

Quality Work-Based Learning: Maximizing Returns for Youth, Employers, and Communities

National Association of Workforce Boards

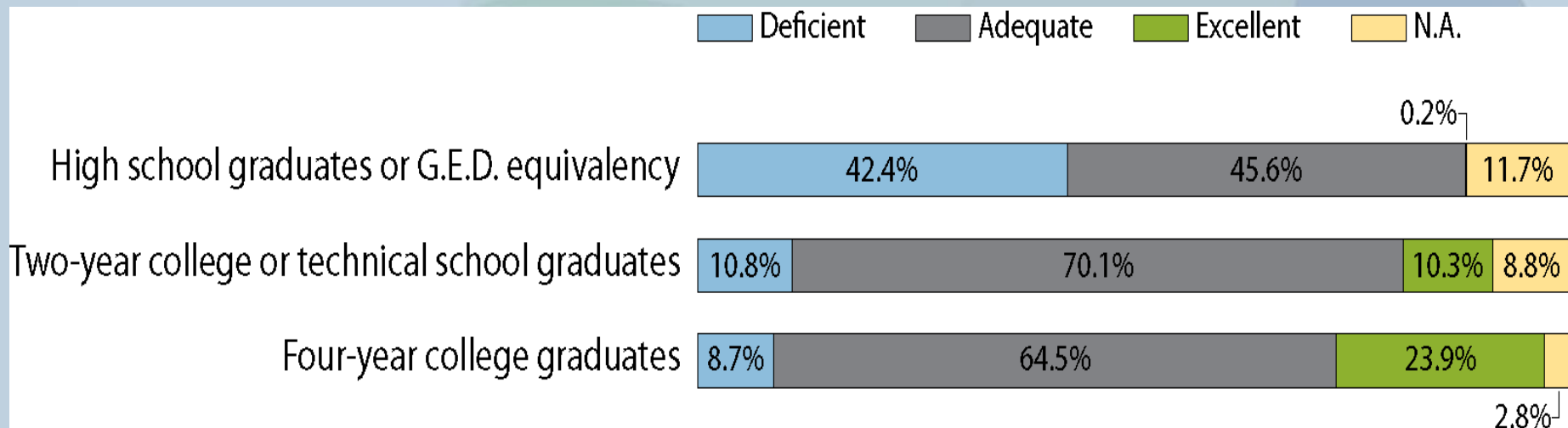
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The Mandate

“Over the next 10 years, nearly half of all new jobs will require education that goes beyond a high school education. And yet, as many as a quarter of our students aren't even finishing high school. The quality of our math and science education lags behind many other nations. America has fallen to ninth in the proportion of young people with a college degree.”

~President Obama, State of the Union Address

Readiness for the workforce



Number of respondents varied for each question, ranging from 401 to 423.

N.A. selected when company does not hire in selected category.

Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Skills needed

- Academic
- Technical
- “21st Century” Workforce Readiness Skills
 - Critical thinking
 - Creativity
 - Collaboration
 - Communication

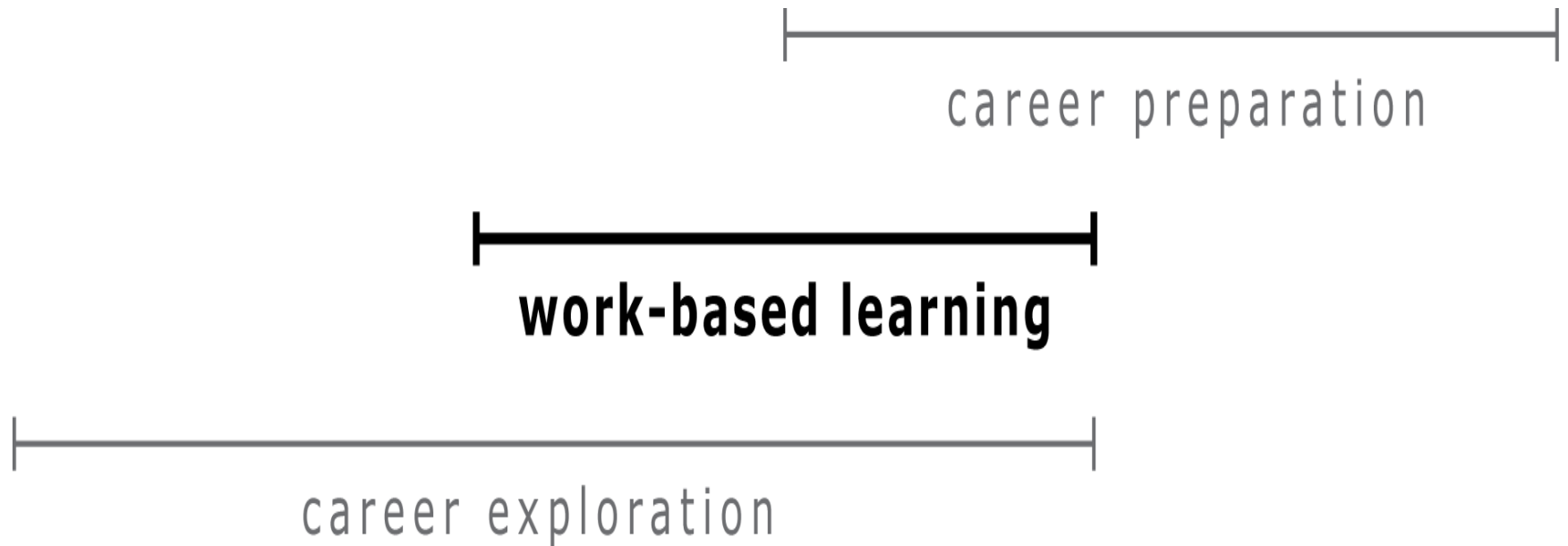
How do we get there?

- ASTD estimates \$125.88 billion spent on employee learning and development in 2009.
- Key strategy recommendation: work with educators on developing workforce readiness skills through mentoring, internships, and other learning opportunities.

Work-based learning definition

...an educational strategy that links class-based instruction with activity that has consequences beyond the class or value beyond success in school and is judged by professional standards; it uses the workplace, or in-depth experience with employer or community input, to engage youth and intentionally promote learning and access to future educational and career opportunities.

Continuum of Experiences

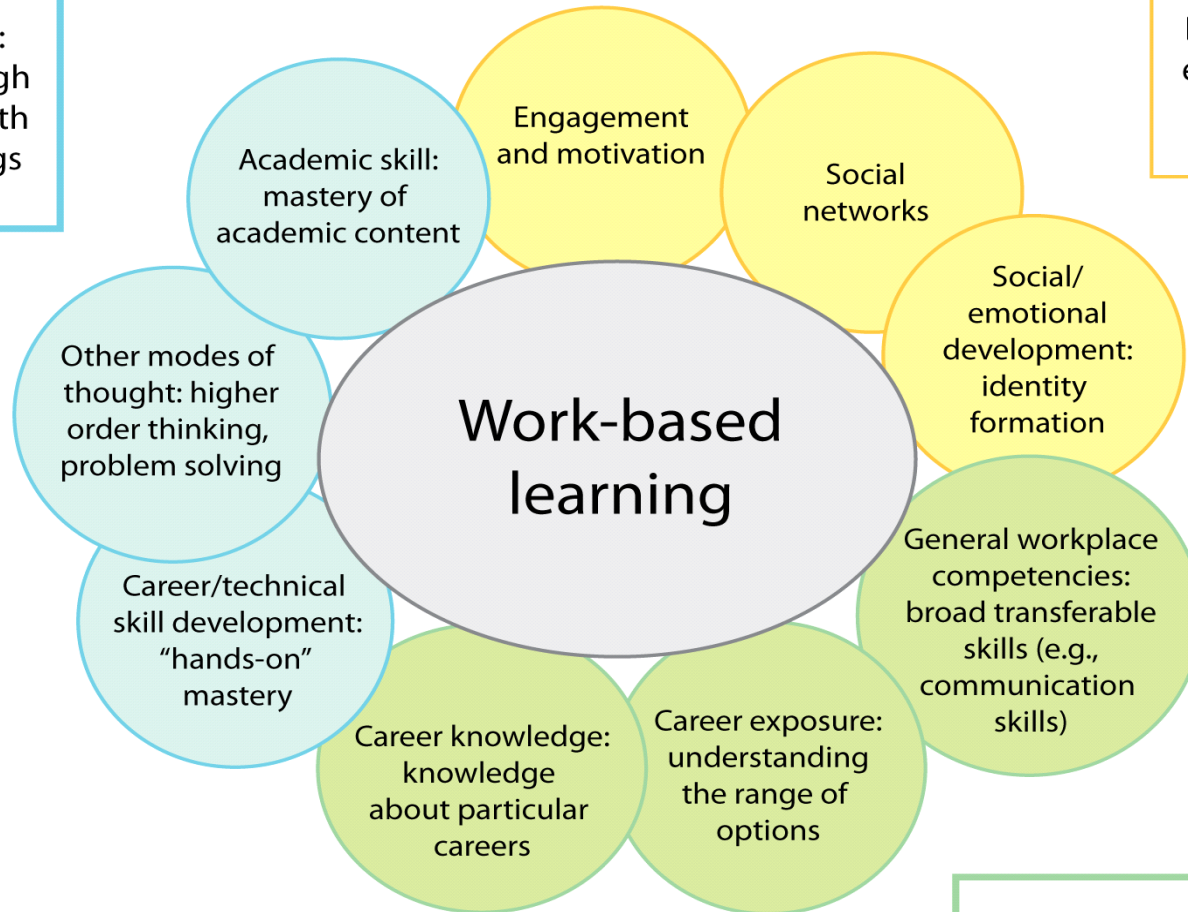


Minimum components

- a) Connection to standards and curriculum
- b) Depth of experience
- c) Direct and systematic input and feedback from professionals and/or the community outside the classroom
 - to establish an understanding of workplace standards
 - to provide meaningful consequences or value beyond success in school

Cognitive
Development:
Learning through
engagement with
ideas and things

Social/Emotional
Development:
Learning through
engagement with
people and self



Career
Development:
Learning through
engagement with
work processes
and places

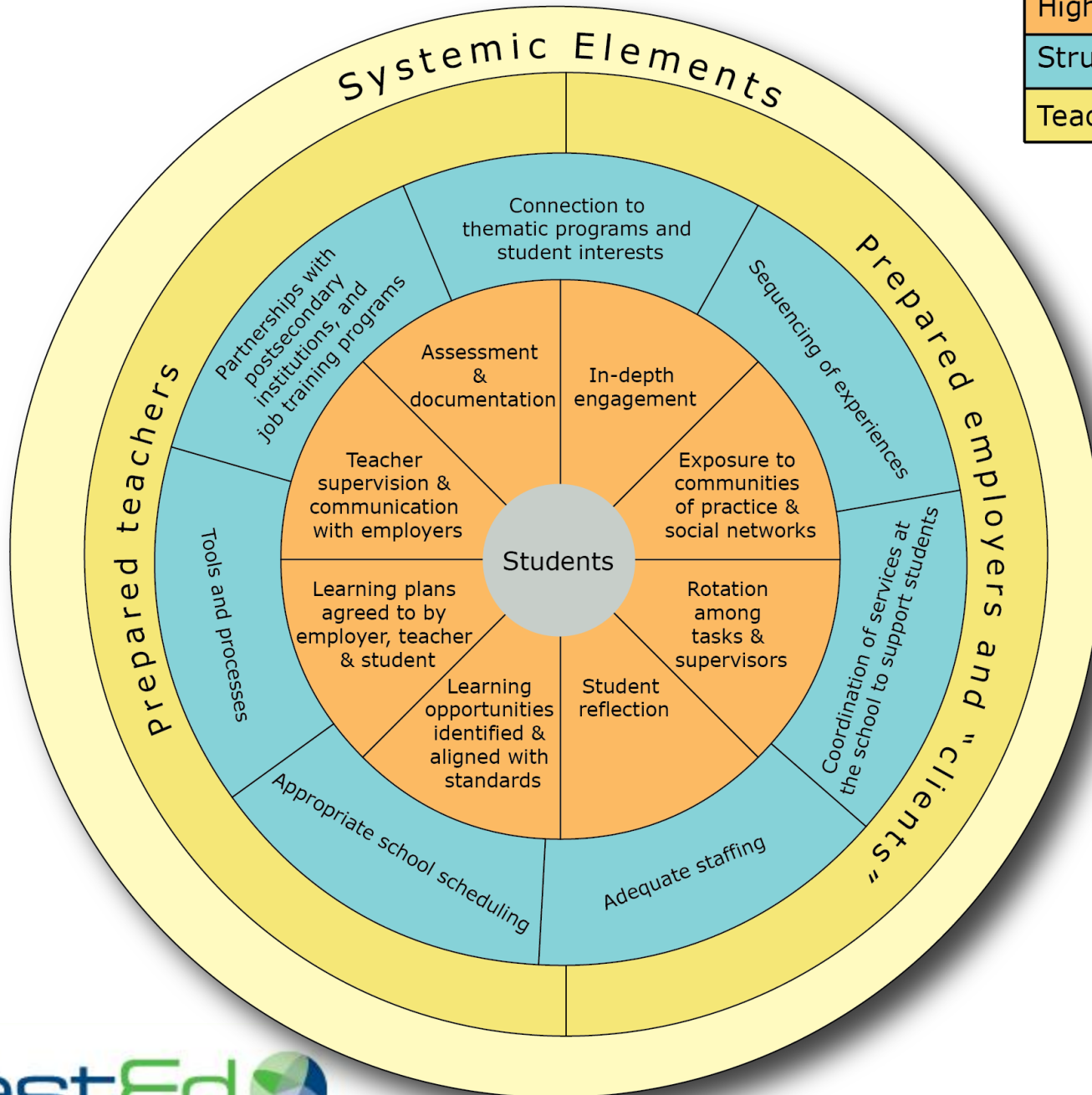
Ensuring Quality to Maximize the Return on Investment

Legend

High-Quality Practice

Structural Features Required

Teachers and Employers



Workplace factors that facilitate learning

- **Socio-cognitive demands.** The intern's tasks require knowledge and skill.
- **Social-interactional demands.** The intern has heavy contact with others of varying statuses and roles.
- **Pragmatics.** The intern's tasks are important to the organization.
- **Production process.** The organization uses work teams and stresses division of labor less.

Workplace factors that facilitate learning

- **Access to knowledge.** The intern has access to knowledge because a) knowledge is not classified tightly and/or b) access is not controlled tightly (by processes or people).
- **Social organization.** Workplace roles are not highly segmented.
- **Workplace culture.** Workers believe in collaboration and learning; intern has status in the organization.

(Hughes & Moore, 1999)

Connected activities to support learning

- Preparation and orientation to the workplace
- Assessment of learning needs, strengths, interests
- Assistance with site selection and interview, as appropriate
- Learning plan development with employer

Connected activities to support learning

- Seminars and ongoing reflection to facilitate deeper understanding
 - of the experience at the workplace
 - of how the experience connects with occupational and academic curriculum
 - of skills, interests, and abilities
 - of the transferability of skills to other settings

Connected activities to support learning

- Assignments to facilitate development of thinking and written communication skills
- Presentations to demonstrate knowledge gained and receive feedback from employers or clients
- Certificates and employer appreciation to bring closure to the experience
- Resume updates and connection to next steps

Support for the employer

- “Easy”, pre-internship opportunities
- Orientation to the internship process and clarity of information
- Adequate tools, communication mechanisms, and logistical support
- Participation in learning plan process so all parties clear on expectations for the student

Support for the employer

- Students prepared to learn
- Access to “just in time” support from coordinator or educator
- Assistance with student assessment processes
- Appreciation and public accolades
- Opportunities to contribute to program improvement

Benefits to employers

- Reduced recruitment costs
- Reduced training and supervision costs
- Increased retention rates and reduced turnover
- Productivity of students
- Higher productivity and promotion rates of program graduates compared with other newly hired workers

Benefits to employers

- Improved employee learning, productivity and morale
- Favorable publicity
- Increased diversity
- Clearer focus for future engagement
- A stronger system for developing skilled workers in the industry

Return on investment

A national study on employer investments in work-based learning found that benefits exceeded costs in nearly three out of four companies studied. For every dollar invested, companies saw the following returns:

- **Autodesk.** Ranging from 1.15 to 2.99 across departments, with a median of 2.32.
- **Charles Schwab.** Ranging from 0.40 to 5.64, depending on whether the company's forecasts of long-term benefits from higher employee retention rates are realized.

Return on investment

- **Crown Auto World.** Ranging from 1.39 to 3.21, depending on employee retention rates and additional profits from technicians hired from the program.
- **Eastman Kodak.** Ranging from 0.87 to 1.05, depending on the productivity of student apprentices.
- **Siemens.** Ranging from 1.07 to 1.79 in Lake Mary, Fla., depending on training and supervision cost savings from apprentices later hired as full-time employees.
- **Sutter Health.** 1.39, if students perform work similar to that done by employees.

Opportunities to partner with education

CTE programs and high school reform efforts encourage work-based learning as an instructional strategy

- CTE pathways include “co-op” and other experiences
- Career academies require internships between 11th and 12th grade
- “Linked Learning” in California is exploring a broad range of work-based learning options

The role of WIA youth programs

WIBs, youth councils, and the youth serving agencies play critical roles in bringing workforce and education systems together:

- Convening local leadership
- Encouraging effective policies
- Ensuring quality and impact
- Brokering and providing services

Examples and Discussion

- How can the education and workforce systems work together more closely to ensure high quality workplace experiences that will lead to postsecondary education and training and livable wage careers?
- What are the challenges and opportunities in expanding access to learning-rich experiences for all youth?

Thank you!

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