

Implementing the Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plan



“Districts around the Commonwealth have seen firsthand that a structured work-based learning experience raises student performance. The student becomes more engaged and more motivated by experiencing the connection between what’s learned in class and what’s needed in the world outside school.”

David P. Driscoll
Massachusetts Commissioner of Education

“The Work-Based Learning Plan removes the feeling of ambiguity when working with students. It provides a solid structure for the student and the supervisor to work together. Because it’s such a simple tool, many of our supervisors find it easy to use.”

Vladimir J. Stevens,
Manager, BankBoston, Boston



Implementing Work-Based Learning

- ★ Introduction
- ★ Overview
- ★ Group activity
- ★ Q & A and conclusion



Presentation Objectives

- ★ Understand the value of work-based learning
- ★ Define worksite learning
- ★ Define structured learning plans
- ★ Explore learning plans through a group activity



Work-Based Learning Philosophy

- ★ Head and hand
- ★ Learning through, not to, occupations and careers
- ★ Learning in authentic contexts



Understanding the Value of Work-Based Learning

- ★ School and work provide different experiences — both essential.



Purposes for Writing

School

- ★ One central purpose: to display mastery of knowledge, skills, format, etc. — Academic

Work

- ★ A range of purposes: inform, persuade, clarify, soften the blow, obscure, recommend, etc. — Instrumental



Constraints and Environment

School

- ★ Deadlines or distractions usually controlled by teacher

Work

- ★ Deadlines often non-negotiable, distractions often unavoidable



Audience

School

★ Teacher

Work

★ A range; often many people with different needs, desires, and levels of expertise:

- Supervisor
- Funder
- Client
- General Public



Defining Worksite Learning

- ★ Worksite experience
- ★ Structured learning plan
- ★ Workplace mentoring
- ★ Instruction in all aspects of the industry



Defining Structured Learning Plans

- ★ The Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plan
- ★ Three-fold purpose:
 - Identify and drive initial skill level within the nine competencies
 - Drive quality of student learning and productivity
 - Assess student progress



Guiding Principal

The competency-based learning plan provides a lens through which teaching and learning is filtered.



The Nine Competencies

I. Individual

1. Communication and literacy
 - a. Speaking
 - b. Listening
 - c. Reading
 - d. Writing
2. Organizing and analyzing information
 - a. Collecting and organizing information
 - b. Research and analysis
 - c. Quantitative analysis and applied mathematics

Implementing the Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plan



3. Problem solving
 - a. Identifying problems
 - b. Solving problems

4. Using technology
 - a. Using work tools and office equipment
 - b. Computer operation

5. Completing entire activities
 - a. Initiating and completing activities
 - b. Managing time



II. Team

6. Acting professionally
 - a. Attendance and appearance
 - b. Accepting direction and criticism
 - c. Flexibility and maintaining self-control
 - d. Respecting confidentiality

7. Interacting with others
 - a. Interacting with customers/clients
 - b. Interacting with co-workers
 - c. Managing stress and conflict
 - d. Respecting diversity



8. Understanding all aspects of the industry
 - a. Role of individual in the larger organization
 - b. Recognizing health and safety issues
 - c. Understanding personnel policy and labor/management relationships

III. Personal and professional development

9. Taking responsibility for career and life choices
 - a. Learning and teaching on an ongoing basis
 - b. Balancing personal, professional and academic responsibilities
 - c. Setting career goals



The Learning Plan: What?

- ★ Activities/tasks that the student will perform
- ★ The competencies the student will attain
- ★ The methods by which the student will be assessed



The Learning Plan: Why?

- ★ Structures work experience to ensure productivity on the job
- ★ Evaluates students skill acquisition
- ★ Articulates expectations of employer and student to minimize downtime and misunderstanding



The Learning Plan: How?

- ★ Start with a job description
- ★ List out tasks
- ★ Attach competencies to each task
- ★ Decide on assessment
- ★ Go over plan with student
- ★ Follow up at regular intervals



Group Activity

- ★ Ten-Minute Learning Plan
- ★ Choose an activity (30 seconds)
 - swinging a golf club; potty-training a child; planning a prom; making a salad; taking a nap
- ★ Write a one-sentence description (1 min.)
- ★ Break description into 6 to 10 tasks (5 min.)
- ★ Match 1 to 2 competencies to each task (5 min.)
- ★ Pick one item from list and assess skill level by using the Mass WBLP