

# Work-Based Learning

**W**HAT DO YOU WANT TO BE when you grow up? When you were little, the answer to that question might have been anything from a firefighter to a ballerina or a veterinarian. As you got older, your interests probably changed, and you became aware of the skills and education necessary to pursue a specific career. As a young adult, you may be able to explore a potential career through work-based learning to see if it is the right choice for you.



## Objective:



Describe work-based learning.

## Key Terms:



analyze

bodily learning style

decision

decision-making process

define

evaluate

gather

identify

interpersonal learning style

intrapersonal learning style

learning styles

linguistic learning style

logical learning style

musical learning style

plan

spatial learning style

work-based learning

## Work-Based Learning

**Work-based learning** is the process through which youth acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes, and habits needed for a particular occupation in a workplace environment. Working in a job can teach you much more than reading about an occupation. You can gain hands-on experience and learn how to interact with people in a professional manner.

A business has several responsibilities when participating in a work-based learning program. The business must ensure that youth are in a supervised program that links knowledge gained

at the work location with a planned program of study. Additional roles of the business include providing basic workplace skills and providing knowledge and understanding of specific occupational skills.

## IDENTIFYING CAREER INTERESTS

Before you take part in a work-based learning program, you need to identify what it is that you want to do. Consider your options carefully and use the **decision-making process**, which is a series of seven steps to assist in identifying and evaluating a choice. The decision-making process can be used in many situations, but here you can use it to make a decision about a potential career.



FIGURE 1. A student involved in work-based learning.

### Step One

The first step of the decision-making process is to **define** (to give meaning to) something. You need to understand what it is you are trying to achieve.

### Step Two

Step 2 is to **analyze** (to break a subject into parts). You can analyze your own strengths and weaknesses as well as your interests. Ask yourself what you are good at and what you enjoy doing. Do you think you would like to work with people, or do you prefer to work in a lab setting?

### Step Three

Step 3 is to **identify** (to establish meaning). Identify your potential career choices.

### Step Four

Step 4 is to **gather** (to collect). You should gather information about each of your options (e.g., specific job requirements and working conditions). You may also find information about the average salary and the availability of jobs in your area.

### Step Five

Step 5 is to **evaluate** (to determine a subject's worth or value). Evaluate which option is the best fit for you. You may want to make a list of the pros and cons of each option.

## Step Six

Step 6 is to make a **decision**—the process of determining what to do. Once you reach this step, you can make a decision about your future career.

## Step Seven

The final step is to **plan** (to decide a course of action). Your plan may include taking college courses, participating in a work-based learning program or internship, or taking an entry-level job in your chosen field. Because many fields require continuing education, your plan may need to include steps to be taken even after you have a job.



FIGURE 2. The decision-making process is a series of seven steps.

## IDENTIFY LEARNING STYLES

**Learning styles** are ways in which individuals prefer to learn. There are various learning styles. It is helpful to identify your own learning style so you can choose a work-based learning program that will be most effective for you.

### Linguistic Learning Style

**Linguistic learning style** is learning by speaking, listening, or reading. You are able to express yourself well verbally or in writing, and you enjoy reading.

### Logical Learning Style

**Logical learning style** is using reason to learn. You may enjoy working with numbers, solving puzzles, or playing strategy games.

### Spatial Learning Style

**Spatial learning style** is using vision to learn. You like to use pictures and charts to convey information, and you may doodle a lot while studying.



## FURTHER EXPLORATION...

### ONLINE CONNECTION: Learning Styles

What learning style best suits you? Do you like to work with others or to work alone? Do you communicate effectively or prefer to use charts to convey information?

Visit the following Web site to take a self-assessment quiz about learning styles. Once you understand your learning style, you may be able to alter your study habits to make them more effective. For example, spatial learners need visual cues and may prefer to use flashcards or to rewrite their notes when studying. Interpersonal learners may do better on a test after studying with a small group of friends.

<http://www.learning-styles-online.com/inventory/login.asp>

### *Musical Learning Style*

**Musical learning style** is using music or melody to learn. You may notice background music more than others.

### *Bodily Learning Style*

**Bodily learning style** is using space and interaction to learn. You like physical activity, and you like to work with your hands.

### *Interpersonal Learning Style*

**Interpersonal learning style** is learning with others. You communicate well—in speaking and in listening to others. You are naturally outgoing and enjoy social activities.

### *Intrapersonal Learning Style*

**Intrapersonal learning style** is learning independently. You may be introverted or independent, and you prefer to work on a project alone rather than in a group.

### Summary:



Work-based learning programs can give you a chance to try a job while gaining knowledge, skills, and habits needed in a particular profession. Before committing to a job or program, it is helpful to follow the seven steps of the decision-making process. First, define what it is you are trying to decide. Then analyze the subject and identify your possible choices. Gather information and evaluate what you have learned. Then you are ready to decide what to do and to make a plan to reach your goal. It is helpful to identify your own learning style so you can be successful in pursuing your career.

## Checking Your Knowledge:

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1. What is work-based learning?
2. What are the business's responsibilities in work-based learning programs?
3. What are the seven steps of the decision-making process?
4. What are learning styles?
5. What are the differences between learning styles?

## Expanding Your Knowledge:

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Contact a few places of business to ask if they have a work-based learning program. Inquire about the requirements and duties expected of participants. Are participants paid employees, or is the work part of an unpaid internship? Ask how many program participants are offered jobs after program completion. If possible, ask to visit the facility to see what is involved in the program.

## Web Links:

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### Seven-Step Decision-Making Model

<http://www.decision-making-confidence.com/7-step-decision-making-model.html>

### Developing Work-Based Learning Opportunities

<http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/envrnmnt/stw/sw300.htm>

### Learning Styles

<http://www.mindtools.com/mnemplsty.html>