

Meeting Student Interest and Needs

Data collected from community and student surveys and from staff and steering committee members should provide a basis for decisions regarding types of Work-Based Learning plans to implement. Answers to at least these three questions should be known at this point:

1. What occupational areas provide the greatest opportunity for student employment in the region? (This information may likely come from the Employer Needs survey created earlier in this module)
2. What occupations seem to be of greatest interest to the students?
3. What type of Work-Based Learning activities and experiences will best serve students?

The primary purpose of Work-Based Learning is to provide students with skills needed to pursue a career. This primary purpose implies obtaining post-secondary education along with work experience.

Among the many secondary purposes of Work-Based Learning are to:

- develop occupational skills, knowledge, and attitudes needed to successfully enter, and make progress in the world-of-work successfully;
- apply or upgrade skills, knowledge, and attitudes previously developed in career and technical education classes;
- provide career orientation and exploration experiences for students who have limited knowledge of opportunities available in the world-of-work;
- reduce the drop-out rate;
- improve job placement rate of program completers;
- develop an economic awareness and understanding in program participants;
- provide career maturing experiences whereby students can learn about their own interests and capabilities in relation to career opportunities in the world-of-work;
- enable students to develop the interpersonal skills needed to succeed in the world of-work;

- provide a second chance for those who, for one reason or another, were early school leavers.

Decisions regarding the type of Work-Based Learning to implement is based on student interest and need and community resources. Other variables that must be considered are the student's:

- level of career development;
- chronological age;
- educational level;
- occupational interest;
- occupational aptitude; and
- individual characteristics, such as mental ability, career aspiration, educational/personal development, work experience, personality, and physical/mental disabilities.

A Work-Based Learning Coordinator should avoid only considering the Work-Based Learning activities and learning opportunities that are explicitly listed or outlined in this course. Student need may dictate the development of an entirely new type of Work-Based Learning. Having students complete career awareness and exploration activities prior to and early in high school helps students identify potential careers of interest. Once a student has identified careers of interest, review of the student's individual plan and partnership with school counselors and other staff members help to ensure that the student is being provided with Work-Based Learning opportunities that meet their individual needs and interests.

Here are some examples of inventories and assessments that you can have students complete in order to match students to careers that best fit their interests.

- [Strengths Assessment - Personality Inventory - Human metrics](#)
- [Career Inventories - Career One Stop Interest Assessment](#)