



Program Evaluation

How well does work-based learning achieve its purposes? Program evaluation is the task of making judgments about the quality of a program and determining the extent to which previously established criteria are being met or have been attained. The fundamental reason for evaluation is to seek improvement. Educators are obligated to ensure that educational processes deliver specified program objectives.

Accreditation Evaluation

The Iowa Department of Education currently uses Differentiated Accountability, a system designed to replace the former mandate of on-site visits every five years by the department. Site visits are now focused on need. Schools annually complete a desk audit to submit information about their compliance with state and federal law. Schools also submit data through the state's early warning system on four pieces of information – known as Healthy Indicators – which are examined to determine the overall health of a school or district.

Local Evaluation

In the absence of an external or accreditation evaluation, conscientious teacher-coordinators wanting to improve may enlist the help of teacher-educators from state universities or colleges, advisory council members, or professional colleagues in the field to appraise their programs.

Teacher-coordinators should also conduct the following types of evaluation to ensure the relevance and efficiency of work-based learning:

- *Graduate Follow-Up.* Within a specified period of time following completion – usually one year and five years, a follow-up study of graduates should be conducted to determine their employment status, additional education received after completion, and general attitudes toward the training received.
- *Mastery of Course Competencies.* An effective means of assuring student outcomes is through the use of a mastery-level test of the core curriculum competencies. This can be done through technical skill assessments or industry recognized certifications.
- *Student Evaluations.* A semester or year-end anonymous program evaluation should be given to students to uncover their attitudes, reactions, opinions, and recommendations related to program objectives, teaching techniques, instructor effectiveness, training sponsor qualities, and training station opportunities, among others.

Parent Evaluations. An effective means of improving communications and parent involvement is through the use of an evaluation by parents of students involved in the program. Be sure to include topics such as parent



communications, insurance coverage for students, safety of students, transportation issues, assistance in guiding students, and other management practices involving parents. The key here is to establish parent support and identify concerns that need to be addressed by the school/coordinator.

Quality Indicators

Work-based learning should be reviewed in a comprehensive manner. Undoubtedly, the key component of any successful work-based learning design is the teacher-coordinator, but the areas outlined below should be reviewed with equal importance to ensure a solid foundation and good reasons to continue the program.

I. Program Development and Operation

Goal: The work-based learning program is planned to meet student and community needs through clear, attainable objectives which fit the overall education program of the school and are evaluated systematically.

Quality Indicators:

1. Written statements containing the purposes and objectives of work-based learning are on file with the administration and are consistent with the school philosophy.
2. All students enrolled have an occupational objective.
3. Provisions are made to accommodate disadvantaged, disabled, or other special audiences.
4. A clear-cut job description for the teacher-coordinator is maintained and updated annually.
5. The teacher-coordinator works with school guidance personnel in assessment and enrollment of prospective students.
6. Program planning reflects requirements for emphasis on math, English, science, social studies, and occupational competencies as core curriculum subjects.
7. Student safety is accommodated via medical and liability insurance provided through the school district, employers, and/or parents.

II. Advisory Council

Goal: The advisory council provides effective communication between the school and the community, is responsible for suggesting curriculum changes, and assists in evaluation.

Quality Indicators

1. There is proportionate representation from the community on the advisory council for special needs, interests, gender, and minorities.
2. The teacher-coordinator attends meetings of the advisory council and is familiar with recommendations made.
3. The advisory committee serves to assure adequate support for the program and consistently assesses the management and implementation of program objectives to improve/ maintain the program. Specific assessment tools have been developed to carry out this role of the committee.



III. Facilities and Equipment

Goal: The facilities are current, and of sufficient size and quality to effectively meet the instructional needs of students.

Quality Indicators

1. A classroom, storage facilities, and access to a private office with telephone, computer and printer are available to the teacher-coordinator.
2. Students have access to computers.

IV. Program Administration

Goal: The work-based learning program functions with an adequate budget for salary, travel, equipment, and supplies.

Quality Indicators

1. The work-based learning program is an integral part of the local plan for career education and is considered equal but of separate instructional design.
2. An approved operating budget for the current fiscal year is on file and available to the teacher-coordinator.
3. The teacher-coordinator uses a plan or checklist to assure all students are kept informed about their achievement of necessary skills and knowledge (competencies).
4. An on-going review of instructional materials is conducted to ensure that materials are free from gender discrimination and bias, and are updated to accommodate current trends and needs in the community/nation.

V. Instructional Staff

Goal: A qualified teacher-coordinator is responsible for conducting a quality program, as well as maintaining effective school and community relations.

Quality Indicators

1. The teacher-coordinator is vocationally approved and possesses the personal, technical, professional, and occupational competencies necessary to prepare students for entry-level employment or for advanced educational instruction.
2. The teacher-coordinator participates in continuing education, in-service training, and/or other forms of professional and technical development.
3. Professional competency is maintained through involvement in affiliated professional organizations associated with each work-based learning program.



VI. Curriculum and Instruction

Goal: The content of all instruction is competency-based, is organized around the skill development needed by students, and includes an overview of occupational opportunities.

Quality Indicators

1. Students are apprised of the importance of 21st century employment skills, safety in the workplace, productivity, the free enterprise system, and entrepreneurial skills as they pursue occupational preparation opportunities.
2. The curriculum is based on analysis of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to meet the occupational objectives of students.
3. Written plans that clearly state competencies, activities, and resources to be used during instruction are developed and implemented. These job-specific competencies for each of the six occupational areas are used in conjunction with the core competencies developed by the Iowa Department of Education.
4. A variety of instructional methods (small group activities, visual materials, field trips, speakers, etc.) is used.
5. Student leadership development activities are incorporated into the overall course of study.
6. Students are provided with individualized projects or units of study relating to their occupational objectives.
7. English, math, science, and social studies are integrated into the related class for continued emphasis on developing essential competencies.
8. Students are apprised of the importance of productivity, the free enterprise system, basic employment skills, and entrepreneurial skills as they pursue occupational preparation opportunities.

VII. Student/Employer Follow-up and Student Placement

Goal: Comprehensive evaluation of the program is conducted, including follow-up of students to determine successful placement, student opinion of program effectiveness, and employer opinion of program adequacy.

Quality Indicators

1. Employer opinion surveys are conducted annually concerning the relevance of the work-based learning program.
2. The findings of evaluation, follow-up, and surveys are available and used by the teacher-coordinator, administration, and advisory council in updating and improving the program.



VIII. Work-Based Learning Components

Goal: Work-based learning involves responsibility and experience in applying skills relevant to the student's career objective.

Quality Indicators

1. Students, parents, employers, and the school have a signed, written training agreement.
2. A training plan has been developed for each individual student and is relevant and specific to the student's occupational objectives. The student, employer, and teacher-coordinator use the plan to measure the progress and sequence of student learning experiences.
3. Regularly scheduled coordinating visits are maintained, and are of sufficient frequency and number to allow for the teacher-coordinator to assist with training or occupational problems.
4. The teacher-coordinator maintains records of each student agreement, training plan, employer evaluation forms, wage and hour records, and information obtained from coordination visits. These should be retained for several years.
5. The related classroom instruction is taught by the teacher-coordinator and is designed to fit the student's occupational objective and/or individual job needs.
6. Credit is granted for occupational experience as well as the related classroom achievement.
7. The employer and teacher-coordinator are involved in evaluating student progress, with the final grades awarded by the teacher-coordinator.
8. A competency-based evaluation instrument is used to measure student performance at the training station.
9. There is an organized system for developing and approving training stations.
10. Each student participates in an appropriate occupational training experience for the minimum number of hours per week that provides a continuum of training.
11. Students are provided release time (excused time away from the school building) during the normal school day.
12. Students are employed for a monetary wage at a rate comparable to that paid other part-time employees for similar work and are not displacing other workers who could do such work.
13. Travel expenses are provided for coordination purposes and other program-sponsored activities.
14. State and federal labor laws are reviewed by the teacher-coordinator, student, parent and employer.
15. Safety instruction is provided by the school as well as training sites/employers involved in the program.