

National Tech Prep Network



2003 Exemplary Worksite
Learning Award Winners

EWSLA competition sponsored by



Computer Information Systems

Lakeland Community College, Kirtland, Ohio

In 2001, the Progressive Auto Insurance Company partnered with the Lakeland Community College Consortium's College Tech Computer Information Systems (CIS) to develop a joint program for providing high school students with yearlong educational experiences covering the IT infrastructure necessary to run a major corporation in today's world. Through a combination of classroom instruction and onsite instruction at Progressive, the program blends technical education with language arts to expose students to a well-rounded picture of the technical, speaking, and writing skills required for success in the corporate world. Now in its second year, the partnership proves to be stimulating and rewarding for both the students and Progressive.

The program's curriculum design consists of five phases:

PEP (Progressive Education Program)—During this eight-week phase, students are invited to the CIS class on Progressive's campus, where they receive an overview of the IT infrastructure that supports Progressive's large insurance business. Each weekly two-hour session is devoted to an important theme such as network security and maintenance.

Showcase Assistance—Students build on their PEP experiences to design independent projects to enter into Ohio State's Showcase Competition. (For example, in 2002 one student group designed a "virtual classroom" in which second-graders read electronic books and discussed them via online chatting.) Progressive assists the students by providing expertise and, in some cases, the use of equipment.

Exploration—During this three-week period, students work with Progressive employees two hours a week to explore topics for senior projects and develop objectives for the projects.

Senior Project—For three weeks, students report to Progressive five hours every weekday. Each student is expected to contribute to the development of a team project that will benefit Progressive. The senior project gives the students an opportunity to demonstrate what they learned during the previous year and to demonstrate their work ethic and ability to learn on the job. The students keep daily journals, write reflective papers, and develop presentations about their experiences. At the end of the three weeks, the students are evaluated by their supervisors just as they would be if they were regular Progressive employees.

Summer Internship—Progressive hired four students as summer interns. Nine months later those students are still with the company, attending college and becoming the new Progressive advisors who will assist the next group of CIS students with showcase projects.

The program is achieving promising results. For example, the CIS class earned a score of 94% and first-place honors at the Tech Prep Showcase Competition. Several program graduates have been hired by Progressive and the IT division of Steris Corporation, and all of the students have entered two- or four-year college programs.

Lodging Management Academy

Gateway Technical College, Racine, Wisconsin

The Lodging Management Academy, an initiative of the Gateway Technical College Tech Prep/School to Careers Consortium, is an intensive work-based educational program for students who are interested in hospitality as a career. The goal of the Academy is to expose students to hotel management through a combination of worksite and school-based experiences. The curriculum, which was developed by the American Hotel and Lodging Association's Educational Institute, focuses on every aspect of the hotel industry: leadership and management, marketing and sales, food and beverage service, lodging management, the front office, and housekeeping.

The Lodging Management Academy is housed on site at the Marcus Corporation's Grand Geneva Resort and Spa in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. The Grand Geneva supports the program wholeheartedly because it provides eager employees who are motivated by more than the pursuit of monetary gain, gives the Grand Geneva an opportunity to help young people learn about the many career opportunities in the hospitality industry, and enlarges the local pool of qualified employee candidates.

The program enrolls students from the high school districts in Lake Geneva, Wilmot, and Elkhorn. It has developed strong partnerships with Gateway Technical College and the University of Wisconsin–Stout through the creation of articulation agreements and a 2+2+2 system. The business community has played an active role through the Geneva Lake Development Corporation and the Wisconsin Restaurant Association. The Academy's administrators have also worked with the Governor's Workbased Learning Board of Wisconsin.

The Lodging Management Academy is a combination of the Wisconsin State Youth Apprenticeship Program in Lodging Management and the National American Hotel and Lodging Association's Lodging Management Program. Each Academy student chooses between two paths—a two-year path involving 900 hours of work and a one-year path involving 450 hours. In either case, the school-based experience is the same. The student is in class three hours per week (two hours in a traditional lecture-style setting, one hour in a hands-on learning environment). The classroom portion of the program is taught by a staff person from the Grand Geneva who has been certified as an adjunct instructor at Gateway Technical College. That person not only teaches the students but also monitors their progress at the worksite. A strong working relationship and communication link have been developed with each of the individual high school district coordinators so that each partner knows exactly how the student is progressing through the program.

The program has assisted with the Tech Prep initiatives in Southeastern Wisconsin through the creation of articulation agreements with the postsecondary institutions. Tech Prep has also been strengthened through the partnerships created with the businesses in the area and with the state and national certification competencies.

Westinghouse Savannah River Company, Tri-County Workforce Readiness Partnership Allendale, South Carolina

The Westinghouse Savannah River Company (WSRC) School-to-Work Internship Program (founded 1995) links internships and employment opportunities to school curricula and provides students with marketable skills that enable them to make successful transitions from the school environment to the workplace. The program provides opportunities for local high school students to gain hands-on experience in areas of academic or career interest before they attend college or pursue additional training. Student participants are seniors at high schools within the tri-county area who have met the program's academic standards, have been referred to the program by their instructors, and have passed on-site interviews. The goals of the programs are to (1) increase students' knowledge of the workplace in general, (2) impact students' educational goals and career choices, (3) assist WSRC in helping to meet workforce needs, (4) provide a comprehensive program of school-based work exploration experiences and structured work-based learning experiences, (5) provide students opportunities to learn employability skills under the supervision of mentors, and (6) develop and implement a comprehensive program of professional development for administrators, teachers, and mentors.

The curriculum for the program was developed by the curriculum committee of the Tri-County Workforce Readiness Partnership, which consists of a representative from each of the educational partners and representatives from WSRC's educational outreach program. High school seniors participate in the occupational areas of office systems technology, computer technology, drafting and design, and electrical instrumentation. The schools provide student competency profiles that are developed by the South Carolina State Department of Education. At the postsecondary level, WSRC asked Denmark Technical College to establish certificate programs that address the core competencies needed for attrition replacement in four skills areas: production operator, laboratory technician, radiation control inspector, and industrial hygiene specialist.

Participating high school students work up to 20 paid hours a week, and postsecondary students work up to 25 hours. During the summer break, students can work full time. Mentors evaluate the students every nine weeks using South Carolina's Education Curriculum Competencies. Teachers are also encouraged to observe the students at the worksites.

The program contributes to the overall Tech Prep effort by giving students an opportunity to connect the classroom to the "real world," use state-of-the-art equipment, and learn from experienced workplace mentors. Exposure to different situations, work environments, and careers enables participants to make more informed career choices and enhances their career development.