation
  - Students are notified regarding the outcome of the interview committee by the employer and the ITEP/YCC staff
  - A parent night is arranged by the employer
    - Time is allowed to mingle and talk with the general manager, plant managers, human resource officials, team leaders, and direct supervisors/mentors
    - Parents learn of their student's opportunities and responsibilities
    - Students meet their direct supervisor and their mentor team
    - An additional hour is spent with the students to provide details of their first days as work-study students and expected protocol to follow at the beginning of their experience
  - First week's experience
    - Students report to an assigned central location to begin their orientation
    - Company badges are provided to the students for entrance and exit to the facilities
    - The General Manager of the organization spends two days emphasizing opportunities and expectations
    - An intensive day is spent in the safety dojo
    - Presentations are made to the students regarding attendance, dress, communication protocols, etc.
    - A gate tour is provided by a member of the ITEP/YCC staff to familiarize students with location entrances for their assignments

## **STEP 3: Schedule and Learning Objectives**

- Students are assigned to two 6-week rotations each at a different facility
- The student background through their resume is provided to the team who will supervise the student(s) at the different facilities
- The student is welcomed at the assigned facility by a company official, introduced to their team, and provided insight into this particular facility, protocol, expectations, and training opportunities
- Mentors who have varying career backgrounds and expertise in the areas of the rotations are provided as a team for the students
- Mentors are to be with the students at all times during their assignments
- A determination was made that when schools were closed for snow days, the students would not report to the facility but were expected to communicate this to their immediate supervisor through text messaging
- During the 6-week rotation, three 2-week experiences provided exposure to different elements of the industry
- Specific learning objectives are written by the employer for each rotation and the student(s) are given a booklet to record their outcomes relating to each specific learning objective

- At the end of each rotation, the student prepares a PowerPoint presentation delivered to their team and when available their plant manager
- At the end of each 6-week rotation, the students delivered a PowerPoint presentation to Corporate Officials, all plant managers, supervisors, teachers, etc.

#### **STEP 4: Continuous Improvement**

- ITEP/YCC staff visited the industry midterm of the student experience
- During this visit the students were on the job and were able to explain processes they had learned to ITEP/YCC staff
- Students were able to demonstrate what they were doing
- ITEP/YCC staff has the opportunity to talk with immediate supervisors about the progress of these students
- Mid-term evaluation forms were completed by immediate supervisors with contributions from the mentor team
- Student oral evaluations were based on the evaluation forms with the supervisors providing assessments of the jobs they were doing emphasizing areas of improvement
- At the end of the experience, the students provided insight into their experiences with the program, the benefits they gained, and feedback on areas to emphasize for future students

#### **STEP 5: Celebrations**

- At the end of the semester, the company hosted a luncheon for the students which included the general manager and other corporate officials, parents, superintendents, principals, teachers, ITEP/YCC staff, company plant managers, supervisors, team leaders, and mentors
- A summary of this experience from the company's perspective was provided by the general manager
- Each student presented their experience through a PowerPoint presentation to approximately 120 people
- Students were supported by their mentoring team which provided for them an official company shirt
- A group picture of the students was presented to the general manager of the facilities in appreciation for the experience

The implementation of the work-based learning program for high school seniors by this company and for these students is a model for all employers. In the next year, options are being reviewed to have this company host other employers in the area to present their model showing how employer-driven programs can end in defined outcomes for the company and for the students. This employer/educator forum using this model is expected to increase opportunities for more students to benefit from work-based learning experiences. The results of this first year's work-based learning experience for this company and for these students revealed benefits that were beyond initial expectations.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Our thanks to our Partner [FCA Fiat Chrysler Automobiles](#) for their continued support and engagement in the Integrated Technology Education Program (ITEP) through the Youth CareerConnect (YCC) Grant Program.

