

Jobs to Careers

*Promoting Work-Based Learning
for Quality Care.*

The *Jobs to Careers* Work-Based Learning Self Assessment Tool

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Work-based learning, a novel approach to meeting labor force needs in health care, as well as in other fields, is a central aspect of how workers in the *Jobs to Careers* initiative are trained and advanced. This five-year, \$15.8 million national initiative is dedicated to improving the quality of care for patients and communities by changing the way frontline workers are trained, rewarded, and advanced in careers.

Jobs to Careers supports 17 partnerships that bring together employers, colleges, and other education and training organizations. They vary widely across health sectors, geography, and demographic makeup, but all are laboratories working toward three goals:

- Incorporating formal learning into the jobs of frontline workers;
- Providing workers with college credit or credentials recognized by industry; and
- Redesigning systems to support worker training and advancement.

Achieving those goals can result in human resources policies that more effectively support the development of frontline worker skills and performance, as well as establish new working relationships between employers and educational institutions.

Work-based learning, for *Jobs to Careers*, began as a promising idea that had the potential to transform learning and career advancement for frontline health and health care workers to better meet the needs of both workers and employers. While the definition of the idea was sufficiently in place to solicit organizations to participate in the initiative, it became clear early on in the implementation of work-based learning that those implementing the projects would benefit from

both a more robust definition of the approach and a practical tool that would provide concrete examples of practices that exemplified it. The idea for the latter was inspired by recent experiences of The Hitachi Foundation in its own development of *The Hitachi Foundation's Mastering Community Action Self-assessment Tool*. The definition of work-based learning (see final page in this document), developed by a working group that engaged the funders, the Evaluation Team and JFF, served as a launching point for enumerating the practices that exemplified work-based learning.

Informed by both fieldwork and experience, the UNC Evaluation Team drafted a set of items that represented potential or actual practices that exemplified the core components of the *Jobs to Careers* Work-based Learning Model. This tool, while pre-tested and pilot tested, is not yet fully validated or assessed for reliability. However, the process of completing the tool as a partnership of organizations implementing a work-based learning project with frontline health and health care workers has been unanimously reported by participants as a thought-provoking and useful endeavor. Specifically, it helped users to identify how their efforts matched up with the definition, identify which areas most needed improvement, and gives concrete examples of practices they could employ within their own organizations to strengthen work-based learning. The *Jobs to Careers* initiative and the UNC evaluation team seek to share this tool so that partnerships engaged in work-based learning for frontline health and health care workers can also accrue these process-oriented benefits as well.

How to Use this Tool

Partnerships supporting development of incumbent workers can use the Work-based Learning Self-assessment Tool to identify what components of work-based learning they are currently implementing, and to spur thinking about additional measures they could take to improve a work-based learning program along eight core dimensions:

1. Embedding the curriculum in the work process;
2. Embedding learning in the work process;
3. Embedding assessment in the work process;
4. Involving coworkers/instructors;
5. Strengthening the potential for career advancement/job enrichment;
6. Designing rewards for engaging in the program;
7. Making organizational changes at the educational partner institutions to support work-based learning; and
8. Making organizational changes at employer worksites to support work-based learning.

Programmatic revisions along these dimensions could mean adding something entirely new to a program. It could also mean being more intentional and intensive in what a partnership is currently doing in a limited way with particular individuals.

The *Jobs to Careers* Work-Based Learning Self Assessment Tool was created by the *Jobs to Careers* evaluation team, a collaboration between the UNC Institute on Aging and the Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research.

Think about your project and partnership as a whole (i.e., all employer and educational partners) when answering these questions. It may be a useful exercise to fill this tool out for each component of your project in addition to completing it for your project/partnership as a whole.

Answer each question using the following scale:

0 - Not considering (not applicable, not an option for our situation)

1 - Considering (deciding about whether or not to do)

2 - Planning (in the process of putting plans in place to do)

3 - Doing sometimes (in a limited way)

4 - Consistently doing (across the board)

Important Definitions

Supervisor: For the purposes of this tool, “supervisor” refers to anyone who directly supervises or manages frontline health and health care workers, and who works for the employer. Please list the designation given to the people who fit this description. Think of them as you answer the questions about supervisors. For example, some partnerships refer to the individuals who directly supervise frontline workers as mentors. These partnerships would answer the questions about supervisors with their mentors in mind.

- _____
- _____
- _____

Instructor: For the purposes of this tool, “instructor” refers to anyone who facilitates the learning wherever the learning occurs (e.g., classroom, clinical sites) while performing job tasks. This person could work for the employer, educational partner, or both. Please list the designation given to the people who fit this description. Think of them as you answer the questions about instructors. For example, at some partnerships the instructor is called a preceptor. At others, the instructor is called an educator. Therefore, these partnerships would answer the questions about instructors with their preceptors and educators in mind.

- _____
- _____
- _____

NOTE: “Supervisors” and “Instructors” may be the same people within a partnership.

Assessment: For the purposes of this tool, assessment refers to any process by which workers demonstrate acquisition of skills and/or knowledge.

1. Is The <i>Curriculum</i> Embedded In The Work Process?	Not Considering	Considering	Planning	Sometimes	Consistently
1.1 Were the learning objectives extracted from the work process of the frontline worker?	0	1	2	3	4
1.2 Were the learning objectives extracted from an occupational curriculum?	0	1	2	3	4
1.3 Are critical incidents or work projects used as resources for learning and reflection?	0	1	2	3	4
1.4 Are learning objectives and competencies inventoried, mapped or connected to positions?	0	1	2	3	4
1.5 Were supervisors involved in the development of competencies?	0	1	2	3	4
1.6 Were frontline workers involved in the development of competencies?	0	1	2	3	4
1.7 Is there a process by which information gained through this activity influences the way frontline work is done?	0	1	2	3	4
1.8 Have work processes been refined in the process of developing the competencies/curriculum?	0	1	2	3	4
1.9 Were frontline workers involved in refining the curriculum?	0	1	2	3	4
1.10 Is feedback from learners used to modify or adapt the curriculum/competencies?	0	1	2	3	4
1.11 Is feedback from the process of modifying or adapting the curriculum used to modify the job or work process?	0	1	2	3	4

2. Is Learning Embedded In The Work Process?	Not Considering	Considering	Planning	Sometimes	Consistently
2.1 Does the learning occur onsite?	0	1	2	3	4
2.2 Do instructors use facilitation strategies more often than lecture?	0	1	2	3	4
2.3 Are situations encountered at work used to create learning?	0	1	2	3	4
2.4 Will the learner gain hands-on skills relevant to his or her current responsibilities?	0	1	2	3	4
2.5 Will the learner gain knowledge relevant to his or her current responsibilities?	0	1	2	3	4
2.6 Will the learner assume greater responsibility in his or her current job if knowledge and skill is acquired?	0	1	2	3	4
2.7 Is there a mechanism by which teachable moments are exploited during work?	0	1	2	3	4
2.8 Are there opportunities for on-the-job peer-to-peer learning?	0	1	2	3	4
2.9 Are there reflective mechanisms used to promote critical thinking?	0	1	2	3	4
2.10 Are there reflective mechanisms used to promote skills/knowledge acquisition?	0	1	2	3	4
2.11 Are learning experiences developed in a way that is convenient for frontline workers' schedules?	0	1	2	3	4

3. Is Assessment Embedded In The Work Process?	Not Considering	Considering	Planning	Sometimes	Consistently
3.1 Are work-related competencies identified and articulated with academic learning objectives?	0	1	2	3	4
3.2 Are competencies pre-assessed?	0	1	2	3	4
3.3 If yes to 3.2, are existing competencies recognized or rewarded?	0	1	2	3	4
3.4 Are required competencies communicated to frontline workers?	0	1	2	3	4
3.5 Are competencies assessed on the job during the work process?	0	1	2	3	4
3.6 If yes to 3.5, are newly acquired competencies recognized or rewarded?	0	1	2	3	4
3.7 Are frontline workers provided with feedback post-assessment?	0	1	2	3	4
3.8 Do frontline workers have input into how they are assessed?	0	1	2	3	4

4. How Are Coworkers/Instructors Involved?	Not Considering	Considering	Planning	Sometimes	Consistently
4.1 Do the instructors work in the same setting as the learner?	0	1	2	3	4
4.2 Do the instructors have relevant experience by which to understand the frontline work process?	0	1	2	3	4
4.3 Did supervisors participate in developing the learning objectives?	0	1	2	3	4
4.4 Do supervisors deliver content?	0	1	2	3	4
4.5 Did experienced frontline workers participate in developing the learning objectives?	0	1	2	3	4
4.6 Do experienced frontline workers deliver content?	0	1	2	3	4
4.7 Did an instructor(s) participate in developing the learning objectives?	0	1	2	3	4
4.8 Do supervisors assess the worker on competencies?	0	1	2	3	4
4.9 Do experienced frontline workers assess the worker on competencies?	0	1	2	3	4
4.10 Were the supervisors trained in coaching?	0	1	2	3	4
4.11 Were the supervisors trained in outlining career pathways?	0	1	2	3	4
4.12 Were supervisors trained in active/experiential learning strategies (e.g., journaling, learning portfolios, coaching/mentoring, learning teams)?	0	1	2	3	4
4.13 Were instructors trained in active/experiential learning strategies?	0	1	2	3	4

5. How Strong Is The Potential For Career Advancement/Job Enrichment?	Not Considering	Considering	Planning	Sometimes	Consistently
5.1 Are career lattices identified for frontline workers?	0	1	2	3	4
5.2 Are career lattices communicated to frontline workers?	0	1	2	3	4
5.3 Do frontline workers have individualized plans for gaining competencies?	0	1	2	3	4
5.4 Do frontline workers have individualized plans for education keyed to position progression?	0	1	2	3	4
5.5 Are frontline workers asked about how they view their own career advancement/job enrichment opportunities?	0	1	2	3	4

6. What Are The Rewards For Engaging In The Program?	Not Considering	Considering	Planning	Sometimes	Consistently
6.1 Is an industry-recognized credential associated with the learning process?	0	1	2	3	4
6.2 Is there a state or nationally recognized credential associated with the learning process?	0	1	2	3	4
6.3 Is college credit assigned to meeting competencies delivered through work-based learning?	0	1	2	3	4
6.4 Is continuing education credit assigned to meeting competencies delivered through work-based learning?	0	1	2	3	4
6.5 If so, does the course credit articulate with education pathways likely to be useful to frontline workers?	0	1	2	3	4
6.6 Is there a wage increase associated with gaining competencies?	0	1	2	3	4
6.7 Is there a job title change/promotion associated with gaining competencies?	0	1	2	3	4
6.8 Were frontline workers consulted about how to structure rewards?	0	1	2	3	4

7. What Organizational Changes Are Being Made At The Educational Partner Institution(s) To Support Work-Based Learning?	Not Considering	Considering	Planning	Sometimes	Consistently
7.1 Has there been an increase in the use of active learning strategies since the start of the project?	0	1	2	3	4
7.2 Are supervisors and/or other employees recognized as faculty by the educational institution?	0	1	2	3	4
7.3 Are instructors enlisted from college(s) to deliver learning at the work site?	0	1	2	3	4
7.4 Does academic advisement or coaching delivered by the educational partner happen at the employer?	0	1	2	3	4
7.5 Are college services (e.g. admissions, advising) more accessible to frontline workers at educational institutions?	0	1	2	3	4
7.6 Is there increased enrollment of frontline workers from the employer with the educational institution?	0	1	2	3	4
7.7 Are there mechanisms by which credit for prior learning or competency assessment results in credit for frontline workers?	0	1	2	3	4
7.8 Are basic skills or remediation offered through employers in a work-based learning format?	0	1	2	3	4

8. What Organizational Changes Are Being Made At Employer Worksites To Support Work-Based Learning?	Not Considering	Considering	Planning	Sometimes	Consistently
8.1 Is tuition advancement/remission a benefit available to frontline workers?	0	1	2	3	4
8.2 Is educational release time a benefit available to frontline workers?	0	1	2	3	4
8.3 Did the employer increase their investment in the training/development of frontline workers?	0	1	2	3	4
8.4 Are participants' performance assessments structured to explicitly acknowledge skill and knowledge acquisition through work-based learning activities?	0	1	2	3	4
8.5 Are rewards or incentives for supervisors to participate in work-based learning activities institutionalized?	0	1	2	3	4
8.6 Are career lattices or maps available and accessible to all employees?	0	1	2	3	4
8.7 Are supervisors' performance assessments based, at least in part, on participation in work-based learning and career development of frontline workers?	0	1	2	3	4

About *Jobs to Careers*

Jobs to Careers supports partnerships to advance and reward the skill and career development of incumbent workers providing care and services on the front lines of our health and health care systems. The initiative is a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, in collaboration with the Hitachi Foundation and with additional support from the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. *Jobs to Careers* supports partnerships of employers, educational institutions, and other organizations to expand and redesign systems to:

- Create lasting improvements in the way institutions train and advance their frontline workers; and
- Test new models of education and training that incorporate work-based learning. The core concept of *Jobs to Careers* is “work-based learning,” which represents a novel approach to meeting labor force needs in health care as well as in other fields.

Key Components of *Jobs to Careers*

- Work-based learning is a key component of an overall skill building strategy that may also include an array of other learning approaches, such as more traditional off-site, on-site, technology-enabled, or experience-based learning.
- Career paths are developed and are readily available to frontline workers.
- Both the employer and education partners develop and implement changes that recognize the needs of working adults and that improve access to and success in skill building efforts by frontline workers.
- Frontline workers are recognized and rewarded as they build skills and expand knowledge necessary for their current job responsibilities or for advancing to new positions.

Essential Elements of Work-Based Learning in *Jobs to Careers*

Work-based learning is focused on building the essential skills and knowledge to effectively conduct current job responsibilities of the frontline worker and/or to advance in job responsibilities and career steps.

- The program is learner-centered. Learning is co-created by the individual learner and the person responsible for facilitating that learning.
- Development of the curriculum is shared between the educational institution and the employer.
- The facilitation of the learning is shared between the educational institution and the employer.
- The learning process is embedded in the work process.

Core Components of the *Jobs to Careers* Work-Based Learning Model

- The curriculum is embedded in the work process.
- Learning is embedded in the work process.
- Co-workers and supervisors are active participants in the process.
- Assessment is embedded in the work process.
- There is a strong potential for recognition and rewards as frontline workers build skills and expand knowledge necessary for their current job responsibilities or for advancing to new positions.
- Rewards (raises, promotions, credentials) are given for engaging in the program.
- Educational partners make organizational changes to support work-based learning.
- Employers make organizational changes to support work-based learning.
- Organizational leaders are engaged in the project and motivated to sustain the effort.