Our WSP is
Gold Standard

As the Buck Institute for Education has set the national standard of Project Based Learning through comprehensive research, DirectEmployers Institute has taken the opportunity to ensure that our own PBL, the Workplace Simulation Program (WSP) aligns with national best practices. Indeed, our WSP strongly aligns with the seven metrics for a 'Gold Standard PBL' according to the Buck Institute

1 CHALLENGING PROBLEM OR QUESTION

The WSP is based on an authentic problem given to students by the employer partner. It is refined and phased at an appropriate level by our curriculum development partners, The Center for Research and Collaboration P-16 at IU. Our driving question is always open-ended, understandable, inspiring, and aligned with learning goals unique to each student's class.

2 SUSTAINED INQUIRY

Due to the open-ended nature of the WSP's central problem and driving question, students are encouraged to form their own hypothesizes for a solution, then research, develop, and evaluate their potential solution, then move forward based on what they have discovered, even if that means scrapping their ideas and starting over.

3 AUTHENTICITY

The entire point of the WSP is to make this an authentic workplace simulation from the students. DirectEmployers Institute recreates the work space within the school (including bringing in authentic furniture, appliances, and tools), brings in real employees, and uses real problems or projects from the employer. Additionally, because the employer remains involved throughout the entirety of the WSP, they have an opportunity to implement the novel solutions students create (and some have!)

4 STUDENT VOICE AND CHOICE

Students work almost entirely independently of their teachers in the WSP, and as a result, they are given the freedom to make whatever choices they deem appropriate to respond to the WSP's driving question. Students are given a variety of resources (including, of course, the use of the internet) and if they find a material or resource they would like to use, they are encouraged to bring it up to the Project Manager, who does their best to meet these requests.

5 REFLECTION

While the students are meant to work on the WSP project as a part of their regular class activities, lab days provide a perfect opportunity for everyone to evaluate progress and process. The Project Manager encourages and facilitates these reflections.

6 CRITIQUE AND REVISION

On lab days, students receive feedback and guidance from the employee volunteers and the project manager. Students are given the opportunity and materials to revise based on that feedback.

7 PUBLIC PRODUCT

Every WSP ends with a culminating event, where students invite family and friends, and DEI invites local media, politicians, and other prominent and interested parties, and the employee volunteers invite their interested peers. This culminating event is where students display and explain their projects and why they made the choices they made.

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