

Quality Work-Based Learning

Guide to Creating Quality Work-Based Learning

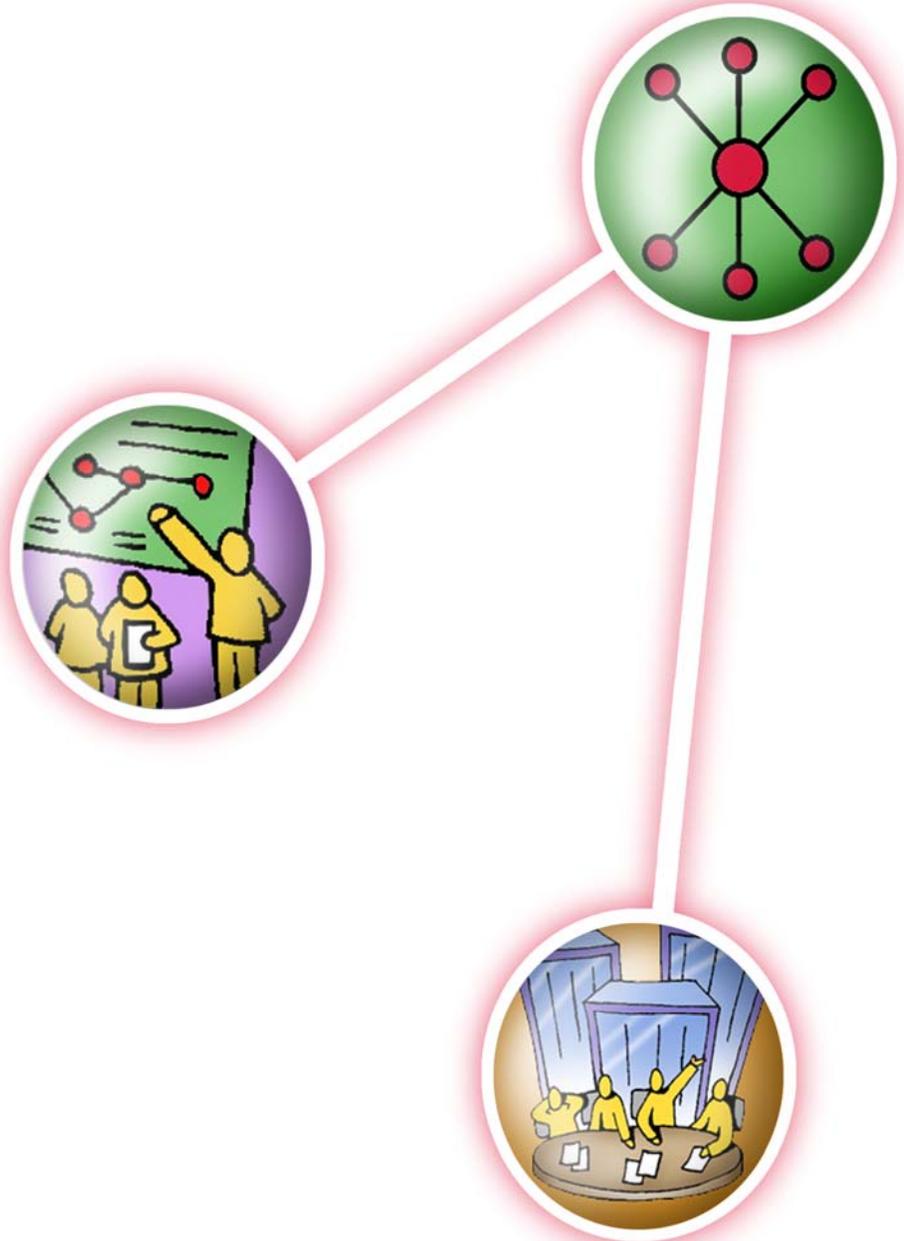


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Guide to Creating Quality Work-Based Learning

Introduction

Creating Quality Work-Based Learning provides 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 in this guide focus on the “must-haves” for quality experiences that have powerful impacts on the career development potential for youth and young adults.



What is Quality Work-Based Learning?

Work-based learning is defined as activities that occur at a workplace, providing structured learning experiences for youth and young adults through exposure to a range of occupations. Youth learn by observing and/or actually doing real work. Learning in the workplace supports academic learning and promotes the development of broad transferable skills. Work-based learning experiences that incorporate the quality elements described below are considered Quality Work-Based Learning.

Work-based learning is a key element of a rigorous and relevant education. Properly designed and supported, work-based learning provides a practical context for academics. It enables youth and young adults to acquire the attitudes, skills and knowledge needed to succeed in today’s workplace. This guide is designed to help define quality elements so that all work-based learning meets the highest standards.

Quality Work-Based Learning can help to better prepare youth and young adults for an economy that demands that workers have strong academic and career knowledge and skills, are adaptable to change, and are prepared for lifelong learning. The strategy of Quality Work-Based Learning utilizes community partners in an effort to provide youth and young adults with the opportunity to learn the necessary workplace skills required for success in the new economy. All reference to work-based learning in this guide implies the presence of a set of defined quality elements.

The Quality Elements

Quality Work-Based Learning is

- Designed to enhance the learning of skills and workplace knowledge;
- Structured to be safe, legal, and measurable;
- Supported by appropriate planning and training; and
- Connected to other programs that work.

Quality Work-Based Learning is designed to enhance the learning of skills and workplace knowledge.

Work-based learning assists in the development of workplace awareness. It helps build the skills required for specific occupations by exposing youth and young adults to all aspects of an industry¹ and the multiple career options available at a workplace. Work-based learning engages

¹ 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 www.newwaystowork.org

youth and young adults in their own learning and provides multiple opportunities for reflection on the experience, both verbally and in writing. Experiences are designed to directly support academic learning.

Quality Work-Based Learning is structured to be safe, legal, and measurable.

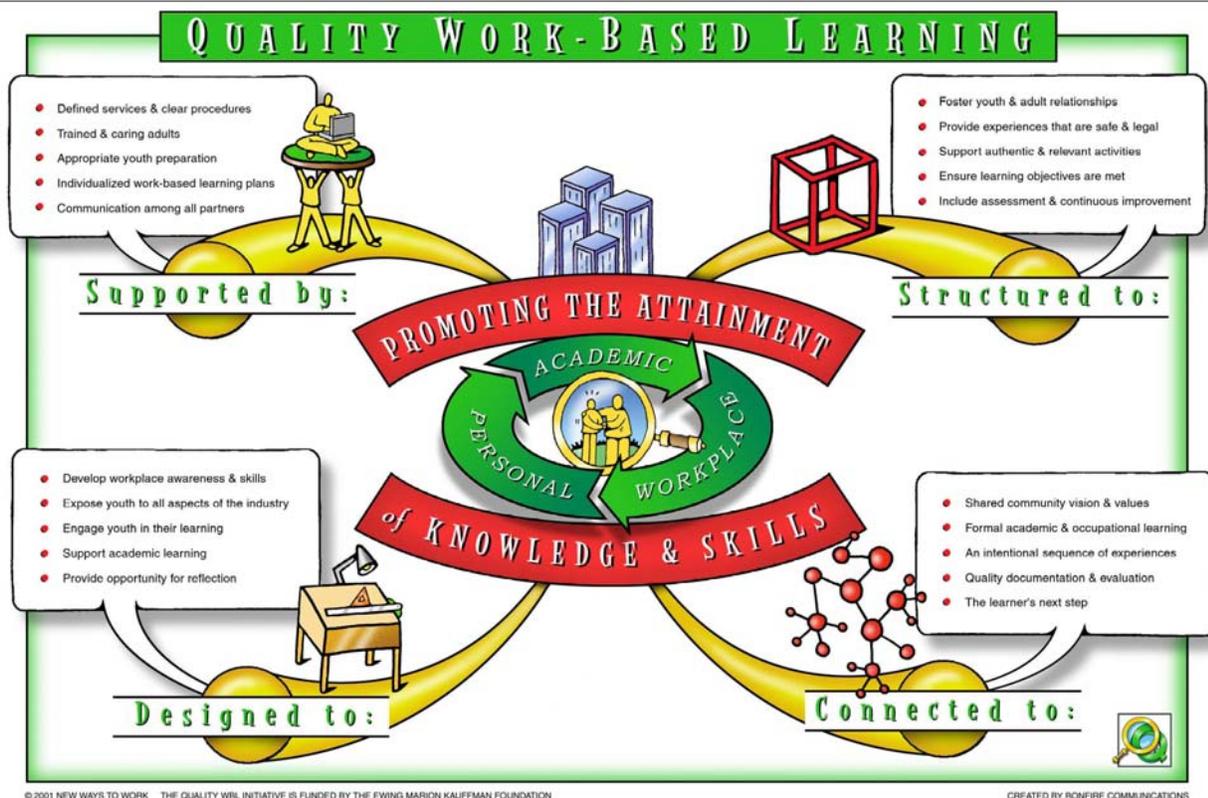
Work-based learning provides authentic and relevant learning experiences that are safe, legal and in compliance with state and federal regulations. Learning objectives are met through ongoing assessment and continuous improvement activities.

Quality Work-Based Learning is supported by appropriate planning and training.

Work-based learning has defined services and procedures to manage expectations and foster communication among all partners. Youth and young adults are served through individualized work-based learning plans. Both youth and young adults are sufficiently prepared and supported throughout the experience. Part of this preparation is providing appropriate safety and health training for young workers and helping them understand their rights and responsibilities as employees.

Quality Work-Based Learning is connected to other programs that work.

Work-based learning should support a community-wide vision and collective expectations for both academic and occupational learning. It provides a planned sequence of experiences that ties together academic and career-related steps in a developmentally appropriate process.



skills, underlying principles of technology, labor and community issues, health and safety issues, and environmental issues, related to such industry or industry sector.” See *All Aspects of an Industry* for a detailed list of the aspects.

² The Quality Work-Based Learning chart helps to describe the elements necessary to build experiences for young people that most effectively promote the attainment of knowledge and skills in academic, workplace, and personal arenas.

All work-based learning experiences should:

- Be developmentally appropriate;
- Include an orientation for all parties;
- Identify learning objectives;
- Explore all aspects of an industry;
- Develop the SCANS competencies or other workplace skills competencies;
- Assess performance;
- Provide opportunities for reflection;
- Link to appropriate next steps; and
- Be documented and recorded; and
- Comply with state and federal labor laws.

The Continuum of Quality Work-Based Learning

Work-based learning is most effective when youth and young adults are provided a developmental continuum of activities that address career awareness, exploration, and preparation. This is accomplished through a series of workplace exposures combined with and supported by classroom and/or other learning activities over time. Youth and young adults should be provided with experiences commensurate with their knowledge, skills, and abilities and appropriate to their age and stage of development.

The following section provides brief definitions of the range of work-based learning activities.

Career Awareness Activities

Career awareness activities are designed to make youth and young adults aware of the range of careers and/or occupations in an industry. These activities help youth and young adults begin to understand the skills required for specific occupations and the expectations of the workplace. Career awareness activities may include workplace tours, field trips, or informational interviews.

Workplace Tours and Field Trips: Career awareness activities in which youth and young adults visit a workplace, learn about the business, meet employees, ask questions, and observe work in progress.

Informational Interview: A career awareness activity in which youth and young adults formally interview a workplace partner about his or her industry and chosen profession. The interview includes discussion of the career itself, duties and daily activities of the job, and the level of education required to be successful. Youth and young adults should also explore growth opportunities in the industry and salary ranges for different occupations.

Career Exploration Activities

Career exploration activities provide youth and young adults with the opportunity to explore fields of interest related to their career goals and academic learning. Youth and young adults work closely with an adult supervisor and participate in appropriate hands-on workplace experiences. Career exploration activities may include such things as job shadows and career mentoring,

Job Shadow: A career exploration activity in which youth and young adults observe the workday of a professional, interact with clients or customers, and attend meetings and other appointments. Job shadows are designed to help youth and young adults explore a field of interest while developing research skills and building occupational knowledge through a facilitated, active learning process.

Career Mentoring: A career exploration activity in which youth and young adults are matched one-to-one with an adult professional in a chosen field of interest to explore a career and related issues. The career mentor serves as a resource for youth and young adults by sharing insights and providing guidance about the workplace, careers, and education.

Career Preparation Activities

Career preparation activities provide an in-depth discovery of a particular career, linking the skills utilized in the workplace with academic learning. These activities also allow for the development of career and occupational skills. Career preparation activities may include work experience, internship, or apprenticeship.

Work Experience: A career preparation activity in which youth and young adults are at a workplace doing real work for pay. They are held to the same expectations as all employees. The workplace supervisor conducts evaluations based on workplace expectations and performance. These experiences range from regular, paid employment to subsidized employment and learning-rich work experience.

Learning-Rich Work Experience: A career preparation activity that is highly structured to promote learning through paid work. Youth and young adults participate in planning the work and problem-solving. Worksite Supervisors act as coaches. The experiences are generally based on projects (instead of tasks) where youth and young adults interact with other employees, often work in teams, and are paid an appropriate wage.

Internship: A career preparation activity in which youth and young adults are placed in a business for a defined period of time to participate in and observe work firsthand within a given industry. Internships are highly structured, time-limited experiences that occur at a workplace. Unlike work experience, internships often allow for a rotation through a number of departments and job functions.

Apprenticeship: A career preparation activity designed to prepare an individual, generally a high school graduate, for careers in the skilled crafts and trades. Apprenticeships consist of paid, on-the-job training supplemented by related classroom instruction. Apprenticeship training usually requires one to five years to complete, depending on which occupation is chosen.

Seven Simple Guidelines for Creating Quality Work-Based Learning

Caring adults, both at the school and the workplace, can assist with creating safe and legal work-based learning experiences for youth and young adults by paying attention to seven straightforward guidelines.

These guidelines are designed as easy-to-remember rules of thumb for youth program staff and workplace partners designing work-based learning experiences. These guidelines are consistent with and supported by a number of laws and regulations designed to protect youth and young adults when they are in the workplace.

The Seven Simple Guidelines will help provide positive and successful work-based learning experiences for youth and young adults, particularly those under the age of eighteen. Worksite Supervisors and/or program coordinators responsible for creating and managing these experiences should be prepared to follow and address each of these guidelines when placing youth and young adults in work-based learning experiences.

The Seven Simple Guidelines are:

1. Plan and prepare for successful experiences;
2. Maximize learning;
3. Provide effective supervision;
4. Promote safety;
5. Manage the hours a youth is at the workplace;
6. Pay when required; and
7. Provide ongoing support.

Following these guidelines will allow youth to benefit from exposure to the workplace and help develop an educated, quality workforce.

Guideline 1: Plan and Prepare for Successful Experiences

Planning and preparation make all the difference in the success of work-based learning and increase the likelihood of expanded workplace partner participation. Deliberate attention ahead of time to how the seven simple guidelines will be addressed will ensure a quality experience for youth and young adults, workplace partners, and WBL Coordinators as well.

Structural elements, such as the responsibilities of all parties involved and insurance coverage, should be determined prior to the experience itself. A clear understanding of the expectations, duration and objectives of the work-based learning experience is essential. A primary contact as well as the individual who will supervise the young or young adult should be identified at the workplace.

In order to maximize learning and promote safety, orientation and preparation activities should occur at the workplace. Work-Based Learning (WBL) Coordinators, Worksite Supervisors, and other participating employees should be adequately prepared. For internships, a work-based learning plan outlines projects or tasks the youth and young adults will undertake and includes articulation of the desired learning objectives. The plan should be jointly developed by and shared with the youth or young adult, Worksite Supervisor, and the WBL coordinator.

At the workplace, youth and young adults should receive a thorough orientation. The orientation should cover the nature of the business, workplace culture, and any safety, health or legal considerations associated with the experience. Youth and young adults should be held to the same expectations as all employees in terms of timeliness, dress, and workplace conduct. Connections should be made between the work, the skills required, and academic learning. Adequate preparation combined with structured opportunities for youth and young adults to reflect on the experience is critical to the success and value of work-based learning.

Strategies that Work

Provide a thorough orientation for youth and young adults and workplace partners.

Orientation sets the context for learning and supports partners in their preparation for the opportunities that work-based learning experiences provide. WBL Coordinators should make sure that youth and young adults are prepared for any workplace experience with the skills, knowledge, and abilities needed to succeed. The orientation should be clear and specific and

should begin prior to the first day at the workplace. It should cover the skills to be explored, projects or tasks to be sampled, and the roles and expectations of all parties. Workplace culture, appropriate dress, and an understanding of safety, health, and legal considerations also should be addressed. Youth and young adults should be introduced to the workplace skills that will be evaluated, made aware of all aspects of an industry, and taught how to craft measurable learning objectives.

Promote a shared understanding of the expectations of the experience.

Rich learning experiences at a workplace are supported by good communication right from the start. WBL Coordinators and workplace partners should have a shared understanding of the roles, expectations, and objectives of the experience.

Coach youth and young adults in setting personal goals and establishing learning objectives.

The program orientation is an appropriate setting in which youth and young adults can become aware of and articulate skills, career interests, and plans to expand their knowledge and awareness. WBL Coordinators and Worksite Supervisors are responsible for supporting youth and young adults through coaching and mentoring to establish personal goals and learning objectives to be achieved during the workplace experience.

Treat youth and young adults as regular employees.

In work situations, youth and young adults will learn and produce more if they feel they are in an authentic work environment. Youth and young adults should be oriented and held to the same expectations as other employees in terms of timeliness, dress, and workplace conduct. Youth and young adults participating in internships or work experience should receive the same orientation as any new employee.

Guideline 2: Maximize Learning

Quality work-based learning experiences allow youth and young adults to acquire new skills and gain knowledge about the world of work. Youth and young adults can be productive in the workplace while applying what they have learned in the secondary/post-secondary classroom, or through other activities. Many academic standards can be learned within the work-based learning experience.

WBL Coordinators play an important role in communicating with Worksite Supervisors to help balance the desired learning and educational objectives with the needs and resources of the workplace. WBL Coordinators help make connections between what youth and young adults learn at the workplace and what they might learn through the classroom or their involvement in other learning rich activities.

Prior to the experience, youth and young adults should understand the learning objectives and how classroom learning can be applied at the workplace. In addition, youth and young adults should be encouraged to set their own expectations and develop an awareness of the work to be accomplished. Youth and young adults benefit most when they know that their experience is a real one rather than made-up work or simulation.

Strategies that Work

Make ties to the classroom.

Classroom experiences that prepare youth and young adults for their time in the workplace can maximize the quality of those experiences. Prior to the experience, youth and young adults should research the business, field of interest, and selected occupations with which they will come in contact. Additional research can be conducted on the skills, education, and training required for particular occupations as well as approximate salary ranges for different positions.

Youth and young adults should come to the experience prepared with a list of questions to ask employers and employees.

Support academic standards.

Weaving academic standards and classroom objectives into work-based learning experiences reinforces the lessons that youth and young adults may be learning at school. Youth and young adults need assistance to see the links between academic standards and practical skills by connecting classroom goals to workplace opportunities before, during, and after the work-based learning experience.

Exposes youth and young adults to all aspects of an industry.

All Aspects of an Industry identifies nine aspects that are common to any enterprise. Youth and young adults should gain experience and understanding of the associated concepts and skills to be successful. For shorter-term work-based learning experiences, such as workplace tours or job shadows, youth and young adults may be given a tour and overview of the business that introduces them to as many departments or job functions as possible. This could include personnel, finance, production, sales, and marketing, among others. For experiences longer in duration, such as internships or paid work experiences, youth and young adults should be given the opportunity to interact with and ask questions of different types of employees. In doing so, youth and young adults learn about job tasks, skills used, and the education, experience or training needed for various positions. Structured examples of experiences can occur through a rotational job shadow, where youth and young adults spend time in multiple departments, or work in teams with employees from various departments or occupations.

Involve youth in setting expectations.

Youth and young adults take responsibility for their learning when they are charged with setting expectations about what they hope to learn at the experience. In internships youth and young adults should work with their Worksite Supervisor and WBL Coordinator to develop measurable learning objectives outlined in a *Work-Based Learning Plan*.

Develop measurable learning objectives.

The creation of learning objectives helps motivate youth and young adults to get the most out of their experience and assess the extent and value of classroom learning when applied to a job situation. Learning objectives also help ensure that youth and young adults meet expectations of the Worksite Supervisor to learn new workplace skills and develop competencies. A measurable learning objective is a statement that precisely describes something that a youth or young adult intends to accomplish during an internship. Each learning objective involves new learning, expanded growth, or improvement on the job, and benefits both youth and young adults as well as the workplace.

Develop a Work-Based Learning Plan.

During longer work-based learning experiences such as internships, a *Work-Based Learning Plan (WBL Plan)* ensures that learning objectives will be accomplished. The *WBL Plan* documents what youth and young adults will learn and do while engaged in their internships. It serves as a guide for youth and young adults and the Worksite

Supervisor and as an evaluation tool to measure what has been accomplished during the experience.

Setting Learning Objectives will encourage growth in four areas:

- Workplace skill development;
- Academic enrichment;
- Career awareness; and
- Personal improvement.

Along with the Worksite Supervisor, youth and young adults should be involved in creating learning objectives and later in the experience, in evaluating accomplishments. The elements of the learning objectives and *WBL Plan* are developed and evaluated by the youth and young adults and the Worksite Supervisor.

Provide opportunities for reflection.

Personal reflection helps an individual 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 tools for reflection. It is in the act of reflecting that a person forms understanding and knowledge from the experience, extends that understanding to other situations, and comes to “own” the experience and the learning. Reflection is the key to getting meaning from any experience and will enable youth and young adults to link experiences with specific academic learning standards and with workplace skills standards such as SCANS, Equipped for the Future, 21st Century Skills, or others.

Document and measure the learning.

Youth and young adults benefit from awareness and validation of the learning that happens at the workplace. Tools and processes that identify and measure progress in acquiring skills should be used to document the experience. A good *Work-Based Learning Plan* is a tool to help document learning.

Guideline 3: Provide Effective Supervision

Effective supervision is a key element reinforcing a work-based learning experience. WBL Coordinators should provide expertise and resources to Worksite Supervisors to assist them in successfully mentoring youth and young adults at the worksite. Effective supervision helps youth and young adults meet the needs of the workplace, enhance learning opportunities, and contribute to a quality work-based learning experience.

Worksite Supervisors and WBL Coordinators should provide frequent feedback to youth and young adults, demonstrate and explain key tasks, and regularly assess performance. Effective supervisors function as coaches. Supervisors should receive an orientation and be provided ongoing support that suits their schedule, usually at the workplace.

Effective ongoing supervision is an essential part of enhancing any worker’s performance and skill development. Supervision of youth and young adults requires many of the same skills that are needed to effectively manage any employee. These skills include understanding and communicating workplace expectations, providing feedback about performance, and coaching to motivate future performance.

Youth and young adults need supervision that is nurturing and supports not only their understanding of the task at hand but also the learning objectives of the assignment. In addition to exploring the business or industry and learning the skills required to be successful on the job, youth and young adults develop work maturity skills. These skills include being punctual, diligent, responsible, and receptive to supervision. Supervisors should help youth and young adults understand that developing good work behaviors can improve their future career success.

Strategies that Work

Provide an overview of the workplace.

A comprehensive overview of the work environment helps youth and young adults to acclimate quickly and begin their work-based learning experience ready to be effective in both work and

learning. The Worksite Supervisor should be assisted in developing an effective workplace overview that covers:

- The nature of the company's business;
- A review of the company's organizational chart;
- The workplace culture including dress and behavior;
- A review of the workplace safety and health program;
- Office procedures;
- Tasks required;
- The connections between the needs of the workplace and what the youth or young adult is learning in school; and
- A tour of the workplace.

Conduct orientations, training and support sessions for supervisors in the workplace.

Workplace partners appreciate WBL Coordinators using brief, targeted, on-site approaches to orient and train supervisors and other workplace partners. In workplaces where multiple youth and young adults are placed, one successful strategy is to arrange for time on a staff meeting agenda to discuss supervision, performance, learning progress, and other issues. Youth and young adults experience the greatest success in workplaces where management and direct supervision staff understand the goals of work-based learning.

Help the supervisor teach new skills.

There are many ways to teach new skills. Research indicates that people learn best in an authentic context—that is, they learn by using skills and reflecting on their work. Like most people, youth and young adults need to have an interest or willingness to learn. They should have the opportunity to try the new skill in a real context, demonstrate it, and reflect on and evaluate the learning. Supervisors can assist youth and young adults with learning by being prepared, describing and demonstrating the tasks, observing and supporting the youth or young adult while he or she performs the task, allowing them to work independently, and providing opportunities for reflection on his or her work and learning. For more information on supporting the Worksite Supervisor, refer to the handout included at the end of this guide titled *The Work-Learning Process: What Every Worksite Supervisor Should Know*.

Encourage ongoing evaluation.

Regular performance reviews introduce youth and young adults to what it is like to be evaluated in the workplace. The evaluation process gives the supervisor an opportunity to articulate progress and assess the skills that have been acquired. It also provides a vehicle for youth and young adults to understand and document their challenges and successes against work expectations and serves as a communication tool for WBL Coordinators.

Assist the supervisor with coaching youth and young adults.

There are at least two roles an adult plays in providing effective supervision—the boss and the coach. The boss monitors performance, provides direct feedback, makes sure that the work gets done, and understands the consequences if it does not. As the coach, the supervisor encourages youth and young adults through the process of what they are doing and learning. The coach challenges them to learn from and improve their performance, serves as a resource, and acts as a professional partner.

The key to being a good coach is to offer advice rather than providing answers and to support learning through exploration. This does not mean that answers or directions are never given. If factual information is available that will help youth and young adults do a better job, such as the budget for a project or where to find company information, then the supervisor should provide it.

However, in most cases, there are multiple options, multiple solutions, and multiple answers. The responsibility of the coach is to encourage the youth and young adults to find solutions, not to provide the answer. WBL Coordinators should support and encourage the development of the coaching skills by Worksite Supervisors.

Guideline 4: Promote Safety

Workplaces can be safe learning places if a few simple rules are applied. Youth and young adults should be placed in experiences that consider their age, experience and maturity, and that provide for learning and working in a safe environment. The application of common sense, caution, and strict attention to the safety and health restrictions placed on what youth and young adults may do in the workplace lead to both a safe and legal work-based learning experience.

WBL Coordinators play a critical role in creating safe and healthful workplace experiences and helping to protect young workers. Programs that place youth and young adults in workplaces offer an important venue for teaching the skills that workers need. By integrating job safety and health information with orientation, training, and other activities, youth, young adults, and workplace partners enter the relationship with the knowledge needed to stay safe. WBL Coordinators should use a curriculum designed to teach youth and young adults about workplace safety and health. They should also familiarize themselves with the relevant safety and health restrictions as well as what youth and young adults can and cannot do in the workplace.

There are thousands of work-based learning activities that are appropriate and learning-rich for youth and young adults. However, some tasks are prohibited. Youth under the age of 18 cannot be exposed to hazardous materials or be asked to work with power tools, perform dangerous tasks or be expected to lift heavy objects. See the *Laws Pertaining to the Employment of Youth Factsheet*.

Strategies that Work

Design experiences that work for youth and young adults and the workplace and that meet safety standards.

WBL Coordinators have designed creative solutions that provide safe work and learning environments for youth especially in occupations and industries that pose potential hazards to young workers. WBL Coordinators should learn about what youth can do and should work with employers and other workplace partners to create experiences that meet safety standards. Details about what youth can and cannot do are included in the *Laws Pertaining to the Employment of Youth Factsheet*.

Provide training on legal, safety, and health issues.

Training in occupational safety and health as well as relevant labor and personnel issues is an integral part of youth and young adult's learning all aspects of an industry in which they are placed. Concepts that need to be covered include:

- Common safety and health hazards that they may face on the job;
- Control measures that can reduce or eliminate hazards;
- Safety and child labor laws;
- Approaches to use with supervisors about safety and health problems; and
- Sources of safety information and help.

WBL Coordinators should provide a workplace safety and health curriculum to all youth and young adults participating in work-based learning.

Prepare youth and young adults to be safety and health conscious.

While workplace-specific safety and health training provided by the WBL Coordinator and employer are critical, youth and young adults should also have the opportunity to develop and practice general safety and health skills that they will carry with them from job to job. Youth and young adults can be trained to monitor safety and health issues for both their workplace partners and themselves, providing an additional skill set for future employment. These skills include recognizing hazards in any workplace, understanding how hazards can be controlled, knowing about their rights to a safe workplace, and communicating effectively when problems arise at work. WBL Coordinators should prepare youth and young adults to ask their supervisor questions about safety. See the *Laws Pertaining to the Employment of Youth Factsheet*, for more information.

Promote and support a safe work environment.

Employers have internal systems that raise workers' awareness of and protect them from safety and health hazards. Youth and young adults should be educated about company practices and policies regarding safety and health, and be included in staff trainings or orientations regarding workplace safety.

Effective safety programs include:

- Information and training for all workers about hazards they may face;
- A system for workers to report hazards without fear of being fired or punished;
- A system for inspecting the workplace and correcting hazards promptly; and
- Supervisor training.

Youth and young adults can become vital resources to employers who wish to improve their safety and health programs. Youth and young adults can map the hazards found in work areas, review safety procedures for clarity, identify hazards, and suggest practical solutions.

All youth and young adults, including those in unpaid work-based learning experiences, must be provided with the resources needed for a safe work environment. WBL Coordinators select and approve workplaces prior to placing youth and young adults in order to become familiar with the workplace and identify possible safety or health issues. In cases where youth and young adults have paid jobs that are being developed into internships, WBL Coordinators should make sure the employers are provided with strategies to help them assure a safe work environment.

A safe work environment includes:

- Safety training for activities or tasks that will be performed by the youth or young adult;
- Training in proper use of equipment;
- Access to proper safety gear;
- Training about what to do if accidents or injuries occur;
- Appropriate supervision; and
- A clean and organized work area.

Guideline 5: Manage the Hours a Young Person Is at the Workplace

The time youth and young adults spend at the workplace in a given day or week should be balanced with the regular demands of school and other activities in which they are involved. State and federal child labor laws, which apply to employment situations, are designed to provide sensible limits to the number of hours that youth may work. See *Laws Pertaining to the Employment of Youth Factsheet*.

Hours that Youth May Work

The hours that youth may work are governed by child labor laws. Under the Fair Labor Standards Act, children ages 16 and 17, can work between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. except from June 1 through Labor Day, when evening hours are extended to 9 p.m. All youth under the age of 18 who have not graduated from high school or received a GED must attend school and are prohibited from working during school hours.

Number of Hours that Youth May Work

In California, youth between the ages 14 and 15, may work up to 3 hours on a school day, 18 hours in a school week, 8 hours on a non-school day, 40 hours on a non-school week. Please be aware that there are both State and Federal Child Labor Laws. In most cases, the more restrictive laws prevail. See *Laws Pertaining to the Employment of Youth Factsheet* for more information on this subject.

Strategies that Work

Develop a time management plan with youth and young adults.

Balancing school, work, and other responsibilities requires time management skills. Work-based learning experiences are ideal for helping youth and young adults build those skills. Youth and young adults should take some responsibility for determining the number of hours they allocate to a work-based learning experience. WBL Coordinators should have youth and young adults map the number of hours they are in school, study, sleep, eat, socialize, spend with family, and participate in other activities. They should then help them identify the appropriate number of hours they can spend in work-based learning activities, including time getting to and from work.

Inform education and workplace partners about the appropriate hours for youth.

Regulations about the number and spread of hours youth can work exist to protect and support youth under the age of 18, in their education. WBL Coordinators should help workplace partners and their colleagues understand the regulations regarding the number of hours youth can work and help design experiences and schedules that not only meet the legal standard, but also work well for the young person.

Guideline 6: Pay When Required

When youth perform productive work for private concerns, they are entitled to receive wages. Payment at the minimum wage or higher is not just the law, it is the right thing to do. School credit is not a substitute for wages. Also, youth cannot be required to volunteer their services in any setting nor can they volunteer in private businesses under any circumstances.

Whether or not youth involved in work-based learning experiences should be paid depends on the nature of the experience. Wages must be paid to anyone who qualifies as an employee. In general, this means that youth must be paid if they are doing productive work and if the training and supervision provided ultimately benefits the employer's labor needs.

Work-based learning activities such as workplace tours, job shadows, and career mentoring are typically unpaid experiences. In these activities, youth visit workplaces and observe work activities, but do not perform productive work.

Work-based learning activities such as internships, apprenticeships, and work experience are typically paid positions. In these activities, youth obtain valuable experience while providing a service for the employer. Youth must be paid the minimum wage or higher when performing productive tasks in the workplace.

To determine whether an unpaid work-based learning experience meets federal guidelines, subject the program to the Fair Labor Standards Act test, which can be found on the *Laws Pertaining to the Employment of Youth Factsheet*.

Additional issues need to be addressed when youth and young adults are placed in paid experiences. Workers' compensation coverage is the employer's responsibility, as is I-9 documentation of an individual's right to work. Safety and health standards need to be addressed, and steps should be taken to make sure that youth workers never displace a member of the regular workforce. Youth and young adults who are first-time workers should be oriented to their rights and responsibilities and receive information about their tax liability and its implications..

Strategies that Work

Determine if pay is required for the experience.

In conjunction with the workplace partner, WBL Coordinators and youth program staff should review the nature of the experience and determine if pay is required. See the *Laws Pertaining to the Employment of Youth Factsheet* for a checklist that will help you determine whether pay is required.

Encourage payment of fair and comparable wages.

Youth and young adults must be paid the minimum wage or higher when performing productive tasks in the workplace.

Guideline 7: Provide Ongoing Support

WBL Coordinators play an important role in providing ongoing support to youth and young adults, and workplace partners. Contact by telephone, written communications, and scheduled workplace visits from WBL Coordinators greatly enhance the experience. Maintaining regular communication and follow-up and addressing any problems quickly, are key to maintaining a successful relationship. WBL Coordinators should provide all parties with appropriate contact information at the start of the experience so that youth and young adults and the Worksite Supervisor can communicate as needed.

Strategies that Work

Make regular visits to the workplace.

Structured opportunities to discuss learning at the workplace prove to be beneficial to all parties. While it is sometimes difficult to meet with the Worksite Supervisor and the youth and young adults at the same time, it is important to make the effort. The best possible meeting is one in which the youth and young adult and the Worksite Supervisor are present with the WBL Coordinator.

WBL Coordinators should schedule regular visits or phone calls to touch base with both youth and young adults and workplace partners. After the work-based learning experience has begun, an early follow-up visit and ongoing contacts are essential to its success. While it is important for the WBL Coordinator to maintain regular contact with the Worksite Supervisor, it is also important to be sensitive to the workplace culture and respectful of the Worksite Supervisor's time by scheduling appointments rather than showing up unexpectedly or assuming that they can stop what they are doing in order to accommodate impromptu check-ins.

Provide the communications link.

WBL Coordinators should also serve as the communications link, facilitating information-sharing between the workplace and the classroom for those youth and young adults that are enrolled in school. Workplace partners need to be aware of the skills that youth and young adults

are learning in the classroom. WBL Coordinators need to know about the skills youth and young adults are learning and those required at the workplace.

Be a resource to the workplace.

The benefit to youth and young adults is greatest when the WBL Coordinator and workplace partners share resources and expertise. WBL Coordinators should provide information to the workplace about effective strategies for supervising and supporting youth and young adults. The Worksite Supervisor should be informed about the relevant legal and regulatory issues. Workplace partners should consider assisting with the creation of project-based learning opportunities for the youth and young adults at the workplace. WBL Coordinators should provide the Worksite Supervisor with resource materials and contact information.

Summary

These Seven Simple Guidelines provide WBL Coordinators and other youth program staff with a general sense of what to keep in mind when developing work-based learning experiences.

The laws and regulations governing what youth can and cannot do in the workplace help define the Seven Simple Guidelines discussed in this guide. Long-sought protections detail appropriate limits on the number of hours youth can work. They also offer guidelines for the types of experiences youth under the age of 18 can be exposed to. Being aware of and following these regulations helps make the work-based learning experience a safe and valuable one for youth, employers, and the community.

For more information, tools, and materials on Quality Work-Based Learning, visit the New Ways to Work website at www.newwaystowork.org.

THE WORK-LEARNING PROCESS WHAT THE WORKSITE SUPERVISOR SHOULD KNOW

There are many ways to supervise people and get a job done. There are many ways to teach people new skills. Supervising a learning-rich task requires a supervisor who is more of a coach than a boss. Supervisors must ask themselves the following eight questions:

1. What work needs doing that is of value to the organization?

Make sure that the project and its tasks have some real benefit to the company.
People know when they are doing make-work. Real goals foster real effort.
Real accomplishments foster higher self-esteem.

2. How will young workers be directed to do the task?

The key here is to offer advice rather than answers. That advice usually comes in the form of a question which facilitates the youth to arrive at his/her own conclusions. As an expert, we want to share all of our knowledge in our particular discipline. However, the best way for young people to learn is through exploration. This does not mean that answers are never given. However, in most cases, there are multiple options, multiple solutions and multiple answers. The responsibility is to coach the youth to find solutions...not give a solution.

3. What should the young workers learn?

In addition to learning the skills they need to accomplish the project at hand, youth are learning skills that are applicable to a broad range of jobs. Encourage young people to think about what other ways they might use the skills they are practicing at the moment. Ask young people to tell each other and supervisors what skills they think they are learning.

4. How will they best learn it?

We know from research that people learn best in an authentic context, that is, they learn skills by using the skills, and by reflecting on what they have done. As youth workers progress through their work, have them reflect on their work and learning in a journal, in group discussions, and on their own.

5. What is the supervisor's role in this process?

There are at least two roles: the overseer and the coach. The overseer makes sure that the work gets done, and the young people understand the consequences if it does not. It is important that both the supervisor and the youth agree on clearly articulated expectations. The second role is much more complex, and one that we suggest is a critical element to the success of both the supervisor's and young person's work experience. In the role of coach, adults encourage young people through the process of what they are doing and encourage young people through the process of what they are doing and learning. The coach prods young workers to learn from and improve their performance. The coach asks questions to encourage young people to think about possible solutions rather than giving answers. If you give them answers, they will not learn to find their own. If you give them thoughtful questions, they will learn to seek and find the information they need to produce solutions.

6. What will supervisors get out of the experience?

It has often been said that one learns a subject best by teaching it. Moreover, for many this will be an opportunity to acquire or improve their own supervisory skills. Last but not least, real work is accomplished that is valued by the organization or company.

7. What will the youth get out of the experience?

This approach yields multiple benefits for the youth. The young people develop a sense of self-worth and confidence in their ability to learn. They also get real work experience. In addition, they expand their horizons by seeing “what work looks like” and in turn, begin to see themselves working successfully within an organization or company. Young people also experience the value of learning and understand that learning does not stop when one enters the workplace.

8. What will the community get out of the experience?

The community benefits through providing opportunities for young people to become productive citizens.

Key Ingredients to Work-Based Learning

- Ensure that the learning contributes to building skills and knowledge rather than simply being exposed to work. It is the nature of the work experience that makes it work-based learning, not simply the “being “ at a worksite.
- Ensure employer participation. This learning strategy requires it in at least two ways: employers identify the real work that needs to get done, and they provide supervision to the young workers. The intensity of their involvement at work can vary – from providing the technical expertise of the content of the work with program staff being on site daily to provide the intensive coaching, to providing all supervision as a coach.
- Ensure careful planning of what young people will learn and how they will learn. The learning opportunities involved in the work at hand must be explicitly planned for and continually recognized “moments of learning.”
- Ensure competent supervision, coaching, and mentoring by adults. Training of program staff and worksite supervisors on facilitation and coaching skills is a must. These skills are not innate and must be learned and practiced.
- Ensure assessment and documentation of learning through the actual demonstration of skills and knowledge, and the creation of authentic work products.
- Ensure opportunities for learner/workers to reflect both on the knowledge and skills they are gaining, and how to improve upon them.
- Ensure that connections are made between what is being learned in school-based settings and at work.
- Ensure school credit for work-based learning at the secondary and post-secondary levels.

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