Planning Classroom Assignments and Projects

When planning for a Work-Based Learning curriculum at your district/school, as mentioned before, it is best practice to engage community members in this process. As educators, we like to be the experts and share our knowledge with students in a fashion that garners student growth. Work-Based Learning initiatives and programs are distinctly different from traditional teaching models because

1. Teachers do not "own" the information
2. Skill learning and skill development have a higher priority than knowledge
3. Skills development is based on the needs of the community

When planning curriculum, it is important to match your Work-Based Learning supervisor/coordinator, teachers, and community members together to formulate a strategy that focuses on the skills students will need to be successful in the workplace. This primary goal sets the stage for beginning your curriculum development journey by starting "at the end", identifying what skills are needed to successfully meet the requirements of the program.

Step 1: Identify the skills you want to develop in the Work-Based Learning experience

- [Illinois Career Competencies by Pathway](#) - choose the pathway students are focusing on and pick which skills you want to focus primary teaching around
- [Essential Skills Competencies](#) - choose the essential skills you want to focus on

Step 2: Have discussions with community partners on what type of end goal(s) (i.e. Competencies) you want your students to learn by the end of the Work-Based Learning experience. These conversations will better prepare you when you plan out curricular activities. *Note - It is important to document and maintain a list.

Step 3: Use a calendar that includes Work-Based Learning instruction time to place the skills in a weekly and/or daily goal. You may use the [Work-Based Learning Planner – For Teachers](#) document

Step 4: Create activities, assignments, and projects around the competencies you want to focus on while noticing that large projects, competitions, or activities will need a larger allocation of time. Review the [Suggested Classroom Learning Activities for Work-Based Learning](#) document for suggestions, samples, and resources to help plan classroom learning activities.

Step 5: Take the time while implementing the curriculum to analyze what is working and what is not. Be sure to note how you are differentiating, scaffolding, and/or assisting students with special needs, students who are struggling, or students facing SEL issues in their life.

Step 6: Save curriculum in a place that is accessible for appropriate stakeholders which may include students, parents, administrators, support staff, counselors, etc.

Identifying Typical Constraints and Potential Responses

There are many real and imagined constraints which impact the Work-Based Learning planning process. Work-Based Learning planners and practitioners should be able to respond to these constraints with

accurate information. This section will present a number of constraints with possible responses to those real or imagined constraints.

Teacher-coordinators can respond to constraints more effectively if they thoroughly understand the benefits of Work-Based Learning to students, schools, employers, and others.

[Alternate Text Version](#)

Constraint	Response
With increased educational requirements, there simply are not enough periods in the school day to include Work-Based Learning in the curriculum.	Work-Based Learning does not have to be limited to the normal 5, 6, 7, or 8 periods on which most secondary schools operate. Student work related to Workplace Experience Courses and Career Development Experiences may be scheduled at times other than when school is in session. Career Development Experiences may occur over a summer, a semester, or a year if the experience meets the 60-hour minimum.
Meeting the 60 hour requirement makes it challenging for students to balance work and school responsibilities and inhibits student learning.	There is no evidence that working up to 20 hours per week lowers a student's grades. Student employment has the potential to be a significant developmental experience, providing an extracurricular setting in which to promote learning after class ends, enabling students to grow as leaders, develop career paths, and balance courses, work, and personal lives. Many coordinators have found that students who participate in Workplace Experience courses or Career Development Experiences increase their grade point averages and see more relevance in the other required coursework.
Career and technical education students who enroll in Work-Based Learning may be out of school 2 or 3 periods each day. This leaves fewer students to enroll in the regular career and technical education classes	Job security is a real staff fear; however, this fear can be lessened by working closely with your school's career and technical education teachers in the planning, development, implementation, and operation of Work-Based Learning. Throughout history, it has been shown that the best career and technical education training results when there is a combination of classroom training and on-the-job training. Both experiences need to be managed so that they compliment rather than compete with each other.
Students need to be in school to learn. Work-Based Learning does not provide the proper setting for student development.	People learn during every waking hour. Work-Based Learning activities, Workplace Experience courses, and Career Development Experiences are structured learning experiences that have been proven to provide the skills needed to make the transition effectively to the world-of-work.
My school does not want to be responsible for students going to and from training stations.	The same liability exists for students traveling to and from home as exists for students traveling to and from work
My school has a policy against students driving during the school day (or even driving to school).	Policies can be developed to satisfactorily control Work-Based Learning student's use of automobiles to travel to and from the training station.
Participating in Work-Based Learning will not increase the chances of students being hired after graduation.	A primary limiting factor for students being hired initially is lack of experience. Work-Based Learning provides students with a base of occupational experience and helps develop the Essential Skills which, ultimately, enhances employability.
Work-Based Learning will not fit in with the regional career and education system.	The regional system will be severely restrained if Work-Based Learning is not used for the purpose of increasing linkages and training partnerships with the employment community. Because a combination of in-class instruction and on-the-job training is the most effective approach to developing world-of-work skills, regional education for-employment systems would be less effective in meeting their mission if a decision was made against incorporating Work-Based Learning into the curriculum.
I do not have sufficient partnerships in place to support Work-Based Learning.	Start where you are at and work to grow partnerships. ☐ Leverage existing relationships to provide student opportunities and to connect you with other potential partners ☐ Leverage networks of colleagues to begin building additional partnerships ☐ Create an action plan to recruit - who do you need? Who can help? ☐ Leverage community organizations (i.e. Chamber of Commerce) to help connect you to potential business partners ☐ Review addition strategies outlined in Module 2.