

# Considerations for program planning

Last revised in June 2024

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## Experiential Learning

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Experiential learning is hands-on learning that occurs in person or virtually and provides developmentally appropriate opportunities for students of all ages to:

- **participate** in rich experiences connected to the world outside the school;
- **reflect** on the experiences to derive meaning; and
- **apply** the learning to their decisions and actions.

Adapted from David A. Kolb, *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*, 2nd ed. (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson Education, 2015)

Planned learning experiences in the community may include outdoor education, project/program-based learning, job shadowing and job twinning, field trips, field studies, work experience, and cooperative education. These experiences provide opportunities for students to see the relevance of their classroom learning and its connection to the broader world. They also help them develop transferable and interpersonal skills and work habits that prepare them for their future, and enable them to explore careers of interest as they plan their pathway through school to their postsecondary destination, whether in apprenticeship training, college, community living, university, or the workplace.

Experiential learning opportunities associated with various aspects of the curriculum help broaden students' knowledge of themselves and of a range of career opportunities – two areas of learning outlined in [Creating Pathways to Success: An Education and Career/Life Planning Program for Ontario Schools – Policy and Program Requirements, Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2013](#). [↗](#) The key to providing successful experiential learning opportunities is to ensure that the experiential learning cycle (participate, reflect, apply) is a planned part of the experience.

In secondary school, pathways programs that incorporate experiential learning are available to students. They include the following courses and programs:

- cooperative education courses, outlined in [The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 11–12: Cooperative Education, 2018](#) [↗](#)
- Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) (see [“Prepare for Apprenticeship”](#) [↗](#) on the Ontario government website)
- [Specialist High Skills Major \(SHSM\)](#) [↗](#) program
- [Dual credit](#) [↗](#) programs