



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 experiences allow students to apply their classroom learning in professional settings and gain real-world experience in the process. Examples of experiences include internships, apprenticeships, workplace simulations, student-led enterprises, and other opportunities in the business or nonprofit arenas. 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**
-  **Supports students in defining career goals**
-  **Enhances student motivation, retention, and academic success**
-  **Gives students practical experience and helps them develop in-demand technical skills, 21st century skills, and career competencies**

"Applied learning enables students to learn through doing, which can result in greater understanding than learning through reading and listening alone."

(California Department of Education, 2010)

What do the experts say?

Research has found that work-based learning increases students' persistence, graduation rates, and employment rates, with notable gains for students from underserved racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds (Holzer & Lerman, 2014; Kuh, 2008; Lerman, 2010; National Survey of Student Engagement, 2007).



Career Awareness and Exploration

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



Career Preparation

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



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 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 careers.

What faculty in San Diego and Imperial County community colleges are saying about work-based learning

Faculty¹ from 10 community colleges in San Diego and Imperial Counties were surveyed about their involvement with and attitudes about work-based learning.

Opportunities for collaboration and growth

Room to expand applied and work-based learning opportunities across the colleges

- **Room to increase intensity of applied and work-based learning activities:** A larger percentage of applied and work-based learning activities offered are low-intensity (e.g., career days or industry speakers) versus deeper applied learning and job placements (e.g., internships, apprenticeships)
- **Room for more faculty to get involved:** There is room to expand applied and work-based learning across the colleges for both CE and Non-CE to make learning more engaging and relevant. Collaboration can help make opportunities available to all.

Faculty reactions to applied and work-based learning

- 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.”

¹ Surveys were sent to a selection of 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.