

Internship/Practical Training

Internships and practical trainings are a major element of the career planning and job orientating process at our school. Students go to companies, handicraft businesses, public offices or social institutions for a certain time. This is either a period of two or three weeks or two days a week but then for a longer period, which varies between 3 and 12 month.

There are diverse ideas behind these different approaches. The two main objectives of the internship of two – three weeks are to get an idea of how the world of work is organized and functions and to learn more about a certain job that could be a choice for job training after school, no matter whether in an apprenticeship, in a vocational school based training or a course at college or university. The idea of the practical training on two days a week for a longer period has got different priorities. Of course students will have the chance to learn more about a certain job but the intention is that students and employers get to know each other and that the employers can value the students' abilities and attitude besides the remarks and grades they get in their reports. Often there is a difference between the behavior of students in their practical training and the results they achieve at school. During practical training students have a chance to put across their positive aspects even if the reports are not very promising. Employers on the other hand can experience students as reliable, accurate and motivated, with a generally positive attitude towards work, even if their marks in Mathematics, history or chemistry are not really convincing. Thus students, who have normally difficulties finding a job or apprenticeship, stand a far better chance to be successful in this field. This is the group our type of practical training is designed for. The results are very promising! Up to 80% of these students get an apprenticeship after school compared to very low rates of students who are not part of this scheme.

Where are the students and what are they doing? The internships are in all areas of employment, the practical trainings more in the handicraft business and in social institutions. The activities of students vary from watching and doing simple and preliminary work, to periods where students can actually support the workers and take on work that would have to be done by someone else from the company otherwise. In the following we have some examples what students are doing.

Here a student is working together with an apprentice as a mechanic in a company producing covers for various machines.



A Student is working at a dentist modelling coronas and bridges. Here we see the first attempts with wax!



A student in a kindergarten putting away the toys the children have played with. Before that she has played with the children inside and outside the house in the playground. The students in kindergartens also read stories to the children, help with the meals, draw pictures with

them and start to do easy handicraft work. The students enjoy that kind of work very much because very often they get a positive feedback from the children and the children like people around them. The more the better!

This is a student preparing and testing workflow for people in a sheltered workshop for people with special needs.



There are many different ways the students evaluate their internships. They report about the institutions, they write reports about their experiences and finally they value their internship and deliberate about whether to intensify their efforts to get a job/apprenticeship in that field or to look for something else. They discuss these reports with careers advisory teacher and the careers officer of the local agency of labour. This is a process at the end of which there is a decision for a job training, apprenticeship or what so ever.

Schedule:

Timeline/ month	Activity	Remarks
x Sep.*	students investigate and find jobs that match with their interests and abilities	
x+2Nov	students start looking for places to do their internships	
x+5 Jan	most of the students have a letter of acceptance from the company in question	
x+8 Apr.	internship for 3 weeks, students stay at the same company for the whole time	
x+10 June	students present their experiences	the presentation is to the classes that will be involved in the internship the following year and parents are informed during a parent-teacher conference
x+11 July	students start to apply for apprenticeships	

* This is our schedule; of course you can change the month and e.g. start in November