

Issue Date: January 29, 2024

Flexible Pathways Talking Points

Work Based Learning

Is this Flexible Pathway option the best choice? Below are prompting questions to be used with the [Vermont Flexible Pathways Tool](#) to assist in a conversation to determine if this pathway is the best fit. These sources do not represent an exhaustive list but are intended to provide a basis for discussion.

What is Work-Based Learning?

Work Based Learning (WBL) experiences can range from career awareness to career preparation and training. Throughout a student's path through school, they should be exposed to a range of career paths, professionals, and work environments. These experiences can particularly help students make the connection between academic principles and real-world applications.

Work-based learning is an educational program or experience involving student interactions with industry or community professionals in real, virtual, online, or simulated work environments that expose learners to postsecondary options, provides opportunities for skill development and proficiency attainment, and allow students to reinforce and deepen their school-based learning. WBL experiences are available to students in both high school and Career Technology Education (CTE) centers where they can participate in career awareness, career exploration and preparation, and career training.

Career Awareness

WBL activities, such as having classroom speakers, completing interest inventories, or taking a field trip to a work site to understand the industry better. These experiences should be integrated into class time for all students in grades 7-12 and can be integrated throughout all grades K-12.

Career Exploration and Career Preparation

WBL experiences can be individualized based on a student's PLP goals, or occupational goals while enrolled at a CTE. Generally facilitated by a WBL Coordinator, some types of opportunities can include informational interviews, job shadows, and/or paid and unpaid internships. There may be restrictions based on the type of opportunity and where the student is enrolled. WBL Coordinators can determine eligibility for a student based on the VT Department of Labor laws, and field of interest. These experiences can be used to meet graduation requirements in academic content areas and/or transferable skills.

Career Training

WBL opportunities can include internships, co-ops, pre-apprenticeships, and registered apprenticeships. These are often more accessible to enrolled CTE students because of labor laws but are not limited to CTE students. Based on the type of industry, applicable labor laws, and where the student is enrolled, there may be restrictions on opportunities. Close communication between the student, WBL Coordinator, program instructor, and employer is important for these career training opportunities to be the most successful for student learning. WBL Coordinators can determine eligibility for a student based on the VT Department of Labor laws and field of interest. These experiences can be used to meet graduation requirements in academic content areas and/or transferable skills.

Why Work Based Learning?

- Career exploration
- Ready to explore opportunities not offered in high school
- Increased applicability of employment and occupational skills
- Better understanding of the expectations in the role at the workplace
- Engaging in the activities of people in the work environment
- Explore and experience interesting tasks and topics
- Explore work sites/industries, learn how to navigate a workplace, interact with colleagues and superiors, and develop as a professional
- Become familiar with industry programs, systems, and expectations
- Develop identity as a professional with confidence in their ability to engage in and contribute to a workplace

Are you ready for Work Based Learning?

- Work Based Learning eligibility requirements met
- Social emotional reflection
 - Self-awareness - Demonstrates self-advocacy, self-motivated
 - Social awareness – Understanding social and ethical norms
 - Self-management – Critical thinking, problem solving
 - Responsible decision making – Time management
 - Relationship skills – Communication, networking
 - Aware of learning environment in WBL setting and it is a good match for student
- Academic Reflection
 - How does this experience meet performance indicators necessary for graduation
 - Academic content area
 - Transferable skill
 - WBL experience aligns with learning goals in student PLP
 - WBL experience aligns with standards to reach proficiencies to fulfill graduation requirements.
 - Prerequisite course(s) completed
 - Course aligns with learning goals in PLP
 - Strong attendance record
 - The IEP team or the 504 team approves
 - Updated IEP/504 documents
 - Become familiar with accommodations/modifications available
 - Completed CCV ICC
 - Demonstrates skills in:
 - Technology
 - Academic readiness shown in mathematics and writing to attend to workplace requirements
 - Any certifications or safety course pre-recs

Do you have?

- Parental and community, support outside of secondary school
- Transportation if needed
- Materials fees identified for the center or worksite to provide
- Adequate technology and internet access
- Time built into your school schedule to pursue WBL

Have you?

- Discussed career pathways to employment with your school counselor
- Researched certifications that may be necessary after graduation (Adult Ed, Community College or employer)

Have you thought about?

- Being away from your high school for part or all of each day
- Time management tools to balance a WBL opportunity with a desired dual enrollment course or sports/club activity and meeting other obligations at home and/or at an outside job
- Maintaining grades necessary to remain in your WBL placement

Did you know?

- You can talk with your employer about future job growth
- You will have a training agreement and/or training plan with employer, school, student, parents if you decide to do this opportunity