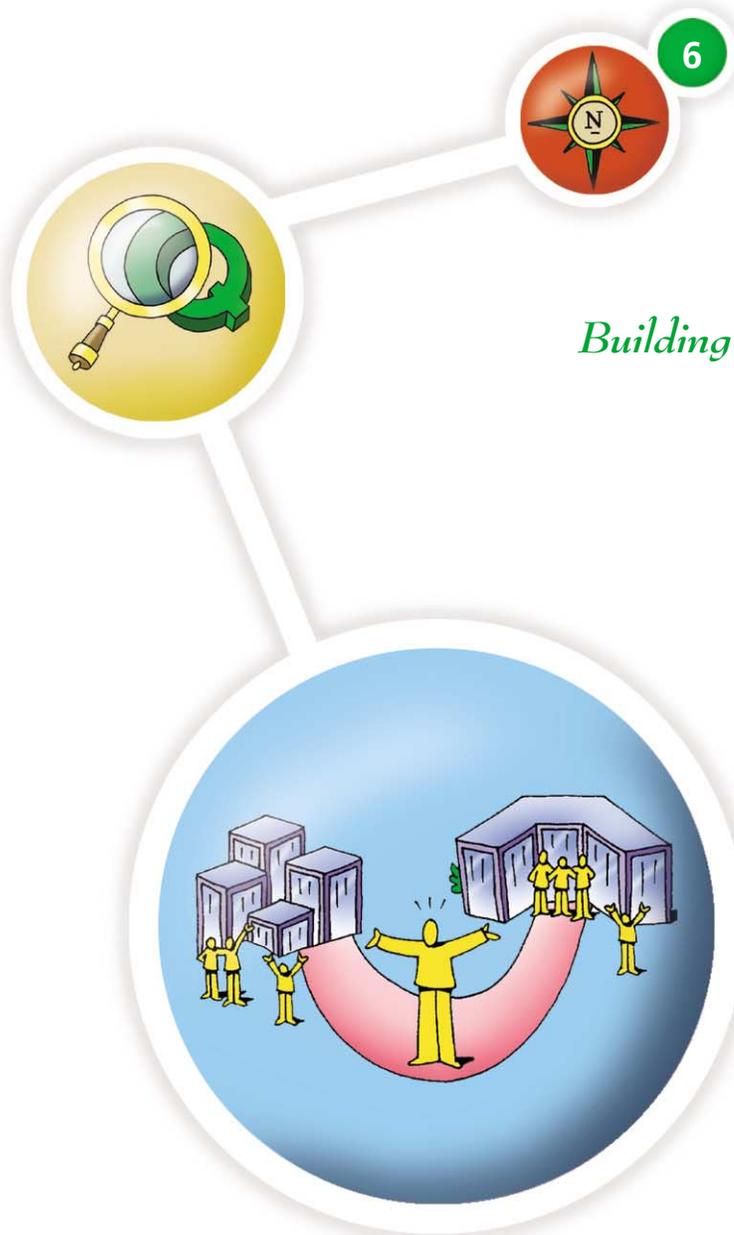


Quality Work-Based Learning Toolkit

Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools



*Building the Classroom
Connection*

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BUILDING THE CLASSROOM CONNECTION



Introduction

This *Building the Classroom Connection* guide provides suggestions for orientation activities, reflection activities and classroom experiences that support work-based learning and ideas for extending student learning beyond the work-based learning experience. It is part of the *Quality Work-Based Learning Toolkit*, which provides teachers with everything they need to create quality, safe and legal work-based learning experiences for students.

The following toolkit sections supplement this guide:

- ✓ *Creating Quality Work-Based Learning* is an introduction to the principles of *Quality Work-Based Learning* and lays the foundation for developing any work-based learning experience. The Seven Simple Guidelines presented focus on the "must-haves" for quality experiences.
- ✓ The *How-to Guides for Workplace Tours, Job Shadows, Internships and Service Learning* are step-by-step guides to developing Quality Work-Based Learning experiences that work for the student, the workplace partner and the teacher.
- ✓ The *Teacher Guide for the Work-Based Learning Plan* provides instructions for teachers on how to assist students and workplace partners with writing learning objectives and evaluating student performance. The *Workplace Partner* and *Student Guides to the Work-Based Learning Plan* detail the learning objective development process.
- ✓ The *Tools* section of this toolkit contains supportive materials including forms, sample classroom assignments and items to assist workplace partners.
- ✓ The collection of *Factsheets* provides overviews of work-based learning structures and programs, laws and regulations and partners, detailing important information about each topic.
- ✓ The *Quality Work-Based Learning Resource List* points to additional materials and organizations that support Quality Work-Based Learning programs.

Preparing Students for Work-Based Learning

A well structured classroom orientation lays the groundwork for a successful work-based learning experience. You can prepare students for learning in the workplace by helping them assess their own interests and skills, learn about what to expect at the workplace and build an understanding of the various aspects of the industry they'll be visiting. The activities outlined in this guide support specific work-based learning types. You may wish to adapt some of these for use with other work-based learning types.

Introducing the SCANS¹ Skills: The Personal Skills Assessment

Useful as an orientation activity for job shadow, internship and service learning.

One way for students to become familiar with the skills and attributes employers look for in employees (SCANS skills) is to complete a personal *SCANS Skills Assessment*. This assessment and the supporting classroom activities will help students to become conscious of the foundation skills and competencies they currently have and those they need to continue to develop. In addition, the assessment lays the groundwork required for students to develop learning objectives. The SCANS skills have been validated by Kansas City employers as being critical to workplace success.

Student Pre-Internship Worksheet

Useful as an orientation activity for internship and service learning.

After the students have discussed the SCANS skills and conducted a self-assessment of their competence, they should complete the *Student Pre-Internship Worksheet* to examine their own interests and needs that might be met during the experience. Students' responses to the questions about their own learning goals and the connections that can be made between academic studies and opportunities at the workplace can provide rich discussion material.

All Aspects of an Industry²

Useful as an orientation activity for workplace tours, job shadow, internship and service learning.

All Aspects of an Industry is a framework to help prepare students for their roles in the workplace. In order for young people to be successful in today's ever-changing world of work, they need to learn more than specific job skills; they need the overview or big picture of any job, career or industry. Focusing on all aspects of an industry encourages entrepreneurship and represents critical components needed for the successful operation of any organization, public or private. This framework integrates academic and vocational learning and emphasizes broad, transferable knowledge of the workplace rather than job-specific skills. Analyzing and solving the problems facing an industry and the enterprises within it draws upon both basic and advanced skills and knowledge in language arts, mathematics, science and social studies.

¹ SCANS is an acronym for the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, which created The SCANS Report for America 2000, issued by the U.S. Department of Labor, April 1992. The report defines a set of skills and competencies necessary for success in the workplace.

² The School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994 defines all aspects of an industry as "all aspects of the industry or industry sector a student is preparing to enter, including planning, management, finances, technical and production skills, underlying principles of technology, labor and community issues, health and safety issues, and environmental issues, related to such industry or industry sector." See *Tools* for a detailed list of the aspects.

The *All Aspects of an Industry* tool identifies nine aspects that are common to any enterprise. Students should gain experience and understanding of the associated concepts and skills to be successful.

- 1 **Planning:** How an organization plans (include goals and objectives); type of ownership (public or private); relationship of the organization to economic, political, and social contexts; assessment of needs.
- 2 **Management:** Structure and process for effectively accomplishing the goals and operations of the organization using facilities, staff, resources, equipment, and materials.
- 3 **Finance:** Accounting and financial decision-making process, method of acquiring capital to operate, management of financial operations including payroll.
- 4 **Technical and Production Skills:** Basic skills in math, communications, computer, time management, and thinking; specific skills for production; interpersonal skills within the organization.
- 5 **Principles of Technology:** Technological systems being used in the workplace and their contributions to the product or service of the organization.
- 6 **Labor Issues:** Rights of employees and related issues; wage, benefits, and working conditions.
- 7 **Community Issues:** Impact of the company on the community, impact of the community on the organization.
- 8 **Health, Safety, and Environment:** Practices and laws affecting the employee, the surrounding community, and the environment.
- 9 **Personal Work Habits:** Non-technical skills and characteristics expected in the workplace.

Prepare Students to Maximize Learning.

Helping students develop a context for the workplace tour maximizes their learning once they are at the workplace. There are several ways to do this.

- Discuss expectations for the experience and what the students may learn beforehand.
- Discuss behavioral expectations that will allow students to make the most out of the activity.
- Discuss what students know about the company and how the industry impacts them.
- Support students in research of the company and the industry so that they can ask meaningful questions during the workplace tour.
- Have students prepare questions and individual learning objectives that they would like to accomplish during the workplace tour.

Also, introduce frameworks and materials that will help students organize what they learn at the workplace. These frameworks include the SCANS skills and All Aspects of an Industry.

Pre-Internship Worksite Supervisor Interview

Useful as an orientation activity for internships and service learning.

Prior to beginning the internship or service learning project, students should schedule a meeting with the worksite supervisor to discuss the work-based learning experience and its potential learning opportunities. During the meeting, students will interview and work with the worksite supervisor to gather the information they need to complete their learning objectives.

Using the *Pre-Internship Worksite Supervisor Interview* tool, go over the interview questions with the students to make sure they understand them. You might have students role-play interviews with one another using their experience in previous work-based learning opportunities as sources for answers to interview questions. Students can practice taking notes during an interview and transcribing them for meaning afterward. This activity will prepare students for the challenge of being involved in a meaningful conversation and having to record it simultaneously. The class can share strategies for successful note-taking as a reflection activity.

Coaching Students to Write Measurable Learning Objectives

Useful as an orientation activity for workplace tours, job shadow, internships and service learning.

When students have clear ideas about what they would like to learn, they are often more engaged in the experience. Learning objectives are useful regardless of the length of the work-based learning experience, although for workplace tours and job shadows they can be more simply stated. Prior to a job shadow, students can define one or two specific things they would like to learn in the course of the day. During a workplace tour you can have the entire class work together to develop several learning objectives from which everyone will benefit, and then ask the workplace partner to structure the tour to help students meet those objectives.

During longer experiences, such as service learning projects and internships, students will need to develop more extensive measurable learning objectives. After the students have completed their *SCANS Skills Assessment*, the *Student Pre-Internship Worksheet*, an exercise with *All Aspects of an Industry* and the *Pre-Internship Worksite Supervisor Interview*, they are ready to begin to craft their learning objectives. In the *Teacher Guide to the Work-Based Learning Plan* you will find a step-by-step guide to coaching students in writing their learning objectives. The *Workplace Partner* and *Student Guides to the Work-Based Learning Plan* outline the step-by-step process for them.



Guides

- Teacher Guide to the Work-Based Learning Plan
- Student Guide to the Work-Based Learning Plan
- Workplace Partner Guide to the Work-Based Learning Plan



Tools

- All Aspects of an Industry
- All Aspects Investigative Interview
- All Aspects Problem-Based Learning Activities
- Confirm Your Internship
- Pre-Internship Worksite Supervisor Interview
- SCANS Skills Assessment
- SCANS Skills Assessment Class Activity
- Student Job Shadow Expectations Sheet
- Student Learning Objectives Worksheet
- Student Pre-Internship Worksheet
- Work-Based Learning Plan and Evaluation Sample (WBL Plan)
- Work-Based Learning Plan and Evaluation (WBL Plan)
- Workplace Safety Curricula



Resources

- SCANS Skills Glossary and Evaluation Handbook

Supporting the Worksite Supervisor

The worksite supervisor essentially functions as an adjunct faculty member in work-based learning experiences. One role of the teacher is to ensure that the worksite supervisor is trained and prepared to support the student in their learning. Clear procedures and regular communication among all partners are vital to this support. In your planning and preparation, make sure to provide worksite supervisors with materials that they can use to help maximize student learning. Through regular phone, e-mail and personal contact, you can support the worksite supervisors so that they also grow in their understanding of and ability to make the connection between academic and workplace learning.

The *Quality Work-Based Learning Toolkit* contains several documents that can be used to support workplace partners. Do not use all of them at once! When compiling a set of materials for a worksite supervisor or other workplace partner, be mindful of their time constraints and their individual need for support. Always deliver new information and supporting documents to a worksite supervisor personally, allowing time for discussion of the content.

Tips on Delivering New Information to Worksite Supervisors

- Be mindful of the supervisor's time constraints. Call well in advance to make appointments; and keep them!
- Deliver new information in person.
- Don't overwhelm them with paper.
- Allow plenty of time for discussion of the new information.

Tips on Communicating with Worksite Supervisors

- Develop a back-up plan in case the worksite supervisor is transferred to another department or location.
- Establish a steady pattern of e-mail communication.
- Encourage supervisors to call you with any questions.
- Balance requests for time and attention with offers to help.

Tips on Meeting with Worksite Supervisors

- Understand that worksite supervisors do not follow school schedules.
- Get to know the supervisor's downtime and take advantage of it.
- Set up the next meeting before ending the present one.
- Establish objectives of the next meeting before it occurs.

Tips to Ensure a Worksite Supervisor's Good Performance

- Have strong supervisors train or orient new supervisors.
- Conduct effective orientation and check-in meetings; clarify expectations.
- Provide feedback on a consistent basis; don't wait until there is a problem.
- Be a good listener; check for signs of anxiety or confusion.
- Send supervisors thank-you notes and other tokens of appreciation.

Tips on Ways to Assess the Learning Potential of a Workplace

- Observe or shadow your students at work; see it through their eyes.
- Review job descriptions; interview the supervisor.
- Participate in mini-internships and engage in work that students will be doing.

Tools



- B-SAFE Safety Checklist
- Frequently Asked Questions about Student Internships
- Internship Orientation Checklist
- Teacher Tip Sheet
- Work-Based Learning Program Evaluation
- Workplace Partner's All Aspects Internship Planning Form
- Workplace Partner Guide to Successful Internships

Concurrent Learning Activities

As the classroom teacher, you have the opportunity to help enhance and expand students' work-based learning experiences beyond the hours they spend at the workplace. Students' experiences at the workplace should be integrated with activities inside the classroom. Classroom activities and assignments that can be completed at the workplace support the students' growing understanding of All Aspects of an Industry, SCANS skills and the connection between academic and workplace learning. *All Aspects Problem-Based Learning Activities* can help you create experiences for students.

All Aspects of an Industry can be studied in depth in the classroom, providing opportunities for students to explore workplace problems and to acquire the skills to help address them. The following situations are ideal for teachers to adapt into assignments. You might consider turning some into team-teaching situations or expanding them into project-based activities.

Organizational Chart

An interesting activity students can conduct at the workplace is to develop an agency/organization chart. This activity provides an opportunity for students to create a comprehensive view of the various roles, departments and divisions within the organization.

- Have the student create an organizational chart for the entire agency/organization and his or her division/department.
- Have the student indicate where their supervisor is on the organizational chart.
- Make sure the student lists the job title for each position and includes the names of the various people who hold the positions.
- Ask the students if they see the organization operating the way the chart suggests, i.e. whether communication and/or authority flows in the way depicted or if there are other people in the workplace who seem to have powerful responsibilities though they may not be at the top of the hierarchy.

Informational Interview

Have the student identify an individual in the organization who holds the type of position they would like to have in five to ten years and/or identify an individual in the organization who holds a position they know very little about but are interested in. Have the student conduct an informational interview with the person and present their findings to the class.

All Aspects Investigative Interview

Students can research all aspects of an industry at a workplace by interviewing workplace partners and employees about the various aspects.



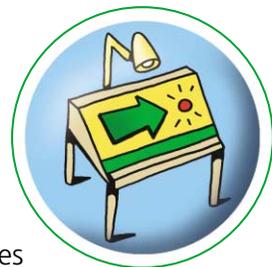
Tools

- All Aspects Investigative Interview
- All Aspects Problem-Based Learning Activities
- Informational Interview

The Importance of Reflection ³

Students involved in work-based learning should reflect both verbally and in writing on what they have experienced and learned. This helps to internalize the learning and skills they have developed and promotes self-awareness and personal assessment.

Reflection refers to any process that a person uses to think critically about their experiences. Writing, reading, speaking, listening, discussing and presenting are all possible methods of reflection. It is in the act of reflecting that a person forms understanding from the experience, extends that understanding to other situations, and comes to "own" the knowledge he/she has acquired. For example, we are bombarded with experiences and bits of information every day, most of which we ignore or attend to in a cursory way. We learn the most from experiences that draw our attention, cause us to sit up and take notice, or make us step back and think.



Learning happens through a mix of theory and practice, thought and action, observations and interaction. Reflection is the key to getting meaning from any experience, and to linking experiences with specific learning standards and with SCANS and similar skills.

Reflection is an essential part of work-based learning. Reflection activities serve a number of functions during the course of an experience. These activities can be used to:

- Help students think critically about their experiences;
- Help students make personal connections to their experiences and to their learning;
- Guide the learning process and deepen or extend the learning that takes place;
- Integrate work-based learning with academic content and learning standards;
- Cause students to think about and internalize the skills they use (such as interpersonal skills, planning skills, or other SCANS skills) in work-based learning;
- Provide a tool for students to use to self-assess (e.g., what they are learning, what they find difficult, how their group is functioning; etc); and
- Assess student learning, group process, or any other aspect of work-based learning.

Reflection Throughout the Process

It is important that students are given an opportunity to reflect before, during and after their work-based learning experience so they may shape the course of their learning and handle problems as they arise. Reflection on students' attitudes and expectations prior to the experience is especially important if students will be working in environments such as nursing homes, hospitals, hospices, animal shelters, homeless shelters and soup kitchens. All of these places can bring students face-to-face with an aspect of life that may be new and perhaps uncomfortable for them.

³ Adapted from: Close-up Foundation Online Quarterly: Reflection, March 8, 2000, and Project-Based Learning: A Strategy for Teaching and Learning, prepared by the Center for Youth Development and Education, January 1999.

It is not enough to ask students to reflect. They must also get regular feedback on their reflective responses. Unfortunately, sometimes teachers collect reflective journal responses or ask students to do a formal verbal report or a final paper only at the conclusion of the program. This approach does not allow students to learn from their mistakes, correct assumptions, become a more careful observer or learn to challenge their stereotypes. Even if an adult diligently adds notes and comments to end-of-term reflections, students are less likely to read and learn from these notes and comments.

Ideally, the teacher and/or supervisor can provide feedback to student reflections on a weekly basis. This can be difficult when a teacher has multiple students engaged in work-based learning, or when a workplace partner manages several staff members. One way for teachers to facilitate feedback on reflection is to institute peer read-around as a way of getting every paper read and helping to bring to the surface the larger questions and problems associated with work-based learning and intellectual growth. This process converts the written reflective process into an oral reflective process.

Reflection can be sorted into three types.

- Cognitive reflection helps students examine the new knowledge and skills they acquire from their experience: information, data and alternative ways of knowing or perceiving. Curriculum links are usually addressed as part of cognitive reflection.
- Affective reflection leads students to examine what they feel as a result of an experience through their emotions or attitudes. Drafting a thank-you letter to the workplace host offers an opportunity for affective reflection.
- Process reflection examines what students learn from experiencing a process: planning, consequences of one decision-making scheme versus another or working with others. The *Workplace Safety Curricula* tool points to several programs that support process reflection.

Journals are the most commonly used reflection tools, but it is important to recognize that there are several modes by which students can and should reflect. Verbal, written and performance reflections can all allow students scheduled, structured time to review, think about and analyze an experience to gain deeper understanding.⁴

Journals can be used with students for multiple purposes. What is critical when having students use a journal is that you are clear about what the expectations are for the assignment. Consider whether or not the journal is for the students' own processing or if feedback and analysis from the teacher will be expected. This will affect what the students write and how each student will utilize the feedback. Whatever model of journaling you choose for students, they will need to know whether and for what purpose you will read the entries. In the *Tools* section of this toolkit, you will find one example of an internship journal assignment.

⁴ Adapted from *Project-Based Learning: A Strategy for Teaching and Learning*, prepared by the Center for Youth Development and Education, January 1999.

Personal journals can be useful to students as a place to simply capture their experiences and responses to those experiences, without regard for mechanics or specific learning outcomes. Personal journals should be snapshots filled with sights, sounds, smells, concerns, insights, doubts, fears and critical questions about issues, people and most importantly the student him/herself. A personal journal isn't a work log of tasks, event, times and dates. In a personal journal students should write freely, grammar and spelling should not be stressed in the writing (unless and until the student turns one of the entries into a final draft for the group or teacher). Honesty is the most important ingredient to successful personal journals.

Learning journals are places for students to reflect on experiences and articulate how those personal experiences help them learn, expand, reinforce or apply specific learning standards and or SCANS skills.

Learning journals can include:

- Descriptions of the experiences, research or other tasks done in the work-based learning experience;
- Reflection on how these tasks directly or indirectly illustrate learning standards (e.g., What did I find out from my dig with the archeologist that illustrates human impact on the environment?);
- Reflection on where else the student sees evidence/applications of this learning standard;
- Thoughts about the implications of what the student has learned (e.g., What do I think archeologists will find in a thousand years based on our current impact on the environment?); and
- Reflection on the SCANS skills that were learned or used in experiences (e.g., What did I learn about interpersonal communication from interacting with the archeologist? How did I use teamwork in the experience? How well did I do as part of the team and how could I improve?).

As part of the learning journal, students can also assess themselves, their learning and their group participation, progress on work tasks, improvements to be made, places where teacher or supervisor help is needed, questions for which they need answers or clarification.

The Classroom Journal

In this exercise, students reflect upon their classmates' and teacher's journal entries. The collective experience is shared in this way without the necessity of face-to-face time. Prompt your students by writing the first entry. Then each day have a different student write an entry that reflects upon the most recent contribution before his/her own, and add new journal material for the student who gets the journal the next day to reflect upon.

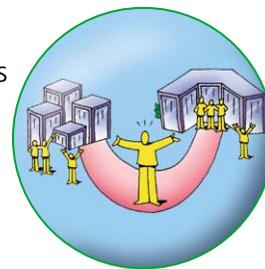


Tools

- Portfolio Rubric
- Internship Journal

Beyond the Work-Based Learning Experience

The support teachers provide students after their work-based learning experience is significant. Connecting the students' workplace experience to their next step helps keep the learning continuous and dynamic for both students and their supervisors.



Activities with Worksite Supervisors

The final visit with the worksite supervisor is a critical moment in the learning process. Take advantage of this meeting to help the student and worksite supervisor reflect together on the learning and growth that have taken place.

Have the student and the supervisor evaluate the experience using the *Work-Based Learning Program Evaluation*. These documents will help you with your program's continuous improvement process.

Send one copy of the *Work-Based Learning Plan and Evaluation*, the *Work-Based Learning Permission Form* and the *Work-Based Learning Contract* for each enrolled student to Susan Engelmann at the Office of Career and Technical Education. Phone: (913) 279-2215, E-mail: suengel@kckps.org.

Activities with Students

The following activities provide students with opportunities to take their experience to another level, making it significant to their personal career development and goals.

Connecting the Dots Between Academic and Workplace Skills

Divide students into two groups. Have one group brainstorm and list all the skills they observed being used during their work-based learning experience, and the other brainstorm and list all the skills they use at school, both academically and socially. Reconvene and have students compare lists. What skills do they use in school that are used at the workplace? What opportunities do they have in school to further develop workplace skills? Discuss how students can develop workplace skills outside of school.

Seeing is Believing

Have students reflect on their observations during their work-based learning experience and compare these with their high school experiences and/or expectations. Discuss selected topics (for example, How does workplace communication differ from that at the high school? How does the workplace dress code differ from the school's? How do employees' workspaces differ from students'—and what do students prefer? How does workplace technology differ from the school's?) Have students follow up with suggestions or an essay regarding how schools can prepare them for the transition between school and work.

Oral Presentation

Students can complete an oral presentation of their experience for their class. Presentations can include observations about the workplace or the workplace host. Students can present about occupations they observed, skills they observed that were necessary to perform work duties; additional skills identified as desirable or beneficial to this occupation. Valuable presentations also include an analysis of additional necessary training, education and experience or steps that could be taken for students to develop a career pathway for this occupation. As students identify skills for each occupation, a giant or master list of skills can be developed, on which a new skill is added when mentioned and is checked when repeated. Discuss skills that are most common, skills that are often identified as necessary and skills that are most desirable. Have students identify how they can further develop skills listed.

Student Evaluation Meeting

After the students have received their evaluations and you have met with the students and worksite supervisors to discuss them, have a meeting with each student and go over the grading and evaluation rubric and discuss the student's grade. This is important when the student has completed an internship or service learning project.

Personal Action Plan

Have students determine an action plan for their own career. Have them determine what their next steps are in developing their SCANS skills, in selecting a formal educational path and in getting exposure in the workplace to experiences that will help them progress toward their goals. Work with them to develop a timeline and benchmarks. Have them identify which activities in their plan will be helpful to them even if their career goal changes.

Interview Anecdotes

Have students get into small groups. Provide common job interview questions to each group and ask each individual to craft a sixty-second story to respond to one of the questions using an experience from their work-based learning experience to illustrate. These stories should illustrate the answer to the interview question with an anecdote. Have the students participate in interview panels and evaluate their peers according to a public speaking rubric.



Guides

- Teacher Guide to the Work-Based Learning Plan



Tools

- Work-Based Learning Contract
- Work-Based Learning Permission Form
- Work-Based Learning Program Evaluation

The Next Step

At the end of the work-based learning experience, it is important to support students in taking the next step. Whether in the classroom as a group activity, as part of an end-of-program presentation or in a writing assignment, students should be given an opportunity to plan their next step based on the learning they have experienced.

The classroom connection is an important component of any work-based learning program. As a teacher, you are the partner who can see the whole picture and help the students to make the most of the experience. Take advantage of the classroom environment in order to help students learn from each other's experience and support one another in their growth and development both academically and in the SCANS skills and competencies.