NYC Department of Education

Work-Based Learning

**An Instructional Strategy That Supports
Youth Development and Community Engagement**

**Prepared for the January 15th AP Conference,
"Preparing for College and Career Readiness in
the 10th Grade."**

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Session Objectives

At the end of today's session, participants will be able to:

> Define Work-Based Learning (WBL), and its role alongside classroom instruction

> Identify academic and developmental benefits of WBL that support students in becoming college and career ready

> Outline a WBL activity that supports curricular goals by providing new settings to practice skills and explore content

> Identify key tasks and resources required to run quality WBL activities, and recognize the needs of prospective community / industry partners

Agenda

> Define Work-Based Learning (WBL), share experience
  - What contact with the community or industry does your school already provide your students? What are other instructional ways of connecting students to the world of work?
  - What distinguishes WBL from other kinds of instruction?

> Review key benefits of WBL for your students – compare your experience to key research
  - How can WBL support academic achievement?
  - How can WBL support youth development, as you prepare your students to face adult responsibilities after graduation?

10 minute break

> Case study: Student Consulting Teams
> Design: Small group work to outline a WBL activity for 10th graders

Work-Based Learning
Definition and purpose

"Students go out to worksites,
and they come back as different people."

A progressive (4-year) sequence of instruction within a real-world context that allows students to build a bridge from adolescence to adulthood

Work-based learning can play several critical roles in your school:

1. **WBL is an instructional strategy**
   Real world experience gives students a chance to transfer classroom skills into new settings, and to learn the 21st Century / interpersonal skills sought by employers
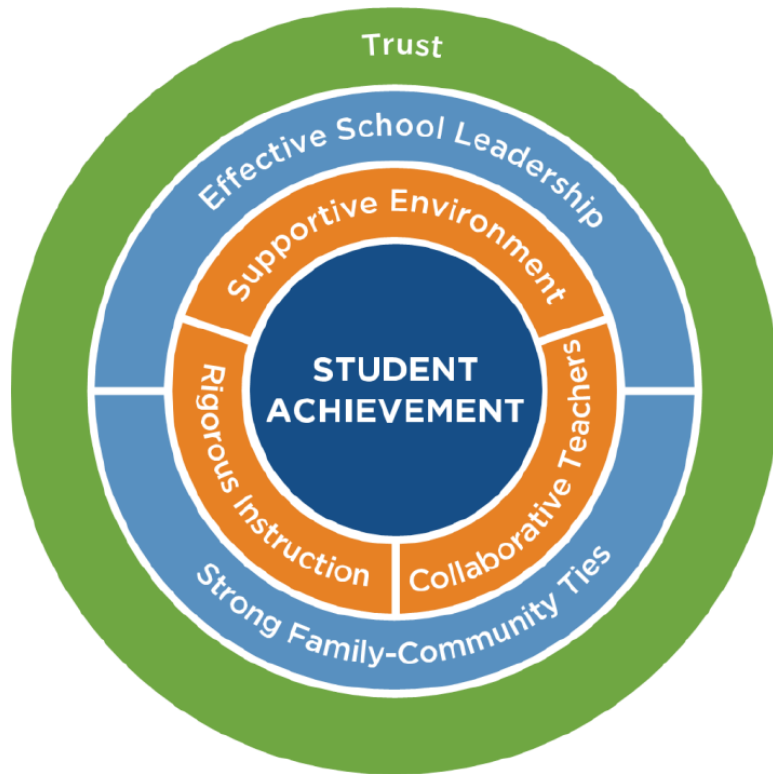
2. **WBL as an engagement / development strategy for young people**
   Experience out of the school adds relevance to secondary school and college planning, and gives students opportunities to try (and fail, and try again) in adult roles while they still have support from the school

3. **WBL as an institutional development strategy**
   By enrolling and engaging industry partners in low-commitment activities such as guest speakers, career fairs, and coaching class projects, a relationship can develop between school and company that benefits both institutions, and maximizes time and resources available to provide authentic opportunities for students in preparation for adulthood

WBL Alignment to the Capacity Framework

Rigorous Instruction
> Learning in workplace settings is not automatic. It requires careful planning and scaffolding activities to help students make the most of their time in and outside of the classroom

Supportive Environment
> Opens the adult world outside the school building in a way that allows students to explore new social roles and pathways, while offering fresh perspective on academic skills and content

Collaborative Teachers
> WBL requires strong in-school collaboration to turn field trips into learning experiences that engage students, offer fresh perspectives, and resonate throughout the school year

Effective School Leadership
> Leader support for WBL invites staff and students to envision themselves in the community and demonstrate their achievements publically

Strong Family-Community Ties
> WBL provides sustainable structure for families and businesses to work with students and build relationships that connect them to the school in meaningful ways

Trust
> Structured experiences with non-school professionals give students the confidence and experience they need to trust themselves and earn trust from others

You're already doing it

Interaction with *non-school professionals* is the defining element of WBL, preferably outside the school setting. (Some leading practitioners talk use the term "workplace learning.")

What opportunities does your school currently provide to allow students to interact with non-school professionals?

What settings outside the school do students visit?

What types of activities are represented?

Types of WBL Activities

> Field Trips (Workplace Tour)
> Guest Speakers
> Career Fairs
> Job Shadowing
> Mentoring
> Competitions
  - Industry serves as coaches, judges, developers of cases and performance tasks
> Service Learning (Community Service)

> Research Projects
  - Focus groups,
> Interactive Projects and Simulations
> Student-Run Enterprise
  - in-school stores
  - fundraisers

To be considered WBL, these activities require interaction with non-school professionals – coaching, interviews, focus groups, site visits etc.

In-school simulations without industry contact miss out on key benefits of WBL

> Internships
  - Paid or unpaid
  - Can be offered for credit
> Apprenticeships
  - Selective programs, employer-hosted, compensated, leads directly to employment. Alternative / supplement to college or graduate school.

Advanced experiences where students are embedded in industry.

Comparable to advanced placement courses – student need scaffolded preparation to compete for and succeed in these opportunities.

Benefits of Work-Based Learning

In your folder, there is a graphic organizer, listing these WBL Activity types. Pick two or three activity types, and make notes:

> Which activity types does your already offer? Which grade levels participate?

> Which activities sound interesting to you? How could they support existing school goals?

> What are potential benefits or opportunities you see in these activities?

- Student engagement / development
- Academic
- School community and culture

Readings – excerpts from research literature about WBL benefits

Break / Choose An Activity

We're going to take a 10 minute break.

When you return from the break, we will walk through a case study and identify 6 Elements that make for a quality WBL experience for your students.

You will then be invited to work in small groups to design a WBL activity that supports a unit of the 10th grade social studies curriculum.

Case Study

Database Consultation Project
(inspired by a project developed by Andrew Woodbridge, Grover Cleveland High School)
Class: Database Design class (taken in year 1 or 2 of CTE sequence in IT – 10th and 11th grade students)

WBL Activity: Research Project
> WBL research project formed the core project and final for a semester long class in database design

Industry Partner: Global Manufacturer of Computer Networking Equipment. Company has strong interest in supporting technology education

School Resources: Activity occurred during class time. Access to Internet and database software; support with transportation and logistics.

Case Study – Industry Touchpoints

The time commitment for the partner was relatively small, and aligned with company goals.

> **Engage Partner** – teacher met with company executive during prior semester to design and organize the project

  ▪ Preparation for Initial Site Visit – students researched the company and developed questions about their data needs. Social studies teacher provided material on online research techniques, including evaluation of sources, and distinguishing between marketing, journalism, and rigorous economic research

> **Site Visit** – tour the customer service center, interview customer service staff about their use of the company database

  ▪ Class Time – students were given one class period per week to work in their teams and develop their project over six weeks. Student questions were relayed through the teacher.

  ▪ Correspondence Exercise – students drafted a cover letter to request a meeting, accompanied by one-page business proposal. English teacher provided support on polishing these documents.

> **Final Presentations** – student teams travelled back to company site to deliver their final presentations

Reflection on Case Study

Students and industry partner both found this project highly engaging.

The industry partner noted that many of the students' recommendations were more focused and practical than he hears from college students and graduates in computer science.

What do you think contributed to this experience? What questions come up for you?

6 Elements that Support WBL Quality

1. Orientation and coordination between the school and the workplace
   > Both workplace and school need to articulate their organizational goals to avoid conflict, and ensure the collaboration supports student learning

2. Defined instructional goals
   > These should include input from the workplace involved, be developmentally appropriate, and take advantage of the unique opportunities of learning outside the classroom setting (see 3 – 6 below)

3. Situated learning
   > Opportunities to learn and practice skills in an authentic work context

6 Elements that Support WBL Quality (cont'd)

4. Reflective learning
   - > Reflection in a school context allows them to assimilate their learning and transfer it to other settings such as college or job interviews with other companies

5. Goals-based assessment
   - > In addition to traditional academic assessments (journal-writing, essays, presentations and tests). WBL provides unique opportunities for assessment:
     - a.   authentic assessment through demonstration and interaction with non-school professionals based on industry expectations, and
     - b.   self-assessment by the students, allowing them to establish their own definition of success, and milestones for achieving it within a realistic context

6. Relationship-building
   - > Opportunities to find mentors and role models outside the school setting

Small Group Activity: Outline an Activity

Using the WBL Activity Worksheet, work together to plan one of the following WBL activities as a way of delivering a unit of the 10th Grade Social Studies Curriculum.

- Service Learning Project

- Student Fundraiser for Community Agency

- Research Project

Selected Inquiry Questions from the 10th Grade Scope and Sequence is included, along with a list of suggested industry / community partners doing work related to these topics.

We will reserve a total of 10 minutes to share out your designs.