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# Work-based Learning

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# My Journey to WBL

- ~15 years in higher education, mostly academic support, adjunct teaching.
- Redirect my focus to work more with businesses and industry.
- Grant-funded regional WBL Coordinator at IALR in July 2020. Researched and **floundered**.
- Joined newly developed VA WBL Collab Group in winter 2021.
- Attended ACTE WBL virtual conference in spring 2021 and was invited to join conference planning meetings for 2022, which led to PD Chair.
- Thrown into two large-scale internship pilot programs in spring 2021.
- Made connections and persisted.

What did I learn?

# relationships.

It's all about relationships.

You can't do this work alone.

# CAREER EXPERIENCE

SPECIFIC SKILLS | PERMANENT EMPLOYMENT

Engages individuals as paid workers to gain specific skills, in conjunction with related classroom or lab instruction, in a particular industry or occupation.

**Models include:**

- Registered Apprenticeships
- Youth Apprenticeship
- Other Forms of Apprenticeships
- Transitional Jobs
- On-the-Job Training
- Work-Based Courses

## CAREER EXPOSURE

INDUSTRY INTRO | SHORT-TERM

Brings participants to workplaces for short periods of time with the goal of gaining introductory information about an industry and associated occupations.

**Models include:**

- Job Shadows
- Company Tours
- Mentoring
- Simulations
- Information
- Interviews

## CAREER ENGAGEMENT

BASIC TECHNICAL & EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

Provides extended opportunities for participants to increase their knowledge of an identified field of interest and gain employability skills and some entry-level technical knowledge or skills.

**Models include:**

- Internships
- Pre-Apprenticeships
- Apprenticeship Readiness
- Cooperative Education
- Service Learning

WORK-BASED LEARNING

PREPARATION FOR WORK-BASED LEARNING

## CAREER EXPLORATION

AWARENESS | FOUNDATION | PREPARATION

Builds awareness of careers. Career exploration activities do not take place in workplaces and are not work-based learning, but provide a foundation for work-based learning and prepare participants to make the most of opportunities.

**Models include:**

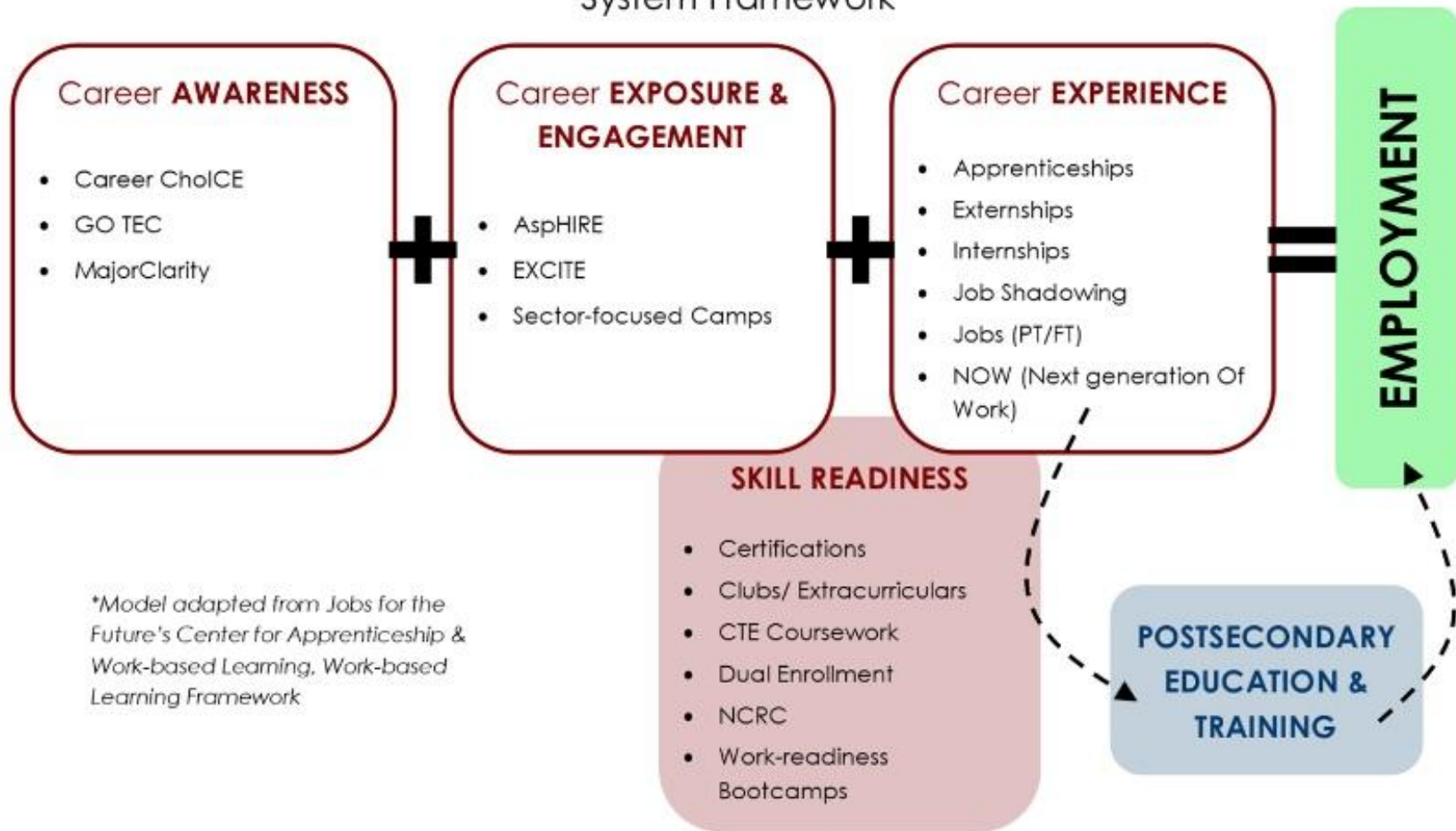
- Career Fairs
- Industry Projects
- Interest Inventories
- Mock Interviews

Work-based learning is defined as a student or worker completing meaningful job tasks in a workplace that develop readiness for work, knowledge, and skills that support entry or advancement in a particular career field. This can be done through experiences that provide:

1. Career Exposure
2. Career Engagement
3. Career Experience

All supported by Career Exploration.

# System Framework



**Partner Collaboration supports the system**

# Where is WBL housed?

Depending on where this work is housed, your goals and processes may look different. Familiarize yourself with the expectations for WBL based on your position.

- District-level WBL Coordinator/Specialist – WBL for all
- WBL Coordinator within CTE department – WBL for CTE
- CTE Director or Coordinator takes on WBL responsibilities
- Individual teachers (CTE or Core) take on WBL-related responsibilities for their respective courses
- WBL Coordinator/Specialist at state or regional level
  - Can be under DOE or DOE CTE or DOLI, or alternate organization

# “Officialize Current Happenings”



What’s going on in your district or at your school(s)? Become the authority by learning about how forms of WBL are already happening, and then put structure around those activities.

For example, a Cosmetology class that offers haircuts at a discounted rate for community members. Turn that into an official school-based enterprise by ensuring all the documentation is in place.

Maybe your welding instructor has a few business contacts where students can get experience while in welding class. Officialize that with internship documentation or work with DOLI to establish a YRA.

Do counselors or career coaches coordinate guest speakers? Make it an official part of your program.

Is there a course that assists with workplace readiness? Job hunting, resume-writing, mock interviews, professional communication – this all relates to work-based learning!

# Prioritize the Targets

There are a lot of moving parts to WBL, so it can quickly become overwhelming if you don't have a focus. If you're starting fresh without an established program, follow these steps to figure out your WBL goals:

**Step One:** Know the expectations from your state, district, school(s), etc.

**Step Two:** Look at what programs are already in place for each student population (CTE, SPED, non-CTE, grade levels, etc.).


**Step Three:** Determine the need to find a target. Make this a personal priority.

For example, have your seniors all had a WBL experience?

**Step Four:** Write out WHY these are your goals. Don't skip this step.



# Pro Tip: Build in time to research.

A light gray speech bubble with a black outline and a tail pointing towards the bottom right. It contains the text "At least one hour per week!".

At least  
one hour  
per week!

Research could include:

- Networking on LinkedIn and social media to review the others' WBL
- Reading about youth labor laws, state and national movement on CTE
- Looking up possible funding sources or templates to use to request funding
- Attending professional development, webinars, conferences
- Watching recordings of previous webinars (check out ACTE website!)
- Listening to podcasts (have you heard of the 2152 Project?)
- Researching best practices by industry experts (JFF is great, ACT)
- Going to your school board meetings to advocate for WBL

# Determine and Refine Processes

Develop a consistent process with accountability checkpoints.

- How will you engage with and keep track of employers?
- Determine a recruitment and promotion process.
- Create an application and acceptance process for students.
- Align work-readiness concepts and activities within your timeline(s).
- Align course learning objectives with the WBL experience.
- Follow Fair Labor Standards Act and Youth Labor Laws.
- Be sure to have all the required state documents.
- Remember that WBL is for everyone, not just CTE students.

## ACTE WBL Professional Development Webinars

Thursday, September 22 @3PM EST

*Building & Maintaining WBL Business Partnerships*

Register: <https://bit.ly/3QIYc5>

Thursday, October 27 @3PM EST

*WBL Marketing 101*

Register: <https://bit.ly/3cjmStr>

Thursday, November 17 @3PM EST

*Employability Skills Development*

Register: <https://bit.ly/3AFrJyI>

Thursday, January 26 @3PM EST

*Addressing WBL Barriers & Workplace Safety*

Register: <https://bit.ly/3T9gc1S>

Thursday, February 22 @3PM EST

*Large-scale WBL Event Planning w/ACTE Admin*

Register: <https://bit.ly/3AeWoBp>

# Things to Consider for Students

Thursday, January 26 @3PM EST  
*Addressing WBL Barriers & Workplace Safety*  
Register: <https://bit.ly/3T9gc1S>

To make WBL equitable, barriers must be addressed.

- Transportation: consider using school bus routes or ride-sharing services\*
- Work clothes: start a work clothes closet or a host a fundraiser
- Funds for gas cards, lunch money, bus passes, supply closet
- Work with DARS or SPED programs to identify alternate WBL options for students with IEPs and to identify appropriate employers
- Host live and recorded information meetings
- Think about the business of schools/school board offices – these are great places for internships (IT dept, Finance, CTE department, etc.)
  - [bit.ly/WBLchesapeake](https://bit.ly/WBLchesapeake)

# Things to Consider for Employers

Thursday, September 22 @3PM EST  
*Building & Maintaining WBL Business Partnerships*  
Register: <https://bit.ly/3QJYc5>

We want high-quality work-based learning opportunities, not simply part-time jobs coordinated by the school. Most employers are not used to working with high schoolers at their job sites.

- Set expectations and paint a clear picture of the WBL experience.
- Reinforce expectations and process at every chance. People are comforted by consistency.
- Encourage, encourage, encourage. Some employers are reluctant, some are super eager. They will respond to your confidence and positivity.
- Check in on them consistently with surveys, phone calls, drop-ins, etc.
- Don't overestimate their ability to work with this age group. Hold Employer Info Sessions to talk about what to expect from their students and how to handle situations. (sample slide)

# Internships vs. Jobs

## INTERNSHIP

- Temporary
- Individual is not expected to know or have all the skills required for the experience at the onset.
- Sometimes requires direct training and supervision to perform tasks.
- Not all individuals have work experience.
- May need to learn workplace etiquette and norms.
- A workplace mentor might become a life mentor, helping interns beyond the job.

## JOB

- Typically long-term
- Individual is expected to be able to perform the job tasks autonomously.
- Minimal supervision needed.
- Individual typically has had job experience.
- Work habits and norms are expected.
- A workplace mentor might check in on professional development.
- Advancement opportunities.

# RECAP on how to get started...

1. Know the expectations. Read through your state's DOE WBL Guide and pull out templates to customize for your district or school(s).
  - Training Agreements and training plans
  - Worksite Evaluation and Employer Participation forms
  - Timesheets / time log
  - Feedback and Reflection forms (student and employer)
2. "Officialize" opportunities already in place, such as school-based enterprises or service learning, using the required forms.
3. **Prioritize your WBL focus for the year and set targets.**
4. Determine processes for recruitment, applications, and employer engagement.
5. Watch Jason Van Nus's presentation from this year's conference (Resource slide).
6. Begin outreach to local employers.

# Suggestions

1. Stay organized!
  - Lots of documents, moving parts, etc. Must keep track of hours, signed contracts, incident forms, etc.
  - If you do not have a dedicated WBL person, your organization and transparency with teachers and counselors will help everyone follow the same process and stay on the same page.
2. Employers are placing trust in YOU and YOUR PROCESS.
  - Be sure to keep regular communication with them. Reminders are essential.
  - Have surveys prepared to gather information and helpful data.
3. Utilize local partners, from Workforce Centers to economic development organizations to Chambers of Commerce and Rotary Clubs to recruit businesses and provide services like mock interviews or resume-writing workshops. Or simply just to promote your WBL.
4. IRS VITA program, “Geek Squad” style computer repair
5. Use LinkedIn and take advantage of your networks. Ask questions. Get involved.

# Essential Resources

ACTE Work-based Learning Division:

<https://www.acteonline.org/about/structure/divisions/work-based-learning-division/>

Virginia's CTE Resource Center:

<https://www.cteresource.org/resources/high-quality-work-based-learning/>

JFF's Center for Apprenticeship and Work-based Learning:

<https://www.jff.org/resources/work-based-learning-framework/>

Jason Van Nus has how-to videos for using free tools to streamline your processes:

[bit.ly/JVNhow-to](https://bit.ly/JVNhow-to) and WBL Conference Presentation on those WBL tools: [bit.ly/JVNfreetools](https://bit.ly/JVNfreetools)



# Thank you!

Questions?  
Want to get involved with ACTE WBL?

Email: [dana.wilson@ialr.org](mailto:dana.wilson@ialr.org)