



North Central Texas Pathways

WORK-BASED LEARNING EMPLOYER RESOURCES

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North Central Texas Pathways



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Welcome to the NCTX Employer Guide for Work-Based Learning! This guide is designed to help you assess your work environment and address any concerns related to implementing work-based learning programs. Each section of this guide provides valuable insights and practical tools to evaluate your current practices, identify areas for improvement, and develop strategies to start, grow, or enhance your work-based learning initiatives. We recommend completing this guide as a group, involving key stakeholders from various departments. This collaborative approach ensures diverse perspectives, fosters a sense of ownership, and promotes a more comprehensive understanding of the work environment. By working together, you can create a supportive and effective learning experience for all participants.

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WHY?

WHY are we doing this?

What are the ultimate short/long-term goals of providing work-based learning?

Consider specific goals before doing anything else! (Talent attraction, development, retention, etc.)

What do you wish more people knew about your company, industry, community, etc.?

Are there specific metrics to define “success”? (# application increase, % employee satisfaction growth, etc.)

Consider viewing students as “consultants” who can benefit your company by offering a unique and valuable perspective, who may also represent your target audience. What projects could they help you start or complete?

WHAT?

WHAT will everyone be doing? How do we keep everyone engaged and benefiting towards our outcomes?

Plan engaging, hands-on activities for students that help them 'experience' the careers you offer and that may break misconceptions/stereotypes of the industry. Consider things they can't do or see online or on their own!

Determine types of work-based learning opportunities you are able/willing provide.

- ___ CLASSROOM GUEST SPEAKERS
- ___ CAREER FAIRS AND CAREER EXPERIENCE DAYS
- ___ 'VISIT PARENTS AT WORK' DAYS
- ___ FACILITY/SITE TOURS
- ___ INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS WITH STUDENTS
- ___ JOB SHADOWS/WORK OBSERVATIONS
- ___ IN-CLASSROOM PROJECTS/TEAM CHALLENGES
- ___ ON-SITE STUDENT PROJECTS/TEAM CHALLENGES
- ___ MOCK INTERVIEWS/RESUME ASSISTANCE
- ___ VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCES
- ___ PAID OR UNPAID INTERNSHIPS
- ___ SUMMER/PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT
- ___ PRE-APPRENTICESHIPS/PARTNER WITH HIGH SCHOOL OR OTHER TRAINING PROVIDER
- ___ APPRENTICESHIPS (ANY TYPE)
- ___ CLINICAL OR LAB EXPERIENCES
- ___ ON-THE-JOB TRAINING PROGRAM
- ___ MENTORSHIP/SPONSORSHIP OF A CURRENT OR PROSPECTIVE STUDENT
- ___ SPONSOR CAREER PATHWAY CERTIFICATES OR DEGREE PROGRAMS AT COMMUNITY COLLEGES

WHO?

Who will be involved?

Work SMARTER, not HARDER by leveraging other partners and resources!

___ Determine desired number, grade level, and ages of students for each work-based learning opportunity.

___ Connect and secure partners from your regional convener, K-12, and higher ed or workforce development partners.

___ Find champions at your company who connect well with youth and are willing to be speakers, tour guides, job shadow hosts, mentors, etc. (Consider employees interested in advancement or who show leadership potential.)

___ Attend local meetings for sector boards, advisory boards, Intermediary advisory committees, high school and college career and technical program advisory committees, etc. to connect with others and support existing work-based learning initiatives. (Your regional convener can assist you in joining with these groups)

WHERE?

Where will these experiences take place?

What is the BEST environment for this type of experience?

Is travel necessary for participants? Who will provide transportation to/during/from a learning experience?

Consider ways to engage educators and parents in the opportunities you offer such as evening/night open houses, STEM externships, educator tours, speaking engagements with educators for professional development, etc.

Establish necessary training for participants for each type of work-based learning opportunity you plan to offer onsite (confidentiality, safety, standard operating procedures, etc.)

WHEN?

When will these experiences take place?

When is the best time for both you and students to begin?

Schedule times/days that work best for your company to engage in work-based learning. Consider holidays, budgets/fiscal year, class schedules, shift schedules, sports events, etc.

Determine information that students should receive in advance such as dress policy, privacy policy, confidentiality, permission slips, etc. (Create a process to distribute and collect signed forms from student/intermediary if needed)

Determine if lunch will be included for students (if applicable) or if they are responsible for their own meals and communicate this to intermediary/student. Consider food allergies, sensitivities, and other dietary restrictions.

HOW?

How will we achieve our goals?

How will we ensure participants have a positive and lasting experience?

Develop policies and procedures for work-based learning at your company/organization. (regional conveners can help with examples and lessons-learned)

Make sure tour groups are not too large! All students should be able to hear, participate, and learn from the experience. (Consider a tour headset system if noise or confidentiality are concerns)

Share personal stories about your career path, why you chose this company/career, promotion pathways, actual work-based learning examples and outcomes, etc.

Bring real examples of work and products if possible. Students appreciate genuine, authentic interactions.

Encourage student questions and be prepared for anything to come out of their mouths!

Ensure internal Human Resources is familiar with state and federal codes regarding student learners, including liability and other considerations based on your specific type of organization, products, etc.

CURRENT STAFF

Train employees working with student learners so they are familiar with Young Workers Rights.

Resources for Young Workers' Rights

Determine if internship opportunities can be paid or unpaid using Department of Labor Standards.

Internship Programs Under The Fair Labor Standards Act

Communicate with educator and regional convener before placing student interns to ensure that all required documentation is in place for a student to receive high school/college credit for the experience.

Address student learner issues directly with student and involve educator/convenor when necessary – remember this is a learning experience for the student on how to perform in a professional work environment!



CONCERNED?

Employer Liability Concerns?

WBL involves the presence of youths in the workplace, which can raise concerns for employers about liability issues and insurance costs. The Texas Education Agency offers guidance for school districts and employers to mitigate these concerns.

[Work-Based Learning Student Insurance](#)

BUT, is the student REALLY ready?

Educational partners are ready to demonstrate to employers that youths have the necessary skills for the workplace. Reach out to schools, colleges, or the regional convener for assistance in developing a metric to guide your decision making in this area.

Do you have suggestions for activities to do with students?

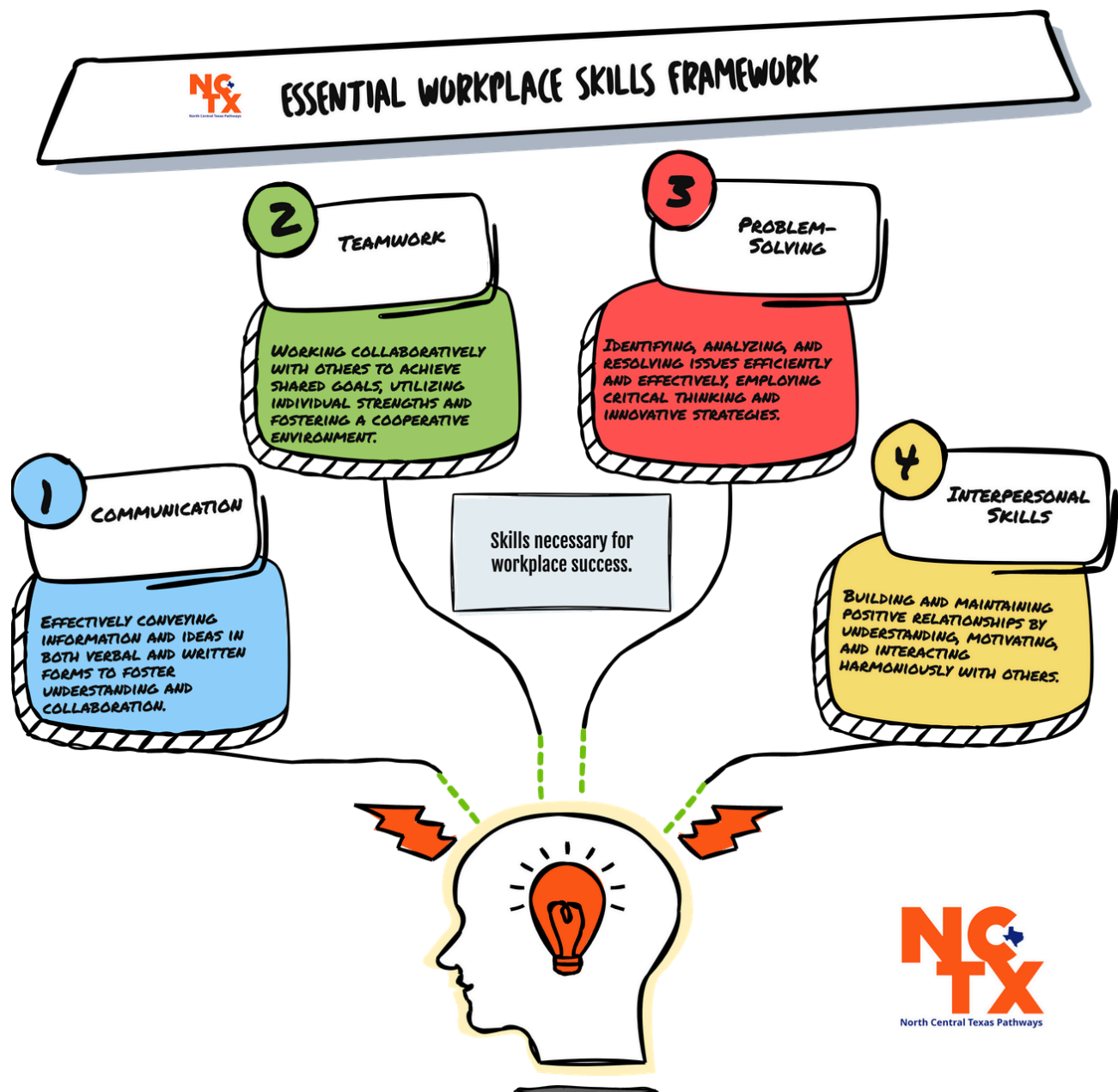
Work-based learning activities should focus on application of academic, technical, and employability skills in a work setting.

This means that comprehensive WBL experiences:

- are based on rigorous academic and employability skill requirements; and
- include in-depth and hands on work experiences (either on site or through simulated/virtual methods), with activities ranging from career awareness and exploration to career preparation and training.

SKILLS

Employers play a crucial role in shaping the future workforce by identifying and nurturing key employability skills. These skills, which include critical thinking, communication, teamwork, and adaptability, are essential for success in today's dynamic job market. The NCTX employability skills framework provides a comprehensive guide to these competencies, helping employers to assess and develop the skills that are most relevant to their industry. By integrating this framework into your hiring and training processes, you can ensure that your employees are well-equipped to meet the demands of their roles and contribute to the overall success of your organization



CONTACT

Need assistance?

Establishing a work-based learning program is a daunting task! The role of a designated Tri-Agency regional convener is to oversee the development, implementation, and monitoring of the regional strategy for high-quality career and education pathways into targeted industries across an entire workforce development area. This means we are here to help you every step-of-the way!

Reach out!

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