OACC | Ohio TechNet

FOUNDATIONS OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Experiential Learning Webinar Series
2026

OACC
OHIO ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

OhioTechNet

Today's PRESENTERS

CRYSTAL JONES
OACC

COURTNEY TENHOVER
LCCC | Ohio TechNet

Session Overview

- **Overview of Ohio TechNet and OACC**
- **Webinar Series Overview**
- **Plans for an updated Replication Guide**
- **Current Experiential Learning Initiatives in Ohio**
- **Overview of Experiential Learning**
- **Making Experiential Learning Work**: When to Use Each Model, Key Considerations, and Successful Programs

Experiential Learning on Your Campus

Webinar Series Overview

This series will cover:

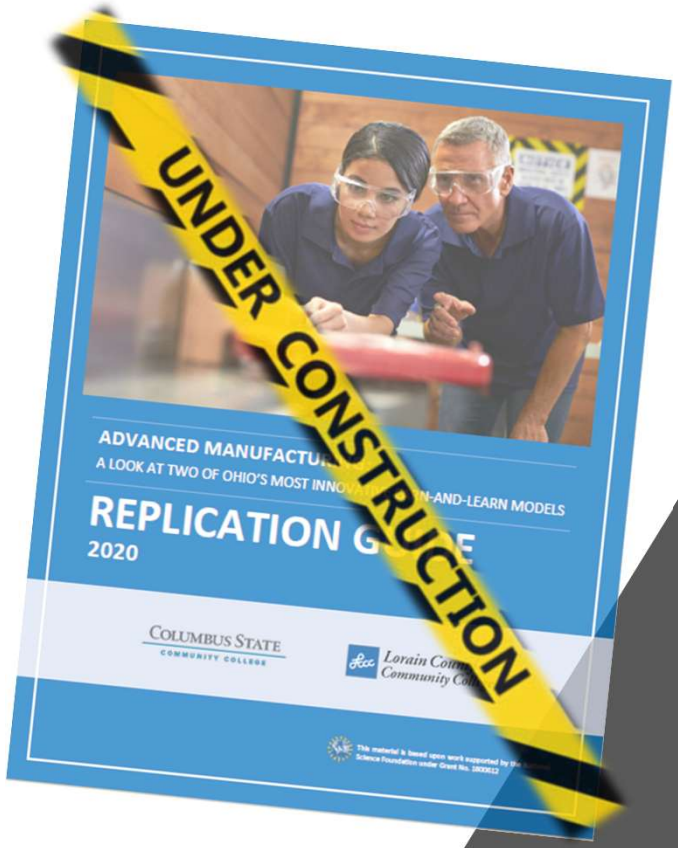
- Foundational concepts and emerging earn-and-learn models that strengthen pathways into high-demand fields
- Practical strategies for designing programs and building strong industry partnerships
- Leveraging micro-internships and project-based learning
- Integrating simulations and virtual labs to expand hands-on opportunities
- Best practices for tracking, reporting, and demonstrating impact

This series will equip you with actionable models, tools, and inspiration to advance experiential learning across your institution.

1. Foundations of Experiential Learning **TODAY!**
2. Designing Earn and Learn Programs
3. Building Industry Partnerships
4. Innovative Approaches: Micro-Internships and Project-Based Learning
5. Leveraging Simulations and Virtual Labs
6. Experiential Learning Recap & New Guide Launch

Experiential Learning Replication Guide

The series concludes with the release of an updated Earn & Learn Replication Guide, offering tools and insights for institutions ready to launch or scale experiential learning initiatives.



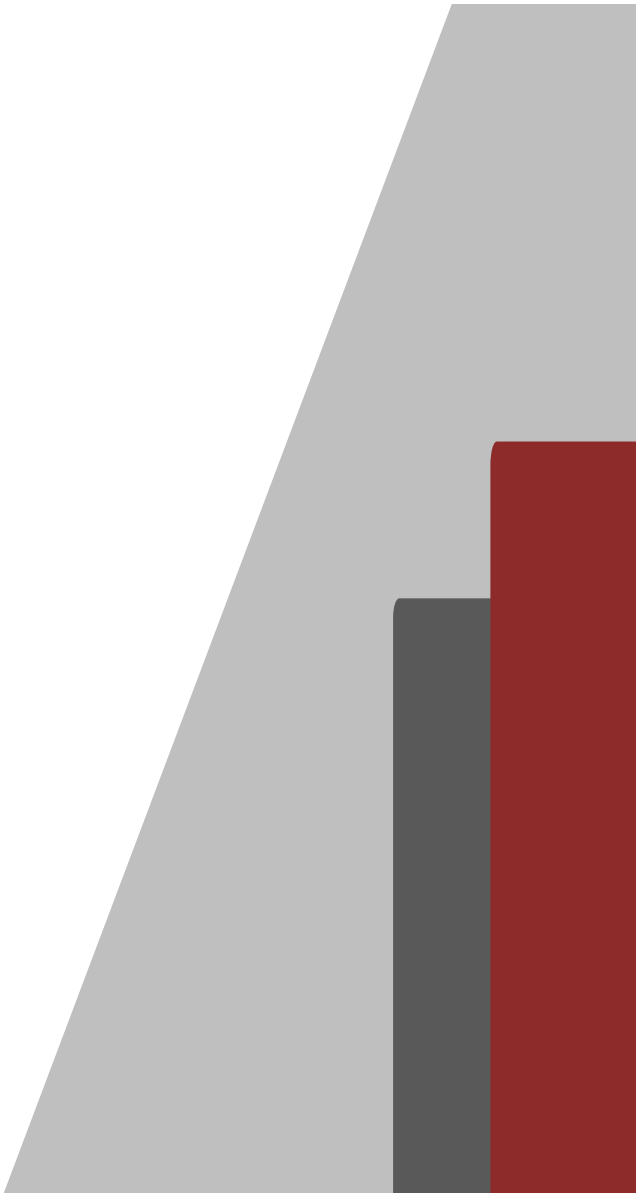
About
OACC & OSCN

OACC
OHIO ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

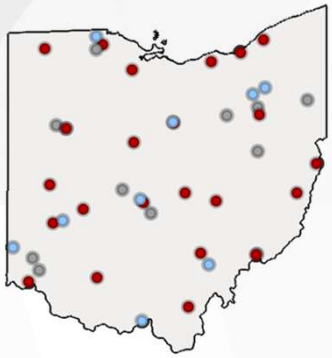
- **CORE Functions serving 22 Community Colleges**
  - Policy & Advocacy
  - Strategic Leadership
  - Professional Development & Networking
  - Student & Workforce Success
  - Statewide Institutional Research Support
- **Success Center**
- **Innovation**
  - Workforce Partnerships

OHIO SEMICONDUCTOR COLLABORATION NETWORK (OSCN)

- **Developed to serve as a statewide collaborative that focuses on building and sustaining a strong semiconductor and engineering technician pipeline/ecosystem by:**
  - Leading the Intel Semiconductor Education and Research Program (SERP)
  - Aligning credentialing and program outcomes
  - Scaling best practices
  - Leveraging partnerships
- **Steering committee formed to create a sustainability strategy for the network**



About
OHIO TECHNET



OTN Members:

- Community College
- Technical Center
- University

Vision

The members of the Ohio Technical Skills Innovation Network, or Ohio TechNet, are nationally recognized for partnering with industry to implement collaborative, innovative solutions that meet manufacturing and tech workforce needs.

Mission

Ohio TechNet supports workforce development and academic professionals to incubate, develop and sustain programming that accelerates the growth of Ohio's manufacturing & technical workforce.

Purpose

Ohio TechNet partners benefit from peer-to-peer collaboration, technical assistance and access to resources, making program expansion and innovation at their institution more efficient, faster to implement and easier to sustain.

Partners in Training Ohio's Manufacturing Workforce

Strategic Focus Areas

Ohio TechNet's strategic focus areas provide partners with best practices, models, and technical assistance to address the critical workforce needs in the state.

- **Guided Pathways for Youth**
- **Reaching New Audiences**
- **Innovative Earn and Learn**
- **Faculty and Educator Development**
- **Partnering with Industry**

OhioTechNet

What's Changing in Ohio –
and Why it Matters for Experiential Learning

- ODHE Co-op Internship Program
- Workforce Pell Program
- Increase in Pre-Apprenticeship Training
- Strengthens Ohio's Workforce Pipeline

Let's Hear From You

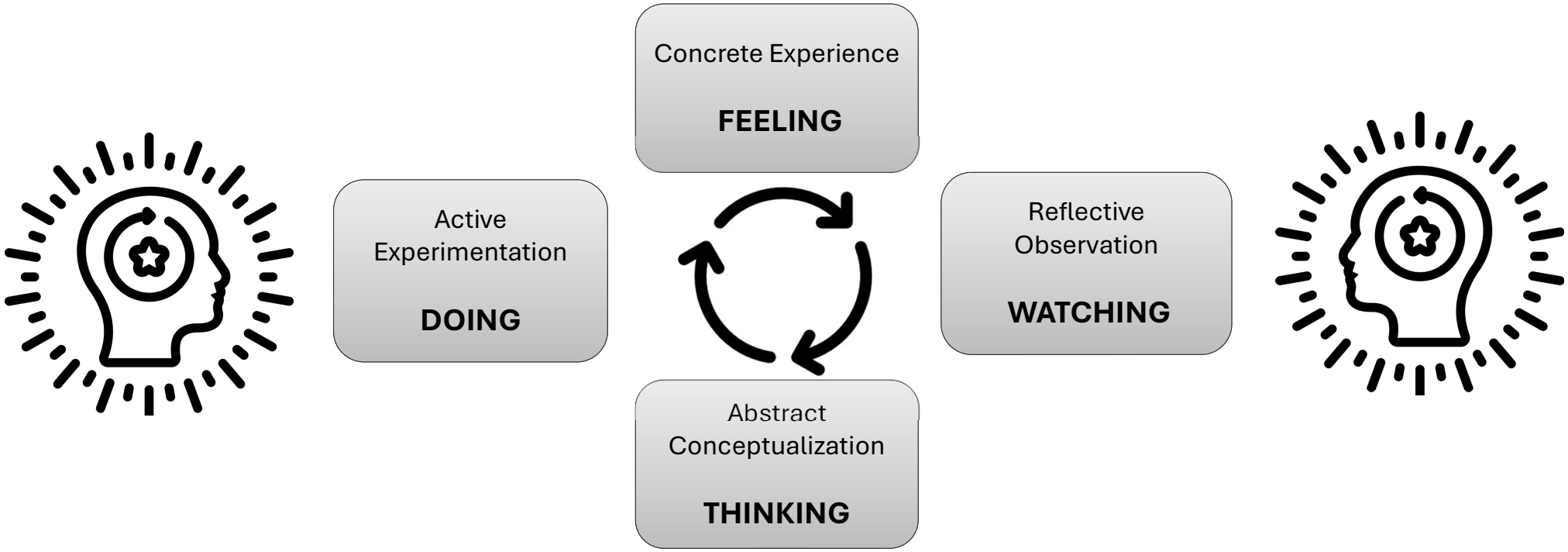
1. How familiar are you with experiential learning?

2. How would you describe the role of experiential learning in your institution today?

3. What has been your experience with experiential learning?

WHAT IS EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING?

Learning by Doing: Students gain knowledge through experience, reflection, and application.



Kolb's Cycle of Learning: "The process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience."

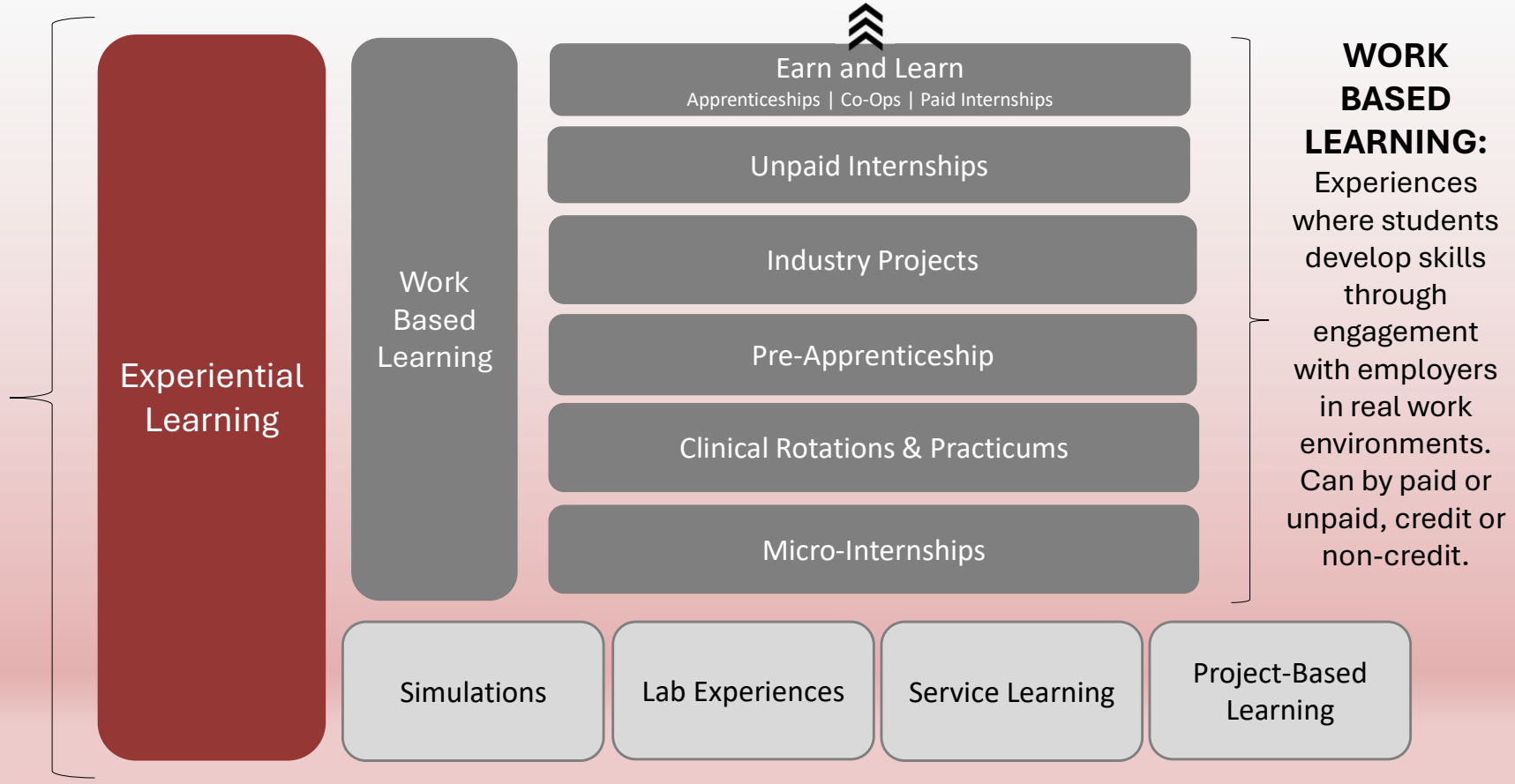
Kolb (1984). *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*

Key Benefits

1. **Deeper Understanding & Retention**: Connecting classroom knowledge to hands-on work experiences
2. **Real-World Relevance**: It shows students what they're learning matters by applying it to actual problems
3. **Skill Development**: Develops essential soft skills and industry-specific competences
4. **Career Preparation**: Provides hands-on experience, mentorship, and networking, providing a competitive edge and clarity on career paths
5. **Increased Engagement & Motivation**: Provides the chance to "fail safely" boosting interest and intrinsic motivation

OVERVIEW OF
Experiential Learning

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING:
Any structured activity where learners gain skills through hands-on, real-world experience. Learning by doing and reflecting, rather than learning only through classroom instruction.



EARN AND LEARN:
PAID | Structured Learning | Clear Pathway to Employment
A paid subset of WBL that integrates wages with structured training

WORK BASED LEARNING:
Experiences where students develop skills through engagement with employers in real work environments. Can by paid or unpaid, credit or non-credit.

WORK BASED LEARNING

EARN AND LEARN

- Gain r**eal-world job experience while simultaneously earning wages** and developing new skills or credentials.
- **Blend paid employment with structured learning**—such as classroom instruction, training modules, mentoring, or certification pathways—**allowing individuals to advance their education or career** without sacrificing income.

UNPAID INTERNSHIPS

Classified as work-based learning when they meet these criteria:

- Take place in a **real workplace**
- provide **structured learning objectives**
- Student gains **career-relevant skills**
- There is **supervision and feedback from an employer**
- Experience is tied to **career exploration, skill development, or academic learning**

MICRO-INTERNSHIPS

- A **short-term, project-based work experience**—usually lasting **10–40 hours** total and completed over a few days to a few weeks.
- Allow work on **real employer projects** that build career-relevant skills without the time commitment of a full internship.

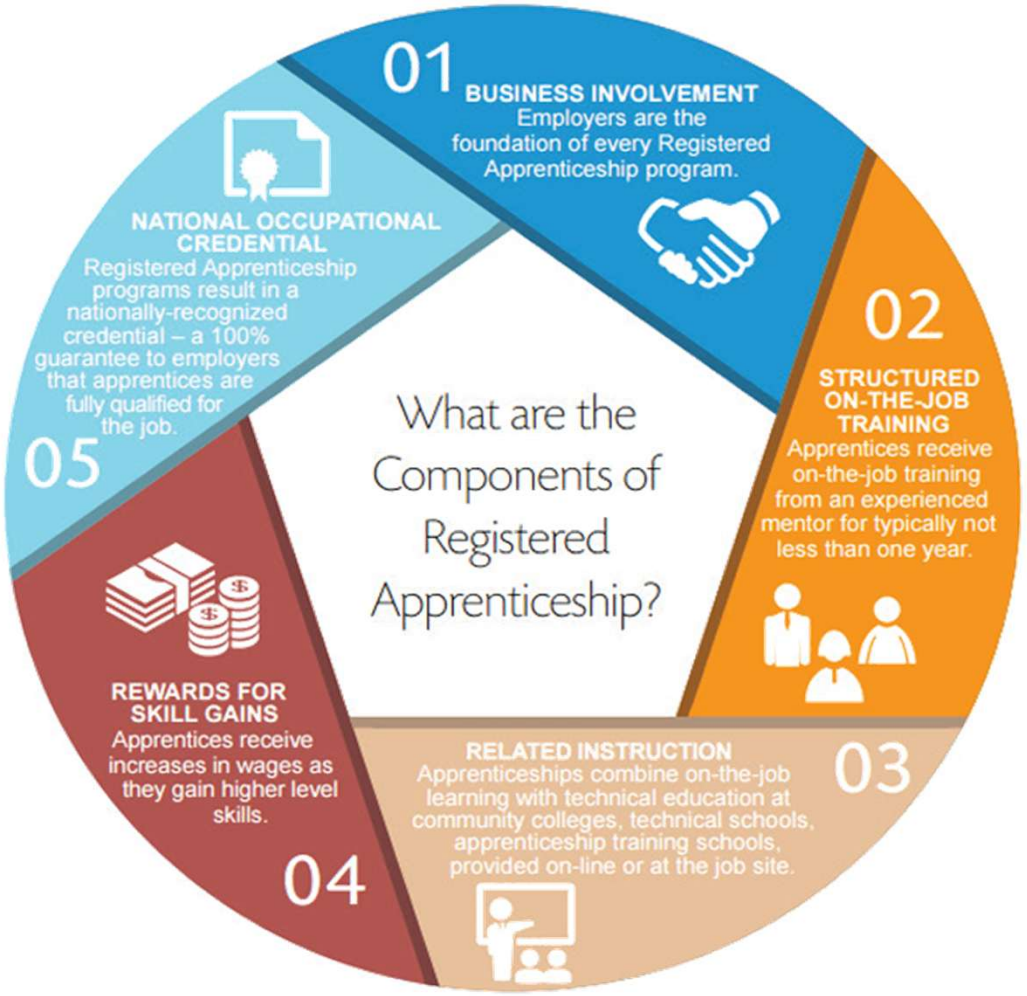
INDUSTRY PROJECTS

- **Collaborative, real-world assignments** in which students work directly with employers or industry partners to solve authentic business, technical, or organizational challenges.
- Learners **apply academic knowledge, engage in problem-solving, collaborate in teams, communicate with stakeholders, and produce deliverables** that have value to the partner organization.
- **Strengthen career readiness** by giving students hands-on experience with industry tools, expectations, and workflows while providing employers with fresh perspectives and potential talent.

TYPES OF EARN AND LEARN

REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIPS

- U.S. Department of Labor Recognized
- Combined on-the-job training & related instruction
- Full or Part-time
- Industry-Recognized Credentials
- Can articulate to academic credits

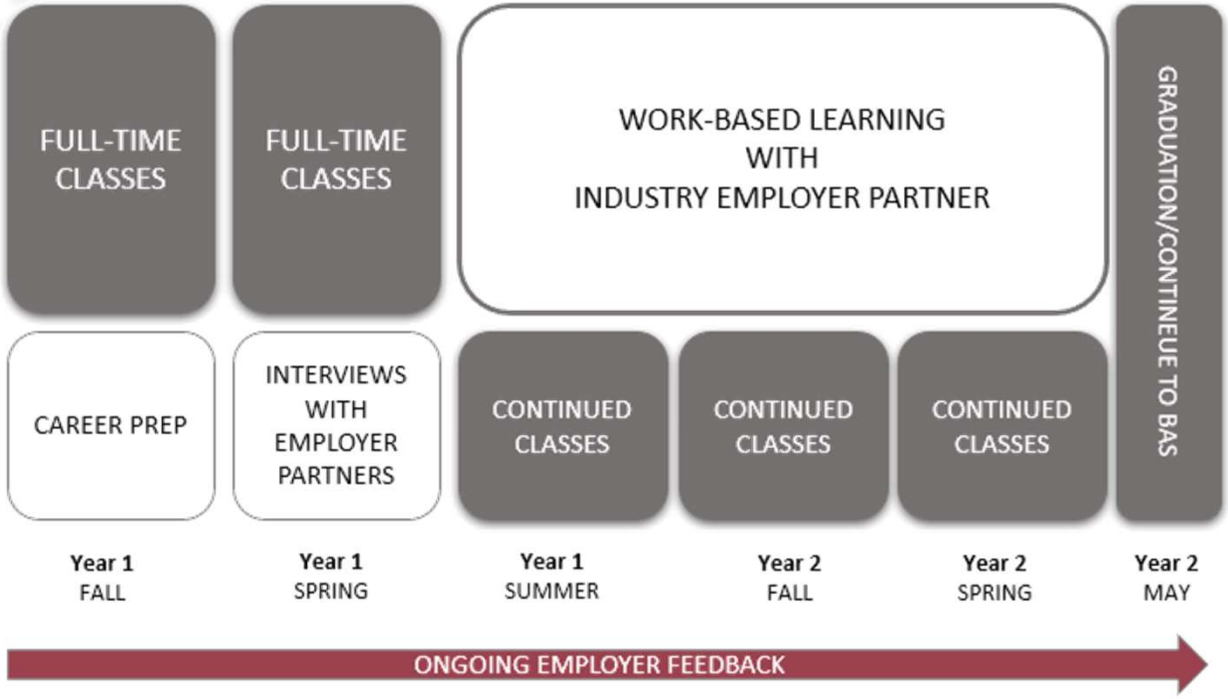


https://www.workingforamerica.org/system/files/wai_apprenticeship_toolkit_june17_0.pdf

TYPES OF EARN AND LEARN

NON-REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP

- Defined skill progression
- Full-time or part-time
- Credential aligned coursework, Structured On-the-Job Learning
- Mentor or Supervisor Support
- Defined Learning Outcomes or Competencies
- Assessment and Evaluation
- Not formally registered with a state apprenticeship agency or the U.S. Department of Labor



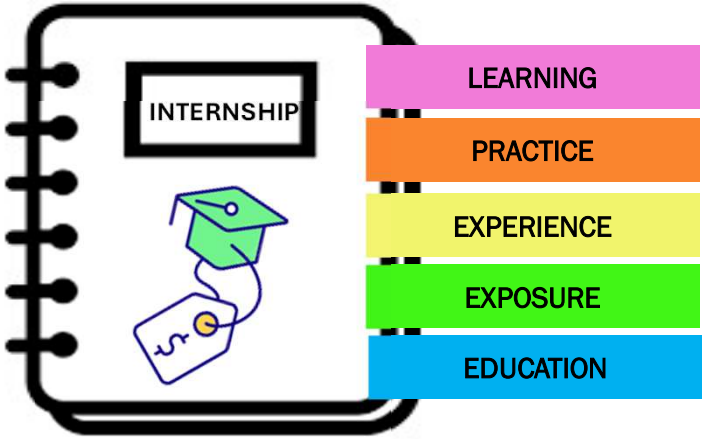
TYPES OF EARN AND LEARN

CO-OP (Cooperative Education)

- Students alternate or combine periods of academic study with paid, career-relevant work experience
- Typically long-term placements—often a full semester, multiple semesters, or part-time throughout the year
- Field-aligned employment
- Academic study part of a credential pathway

PAID INTERNSHIP

- Time limited duration
- Full or part time
- Structured skill development
- Provide supervised, meaningful job assignments that align with a learner's field of study or career interests.



OTHER FORMS of Experiential Learning

SIMULATIONS

- Structured, interactive learning experiences that replicate real-world environments, tasks, or decision-making scenarios in a safe and controlled setting.
- Allow learners to practice skills, apply knowledge, and test choices without real-world consequences.
- Can use role-play, digital platforms, virtual reality, or scenario-based activities to mirror authentic workplace or life situations.

LAB EXPERIENCES

- Hands-on, instructor-guided learning activities conducted in a controlled environment where students apply concepts, experiment with materials or tools, and practice technical or scientific procedures.
- Labs simulate real-world conditions by allowing learners to test ideas, analyze results, and develop problem-solving skills using specialized equipment or structured protocols.

SERVICE LEARNING

- A structured learning experience in which students apply academic knowledge and skills to meet a genuine community need through organized service activities.
- Integrates meaningful community service with guided reflection, allowing learners to connect their coursework to real-world issues, develop civic awareness, and build personal and professional skills

PROJECT-BASED LEARNING

- Students gain knowledge and skills by working over an extended period to investigate and respond to a complex question, problem, or challenge.
- Learners engage in authentic, real-world tasks that require inquiry, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking.
- Reflection and feedback are integrated throughout to deepen learning and connect the project to academic content and real-world application.

EARN AND LEARN

What it Works Best for

- When the goal is to build workforce-ready skills
- When students need income while learning
- When employers want a talent pipeline
- When the learning requires extended or progressive skill development
- When programs want stronger outcomes
- When real work expectations are essential

Challenges & Considerations

- Students balancing work and academic demands
- Employer capacity and commitment
- Ensuring high-quality learning experiences
- Coordination complexity
- Sustaining employer engagement over time
- Aligning work tasks with curriculum
- Funding limitations
- Measuring outcomes and impact

Earn and Learn Success

- **Columbus State Community College,** Modern Manufacturing Workforce Study Program
- **Lorain County Community College**, TRAIN OH Earn and Learn Program
- **Cincinnati State,** Cooperative Education Program

MICRO-INTERNSHIPS

What it Works Best for

- Short-Term, Project-Based Skill Application
- Career Exploration across Multiple Fields
- Expanding Access to Experiential Learning
- Building Professional Experience and Portfolios
- Meeting Employer Needs for Short-Term Support
- Students Strengthen Networking Connections
- Supports Students who aren't ready for Full Internships
- Allows Programs to Scale Work-Based Learning Quickly

Challenges & Considerations

- Limited Time for Deep Skill Development
- Harder to Form Meaningful Mentorship Connections
- Ensuring Project Quality and Alignment
- Limited Exposure to Workplace Culture
- Risk of Simple Task Outsourcing
- More Smaller Projects can Require more Coordination

Micro-Internship Success

- **Cleveland State University, Case Western Reserve University, and The University of Akron** and a formal partnership with Parker Dewey offering structured programs, dedicated portals, and clear student and employer resources.

PARKER DEWEY

UNPAID INTERNSHIPS

What it Works Best for

- Early Career Exploration
- Mission-Driven or Resource-Limited Sectors
- Skill Building through Portfolio-Based Work
- Short-Term, Exploratory Engagements
- Where Academic Credit is the Primary Benefit
- Building Networks and Mentorship Connections
- Flexible, Low-Pressure Experiences

Challenges & Considerations

- Can exclude students who can’t afford to work without wages
- Less accountability from employers
- Networking may be more limited; paid roles often come with stronger engagement
- Difficult ensuring student motivation and commitment

Unpaid Internship Success

- **Research Labs at Universities use unpaid research volunteer positions** as experiential opportunities. Students assist in lab and work is educational and aligned to academic interests.

INDUSTRY PROJECT

What it works best for

- When the goal is to solve real employer challenges
- Learners that need collaborative, team-based experience
- Employers what fresh ideas without long-term commitments
- The academic focus is on applied, project-driven learning
- Programs want scalable employer engagement
- When learning outcomes require students to demonstrate problem-solving, technical skills, presentation skills

Challenges & Considerations

- Scoping projects at the right level of complexity
- Aligning project work with curriculum
- Ensuring consistent employer engagement
- Protecting confidentiality and intellectual property

Industry Project Success

- **Ohio University – the Industrial & Systems Engineering Senior Design Capstone** assigns student teams to work on real problems provided directly by industry sponsors.
  - Students work with actual companies on issues like flow analysis, product measurement, efficiency, ergonomics, or cost analysis.
  - These are authentic, semester-long industry engagements where students apply skills such as Lean, Six Sigma, operations research, and simulation.
  - Sponsors meet weekly with teams, and students follow formal project milestones and produce professional-level deliverables

PRE-APPRENTICESHIP

What it works best for

- Preparing learners for entry into Registered Apprenticeship
- Offering Career Exploration into High-Demands Fields
- Building confidence through structured, low-risk hands-no learning
- Helping employers create a talent pipeline

Challenges & Considerations

- Aligning pre-apprenticeship curriculum with actual apprenticeship requirements
- Ensuring strong employer partnerships
- Transportation, scheduling, and logistics
- Ensuring the experience is structured and not just observation
- Transitioning students into registered apprenticeships

Pre-Apprenticeship Success

- **ApprenticeOhio**, programs are built as school–employer partnerships offering technical and job-readiness skills aligned to registered apprenticeships

- **Manufacturing Works** in NEO Ohio, active programs in five (5) NEO schools and offers internships, job shadows, plant tours, and career prep with a clear, employer-verified pathway.

SIMULATIONS

What it works best for

- Practicing skills in a safe, controlled environment
- Introducing students to complex, high-stake scenarios
- Building confidence before entering authentic work settings
- Teaching decision making under pressure
- Providing immediate feedback and reflection opportunities

Challenges & Considerations

- High cost of technology and implementation
- Limit fully capturing the workplace culture and the unpredictability of real people
- Need for significant instructor training
- Risk of focusing on ‘procedures’ instead of problem solving

Simulation Success

- **University of Toledo – Interprofessional Immersive Simulation Center (IISC)**
  - Combines virtual reality, high-fidelity clinical simulation, and surgical skills labs
  - Accredited by both the American College of Surgeons and the Society for Simulation in Healthcare (one of fewer than a dozen in the world)
  - Designed for interprofessional training and innovation with industry partner

LAB EXPERIENCES

What it works best for

- Practicing technical skills with real tools and materials
- Applying scientific or technical concepts through hands-on experimentation
- Building foundational skills before entering high-risk or real-world settings
- Reinforcing problem-solving and troubleshooting skills
- Offering structured, repeatable practice

Challenges & Considerations

- High cost of equipment and maintenance
- Safety requirement in lab settings
- Limited space and scheduling constraints
- Need for skills lab instructors
- Limited real-world context

Lab Experience Success

- **Cleveland Clinic – Simulation & Advanced Skills Center (SASC)**
  - Includes a 10,000-square-foot skills and simulation lab
  - Includes skills labs, wet labs, robotic procedure labs, and in situ lab environments used across the health system
  - Provides hands-on training for clinical staff, students, and residents using real equipment, surgical stations, and procedure rooms

SERVICE LEARNING

What it works best for

- When the goal is to connect academic learning to real community needs
- When programs aim to build civic engagement and social responsibility
- When reflection and personal growth are key learning outcomes
- When learners benefit from team-based, collaborative problem solving

Challenges & Considerations

- Ensuring the service activity aligns with academic learning
- Capacity of community organizations to host students
- Providing adequate training and preparation for students
- Supporting student readiness and reflection

Service Learning Success

- **Lorain County Community College,** connects volunteerism and community service with a specific course and to general education outcomes. LCCC's program connects community involvement, practical experience, and the academic program of study.
  - Upon completion, students can earn a Certificate of Completion and Graduation Medallion.

PROJECT-BASED LEARNING

What it works best for

- Tackling complex, real-world problems that require inquiry and critical thinking
- Developing collaboration, communication, and project management skills
- Provide a structure environment for applied learning without requiring a workplace site
- Promote creativity, autonomy, and iterative design

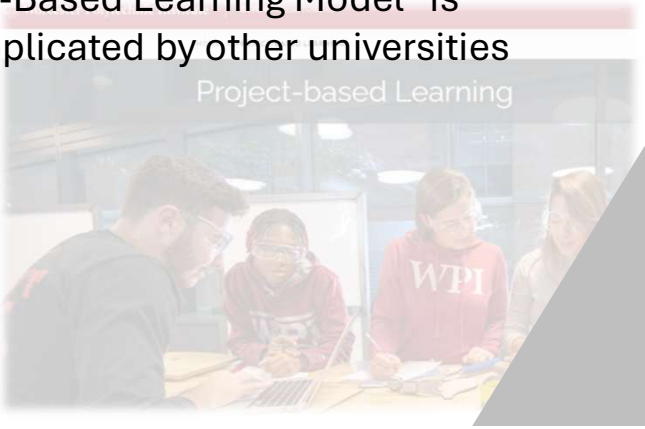
Challenges & Considerations

- Ensuring projects align with learning outcomes
- Time-intensive for both students and instructors
- Need for significant instructor preparation and facilitation skills
- Access to resources and tools
- Keeping projects authentic but manageable

Project-Based Learning Success

- **Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI),** National Leader in Higher Ed Project-Based Learning

  - Project-based learning is embedded throughout the curriculum
  - All students complete Interactive Qualifying Projects and Major Qualifying Projects
  - WPI's "Project-Based Learning Model" is studied and replicated by other universities worldwide.



Let's Hear From You

1. Which experiential learning models are currently used at your institution?

2. What has worked well?

3. What successes or wins have emerged from experiential learning?

Student Success
IMPACT

- Improve Student Outcomes across Academic, Personal, and Career Dimensions
- Increase Academic Engagement and Achievement
- Strengthens Career Readiness and Employability
- Improves Retention and Persistence to Completion
- Strengthens Personal and Social Development
- Enhances Post-Graduation Outcomes
- Builds Stronger Connections between Education and Industry

Experiential Learning on Your Campus

Webinar Series Overview

1. ✓ Foundations of Experiential Learning
2. Designing Earn and Learn Programs
3. Building Industry Partnerships
4. Innovative Approaches: Micro-Internships and Project-Based Learning
5. Leveraging Simulations and Virtual Labs
6. Experiential Learning Recap & New Guide Launch

Up Next: Designing Earn and Learn Programs

Learn how to structure earn-and-learn models that respond to real workforce demand, support student success, and close talent gaps in high-growth fields.

Spotlight on Successful Models: Hear from leading institutions in Ohio as they share proven models, lessons learned, and scalable approaches.

Funding & Partnership Strategies for Sustainability: Discover how institutions are leveraging grants, state initiatives, institutional funds, and public-private partnerships to support and sustain experiential learning programs. Learn practical tactics for developing long-term employer relationships.

Measuring What Matters: Enrollment, Completion & Employment Outcomes
Gain insight into how to:

- Track and report key success metrics
- Use data to drive continuous improvement
- Apply tools for evaluation and employer feedback

Applicable Across Any Sector or Program

Contact us

Courtney Tenhover

ctenhover@lorainccc.edu

www.ohiotechnet.org

Crystal Jones

cjones@ohiocc.org

www.ohiocommunitycolleges.org

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THANK YOU

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