

Career Development Continuum

Career Pathways provide a sequenced continuum of career development activities and experiences for all students and young adults that address Career Awareness, Career Exploration and Career Preparation. This is accomplished through a series of work-based classroom activities, community experiences and workplace exposure over time. While generally students and young adults begin awareness activities at earlier ages and 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 students would participate in an awareness activity. Work-Based Learning activities should align to the student or young adult's age and stage of development, and address defined career development objectives.

These are the three levels that make up 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 student or young adult 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 students and young adults visit a workplace, learn about the business, meet employees, ask questions and observe work in progress.
- **Guest Speaker:** a Career Awareness activity in which a students or young adults 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 may include Informational Interviews, Job Shadowing and Industry Exploration Tours.

- **Informational Interview:** a Career Exploration activity in which a student or young adult formally 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 student or young adult is paired with an employee of a partner business and follows that employee during much of a regular workday. A Job Shadow provides students and young adults 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.

- **Industry Exploration Tour:** a Career Exploration activity similar to a Workplace Tour in which small groups of students and young adults visit a workplace in an industry that reflects a career interest area. Students and young adults learn about the business and its industry, meet and talk with employees in occupations of interest, ask questions related to educational and training options 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 & Training

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

- **Work Experience:** a Career Preparation activity in which a student or young adult 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. Students and young adults 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 student or young adult 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 student or young adult is performing productive work for the employer and other defined factors. Unlike work experience, internships often allow for 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."