



Applied and WORK-BASED LEARNING

Preparing students to succeed academically and thrive in their future careers

WHAT is applied and work-based learning?





Applied and work-based learning (WBL) allows students to apply classroom content in professional settings while gaining real-world experience. WBL exists on a continuum that reflects the progress of experiences from awareness-building to training. Students often cycle back through the continuum many times throughout college and throughout their career. Faculty play a critical role in ensuring these experiences are embedded into curriculum and support learning.

“In the 21st century, the majority of entry-level jobs require a rich mix of formal postsecondary education along with high-quality work experience.”
(Carnevale & Smith, 2018)



HOW does it help students?

Applied and work-based learning can provide students a deeper, more engaging and relevant learning experience in a number of ways:

-  Connects academic learning with real-world experiences, making learning relevant
-  Enhances student motivation, retention, and academic success
-  Supports students in defining career goals
-  Gives students practical experience and helps them develop in-demand technical skills, 21st century skills, and career competencies

WHY is WBL important?

WBL fosters deeper engagement

- Enables students to:
- learn by doing
 - learn skills and concepts in context
 - see direct links between what they learn in the classroom and problems in applied settings*

WBL offers students better outcomes

- persistence
- graduation rates
- employment rates
- better outcomes for underserved populations**

* California Department of Education, 2010; Holzer & Lerman, (2014)
** Rodriguez, J., Fox, H., & McCambly, H. (2016). *Work-Based Learning as a Pathway to Postsecondary and Career Success*. Champaign, IL: Office of Community College Research and Leadership. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

What are faculty saying about applied and work-based learning?



Faculty from 10 community colleges in San Diego and Imperial Counties were surveyed about their involvement with and attitudes about applied and work-based learning.*



Career Awareness and Exploration

24% (39% CE; 16% Non-CE) of responding faculty incorporate **workplace tours** into their classes

WBL Examples:

Informational interviews
Guest speakers
Industry speakers
Workplace/company tours



Career Preparation

27% (31% CE; 25% Non-CE) of responding faculty incorporate **service learning** into their classes

WBL Examples:

Job shadowing
Mentorships
Service learning
Volunteering



Career Training

34% (48% CE; 25% Non-CE) of responding faculty incorporate **unpaid internships** into their classes and **26%** (40% CE; 18% Non-CE) incorporate **paid internships** into their classes

WBL Examples:

Internships (paid and unpaid)
On-the-job training
Apprenticeships

- 71% of responding faculty who use applied and work-based learning strategies do so because it “brings relevance to curriculum – helps students understand why they need to learn something”
- “[There’s] a cultural shift at the colleges that it’s every faculty member’s responsibility to prepare every student for success in their career.”
- “My wish would be that career education programs collaborated with GE courses (and vice versa) to build 21st century skills in focused, reinforced, relevant ways.”
- “Theories alone, without application to students’ lives, are quickly forgotten. When their relevance to student experience can be demonstrated, then students remember concepts and can integrate them into their daily lives.”

How do I get involved?



Partner with your campus Career Center and Work-Based Learning Coordinator!

Help students explore career options and teach them the professional skills needed to be successful in today’s labor market. Contact your campus WBL Coordinator or Career Center for support in integrating WBL activities into your classes to connect your students’ academic learning with real-world experiences.

* Surveys were sent to faculty across 10 community colleges in San Diego and Imperial Counties. A total of 376 faculty responded – 140 of those were career-education faculty and the other 236 were academic faculty.