

WORK-BASED LEARNING WORKGROUP

Date: March 13, 2025

Time: 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Location: Zoom

Chair: Mr. Daniel Serota

Workgroup Members Present: Whitney Thompson, Jason Klein, Larry Fitzpatrick, Laura Love, Jennifer Foil, Stephen Lefaver, Taylor White, Debbie Wasden

Workgroup Members Absent: Daniel Serota, Julio Rodriguez, Lazaro Lopez, Brent Parton

Members of the Public: Heather Penczak

Workgroup Support: Antonio Gomez, Coryn Barger, Jordan Johnson, Elizabeth Yotter



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10:01 AM	<p>Welcome and Introductions</p> <p>Antonio Gomez called the meeting to order and stated that all Work-Based Learning Committee members have been added to the RSVP list for the Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeship (WBLA) Spring Quarterly Meeting. Gomez asked that those who are not official members RSVP or contact him if they would like him to RSVP on their behalf.</p> <p>Gomez performed roll call, noting that a quorum was present.</p> <p>Gomez called for a motion to approve the February 21, 2025, Meeting Minutes. Jason Klein made a motion to approve the March 21, 2025, Work-Based Learning Workgroup Meeting Minutes as presented. Larry Fitzpatrick seconded the motion. All present members voted in the affirmative. The motion carries. The February 21, 2025, Work-Based Learning Workgroup Meeting Minutes stand approved as presented.</p>	Antonio Gomez
10:05 AM	<p>Workshop Draft Working National Definition</p> <p>Gomez provided a review of the “Step 1: Conceptual Framework – Work-Based Learning Definition” one-pager for the group and asked members to provide recommendations for edits on the current draft definition.</p> <p>Laura Love asked the group for thoughts on changing “project-based experience” to “work experience”.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jason Klein stated that he would prefer “project-based experience” because it implies a certain amount of work 	Antonio Gomez

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involved. Additionally, Klein suggested “meaningful work experience” as an alternative.

Heather Penczak suggested the term “authentic work experience” as another alternative.

Regarding the term “program of study” Heather Penczak suggested that the term may be confusing as the term is often used to include the related coursework. Additionally, Taylor White stated that “program of study” is a technical term in the CTE field as well as in federal policy.

Laura Love suggested replacing “offers” with “strengthens” in the last sentence of the definition.

Debbie Wasden noted that this workgroup wants to connect that this experience is guided by a mentor/supervisor/industry expert, and the experience itself is meaningful.

Stephen Lefaver and Debbie Wasden proposed using the term “work-aligned” to convey that the individual work experience could take place on a work site with a supervisor or could also be a project-based simulated work environment.

- Whitney Thompson agreed, stating that this group should also ensure that they are differentiating between technical training and contextualizing work for work-based learning.

Additionally, Debbie Wasden asked the group to consider replacing “supervisor” with “expert”.

- Heather Penczak noted her approval of this approach, stating that the term supervisor suggests that someone is giving tasks as opposed to coaching.

Heather Penczak suggested including a term similar to “industry-specific” instead of “authentic”.

- Larry Fitzpatrick agreed with Penczak, stating that “industry-specific” is more effective language.
- Jordan Johnson suggested the term “industry-aligned” as an additional alternative.

Taylor White asked why apprenticeship itself is not considered work-based learning as per the definition and suggested changing the end of the final sentence to “...or further work-based learning opportunities”.

Debbie Wasden suggested that the definition convey that this group does not recognize that these work-based learning experiences in the



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current definition could focus on and help the individual gain specific skills. Additionally, Wasden suggested inserting the gaining of market value skills into the definition and possibly the implementation section as well.

- Penczak agreed, suggesting that the implementation section could call out essential and technical skills.

Debbie Wasden noted that “ongoing” and “sustained” are both used in the first sentence and suggested that the use of both may be redundant.

- Whitney Thompson asked for clarification on the word “sustained” as it pertains to the definition.
- Heather Penczak suggested removing “sustained” completely as time requirements vary depending on the work environment.

Jason Klein and Laura Love suggested replacing “industry-specific training” with “industry-specific training and in-demand skills development”.

- White suggested specifying that Work-Based Learning provides industry-specific training.
- Additionally, White stated that the term “in-demand” struck her as a term with baggage, noting that work-based learning takes place in fields that are not in-demand and that many in-demand jobs and skills are not positive.
- Penczak suggested replacing the term “in-demand” with “always” and agreed that in-demand does not mean that the jobs provided are living wage or pathways for advancement.

Taylor White stated that an apprenticeship is a job while the individual is in it, but that it is not a job guarantee at its culmination in all cases. Additionally, White suggested that it could be argued that the best internships are also a job because they are paid and “FT” and include some type of formal training.

White suggested that in her belief, apprenticeship is the gold standard work-based learning experience and stated that it could be harmful to apprenticeship to always call it out as separate from work-based learning because it reinforces the idea that work-based learning is for schools/colleges while apprenticeship is for the workforce system only.

- Laura Love asked where apprenticeship should be placed, stating that she considers apprenticeship to be work-based learning because trainees are involved, making an apprenticeship different from other entry-level jobs that are not an apprenticeship pathway.



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- Stephen Lefaver stated that he does not view apprenticeship as work-based learning because apprenticeship is employment.

Heather Penczak highlighted a recent report on Work-Based Learning completed by Bellwether which includes Illinois.

- <https://www.asa.org/newsroom/asa-bellwether-work-based-learning-report-2025/>



Debbie Wasden asked whether the term supervisor was inclusive of individuals leading work-based activities through academic institutions.

- Whitney Thompson suggested the following as an alternative “typically under the guidance of a mentor/supervisor”.
- Stephen Lefaver suggested leaving the term ‘industry expert’ in the definition.

Laura Love suggested removing “in-demand” from the sentence referring to skills development.

Taylor White asked if this group wants to prioritize specific industries or if the aim is to be inclusive of all industries.

- Laura Love stated that her understanding is that this group aims to be inclusive and therefore broad in their definition of work-based learning.
- Based on this understanding, Taylor White suggested removing the term “in-demand” from the sentence referring to skills development.
- Heather Penczak suggested defining the specific skills as either essential or technical.

Stephen Lefaver asked why “apprenticeship” was removed from the last sentence of the definition.

- Gomez stated that it was unintentionally implied that apprenticeship is separate from work-based learning.

Debbie Wasden asked for further clarification on the term “exit points” and suggested “seamless entry and advancement”, “entry and movement”, and “entry and mobility” as possible alternatives.

- The term “transition points” was suggested as an alternative.
- Jordan Johnson noted that during the last meeting, group members discussed the possibility of moving backwards on the continuum.
- Jason Klein endorsed Jordan’s comment and noted that there should be freedom for mobility.

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Debbie Wasden suggested adding an example related to career exploration (left side of the continuum).

10:25 AM

Review Data

Antonio Gomez

Gomez provided a review of the data that is currently available to the group and opened the floor for discussion.



Discussion:

What is the expectation for what this landscape analysis looks like?

- Jordan Johnson suggested organizing resources by topical area (youth, displaced workers, apprenticeship, etc.).
- Laura Love suggested strengths and gaps as well as spelling out specific research questions.
- Debbie Wasden stated that tagged terms would be helpful to allow this to be a living and searchable list.
- Jason Klein suggested creating a one-pager.
- Laura Love suggested providing a call to action.
- The group as a whole agreed that they would prefer an information-heavy design over graphics.
- Whitney Thompson suggested providing examples of field studies and other work-based learning for those in the field.
- Debbie Wasden suggested linking research and this analysis into the work-based learning continuum wherever possible. Additionally, Wasden suggested creating space to point out what is missing so that practitioners who are thinking about all of the elements of the continuum have a reference point (career navigation, etc.).
- Stephen Lefaver stated that he would like to see stores about quality pre-apprenticeship, noting that success should be measured on where the pathway leads the individual.
- Heather Penczak suggested organizing by what is cross-cutting and what might be industry-specific.

Who can we reach out to for more information?

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- Both Whitney Thompson and Heather Panczak suggested reaching out to Abbi Barton
- Jason Klein suggested reaching out to Erica Thieman for her information (ethieman@isbe.net)

10:55 AM

Public Comment

Gomez called for public comment. There was none.



11:00 AM

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 AM.

All