

Overview of Work-Based Learning Methods of Instruction

Work-based learning is a school-coordinated, coherent sequence of workplace experiences that are related to students' career goals and/or interests, are based on instructional preparation, and are performed in partnership with local businesses, industries, or other organizations in the community. WBL enables students to apply classroom instruction in a real-world business or service-oriented work environment. The eight WBL methods of instruction currently practiced in Virginia are listed and defined below in order from the lowest to the highest degree of engagement.

1. Job shadowing is a method of short-term, school-coordinated career exploration in which the student interviews a competent worker about his/her job and industry and "shadows" (follows) the worker to observe the performance of a variety of job tasks. Job shadowing is less intensive than the other methods and is usually the first form of workplace assignment given to a student. Prior to job shadowing, the student receives instruction about careers and the process of career choice, develops appropriate questions to ask, and learns the rules and guidelines for grooming, dress, and behavior in the workplace. Once the student has identified a career interest, path, or goal, job shadowing helps the student make informed career decisions and focus his/her studies. Job shadowing does not provide a standard unit of credit, but the student may enhance his/her class grade through the experience.

2. Mentorship is a structured, school-coordinated method that enables the student to learn about the industry and the workplace from a selected worker who has a recognized record of achievement in the occupational field. It requires student preparation, including career exploration, prior to the experience. Mentorship is more complex than job shadowing but less demanding and often of shorter duration than internship or service learning. Mentorship does not provide a standard unit of credit, but the student may enhance his/her class grade through the experience.

3. Service learning is a method in which the student engages in community-service work for a specified number of hours in order to gain developmental experience. Students and teachers cooperate with local leaders to address community problems and issues, resulting in student service to the community and development of personal, workplace-readiness, academic, and citizenship skills. Students engage in critical, reflective thinking and experience the relationship of theory and practice. Service learning does not provide a standard unit of credit, but the student may enhance his/her class grade through the experience.

4. Internship is a progressive, school-coordinated method that places the student in a real workplace environment in order to develop and practice career-related knowledge and skills needed for a specific entry-level job. An internship can be either introductory (short-term) or extended (lasting a summer, a semester, or an entire school year and involving a specified number of hours in the training agreement). Currently, interns may be paid or unpaid. An internship provides hands-on experience in a particular industry or occupation related to the student's career interests, abilities, and goals, and allows him/her to document job-related experiences. Prior to an internship, the student receives the established criteria and guidelines from the workplace supervisor, and throughout the internship, the supervisor evaluates the student. Internship does not provide a standard unit of credit, but the student may enhance his/her class grade through the experience.

5. Clinical experience is a form of cooperative education for health and medical sciences students, except that students are not paid for their clinical work. Clinical experience provides the student with an opportunity to integrate knowledge acquired in the classroom with clinical practice, and it affords practice of the fundamental skills, behaviors, and attitudes needed for professional competence in the healthcare field. Clinical experience is based on observation and treatment of patients at different stages of medical practice. These experiences place students

in a variety of healthcare settings so they may better understand the scope of the profession and healthcare needs. Like cooperative education, clinical experience is closely supervised, qualifies students for credit toward graduation, and requires a significant number of on-site hours (established by the Virginia Board of Nursing or the Virginia Department of Health).

6. Cooperative education is a career preparation WBL method that combines CTE classroom instruction with paid employment that is directly related to the student's plan of study. The school and the employer plan, coordinate, and supervise the instruction and employment so that each contributes directly to the student's career objectives and employability. Students may earn credit toward graduation for cooperative education experiences, and they normally work between 11 and 15 hours per week to achieve a minimum of 396 hours. Currently, 236 CTE courses are taught in Virginia that provide students with the option to participate in a cooperative education experience.

7. Youth Registered Apprenticeship (YRA) is a career preparation WBL method that integrates school-based and work-based learning to help students gain employability and occupational skills. Local programs provide training based on statewide youth apprenticeship curriculum guidelines, endorsed by business and industry. Students are instructed by qualified teachers and skilled journeyworker worksite experts.

Students are simultaneously enrolled in academic classes to meet high school graduation requirements and in occupation specific related instruction classes. Once an employer becomes an approved YRA sponsor, the student is hired and registered as an apprentice. The participating sponsor/employer provides supervision of a skilled mentor and the student continues on with the Career Technical Education (CTE) training at his/her school. Upon completion of the requirements for a high school diploma, youth registered apprentices may continue as full-time registered apprentices, subject to all standard on-the-job and related instruction requirements.

8. Registered Apprenticeship is a career preparation WBL method that provides the student with hands-on training from an experienced mentor at the job site in the specified occupation. Student apprentices are paid employees of a company. Apprentices receive wages when they begin work, and receive pay increases as they meet benchmarks for skill attainment. This rewards and motivates apprentices as they advance through their training. An apprentice must be paid at least the minimum federal hourly wage.

Upon completion of a Registered Apprenticeship program, the apprentice receives a nationally recognized credential which consists of a Completion Certificate and journeyworker card. This is a portable credential that signifies to employers that employees with the journeyworker status are fully qualified for the job.

A Comparison of Work-Based Learning Methods of Instruction										
Characteristic	Career-Exploration WBL Methods			Pre-professional WBL Methods		Career Preparation WBL Methods				
	JOB SHADOWING	MENTORSHIP	INTRODUCTORY INTERNSHIP	EXTENDED INTERNSHIP	SERVICE LEARNING	CLINICAL EXPERIENCE	COOPERATIVE EDUCATION	YOUTH REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP	REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP	
Grade Levels	Primarily grades 6–8, but continuing into higher grades			Primarily grades 9 and 10, but continuing into upper grades		Primarily grades 11 and 12, but continuing into postsecondary		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primarily grades 11 and 12 At least 16 years old 		
Goals of method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foster career and workplace awareness Promote career exploration Strengthen motivation and informed decision-making skills 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deepen career and workplace knowledge Develop personal qualities and workplace readiness skills Impart beginning professional skills 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop technical knowledge and skills necessary for entry into a specific occupation or postsecondary training program Strengthen career awareness, workplace readiness, and personal development 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect On-the-Job Training (OJT) with related technical instruction Help students gain employability and occupational skills. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop technical knowledge and skills necessary for entry into a specific occupation or postsecondary education training program. Strengthen career awareness, workplace readiness, and personal development.
Student receives pay	No	No	No	Local determination based on FLSA* criteria	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Number of hours required	Local option	Local option	Local option	Local option	Local option	Set by Virginia Board of Nursing or Va. Department of Health	Maximum of 20 hours per week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No minimum or maximum OJT hour requirements. All OJT hours accrued will be credited toward the completion of an RA program. Minimum 144 hours related technical instruction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum 2,000 OJT hours and 144 hours per year of related instruction to supplement OJT 	
Training agreement and training plan used	Optional (assignment involved)	Optional (assignment involved)	Optional (project involved)	Optional (project involved)	No (identified goals)	Contract with clinical facility	Yes (must use specific Va. Department of Labor and Industry [VDOLI] forms)	Yes; must use the VDOLI Registered Apprenticeship forms	Yes; must use VDOLI Registered Apprenticeship forms	
Related classroom instruction	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Desirable, but not required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Received from high school CTE programs to meet 1 or 2 years of related instruction required for RA Minimum 144 hours related technical instruction 	Provided by community colleges, technical schools, online or on-site by company/sponsor. Must be occupation specific.	
Option for receiving credit toward graduation	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Student required to have career objective in the career field	No, but interest in field required	No, but interest in field required	No, but interest in field required	No, but interest in field required	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
WBL experience administered by teacher-coordinator certified in the career field	No, but knowledge of careers and placement required	No, but knowledge of careers and placement required	No, but knowledge of careers and placement required	No, but knowledge of careers and placement required	No	Yes	Determined by school, employer, and VDOLI	Yes	Determined by school, employer, and VDOLI	

*Fair Labor Standards Act. Federal legislation from April 2010 provides for determination as to whether or not interns must be paid the minimum wage and overtime under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) for the services that they provide to private sector "for-profit" employers. Educators must meet the "Test for Unpaid Interns" (six criteria) if they are placing students in unpaid internships. Otherwise, the students must follow the FLSA for paid internships. Source: www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs71.htm.