



# Professional Learning Experience

## Fact Sheet (Updated 7-22-13)

### Purpose:

The purpose of the professional learning experience (PLE) is to connect technical skill development in a course sequence to authentic industry-related experiences across all fields and pathways to build career readiness.

### Mission:

The mission of the professional learning experience (PLE) is to enhance the opportunity for authentic skill development, attainment of a certificate, license or degree and student success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce.

### Benefits of Student Participation:

Students who take part in a PLE while in high school:

- Make connections between real world experiences and the classroom;
- Begin to look at education with a greater sense of purpose;
- Understand how academic knowledge links with technical training;
- Interact with adult role models to develop positive relationships and career connections;
- Experience an introduction to all aspects of the industry;
- Develop new skills and experiences beneficial to their career futures;
- Enhance self-esteem as they demonstrate skills and earn recognition;
- Expand understanding of career and work options available and need for post-secondary training;
- Experience a range of opportunities that may not be traditional for their gender, race or ethnicity.

### Experience-based Learning Connection:

Experience-based learning is participatory and authentic in nature in which a skill or knowledge is practiced in a teacher directed setting. The professional learning experience is an experience-based learning example directly linked with work-related experiences.

### What is a Quality Professional Learning Experience?

Quality professional learning experiences:

- Enhances the development of a broad range of transferrable skills;
- Builds knowledge of career systems through the introduction of all aspects of a selected industry;
- Includes the on-going attention of a school coordinator and work site adult mentor;

- Illustrates the importance of being an employee that has strong academic and technical knowledge and skills;
- Engages students to want to complete their education and obtain post-secondary training to be employable in their area of choice.

### Professional Learning Experience Situations:

A PLE can take place in a variety of situations:

**Work-based learning**—Activities that take place at a workplace, which are pre-determined to expose the student learner to a range of occupations within that pathway where a wage is earned. Examples include internships, health-related clinicals and Supervised Agricultural Experiences.

**Community-based learning**—Activities that provide a service that is linked to the skills necessary to meet a human/community need. These can involve working closely with service providers and are traditionally a voluntary position with no wage earned. Examples include project-based service learning and community-based experiences in human services professions.

**School-based learning**—Activities which are created within the school building, but follow industry procedures and processes. These are useful when other options are not available and/or the school has a need that the student learner's technical skills could be utilized to address. Examples include Supervised Entrepreneurial Experiences and Live Work.

### The Role of Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSO):

Students can expand 21<sup>st</sup> century skills within a Career and Technical Student Organization. CTSO involvement is encouraged due to the activities, leadership, competitions and authentic experiences available for skill application within the classroom and community.

### Professional Learning Experience Toolkit:

A guidance document has been developed to assist in the development of a quality professional learning experience in local schools. This document is called a "toolkit" because it includes both written direction and explanation along with sample forms, rubrics and evaluation tools. Contact: Gayla Randel, [grandel@ksde.org](mailto:grandel@ksde.org) or 785-296-4912 with questions.

