



# Earn & Learn Opportunities Program



Granite State  
Independent Living

**gsil**

*Tools for Living  
Life Independently*

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## **Career Exploration Extended Learning Opportunity**

**HQT:**  
**ELO Student:**

**Discipline:** Career Exploration  
**Project Start Date:**

### **Essential Question:**

### **Student's Learning Goal**

1. Students will explore a variety of educational and occupational opportunities, learn the realities of the work place, and identify both the technical skills and individual qualities that they will need to succeed in their field of interest
2. Increase students ability to make informed decisions through awareness and understanding of individual qualities hat contribute to success on the job
3. Increase students ability to use employment data and other resources to support decision-making, as well as their awareness of the training and post-secondary options available to facilitate their personal success.
4. Increase students' awareness of individual interests, skills, attitudes, talents, and abilities, particularly as they change and develop during the educational experience.
5. Students who plan on post-secondary education will do research on colleges, scholarships and tuition. Assistance with preparation of college applications and financial aid application forms will be provided

**Community Mentor in this ELO:** GSIL

**Community Mentor's Responsibility in the ELO:** 1. Serve as liaison with business sponsor 2. Guide student in completion of interest inventory, career assessments and other relevant written work 3. Evaluate student's weekly journal entries 4. Aid student in identifying appropriate work experience site and monitor progress 5. Arrange for and accompany students on career related, educational trips

### **Student's Interim Measurable Goals**

1. Student will complete interest inventory and career assessments on online career exploration website
2. Student will create, organize and format a cover letter, resume worksheet, resume, reference page and complete a sample job application
3. Student will participate in mock interviews.
4. Student will maintain a weekly journal reflecting on tasks completed, thoughts, feelings etc.
5. Student will participate in work experience totaling 40 hours
6. Student will attend three workshop/presentations and/or college tours on topics related to education/occupational readiness and complete a reflection sheet.
7. Student will complete a final project to summarize his/her ELO experience, to be evaluated by HQT and community mentor.

## Related Core Competencies

**Self-Knowledge competencies.** Develop a positive self-concept through confidence in their abilities to plan for and realize their career, education and life goals; understand how their decisions and actions can affect all areas of their lives and affect attainment of their career and life goals

**Educational and Occupational Exploration competencies.** See the connections between their educational choices and performance and their chances for success in a desired career

**Career Planning competencies.** Develop good decision-making skills; place career choices within the context of life goals; create pathways between their current situations and their goals—now and as they get older

**Communication skills competency.** Develop skills in writing, speaking, and listening and use those skills to effectively communicate. Use technology to generate and enhance accuracy of written communication  
Student will describe either orally, visually or in writing how individual preferences and interests influence career choices and success.

**Professional Development:** Identify career opportunities in business. Utilize resources exploration, development and growth.

## Student's Methods of Documentation to Demonstrate Progress towards Achieving these Goals

1. Student will complete interest inventory and career assessments
2. Student will create a final copy for cover letter and resume, and complete sample job application
3. Student will maintain weekly journal describing ELO experience
4. Student will complete three reflection papers on workshops/presentation/college tours attended
5. Mid-point report indicating student overall progress towards learning goals completed by HQT
6. Student will develop and maintain a portfolio for combined activities
7. Student will create a final project to summarize his/her ELO experience, to be evaluated by HQT and community mentor.

## Final Method of Evaluation of ELO

Student will participate in an exit interview and portfolio review with HQT to summarize his/her ELO experience, as well as create a final project which will demonstrate proficiency in the competencies detailed in this ELO outline.

## Unique Program Features

- **Outside of traditional high school walls**
- **Competency based not seat time**
- **Extensive utilization of community resources**
- **No rules – high expectations**
- **The students are all hired on the first day**
- **Soft skills woven throughout the fabric of participation**
- **All learning becomes relevant**
- **Blended academic learning across all ELO activities**
- **Advisory Team focuses all aspects of service and support**
- **Students feel heard and treated as adults**
- **All students have a work exposure**
- **Small class size**
- **All students have access to a computer and online software**

## Extended Learning Opportunities

The NH Department of Education supports and encourages local school districts to adopt policies that encourage 'extended learning'. Extended learning means: the primary acquisition of knowledge and skills through instruction or study outside of the traditional classroom methodology, including, but not limited, to

- Apprenticeships
- Community service
- Independent study
- Online courses
- Internships
- Performing groups
- Private instruction

**Department Comment:** The local school board is required to adopt and implement written policies and procedures relative to extended learning if the district plans to offer extended learning opportunities, as per Ed 306.27(b)(4) . The local district's policy may define whether extended learning opportunities are offered in wide variety, in limited options, or not at all. The design of these rules gives School Boards and Districts permission to be flexible and creative in the way schools award credits to students for learning in a variety of settings. Technical Advisory #12 gives further guidance on Extended Learning Opportunities.

### General information about extended learning

- Offering ELO is optional for school districts, but if offered, must be available to all students
- Developing a district level policy on ELO is required per Ed 306.27(b)(4)
- Any/all activities are eligible for ELO learning if they meet the requires of ED 306.27(b)(4); school district policy de fines which the district will approve
- ELO learning may be offered in any course area; school district policy defines which areas the district will approve
- ELOs must be pre-approved by the school before beginning
- Certified school personnel must authorize and oversee the ELO and the awarding of credit
- Credit for ELO must be based on student demonstration of mastery of rigorous, measurable course level competencies
- It is the purview of the local school district to identify/develop course level competencies, decide on appropriate competency assessment methods, and identifying necessary and sufficient evidence for students to demonstrate mastery
- ELO may provide credit for all or some of a core course

## Non-Traditional Classroom Instruction

**Granite State Independent Living's Employment Services Department has developed instructional models for delivering academic credits, Extended Learning Opportunities (ELOs) and job preparation skill development in small group settings for students with disabilities.**

### How the Program Works

The classroom setting simulates the workplace and provides an authentic context for teaching and practicing soft skills. Expectations replicate those for any employee on their job site: excellent attendance, punctuality, participation, demonstration of good work habits, team work and respect for others. Each student will earn a full credit in Career Development/Employment Preparation Skills Training. The program is directed at both drop-out prevention and retention of high risk students with disabilities – the most vulnerable segment of this population.



Students will be at GSIL Monday through Friday, 20 hours per week. They will participate in 3 hours of classroom training each day and 2 days a week will include an additional 2.5 hours of community participation and/or work experience.

Training is focused on functionality and demonstrating the relevance of education to adult life after high school. By approaching credit recovery in a variety of creative ways, students are able to explore their passion and understand the importance of the academic experience.

## Curriculum for Extended Learning Opportunities

- Functional Academics: Math and Reading/Writing, GED prep options
- Career Development: Vocational Assessment, work exposures, college visits
- Employment Preparation Skills Training: Applications, Resume Development, work skills and behaviors
- Independent Living: Life Skills Functional Assessment, connection to adult services/resources, ability to make informed choices

## Extended Learning Opportunity Credits

- Career Development/Employment Preparation Skills/ Work Experience (1 credit)
- Functional Math Skills Development (0.5 credit)
- Functional Reading Skills Development (0.5 credit)
- Walking for Fitness (0.5 credit)
- Information Communication Technology (0.5 credit)
- Consumer Science: Independent Living Skills Building (1 Credit)

Each situation is approached with a **trust building, flexible, student-centered methodology** and should start by focusing on the student's needs, interests and goals

### About GSIL

A statewide non-profit, GSIL recognizes the fact that all of us will need some type of support in the course of our lives. We offer tools and resources so that individuals can participate as fully as they choose in their lives, families and communities. Our mission is to promote life with independence through advocacy, information, education and support.

### How to Contact GSIL

[www.gsil.org](http://www.gsil.org)  
[www.nhatwork.com](http://www.nhatwork.com)

### Chenell Drive - Concord Main Office

21 Chenell Drive  
Concord, NH 03301  
603.228.9680 | 800.826.3700  
888.396.3459 (tty) | 603.225.3304 (fax)

## School Responsibilities

- Identify staff member to serve as "Point" person at the school.  
Point person will:
  - Identify appropriate students for program
  - Collect referral/documentation information
  - Set up meeting times for GSIL/VR staff to interview students for acceptance into the program
  - Review student transcripts with GSIL staff to confirm ELO's
- Attend and actively participate in Advisory Group meetings on a monthly basis. (2-3 Staff members: Point person and guidance counselor, assistant principal, principal and/or case managers)
- Point person will schedule, and invite GSIL staff to student IEP meetings to discuss exit education plans from the program.
- Ensure the Earn and Learn program is part of every students transition plan
- Identify school personnel responsible for:
  - Evaluating student's progress on their ELO and granting credit
  - Documenting ELO credit on to student transcripts
- Work in collaboration with GSIL to arrange transportation for all students.
- Ensure a smooth transition for students upon their entrance back into school.

## Self-Efficacy

Albert Bandura may be most well known for his work on social cognitive theory and observational learning. But it's important for educators and parents to know about a buried treasure at the heart of social cognitive theory – self-efficacy beliefs. Self-efficacy is what helps nurture effort, perseverance, resilience, serenity, and optimism in the face of adversity.

Bandura defines self-efficacy as “the belief in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations.” (Bandura, 1995, p. 2). In simpler terms, it’s best captured in Henry Ford’s famous quote:

***“Whether you think you can or you can’t, you’re usually right.”***

### Self-Efficacy: Pervasive in All Aspects of Life

People’s self-efficacy beliefs extend to all aspects of their lives – career choice, dating behavior, and emotional regulation. A child’s ideas about what she’s good at influences her choice of studies and ultimately career. If a person doesn’t believe her efforts will result in the outcome she wants, she will have a lot of trouble starting, applying effort, or persevering in any activity – whether it’s studying for an exam, engaging in a sport or asking someone out on a date.

### Self-Efficacy: 4 Sources

Bandura posits that self-efficacy beliefs are formed by how individuals interpret the input they receive through four sources:

1. ***Mastery experiences.*** How a person interprets the results of her previous performance is the most influential source of self-efficacy beliefs.

***Classroom Strategy:*** As often as possible, invite students to evaluate their own work. The best way to strengthen self-efficacy is to have students identify those things they did well on assigned tasks.

2. ***Vicarious experience of observing others perform tasks.*** A person forms beliefs in her own efficacy when she watches someone similar model the desired behavior. Models can also be mentors if they show a better way of doing the task.

***Classroom Strategy:*** Teachers frequently ask students to assess something done by their peers (reviewing an oral presentation to the class, editing a paper or report, etc). Add the following direction: “In your self-efficacy journal, write down two positive things you observed that you do on a regular basis.”

3. ***Social persuasions.*** These are the verbal judgments made by others. Negative appraisals weaken self-efficacy beliefs more than positive appraisals strengthen them.

***Classroom Strategy:*** When you ask your students to review/edit/assess the work of their peers, have them identify those things that were done well rather than identifying errors or weaknesses.

4. **Somatic and emotional states.** A person will assess how confident she feels by interpreting her own emotional and physical state as she contemplates an action.

**Classroom Strategy:** Begin by asking your students to imagine themselves doing something they do well. Help them identify their physiological and emotional states during times of success. Tell them that as they imagine taking on new challenges, they have the best chance of success if they can replicate the same positive physiological and emotional states.

(Note: This requires considerable abstract thinking skills and may not be especially useful with pre-adolescent students.)

These sources of self-efficacy beliefs point to the importance of a quality that makes us uniquely human. That is our ability to self-reflect, which is the process by which we make sense of our experience. Knowing the life-long impact that self-efficacy beliefs have, teachers and parents can help children develop healthy self-reflection skills. Consistent with the theory of observational learning, a great way to do this is by modeling healthy self-reflection on one's own performance, and mentoring how a child is interpreting the results of his or her performance. Teachers can routinely evaluate their own performance in front of the class, specifically identifying what they did well and how they plan to build on their success. By modeling self-evaluation, teachers demonstrate a process designed to promote self-efficacy.

### Why is self-efficacy important?

Because it *influences*:

- The choices we make
- The effort we put forth
- How long we persist
- How we feel

## Core Elements

Core Elements, Features & Components	Current Status	Desired Outcome	Negotiable/ Non-negotiable
<p><b>REFERRALS</b> <i>Whom does the project serve?</i></p>	<p>Serve a wide variety of students with diverse needs.</p>	<p>Have a District determine our target population:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students just needing something to be “maintained in school”.</li> <li>2. Reengaging students who have stopped going to school, “unofficially” dropped out.</li> <li>3. Students referred to assist in credit recovery.</li> <li>4. Students referred to bring them to graduation or next grade level.</li> <li>5. Student needs Transition Planning.</li> </ol>	<p>Negotiable</p>
<p><b>REFERRAL TO NHVR</b></p>	<p>NHVR works with school district personell to identify potential referrals.</p>	<p>NHVR and GSIL will develop a formal referral process with the district allowing for optimum utilization by all parties.</p>	<p>Negotiable</p>
<p><b>REFERRAL PROCESS</b> <i>Project integration/school reintegration</i></p>	<p>Process has been refinted and improved but still takes different paths due to different school expectations/needs.</p>	<p>All student referrals will have an Entrance and Exit Plan for the student in terms of their school/ GSIL expectations.</p>	<p>Non-negotiable</p>
<p><i>Development of a Personalized Learning Plan (PLP)</i></p>	<p>Students arrive with little insight or understanding of their academic needs, but focus on their personal hopes and dreams for the future.</p>	<p>Each student will start the process with clear expectations and understanding of how the process can assist them in terms of academic credits and career development.</p>	<p>Negotiable</p>

<b>Core Elements, Features &amp; Components</b>	<b>Current Status</b>	<b>Desired Outcome</b>	<b>Negotiable/ Non-negotiable</b>
<b>ENROLLMENT</b>	15 students are chosen at the start of each session; students are not allowed to enroll after the third day of session.	Clear expectations will be in place as to whom the process best serves and how students can be formally dropped or added from the process.	Negotiable
<b>SESSION CYCLES</b>	GSIL currently offers a 14-week Fall and Spring session, as well as a 5-week Summer session.	The District and GSIL will negotiate a mutually-beneficial schedule of sessions that best support student/school needs.	Non-negotiable
<b>ELO COURSE OFFERINGS</b>	GSIL currently determines which specific ELOs (courses) to offer each session - usually in response to student needs.	GSIL will expand its current ELO options so as to personalize course offerings.	Negotiable
<b>PROJECT PHILOSOPHY</b>	GSIL has adopted the <i>Self-Efficacy</i> work of Albert Bandura.	The use and impact of the philosophy will be evident in all aspects of model activity.	Non-negotiable
<b>PROJECT VALUES</b>	The values guiding the E&L process are not always as obvious and evident as desired.	The values of the project will be obvious and overt in the behaviors of all associated with the process.	Non-negotiable
<b>STAFF DEVELOPMENT</b>	All current E&L staff have been participants in the development of E&L to date. Roles and responsibilities for all staff position is documented and available.	GSIL will identify the core competency requirements of each staff position. GSIL will develop a process to maintain their excellence and develop similar qualities in all new staff.	Non-negotiable
<b>CLASS TIME STRUCTURE</b>	GSIL is currently holding academic training in the first 4 days of the week in the fall/ spring with Friday scheduled for work & exposures.  Summer schedule is different.	GSIL will determine the best structure for delivering its comprehensive services to students.	Negotiable

<b>Core Elements, Features &amp; Components</b>	<b>Current Status</b>	<b>Desired Outcome</b>	<b>Negotiable/ Non-negotiable</b>
<b>CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT</b>	GSIL has an approved curriculum in place for 7 different ELOs.	GSIL will improve its ability to feature a more diverse academic curriculum by increasing the number of approved ELOs.	Negotiable
<b>SCHOOL/PARENT INVOLVEMENT</b>	GSIL is currently working with PIC to increase family engagement. PIC presents at parent orientations, parent workshops and graduation.	GSIL will have clear expectations of both school district personnel and parents/guardians of underage students with regard to their understanding and participation of the Transition process.	Negotiable
<b>ACADEMIC TUTORING</b>	GSIL looks to its partners to determine the need for tutoring.	GSIL will have access to academic tutors in all subjects in which they are needed.	Negotiable
<b>STUDENT-DRIVEN APPROACH</b>	GSIL found itself to be in a reactive mode during the 1st phase of program development. GSIL wants to work more with its partners to create more opportunities for earlier and more in-depth student involvement in their personal planning.	Each student will participate in the development of a Personalized Learning Plan (PLO) that will guide their learning experience.	Negotiable
<b>SOFT SKILL MASTERY</b>	GSIL uses an usual approach to student enrollment. We talk about the experience they will have with us as “work”. This takes away from the school mystique and allows staff to refer to expectations “at work”. This has made a huge difference in managing behavior. Soft skills are stressed and evident in all aspects of the student’s experience with us.	Each student will demonstrate mastery in Soft Skills by becoming certified in Work Ethics Mastery via successful completion of the appropriate KEY TRAIN module.	Non-negotiable

<b>Core Elements, Features &amp; Components</b>	<b>Current Status</b>	<b>Desired Outcome</b>	<b>Negotiable/ Non-negotiable</b>
<b>PRE-EMPLOYMENT SKILL DEVELOPMENT</b>	All students receive a number of prescribed pre-employment training modules.	All students will be prepared to successfully apply work a real work exposure.	Non-negotiable
<b>WORK EXPOSURES</b>	GSIL has been able to provide students with experiences in their areas of career interest.	GSIL will have an abundance of diverse work sites willing to host students for their work exposures.	Negotiable
<b>GED ASSESSMENT</b>	GSIL has had 3 students able to use their experiences on our KeyTrain computer system to take the pre-GED assessment and then pass their GED. We are also adding A+ software to assist in GED preparation.	GED preparation is part of our core offerings for students enrolled.	Negotiable
<b>STIPENDS AND INCENTIVES</b> <i>(Stipends are payment for work and incentives are for achievement recognition)</i>	GSIL is currently using both of these tools to support academic activity and work experiences, but each session has approached it differently.	GSIL/NHVR/MSD will determine if and when these resources will be used.	Negotiable
<b>CAREER DEVELOPMENT</b>	Students use a variety of computer-based assessment tools to identify and prepare them for career opportunities.	Each student will complete career assessments and have an identified career goal.	Negotiable
<b>ONLINE LEARNING</b>	GSIL currently uses A+ software - during and after E&L program participation.	The need for, development of and staffing of a lab will only exist with the funding participation of the district.	Negotiable

## E&L Program Outcomes

### Program Success

**142** students have graduated from the program since the summer of 2010.

**527** ELOs have been completed, 363.5 academic credits obtained and 97 credits gained through the computer lab.

**51** students have graduated from high school and 10 have earned their GED.



**119** work experiences have been created for students.

The average student attendance rate is

**94%**

*Upon program completion, 93% of students reengaged with their education:*

- 6 students graduated immediately.
- 15 students attended alternative education.
- 121 students returned to their high school.

*Two years after the program:*

- 89% graduated from high school, obtained their GED or are on track to graduate.
- 3% of students have moved or the information is unknown.
- 8% of the students did not graduate.

### Program Demographics

Program participants are students with disabilities who are at-risk of dropping out of high school.

**98%** of students have IEPs due to severe learning or emotional disabilities.

**2%** of the students have 504 plans.

**95%** of students receive reduced lunch.

\*If GSIL were to include students served during the development phase of the program (11/09-6/10) there would be an additional high school graduated and 1 additional GED recipient.

## STAFFING STRUCTURE

### Program Director

#### *Directs/supervises the day-to-day program activities*

- Serves as lead instructor of day-to-day academic activities
- Oversees the development of new ELOs to respond to identified student needs
- Directs staff in recruitment, intake and progression through the Earn and Learn experience and back to school or other appropriate service
- Works with Program Administrator and stakeholders (School District Advisory team) to continually review and evaluate all aspects of the EARN & LEARN Opportunities – assess process effectiveness and full academic rigor
- Responsible for establishing and maintaining student expectations within the EARN & LEARN Opportunities.

#### *Skills/Abilities:*

- Ability to convey a variety of diverse thoughts and ideas to learners of varying academic levels and learning styles
- Ability to work in dynamic and chaotic environment with flexibility and focus
- Comfort and ability in quick and rapid decision making
- Ability to manage multiple priorities
- Ability to see the best in all students and assist each in “creating themselves”
- Knowledge of Career development assessment software and processes

#### *Qualifications:*

- College graduate
- Teaching/instructional experience
- Experience working with adolescences

### Transition/Independent Living Support Specialist

#### *Serves as the program’s primary liaison with students, school personnel and families*

- Leads recruitment efforts within each high school
- Serves as the EARN and LEARN Opportunities point person for parents and school personnel
- Support the student in identifying and utilizing community resources to increase their IL skill development and greater personal and economic independence
- Assist in program content instruction
- Supports student reintegration to sending schools
- Leads the program effort in identifying needed community resources
- Follows up with each high school to ensure that ELOs are added to each student’s record
- Organize and implement curriculum presenters/workshops where speakers have the opportunity to share specific topics and their life/occupational experiences

#### *Skills/Abilities:*

- Ability to relate well with adolescents and adults
- Ability to multi-task in chaotic environment
- Comfortable in 1:1 and group presentations
- Ability to be consistent in a flexing environment
- Ability to see the best in all students and assist each in “creating themselves”

#### *Qualifications:*

- College graduate
- Demonstrate collaborative skills
- Experience working with adolescences

## STAFFING STRUCTURE

### Employment Coordinator

*Serves as the program's liaison with New Hampshire Vocational Rehabilitation and community employment sites for interviewing, job shadows, internships and competitive placements.*

- Assists with the recruitment efforts of new students within each high school
- Coordinates work exposures with employers, students and families
- Serves as the program's primary liaison for all work sites and work site activities
- Works with the director and transition specialist to find career related experiences for each student
- Coordinates the efforts to connect all students with Vocational Rehabilitation and to assist in completing all paper work
- Assists each student completing the program in returning to their high school and/or to competitive work as indicated by the team

#### **Skills/Abilities:**

- Ability to work with local employers to establish meaningful work exposures to guide student career awareness and understanding
- Relates well with adolescents and adults
- Ability to be consistent in changing environment
- Ability to be responsive to multiple needs and limited resources

#### **Qualifications:**

- College or Technical School Graduate
- Experience working with employers in creating work experiences for students
- Comfort working with adolescents and families
- Knowledge of NHVR