



Partners in Education

A GREATER HAZLETON BUSINESS AND STUDENT ALLIANCE

Workplace/Community-Based Learning Site Visit

Goal: To develop a group plan for a on-day site visit at a business/agency/company related to the theme of your group that is located in your vicinity.

Guidelines:

1. Brainstorm a plan:
 - ✓ Identify one or two companies/businesses your group would like to visit. Consider visiting a business you do not currently work with, but would like to establish a relationship with.
 - ✓ Identify potential dates, times, travel plans, meals, etc.
2. Develop an agenda for the day, might look something like this:
 - ✓ General group orientation to the company by someone (or a team) from the company.
 - ✓ Tour of the facility.
 - ✓ Lunch.
 - ✓ Context-specific visit to an area of interest for each individual in the group to talk with an employee.
 - ✓ Re-convene as a group to debrief and develop a tentative action plan to integrate the knowledge gained into the curriculum.
3. During your visit you should collect the following:
 - ✓ Materials or information to assist you in revising/updating your curriculum.
 - ✓ Organizational chart or structure of the business/company.
 - ✓ Information about new products or services.
 - ✓ Demographics of the business/company-size, jobs available in the business/company.
4. During your tour, ask guides to address the following and how it relates to their job:
 - ✓ Information about the qualities, skills and knowledge that the company expects from its employees, including:
 - ⇒ Skills and knowledge with new technology.
 - ⇒ Ability to work with others.
 - ⇒ The importance of both academic and technical competence.
 - ✓ Information about equipment/technology used in the company/business.
5. Keep in mind that the ultimate purpose of your visit is to benefit students. Discuss some potential outcomes of your visit for your students. Suggestions may include the following:
 - ✓ Shadowing, internships, or job placements for students.
 - ✓ Follow-up experiences for yourself and other teachers.
 - ✓ Establishing a business/education partnership.
 - ✓ Visits by industry personnel to your classroom.

Embedding Workplace Experiences in the Curriculum

This handout has been developed to help you organize and analyze what you see and experience on your workplace visit. It is not all inclusive, but rather is meant to stimulate your thinking about how your workplace observations can be utilized for planning contextual learning and teaching strategies and authentic classroom assessment practices. Review the material before you make your visit and use it to organize your discussion following the visit. Take a notepad to jot down any observations while you make the tour.

Assume the role you have at school. Even if the questions do not apply specifically to you in your role, consider how you can USE this information as you plan for students.

Content – Here you should consider “**what**” you saw the employees doing.

- ★ What *technical content* was necessary for the employees to do their job? Did you observe aspects of what the employees were doing with which you were not familiar? How could you incorporate this new content into your existing curriculum? Or is it a significant enough departure from current curriculum to warrant a total revision of what you teach? Did you see anything in the printed materials about the company, their organizational structure, or their products/services that you could use in your teaching?
- ★ Thinking about *academic content*, what aspects of the job that employees were performing, included subject matter that you teach? How were the employees using the subject matter content? How could you teach this content in your classroom in a way that would simulate the work situation? Are there any other employment situations you can think of where your students would work, that you could incorporate into your teaching?
- ★ Regarding *employability skills content*, can you cite examples of employees practicing effective communication skills, structuring work place activities, team work skills, problem solving skills? How could you teach these skills in your classroom?

Process – Now consider “**how**” the employees you observed were working.

- ★ Did you observe anything in *the way workers were doing their job* that surprised you? What were some examples? Should you consider adapting your curriculum to include some aspect of this?
- ★ Did you see examples of *team work*, and what were they? How could you simulate these situations in your classroom?
- ★ How did those in *leadership* roles behave? How did they get there? How can you apply leadership concepts into your curriculum? If the CEO started the company, did you observe any *entrepreneurship skills* that your students should also demonstrate to be successful?
- ★ Did you see any examples of workers being required to use *higher level thinking skills*? How can you implement these into the curriculum?

Context – This aspect of the visit requires you to consider “**where**” the work took place.

- ★ What *working conditions* did you observe and how might that impact the employee? How might they impact the *employees’ health? family environment? future? physical/mental well-being?* How might you simulate the conditions in your classroom?
- ★ Did you observe anything about the *geographic location* of the facility that you could embed within your curriculum? Can you recall any larger *social, political, cultural, gender,* or other issues that surfaced which you could explore with your students?
- ★ Were there any *public utility issues/concerns* that impacted the company/employees?
- ★ Were there any *governmental/regulatory issues* that you could explore with students?
- ★ What was the role of *technology in the workplace?*

Workers – Now, think about “**who**” you saw working.

- ★ What *skills* did the workers display that you could develop in your students? What *teaching techniques* might you use to cultivate these skills?
- ★ Did the *salaried workers differ from the hourly employees?* If so, how? Can you explore *career pathways* with your students? Are there any related cultural, social, etc., issues that you could explore?

Follow-up outcomes: Consider the question – “**What next?**”

- ★ Were there any possibilities you saw that would *benefit your students* with this company? Any other related company?
- ★ Were you able to make connections *between your school and the company, that the company might benefit from?*
- ★ Were you able to make any plans for future job shadowing visits or more extensive experiences for yourself or other teachers, to advance your/their *technical content?*
- ★ Did you discuss any possibilities for either you or other teachers for *future relationships?*
- ★ Could you incorporate a *visit by company personnel* to your classroom for demonstrations, panel discussion, advisory committees, job fairs, etc.?

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