

Career Awareness

The first stage of the work-based learning continuum is career awareness. Career Awareness Activities provide information about possible career clusters and specific jobs that are available, and how to explore one’s own abilities and interests. These may be career days, career fairs, career-based service learning, lunch and learn, guest speakers, interactive or video presentation tools, or other career awareness projects.



[Alternative Text Version](#)

Career Fairs

Suggested Grade Levels	K-8
Duration	Single event
Pay	None
Credit	None
Related Classroom Instruction	Yes
WBL Coordinator Qualifications	N/A
Student Eligibility	All students could benefit from career fairs as part of career awareness information gathering. Employer representatives can answer basic questions about the field, and students can discover what career options are available to them.

[Alternative Text Version](#)

Definition

Career fairs allow employer representatives and potential candidates for employment to get together and exchange information. Traditional career fairs are often recruiting events held by employers to hire workers or soon-to-be high school graduates in the near future, but they can also be informational for young students. The goal here is to inform and spark interest when applied to younger students, where more advanced students may be seeking deeper connections. Students are exposed to basic choices regarding opportunities and have access to more information. Written assignments and discussions would be appropriate before and after the event to assess what students learn about career options and their own interests.

Rationale

- Identify a student's natural abilities and/or interests.
- Identify concepts of what career readiness skills are.
- Introducing basic career opportunities.
- Learn about tools to explore specific careers.
- Formulate basic plans for education, training, and experience to lead to the desired career.

Planning a Career Fair for Elementary Students

- Engage industry partners who will provide staff and activities connected to their industry, where appropriate.
- Encourage partners to connect preparation now to careers in their industry.
- Provide a platform or event site that is accessible to all students and partners.
- Confirm expectations for participant responsibilities.
- Conduct student outreach to identify participants.
- Negotiate permissions for students to miss any regularly scheduled class.
- Collect and manage parent/guardian permission forms. • Review and prepare for medical needs of students.

- Provide and train appropriate chaperone coverage.
- Prepare students before a career fair and provide follow-up to reinforce learning and connect the experience to academic content.
- Develop a clear understanding of mutual media permission agreements. There should be determinations on what aspects of the event, if any, can be photographed and recorded by visitors.
- Coordinate transportation and logistics, including bus loading and unloading and arrangements for a student meal, if applicable

Planning a Career Fair for Middle and High School Students

- Engage industry partners who will provide staff and activities connected to their industry, where appropriate.
- Encourage partners to connect academic or other preparation now to careers in their industry.
- Provide a platform or event site that is accessible to all students and partners. Consider virtual presentation to incorporate industries or experiences that could not feasibly occur in the classroom.
- Confirm expectations for participant responsibilities. Industry contacts should be aware of and integrate any learning outcome objectives.
- Conduct student outreach to identify participants.
- Negotiate permissions for students to miss any regularly scheduled class.
- Review and prepare for medical needs of students.
- Classroom preparation before and after the event which may include learning about the industry or how to engage with businesses.
- Develop a clear understanding of mutual media permission agreements. There should be determinations on what aspects of the event, if any, can be photographed and recorded by visitors.
- Make clear which partners are offering existing higher-order work-based learning opportunities such as job shadowing, mentoring, or internships, versus which partners are seeking to build pipelines for future employment only.

Career Days

Suggested Grade Levels	K-12
Duration	Single event or series
Pay	None
Credit	None
Related Classroom Instruction	Yes
WBL Coordinator Qualifications	N/A
Student Eligibility	All students could benefit from career days as part of career awareness information gathering. Employer representatives can make engaging presentations and answer questions about the field, and students can discover what career options interest them.

[Alternative Text Version](#)

Definition

Career days are a structured activity that allows employer representatives from one or more firms or industries to share information with students about their industries, companies, jobs and what it takes to be successful in that career. This type of activity is designed to spark interest and gather information, not recruit immediate candidates. Students are exposed to basic choices regarding opportunities and have access to more information. Written assignments and discussions would be appropriate before and after the event to assess what students learn about career options and their own interests.

Rationale

- Identify a student's natural abilities and/or interests.
- Identify concepts of what career readiness skills are.
- Introducing basic career opportunities.
- Learn about tools to explore specific careers.
- Formulate basic plans for education, training, and experience to lead to the desired career.

Planning a Career Day for Elementary Students

- Engage industry partners who will provide staff and activities connected to their industry, where appropriate.
- Encourage partners to connect academic or other preparation now to careers in their industry.
- Provide a platform or event site that is accessible to all students and partners. Consider virtual presentation to incorporate industries or experiences that could not feasibly occur in the classroom
- Confirm expectations for participant responsibilities. Industry contacts should be aware of and integrate any learning outcome objectives.
- Conduct student outreach to identify participants.
- Negotiate permissions for students to miss any regularly scheduled class.
- Review and prepare for medical needs of students.

- Recruit and prepare chaperones by providing appropriate training and information.
- Classroom preparation before and after the event which may include learning about the industry or how to engage with businesses
- Develop a clear understanding of mutual media permission agreements. There should be determinations on what aspects of the event, if any, can be photographed and recorded by visitors.

Planning a Career Day for Middle and High School Students

- Engage industry partners who will provide staff and activities connected to their industry, where appropriate.
- Encourage partners to connect academic or other preparation now to careers in their industry.
- Provide a platform or event site that is accessible to all students and partners. Consider virtual presentation to incorporate industries or experiences that could not feasibly occur in the classroom
- Confirm expectations for participant responsibilities. Industry contacts should be aware of and integrate any learning outcome objectives.
- Conduct student outreach to identify participants.
- Negotiate permissions for students to miss any regularly scheduled class.
- Review and prepare for medical needs of students.
- Classroom preparation before and after the event which may include learning about the industry or how to engage with businesses.
- Develop a clear understanding of mutual media permission agreements. There should be determinations on what aspects of the event, if any, can be photographed and recorded by visitors.
- Make clear whether existing higher-order work-based learning opportunities exist with these partners, such as job shadowing, mentoring, or internships.

Career Based Service Learning

Suggested Grade Levels	K-12
Duration	Single event, series of activities, or part of program
Pay	None
Credit	None
Related Classroom Instruction	Yes
WBL Coordinator Qualifications	N/A
Student Eligibility	All students could benefit from career-based service learning as part of career awareness information gathering.

[Alternative Text Version](#)

Definition

Career-based service learning consists of serving in the community while incorporating learning and career readiness development. Students should learn about employability skills, the purpose of the agency or recipients they will work with, and the need for service, then apply this knowledge through the experience. It may be a very simple experience, such as cleanup of public areas projects.

Student activities may be direct to recipients of the benefit of work; indirect to agencies who work directly with recipients of the benefit; or advocating to increase awareness. Students may participate in identification and selection of opportunities.

These activities may also be tailored to higher levels on the work-based learning continuum. To be part of a higher-level work-based learning experience, this type of activity could be a component of a credited workplace experience course which is discussed later in this module.

Rationale

- Identify a student's natural abilities and/or interests.
- Develop career readiness skills and habits.
- Introduce careers related to service work.
- Introduce importance and awareness of civic responsibility and volunteering.
- Learn about diverse groups outside the known social/family/school based experience

Planning a Career-Based Service Learning Activity

- Discuss the activity ahead of time with students and, if appropriate, let them participate in selection.
- Engage community partners that are able to participate.
- Provide an activity accessible to all students, staff, and chaperones.
- Confirm expectations for participant responsibilities.
- Conduct student outreach to identify participants.
- Negotiate permissions for students to miss any regularly scheduled class.
- Collect and manage parent/guardian permission forms.

- Review and prepare for medical needs of students.
- Provide and train appropriate chaperone coverage
- Reflect on the crucial piece of this activity. Students should discuss why the activity was relevant to them and how it helps the community

Sample Resource:

- [Teacher Checklist for Service Learning Development](#)

Lunch and Learn

Suggested Grade Levels	K-12
Duration	Single event or series
Pay	None
Credit	None
Related Classroom Instruction	Yes
WBL Coordinator Qualifications	N/A
Student Eligibility	All students could benefit from a "Lunch and Learn" event as part of career awareness information gathering.

[Alternative Text Version](#)

Definition

On-site or virtual "Lunch and Learn" events are conducted in a generally relaxed atmosphere to introduce information and foster discussion among students, parents, educators and community members. These sessions are generally voluntary meetings to drive discussions, create camaraderie between community members and students, offer networking conversations, or address a specific topic that builds trust between the stakeholders. A meal is typically provided.

Rationale

- Identify a student's natural abilities and/or interests
- Introduce a specific career cluster or opportunity or career readiness concept
- Relaxed atmosphere may be ideal for introducing specific concepts, such as nontraditional careers, diversity, or tools for increasing career awareness
- Engage parents in the session. (Parents or guardians may be included)
- Identify the short-term goals and tasks that lead students to long-term goals

Planning a "Lunch and Learn" Event

- Stick to a specific concept with a few, attainable outcome goals
- Engage community partners and/or parents that are able to participate

- Provide an activity accessible to all students, staff, and chaperones
- Confirm expectations for participant responsibilities
- Consider timing if school has staggered lunch times
- Negotiate permissions for students to miss any regularly scheduled class
- Review and prepare for the needs of students
- Take into account the accessibility of the meeting
 - Where is it physically being held? Wheelchair accessible?
 - Do all students have the ability to attend?
 - Translators/interpreters needed?
- Address dietary needs of all participants including:
 - Gluten free, lactose, vegetarian, allergies (nut), diabetic and other dietary restrictions
- Provide and train appropriate chaperone coverage
- Work the presentation into the curriculum and have meaningful follow-up discussion and/or assignment

Guest Speakers

Suggested Grade Levels	K-12
Duration	Single event or series
Pay	None
Credit	None
Related Classroom Instruction	Yes
WBL Coordinator Qualifications	N/A
Student Eligibility	All students could benefit from guest speakers as part of career awareness information gathering.

[Alternative Text Version](#)

Definition

A guest speaker is a person from a business, community, or industry group who delivers a speech or presentation to a student group or class. It may be in the classroom, virtual, or on site. This activity introduces students to experts in the field. They describe a day at work, how to prepare for careers in their industry, and what characteristics are important to develop now.

Rationale

Imagine sitting in a classroom and all of a sudden a person with a new voice is present in your space. The new voice creates a curiosity that gets you to start thinking about the possibilities of learning something new today. These opportunities can leave a lasting impression on your students.

- Identify a student’s hobbies, talents, and interests and how they might be related to work.

- Understand why people work and the benefits of various occupations.
- Identify workplace/employability skills and why they are important.
- Show students that someone “like them” can be successful in a career. Engage speakers from a variety of underrepresented groups.
- Identify the short-term goals and tasks that lead them to long-term goals.
- Understand how technology plays a role in employability and their chosen career field(s).
- Expertise of a presenter can bring an industry or organization to “life.”

Planning a Guest Speaker Event

- Engage industry partners will provide staff and activities connected to their industry, where appropriate.
- Encourage speakers to introduce a variety of careers and connect preparation now to careers in their industry.
- Provide a platform or event site that is accessible to all students and partners.
- Confirm expectations for participant responsibilities.
- Prepare students before the speaker event and provide follow-up to reinforce learning and connect the experience to academic content.
- Be mindful of time constraints the speaker and students might have.
- Plan a follow-up activity, such as having a time of reflection or even sending thank-you correspondence to the speaker

Guest speakers should be relevant to the classroom objectives and goals in the unit and provide some form of outside perspective on what the students are learning about in class. They can be sourced from local community organizations to provide opportunities for relationship building or can be from outside the immediate region. In addition, they can also be front and center in the classroom presenting to students or present virtually via Zoom or other video conferencing source that allows them to interact with the class remotely. The following graph outlines some of the strengths and potential limitations of different types of guest speakers.

Guest Speaker Type	Strengths	Potential Limitations
Local Speaker	<p>Represents a local firm that can actively recruit</p> <p>Provide mentorship potential in the future</p> <p>Grow a lasting relationship</p>	Limited access to information outside of your immediate region
Non-Local Speaker	Represents outside interests that can open up the world to your students	Cannot offer mentorship due to proximity
In-person	<p>Students can physically meet, shake-hands, and meet 1 to 1</p> <p>Interactions are fluid and more real</p>	N/A
Video (zoom, etc)	<p>Can reach people that work in careers not directly offered in your community or can highlight exciting careers</p> <p>Can reach people who can't step away from work, but can do a presentation from work</p>	Careers often don't match the local needs
Nontraditional career	<p>Highlights people who are uncommonly found in that style of career or work</p> <p>Teaches students that they can fit into any type of career field they want to follow</p> <p>Addresses Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and SEL needs of students</p>	*While there has been a push politically in some states that nontraditional careers doesn't address the needs of white males (dominant groups), white males are a subpopulation in numerous career fields (eg. nursing, teaching, beauty care, pre-school and at-home care)
Traditional career	<p>Speaker(s) often provide a base-line on the average day in the life of the career</p> <p>Offer points of view on recruiting more people to the field</p>	May not represent or have issues connecting to students in urban settings with a diverse population of students

[Alternative Text Version](#)

Resources

- Guest Speaker Planning Checklists
 - [Student Guest Speaker Checklist](#)
 - [Teacher Guest Speaker Checklist](#)
 - [Coordinator Guest Speaker Checklist](#)
 - [Employer Guest Speaker Checklist](#)

Interactive or Video Presentation Tools

Suggested Grade Levels	K-12
Duration	Single event, series, or ongoing
Pay	None
Credit	None
Related Classroom Instruction	Yes
WBL Coordinator Qualifications	N/A
Student Eligibility	All students could benefit from interactive and/or video presentation tools as part of career awareness information gathering.

[Alternative Text Version](#)

Definition

Interactive or video presentation tools, such as career exploration software, websites, or recordings that engage students to enhance career awareness. This should include interest surveys to help students identify their own strengths and preferences.

Rationale

- Identify a student's hobbies, talents, and interests and how they might be related to work, sometimes known as a career interest inventory.
- Understand why people work and the benefits of various occupations.
- Identify workplace /employability skills and why they are important.
- Show students diversity, that someone "like them" can be successful in a career.
- Identify the short-term goals and tasks that lead them to long-term goals.
- Wide variety of no- or low-cost options are generally available to integrate into other classroom learning activities.
- Reinforce use of technology.
- Understand how technology plays a role in employability and their chosen career field(s).
- Typically, content regarding careers or industries outside of the immediate community is available.

Other Activities

Career awareness activities should include one or more of the following:

- Identify a student's natural abilities and/or interests.
- Identify what career readiness skills are.
- Introduce basic career opportunities.
- Learn about tools to explore specific careers.
- Formulate a basic plan for education, training, and experience to lead to the desired career.
- Incorporate such a plan into the learning environment.
 - Certified teacher should lead/coordinate.
 - Cater to the appropriate K-12 audience.

- Participants may be eligible for summer school credit.

Standards for Career Awareness

Any activity that seeks to accomplish the following standards can be part of a career exploration program. Students at elementary level should be able to do the following:

- Identify their hobbies, talents, and interests and how they might be related to work.
- Understand why people work and the benefits of various occupations.
- Identify workplace/employability skills and why they are important.
- Understand that careers that are nontraditional are options.
- Identify the short-term goals and tasks that lead them to long-term goals.
- Understand how technology plays a role in employability and their chosen career field(s)

Career Exploration

Worksite Tours

Suggested Grade Levels	5-12
Duration	Duration will vary according to the type of experience, but typically completed in a single visit.
Pay	None
Credit	None
Related Classroom Instruction	Yes
WBL Coordinator Qualifications	N/A
Student Eligibility	All students could benefit from worksite tours as a component of a larger framework of career exploration. Many worksites provide an outstanding opportunity to explore various career pathways and clusters, and care should be taken to highlight the full spectrum of career possibilities within the worksite.

[Alternative Text Version](#)

Definition

A worksite tour is a type of career exploration activity that involves a one-time trip to a company or organization. Students participate as a group or class. A tour can typically be completed during a single visit in which a group of students spends time with an industry representative and a variety of employees to observe daily activities, with an opportunity to ask questions about the company, careers, work experience, and industry. Written assignments and discussions can be incorporated before and after the worksite tour to help connect the experience to coursework as well as college and career options.

Worksite tours give high school students the chance to visit a workplace, connect with a local employer, hear from employees about their educational and professional pathways, and participate in work-based problems or activities. These experiences are designed to be impactful and increase the relevancy of K-12 education, give students insight into what careers are possible, and forge enduring relationships between employers and schools.

Rationale

- Provide the opportunity to observe different careers and the basic pathways leading to a variety of careers by connecting them with business partners (in person or virtual).
- Develop awareness of how basic skills, such as math and reading, are used in the workplace and connect academic coursework to industry.
- Explain the importance and relevance of appropriate postsecondary education and training following high school graduation.
- Allow students to begin identifying areas of career interest.
- Stimulate and support classroom projects that emulate workplace projects.

- Provide opportunities for students to connect with networks of industry professionals or potential mentors

Additional Benefits to Workplace Tours

- Permits the flexibility of arranging the business tour/field trip for one student, a small group of students or an entire class
- Provides an exposure to careers and jobs in the actual work setting
- Expands student learning beyond the walls of the classroom into the local community
- Provides students with experiences and perspectives that are difficult to or not possible to duplicate in the classroom
- Allows students to gain realistic perspectives on expectations in a job and/or career field and the workplace requirements
- Allows more informal, personal interaction and conversation between the business tour/field trip guide than traditional classroom presentations
- Provides an opportunity to develop students' Essential skills, including communicating effectively and appropriately, personal responsibility, etc
- Provides information on what a potential applicant would need in their post-secondary journey - skills needed, certifications, degrees, etc

Educators' Steps for Planning a Worksite Tour

- Develop a partnership with one or more local industry partner(s) to provide a tour.
- Collaborate with the worksite representative to create an agenda for the day.
- Confirm expectations for the host's responsibilities.
- Conduct student outreach to identify participants.
- Negotiate permissions for students to miss any regularly scheduled class.
- Collect and manage parent/guardian permission forms.
- Review and prepare for medical needs of students.
- Attempt to assign students to worksite tours based on their individualized career interests.
- Recruit and prepare chaperones by providing appropriate training and information.
- Identify substitute teachers to allow full-time teachers to serve as chaperones, when necessary.
- Prepare students before worksite tours and provide follow-up to reinforce learning and connect the experience to academic content.
- Developing clear understanding of mutual media permission agreements. There should be determinations on what aspects of the tour, if any, can be photographed and recorded by visitors. This should also include students' media permission status for the host to photograph and record the event.
- Coordinate transportation and logistics, including bus loading and unloading and arrangements for a student meal, if applicable.

Small "Asks" of the Employer You are Visiting

- Ask the business/employer to build in demonstrations during the tour to explain why the company has been successful
- Request that guides allow time for employees to explain their roles, responsibilities, and how they were educated, trained or qualified to be employed at the worksite.
- Encourage site visits to have tangible takeaways such as brochures, handouts, business cards
- Clearly communicate the objectives of the site visit to the guide(s) AND to the students participating
- Have the employer review relevant company safety and health rules
- Students and teachers participating in business tours/field trips should receive relevant safety instruction and gear (eye goggles, hard hat, gloves, etc.).
- Provide any needed information weeks prior to the experience

Employers' Steps for Planning a Worksite Tour

- Develop a partnership with one or more educational institutions.
- Collaborate with the educational institution to create an agenda for the day.
- Confirm expectations for students, chaperones, and educators.
- Identify appropriate employee representatives and arrange for a brief training.
- Prepare them for discussions with students by discussing expectations and student engagement strategies, and by providing common topics and questions (e.g., employee's background, the challenges and rewards of your job, required education and training, etc.).
- Collect information from educational partners, including number of students attending, list of names and career interests, and copies of permission slips.

Day of the Tour

The tour should include time for the following:

- Make introductions.
- Tour the business.
- Share aspects of a typical day on the job.
- Point out the various careers available within your company (e.g., administrative, accounting, sales, manufacturing, technical, human resources, etc.) and the education they require. Allow for an opportunity to meet and speak to employees representing as many of the career opportunities as possible.
- Stress the importance of various aspects of employability, such as attire, attendance, punctuality, and workplace manners.
- Discuss what you look for in a potential employee.
- Allow students to ask questions at the end of the tour to help them process and connect what they are learning in the classroom to the workplace

How to Measure Success

- Students have a better understanding of the work environment (guidelines, restrictions, safety requirements, etc.)
- Students are able to create a list of questions, prior to the visit to ask the guide(s) during the visit
- Students can identify the education or training required and the skills needed for the occupations found at the business/organization
- Students have an opportunity to reflect on their visit
- Students can identify and explain the need for certain Technical Skills related to the career
- Students can identify and explain the need for Essential Skills to be successful in the career field
- Students understand the work safety components of the industry partner
- Students learn the many challenges the employer faces from local to more global issues
- Students can connect the learning from the classroom to the visit

Job Shadowing

Suggested Grade Levels	5-12
Duration	Duration will vary according to the type of experience.
Pay	None
Credit	None
Related Classroom Instruction	Yes
WBL Coordinator Qualifications	N/A
Student Eligibility	There are no specific prerequisites to a job shadowing experience, but students who have already participated in some career awareness activities would benefit most from job shadowing. As with other WBL activities, the content and expectations should reflect each student's need for additional information about specific careers.

[Alternative Text Version](#)

Definition

Job shadowing is a career exploration activity that involves learning about a job through observation by spending a limited amount of time with a person who is working in that career. Students learn the realities of a job by walking through the day as a shadow of a competent worker. The experience provides opportunities for students to ask questions, to observe common job tasks, and to evaluate whether he/she likes the job based on firsthand observations. Additionally, the experience provides an opportunity for employers and local schools to form partnerships.

Rationale

Job shadowing provides an opportunity for employers and schools to work together to support the educational process. Students observe workers on the job in different occupations to become familiar with

what is expected of workers in a real-world situation. Students also can discuss items of interest and concern with the individual in the occupation they are shadowing. Shadowing provides relevant learning experience outside the classroom. Employers and industry partners contribute to the education of youth, promote company culture, and showcase occupations that are not as well known or where there will be a shortage of qualified candidates soon.

Steps for Implementing a Job Shadowing Program

1. Discuss and identify the goals and policies of the job shadowing program.
2. Develop application materials for interested students and employers.
3. Develop selection criteria for both students and employers.
4. Develop an evaluation form to monitor the success of the program.
5. Develop and launch a media campaign.
6. Recruit students (along with their parents) and employers to participate in the program.
7. Select the teacher and additional personnel who will be overseeing the shadowing program.
8. Select students and employers who will be participating in the shadowing program.
9. Discuss and identify details of the shadowing, including dates, times, transportation, attire, and any additional expectations.
10. Hold a training and orientation session for the employers as well as a training for school staff involved in the shadowing experiences.
 - Employers/Staff Sessions
 - Present an orientation explanation of the goals, procedure for setting up shadowing event, evaluation procedures, and expectations of the school.
 - Review safety precautions.
 - Develop the agenda.
 - School Staff Sessions
 - Present an orientation explanation of goals, standard procedures to be followed for the shadowing day, and class makeup plan.
 - Review safety precautions.
 - Develop the agenda.
11. Hold a training session for the student(s) involved in the shadowing experience to discuss the following:
 - Expectations - Interact with the community organization with questions, a checklist of things they want to accomplish, and/or some kind of document that has them memorialize the experience
 - Proper dress - Dressed professionally for the interaction (coming in business attire at a business site, prepared to wear scrubs at a hospital, or work clothes in an outside construction site)
 - Researching careers related to the shadowing experience
 - Knowledge of basic workplace etiquette

- Knowledge of basic safety practices/procedures
 - Explanation of the evaluation
 - Plans for transportation
12. Select an employer and a shadowing site compatible with student interest.
 13. Facilitate the shadowing sessions.
 14. Evaluate the shadowing experience to improve program outcomes (students, teachers, and employers).
 15. Send notes of appreciation to the employers who were involved in the shadowing experience.

Job Shadows are listed as a Career Exploration activity because they are meant to be in-depth experiences that garner interaction and participation from both the employer and the student in the event. Job Shadow activities can be paired with other Work-Based Learning activities to enhance the experiences on both sides (employer and student side). They may include some of the following complimentary components:

- Meet and Greet lunch sessions
- “Day in the life” of the career
- Literature and resources provided by the employer
- Conversation on the “next steps” to applying for a career
- Conversation on the need to graduate high school–seek post secondary options

Career-Related Service Learning

Suggested Grade Levels	9-12
Duration	Duration will vary according to the type of experience. Service learning projects may be held during the summer, after school, during the school year, in conjunction with Career and Technical Student Organization experiences, or in the desired format to meet student and community needs.
Pay	None
Credit	Yes. Aligned to the appropriate Workplace Experience as part of course. (May earn credit as part of a Level 5 Workplace Experience Course.)
Related Classroom Instruction	Yes
WBL Coordinator Qualifications	N/A
Student Eligibility	Consider the following prior to placement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful completion of career inventory and exploration activities. • Relevant work experience (e.g., job shadow, part-time job). • Recommendation from classroom teacher or school counselor. • Completion of application and interview process. • Ability to fulfill the time demands of the project.

[Alternative Text Version](#)

Definition



Career-related service learning is a method by which students improve academic learning and develop personal skills through structured service projects that meet community needs using the content and skills attained through their program of study. The intention of career-related service learning extends beyond simply conducting community service as outlined below. At the exploration level, this type of activity should be more complex than a single service project. An example would be Information Technology students helping build and maintain a website for a non-profit organization. Students would plan, build, monitor, apply employability skills, interact with stakeholders, and reflect on the experience.

Service Learning vs. Community Service	
<p><i>Service Learning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students identify an interest and a community need. ● Students develop and complete a service project addressing the community need. ● Students complete structured activities before, during, and after the experience. ● Students reflect and self-assess. 	<p><i>Community Service</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The community need may already be established ● Students participate in voluntary assignments and activities to serve organizations and/or individuals within the community ● Community service may or may not align with school based instruction

The Eight Standards for Service Learning

1. Meaningful Service: Service learning actively engages participants in meaningful and personally relevant service activities.
2. Link to Curriculum: Service learning is intentionally used as an instructional strategy to meet learning goals and/or content standards.
3. Reflection: Service learning incorporates multiple challenging reflection activities that are ongoing and that prompt deep thinking and analysis about oneself and one’s relationship to society.
4. Diversity: Service learning promotes understanding of diversity and mutual respect among all participants.
5. Youth Voice: Service learning provides youth with a strong voice in planning, implementing, and evaluating service learning experiences with guidance from adults.
6. Partnerships: Service learning partnerships are collaborative, mutually beneficial, and address community needs.
7. Progress Monitoring: Service learning engages participants in an ongoing process to assess the quality of implementation and progress toward meeting specified goals and uses results for improvement and sustainability.

- Duration and Intensity: Service learning has sufficient duration and intensity to address community needs and meet specified outcomes.

Rationale

- Provide the opportunity to observe different careers and the basic pathways leading to a variety of careers by connecting them with business partners (in-person or virtual).
- Develop awareness of how basic skills, such as math and reading, are used in the workplace and connect academic coursework to industry.
- Explain the importance and relevance of appropriate postsecondary education and training following high school graduation.
- Allow students to begin identifying areas of career interest.
- Stimulate and support classroom projects that emulate workplace projects.
- Provide opportunities for students to connect with networks of industry professionals or potential mentors

Mentorship

Suggested Grade Levels	9-12
Duration	Duration of mentorship is aligned with the duration of the associated CTE course.
Pay	None
Credit	Yes, as part of course
Related Classroom Instruction	Yes
WBL Coordinator Qualifications	N/A
Student Eligibility	<p>There are no specific prerequisites for a mentorship experience. Consider the following prior to placement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful completion of career inventory and exploration activities. • Relevant work experience (e.g., job shadow, part-time job). • Recommendation from classroom teacher or school counselor. • Ability to fulfill the time demands of the mentorship.

[Alternative Text Version](#)

Definition

Mentorship is a career exploration activity that consists of a long-term relationship focused on supporting the growth and development of students as they learn about a particular industry and workplace. The student is paired with a community professional who has a recognized record of achievement and firsthand experience in the occupational field or career cluster of the student’s choice. Mentors are encouraged to provide the student with as much hands-on experience as possible and to provide a broad view of the business/industry as well as routine tasks and challenging opportunities. A mentorship may be completed on a one-on-one, small group, or virtual basis

Rationale

- Mentor becomes a source of guidance, motivation, wisdom, teaching, role modeling, and support.
- Provide knowledge, advice, and resources to students based on career pathway
- Provides personal and professional benefits, which ultimately lead to improved performance in the workplace
- Offers students advice on both career and college for post-secondary goal making and decision making

High Functioning Mentorship Programs

Research indicates that high functioning mentorship programs provide five specific career development functions:

- Sponsorship - sponsoring promotion of the student into post-secondary programs or employment
- Coaching - coaching the students through life, college, and career issues and concerns
- Protection - protecting the protege from adverse forces – common mistakes or common misunderstood ideas of the career pathway
- Challenges - providing challenging assignments – college essay advice, resume development, and career planning strategies
- Exposure - increasing the protege's exposure and visibility (exposure)

[\(Source\)](#)

Resources

- [Assessment to Help Find Resources that Match Your Needs](#)

Team-Based Challenges

Suggested Grade Levels	9-12
Duration	Duration of project is aligned with the duration of the associated CTE course.
Pay	None
Credit	None
Related Classroom Instruction	Yes
WBL Coordinator Qualifications	N/A
Student Eligibility	The student must be eligible for any course(s) the project is associated with. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful completion of career inventory and exploration activities. • Recommendation from classroom teacher or school counselor.

[Alternative Text Version](#)

Definition

Students work in groups to solve a real-world problem or work-simulation project under the advice or design of an industry partner. The project will be supervised by a classroom teacher. The project should represent a real industry problem, such as innovation, improved efficiency or safety. At the exploration level, this should include significant interaction with industry partner(s), have related classroom instruction, and offer opportunities for feedback and reflection. For example, an industry partner might challenge student teams to solve a problem getting water to a very isolated area for irrigation. Students would work together to brainstorm, identify barriers and costs, sourcing, and all other aspects of the problem.

Identifying where to place a Team-Based Challenge

The Career Pathway Endorsement initiatives set-forth by the State of Illinois, and the Illinois PWR Act, require that Team-Based Challenges take place in one of the seven Career Pathway Endorsement areas. The seven Career Pathway Endorsement areas include:

- Agriculture, Food, & Natural Resources
- Arts & Communication
- Finance & Business Services
- Health Sciences & Technology
- Human & Public Services
- Information Technology
- Manufacturing, Engineering, Technology, & Trades



Team-Based Challenges are encouraged to take place in a classroom setting for a course that falls within one of the seven pathways. For example, Marketing 101 course lives in a Business Pathway of the Finance and Business Services Endorsement area. Fabrication (Metal) 101, lives in the Manufacturing portion of the Manufacturing, Engineering, Technology, and Trades Endorsement area. The Team-Based Challenge should live in a class within its respected Pathway to match the students career and college goals while teaching them the Technical and Essential Skills laid out in the corresponding course work.

Significance of Community Participation and Planning

Community participation is necessary and mandated as part of the Team-Based Challenge. Establishing a well developed relationship prior to a Team-Based Challenge is recommended; however, effective co-development of the exercise can happen in the proper environment without a well established relationship in place. Regardless, the relationship between school and community is integral in the success of the Team-Based Challenge. Some of the following ideas are recommended in order to produce a well refined experience for students:

- Industry partners identify a problem
 - The problem should represent a real industry problem, such as innovation, improved efficiency, or safety presented by the community
- A team of teachers and/or school staff identify a skill to work on the problem presented by community members in collaboration with them
- The team decides when, where, and how to implement the project

Team-Based Challenge Step by Step Process

Step 1: The Problem and the Expert Mentor

- Identify the partner/mentor
- Discuss setting and resources
- Level of engagement
- Student feedback (formative & summative)
- Final presentation/product assessment
- Establish the question to the problem being addressed

Step 2: Identify the Competencies

- These could be Essential Skills, Technical Competencies, or competencies specific to the content area. See examples below:
 - Essential Skill- Problem Solving: Students can use their critical thinking skills to generate and evaluate solutions as they relate to the needs of the team, customer, and company
 - IT Competency - Security: Students can use their understanding of malware, firewall, IDS, and IPS to recognize and describe basic threats to networked computers

Step 3: Identify the Assessments

- Written Assignments
- Planning Assignments
- Presentation/s Assignments
- Built or Constructed Assignments

Step 4: The Kick-off

Establish a kick-off event that drives excitement from all stakeholders, most importantly the students. This can be held in person or via internet communication. The kick-off should pose the problem and get students

a cause for action. Oftentimes, the event is held at a special place highlighting the problem in collaboration with the community stakeholders.

Step 5: The Final Project

Start the final project with community stakeholders who are able to assist the students and offer feedback to the assessment(s) and final project. This feedback is critical in a few ways, as it will give students real information related to the industry.

Examples:

- Building/maintaining the garden at school
- Designing a one-week lunch or breakfast menu that meet nutritional requirements
- Creating a marketing plan for a school drama production or sports team

Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs)

Suggested Grade Levels	9-12
Duration	Duration of project is aligned with the duration of the associated CTE course.
Pay	None
Credit	None
Related Classroom Instruction	Yes
WBL Coordinator Qualifications	N/A
Student Eligibility	The student must be eligible for any course(s) the project is associated with. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful completion of career inventory and exploration activities. • Recommendation from classroom teacher or school counselor.

[Alternative Text Version](#)

Definition

Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs) are organized extracurricular collaboration of students, educators, and industry partners within a field working to strengthen knowledge and skills of students through industry-relevant experiences. Activities often include team-based challenges and competitions. Nationally recognized organizations support students in CTE clusters of Business and Marketing; Agriculture and Natural Resources; STEM, Information Technology; Hospitality, Human Services and Education; Health Sciences; and Skilled Trades. Additional organizations are recognized at the state level. These two activities are listed together because team-based challenges often occur as an activity within CTOS.

Career and Technical Student Organizations - CTSO Information

Thousands of Illinois students participate in Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSO). These dynamic organizations develop academic success through applied skills, promote the identification of career options and challenge students to learn Essential and Technical Skills. The communication components



alone create an environment where students can foster interpersonal skills in teamwork, communications, relationship building and social interactions. Many schools also create a classroom environment where CTSOs work within the structure of the school day to create a Team-Based Challenge. This opportunity allows students from all backgrounds to participate during regular school day hours and allows them access to programs they may not have been exposed to in the past. CTSOs have Team-Based Challenges they have independently created; but beware that they may not meet the state requirements of the Career Pathway Endorsement prior to implementing them. More information on [Illinois specific CTSOs](#) can be found by clicking the link.

[High School Programs – DECA Inc](#)

DECA prepares emerging leaders and entrepreneurs for careers in marketing, finance, hospitality, and management in high schools and colleges around the globe.

[Educators Rising](#)

Educators Rising Arizona (EdRising) is a student organization dedicated to ensuring that the future is full of high-quality educators starting in high school.

[Business Professionals of America](#)

Business Professionals of America (BPA) is one of the largest business student organization in the state of Illinois. It currently focuses on schools in the greater Chicago area.

[FCCLA](#)

Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) helps young people become leaders with student-directed learning in Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) education in the areas of Early Childhood Education, Culinary Arts, Fashion & Interior Design, Hospitality Management. Since 1945, FCCLA members have been making a difference in their families, careers, and communities.

[FFA - Illinois Association](#)

“Future Farmers of America” (FFA) was founded to prepare future generations for the challenges of feeding a growing population. FFA continues to help the next generation rise up to meet those challenges by helping its members to explore their interests in a broad range of career pathways, including biologists, chemists, veterinarians, engineers, and entrepreneurs.

[IL-HOSA](#)

Future Health Professionals (HOSA) is a student-led Career and Technical Student Organization that provides a unique program of leadership development, motivation, and recognition for middle school, secondary, postsecondary, and collegiate students interested in a career in healthcare.

[SkillsUSA](#)

SkillsUSA is a partnership of students, teachers, and industry working together to ensure America has a skilled workforce. We help each student excel. A nonprofit national education association, SkillsUSA serves

middle school, high school, and college/postsecondary students preparing for careers in trade, technical, and skilled service occupations.

*NOTE: While CTSOs can offer a wide array of events and competitions to address Team-Based Challenges, realize that not every CTSO event meets the requirements of a Team-Based Challenge. Some CTSO activities are explicitly designed for individual competition. This means they would not meet the requirement of a Team-Based Challenge. Other CTSO activities have competitions that do not allow ALL students to participate outside of the school work day. These activities do not address many of the Equity concerns for a large portion of students to participate. It is recommended that if a CTSO event or competition is to be used for Team-Based Challenge, that it be modified to work within the time allotted in the school day and allow for students to work in teams, rather than individual participants.