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EXPLORING INFLUENCES AND USING INTENTIONALITY TO DEVELOP WORK-BASED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES: A FACULTY PERSPECTIVE

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DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in the College of Education at the University of Kentucky

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

EXPLORING INFLUENCES AND USING INTENTIONALITY TO DEVELOP WORK-BASED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES: A FACULTY PERSPECTIVE

Understanding the practical implications related to experiential learning is complex. It is important to first view *experiential learning* as an umbrella term under which work-based learning (WBL) is housed. To further particularize, there are different avenues for students to pursue work-based learning opportunities (WBLOs), with internships and cooperative education being two. Although these are not new learning environments, understanding and clearly defining them (to both internal and external bodies) is increasingly necessary. In Kentucky, WBLOs are part of the political discourse on postsecondary education. The Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) and local economic development agencies have incorporated strengthening and growing WBLOs into their strategic plans. This demand is echoed by students and parents.

By interviewing faculty with varying enrollments in their WBLOs, this study set out to explore influences on the development and implementation of these experiences from their perspective. The dissertation is written in three manuscripts, including a companion piece written in collaboration with Robert Boone that examines WBLOs from a complementary faculty (McCrary) and student perspective (Boone). It situates the problem of practice (WBLOs) in the current landscape of Kentucky Community and Technical College System. The second manuscript describes anticipated and unanticipated findings related to the development and implementation of WBLOs drawn from my interviews with WBLO coordinators across the state. Selected examples include the role of the advisory board and faculty background on the development of WBLOs and stakeholder preparation and conveying benefits to the community during implementation. The third manuscript explores obstacles encountered and offers potential avenues to circumvent or overcome said obstacles based on information collected through the interviews of this qualitative, exploratory study. This dissertation will be of use to both senior administrators interested in increasing WBLOs at their institution and to faculty who are interested in offering the opportunities to their students. This study offers insight to current practices related to WBLO development and implementation and offers potential avenues to overcome obstacles.

KEYWORDS: Work-based Learning Opportunities, Internships, Community College, Experiential Learning, Soft Skills, Career Clarity

Lauren McCrary

February 5, 2019

Date

EXPLORING INFLUENCES AND USING INTENTIONALITY TO DEVELOP WORK-BASED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES: A FACULTY PERSPECTIVE

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To Kris, my anchor.

To Bruce and Lulu, my reason for doing this.

To Mom, Dad, and Jim, for helping us along the way.

To Him, for all the above.

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Chapter 1
Introduction

Early in the process of completing the course work for the doctorate in Educational Polices Studies and Evaluation at the University of Kentucky, I knew I was interested in experiential learning, specifically work-based learning. Our professors in the program continued to guide us to pick a topic that was "dear to our heart" and that we would be able "spend countless hours researching." From my experience working with students as a program coordinator and associate professor, the internship was a pivotal time in their academic career. The students were apprehensive and excited. The internship, also a work-based learning opportunity (WBLO), was a chance for the students to grow their confidence, increase their career clarity, and network. The experience was not always ideal, but the students always came away having learned something about the field. Whether it solidified their decision to go into the field or made them question it, WBLOs supported greater insight for the students. I was encouraged to explore what influences WBLOs.

In addition to my interest in student development as a result of WBLO experience, I was also interested in the work based skills they might acquire. Ensuring students have the technical skills to enter the workforce can be readily assessed. They complete the course work, take a test, pass a national certification, or demonstrate the skills in another way. What is harder to assess are soft skills. Understanding that critical thinking, teamwork, strategic thinking, professionalism, and other soft skills can be strengthened through WBLOs was another catalyst for this study.

Initially, the intent of my research centered around ensuring an effective WBLO experience. However, when trying to gain a better understanding of how faculty developed WBLOs, it quickly because apparent that everyone went about the process differently. The focus of the study shifted from developing WBLOs to *exploring* how faculty influence WBLOs. I could not understand how to make the "best" WBLO without first understanding what the current faculty influences were in Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS).

While catering my studies and research papers throughout the course work to further explore WBLOs, Robert Boone was interested in similar topics. When presented by University of Kentucky faculty with the idea of a companion dissertation, we both saw the benefit of our interests overlapping to better inform our individual research. I was interested in studying WBLOs from a faculty standpoint and he was interested in learning more about what drives students. Our research interests complemented each other nicely. What follows is a description of each chapter in this three-manuscript dissertation.

Chapter Two, our co-authored technical report, titled *Work-Based Learning Opportunities: Associated Faculty Practices, Student Impact, and Recommendations* serves as an introduction to the problem and a review of current knowledge. We examine work-based learning as situated in the context of KCTCS. We define the new and emerging problem of practice reflected in the implementation of WBLO's in Kentucky from each of our perspectives and describe the overlap. We also address joint findings and ethical concerns regarding doing this kind of research.

Chapter Three, titled *Influences on the Development and Implementation of Elective Work-based Learning Opportunities*, represents the first part of my individual research study design and findings. The design is described in detail. From there I categorize my findings in three groups: influences on the development of WBLOs, influences on the implementation of WBLOs and, finally, an overview of obstacles to implementing WBLOs. Related to the development of WBLOs findings, I address the influence of faculty background, advisory boards, faculty motivation, and the amount of work required to create the opportunities. When implementing WBLOs, I explore how faculty prepare stakeholders (students, organization, and institution), what their practices are, and how they convey the benefits of a WBLO to the community to garner support. The category of obstacles is more closely examined in chapter four.

Chapter Four, the problem of practice manuscript, titled *Using Intentionality to Foster an Environment to Overcome Obstacles and Grow Work-based Learning Opportunities*, addresses the obstacles from the three categorical findings and offers intentional steps both faculty and senior administration can take to foster an environment that nurtures and strengthens WBLOs. The recurring obstacles to emerge from the faculty interviews included faculty disillusionment as it relates to student's capabilities and soft skill development, perceived lack of support, and logistical obstacles. After highlighting obstacles, I offer suggestions for potential strategies to both faculty and senior administration to overcome the obstacles based on findings from faculty interviews.

Practices offered to senior administration included putting someone in charge of WBLOs as a contact for stakeholders, creating a transparent compensation policy for faculty who offer WBLOs to students, emphasizing and increasing the visibility of

WBLOs both on campus and among stakeholders, and finally, promoting and enabling faculty to be flexible when developing and implementing WBLOs. My research indicates that both senior administrators and faculty can increase oral and written visibility of WBLOs. This includes discussing it at meetings on campus and in the community and making sure WBLO classes are on the website, marketing materials, and on academic handouts like advisor checklists and academic plans. Faculty can introduce the idea of a WBLO early in a student's academic career. Faculty can be intentional in their education and orientation of all stakeholders. Proactive advising was identified an integral part of sparking student interest in WBLOs. Being innovative and flexible are also a key influence on WBLOs.

Chapter Five serves as a professional reflection piece as I move from working day to day with students pursuing their dreams to a broader administrative role in higher education. I look back at the process of the doctoral program and the idea of a three-manuscript dissertation and a collaborative dissertation chapter. I address how this research can support KCTCS should they chose to incorporate WBLOs into an initiative. I situate the findings in the overall landscape of the community college and offer them as a tool for administrators and faculty to support their future endeavors surrounding WBLOs.

On a personal note, I reflect and contemplate how this whole process from coursework, to research, to writing and working collaboratively helped guide me both professionally and personally. I grew as an individual and a professional in the world of education and academics. In many ways, this document represents my own WBLO as a scholar and practitioner.

Conclusion

Setting aside my own individual growth, if the findings are utilized, this study supports the ways in which a student's individual professional growth may be realized. By offering this study to faculty and administrators, students have a greater chance of gaining a work-based learning experience. Faculty and administrators have the potential to influence WBLOs and ensure collaboration between the student, the organization, and the institution to support a mutually beneficial experience for all stakeholders. When an institution resolves to grow their WBLOs and ensure these opportunities for more of their students, being intentional about this process is vital. Taking strategic steps to support faculty and create an environment to welcome innovation and flexibility will lend itself to better results. A deliberate approach in the decision-making process will support an effective WBLO.

Chapter 2
Work-Based Learning Opportunities: Associated Faculty Practices, Student Impact, and Recommendations

Lauren McCrary and Robert Boone

The Research Problem

Dr. Jay Box, in his first year as President of KCTCS, met with nearly two thousand individuals on a listening tour around the state in 2015. The ideas gathered through these conversations with business, industry, and community leaders, as well as students, faculty, and staff, were combined with over 3,200 online survey responses and distilled into five themes—areas of need in the Commonwealth where KCTCS could contribute to the solution:

- educational attainment at all levels
- economic development and job growth
- a world-class, 21st century workforce
- global competitiveness of business and industry
- prosperity of Kentucky citizens (KCTCS, 2016, p. ii)

These themes served as the foundation of the current KCTCS Strategic Plan for 2016-22 and are reflected in Dr. Box's vision for "a future where all of our students' dreams translate into communities with a college-educated workforce, ready and able to fill the needs of local business and industry" (Box, 2016).

This need for an educated and prepared workforce is not new. The legislative act that established KCTCS states that the colleges of the system shall "be responsive to the needs of students and employers in all regions of the Commonwealth with accessible education and training to support the lifelong learning needs of Kentucky citizens."

(Kentucky Postsecondary Education Improvement Act of 1997). It would have been easy to dismiss the listening tour as only serving to confirm that the necessity for KCTCS remains nearly twenty years after its creation. The themes identified in Dr. Box's listening sessions, however, provided additional nuance and clarified what stakeholders expected at the time. The Postsecondary Education Improvement Act speaks of enhancing the relationships between K-12 and KCTCS, facilitating transfer between KCTCS and four-year universities, and improving the "flexibility and adaptability" of currently employed workers in an "ever-changing and global economy" (Kentucky Postsecondary Education Improvement Act of 1997). The collection of comments from Dr. Box's tour resembled, in today's lingo, the same elements found in the law: educational alignment, skill alignment, career-readiness, innovation, a global perspective, and global competitiveness.

National efforts to tighten the connection between workforce preparation and labor markets reflect this refinement in tone as well. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the first reform of the public workforce system legislation since 1998, became effective in July 2015. A bipartisan effort, it was "designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy" (U.S. Department of Labor, 2016). The WIOA emphasizes obtaining a "recognized postsecondary credential"—a term that broadened the possibilities for training and support—because credentials have become a prerequisite for entering the middle class (American Association of Community Colleges, 2014, p. 2). The matching of skills provided by postsecondary credentials to employer needs—the

alignment—was and is critical to this process. Unfortunately, this matching has been identified as one of the shortcomings of the U.S. economy since the recovery, so much so that it is now known as the "skills gap."

The problem of a prepared workforce is a perennial one and at the time of this study, the expectation of a rapid response had become the norm. Both legislation and policy documents included language which heralded the great potential for work-based learning opportunities (WBLOs, which we pronounce **wee-**blohs) to address this need in Kentucky. Through WBLO partnerships with companies and organizations, KCTCS was directed to align the curriculum to workforce needs in near real-time and help employers develop a pipeline for skilled talent. Clearly KCTCS was given a role to play in workforce development; yet, research on post-secondary outcomes indicates the benefits for students may even be greater (Hayward & Horvath, 2000; Weible, 2009). Students can increase their understanding of workplace demands and norms. They can develop their soft skills in context and become better able to make sense of the world of work. They may gain confidence and demonstrate their value to a potential employer. Business and government leaders—including the governor of Kentucky—are promoting these myriad benefits of WBLOs. The timing for the expansion of WBLOs is ideal, hence its inclusion (described as "experiential learning") in the ten goals of the KCTCS 2016-22 Strategic Plan.

The promise of WBLOs in Kentucky, however, will not be realized without an intentional response by KCTCS. KCTCS must build upon the apparent successes of WBLOs such as Kentucky Federation for Advanced Manufacturing Education (FAME)—which boasted a 98% job placement rate in 2016—and move to understand

other established WBLO programs already in place around the state (KY FAME, 2016). There are, however, unique challenges specific to the students that KCTCS serves. Many are first-generation college students. Many come from communities with low post-secondary achievement. Not only do these students come from households with a limited understanding of college, because of low levels of academic achievement at the college-level especially in rural areas of the state, they have fewer role models who appreciate education or consider work to gain anything other than a paycheck. These factors may likely contribute to the dearth of soft skills that Kentucky employers are decrying as well.

WBLOs may provide the recipe that addresses these multiple needs. WLBOs are commonly considered to be a context for students to practice their learned technical skills. The skills needed, however, are two-fold—both hard (technical) and soft. WBLOs allow students to acquire and practice soft skills that are vital for two-year, open-access college graduates in today's economy and possibly even more so for first-generation students who are also the first in their family to pursue a career path. This report describes WBLO development and the obstacles encountered in Kentucky from a faculty perspective (McCrary) as well as the WBLO experiences of a sample of first-generation college students (Boone). Through this study, we hope that a more holistic and intentional approach towards WBLOs can occur within KCTCS in attempt to afford students the best opportunity to grow and succeed professionally.

This study was designed and carried out with the intention of informing and guiding the response of KCTCS as it expands WBLOs. This contribution to the understanding of faculty influences on WBLOs and the student experiences will serve to increase Kentucky's competitiveness in a rapidly evolving economy.

Work-based Learning Opportunities in Context: A Review of Current Knowledge

Experience gained through guided practice at a workplace, where customer and management expectations determine success, affords students the opportunity to demonstrate and acquire soft skills in the "real world." An inclusive definition of soft skills was created for this study based on current research in the field (adapted from Rotherham & Willingham, 2010; Cabo, 2013; Burstein, 2014). Soft skills are workplace and life skills that cut across disciplines, sectors, developmental stages, and functions. They are often difficult to observe, or measure and they must be learned through understanding, practice, and feedback. These skills are often referred to as work essential skills, career ready skills, or work ready skills (the terminology used in Kentucky by KCTCS). This dissertation will utilize the term "soft skills," amid the other terms, due to its precedence in the literature and its inherent contrast to technical skills.

KCTCS has defined work ready skills based on the results of a survey of hundreds of employers by the Kentucky Community and Technical College System in 2016 as skills essential for the workplace as defined in the state of Kentucky. These skills included:

- Professionalism: Work Ethic, Professionalism and Integrity, and Flexibility/Adaptability
- Communication: Teamwork, Communication Skills, and Interpersonal Abilities
- Critical & Integrative Thinking: Analytical/Research Skills, Problem-Solving/ Reasoning, and Technology as a Tool

- Organizational Skills: Planning/Organizing and Leadership/Management Skills

The National Association of Colleges and Employers surveyed over 200 employers to explore what they were looking for in their new hires. Survey results indicated positions remained open because employers could not find applicants who were motivated with strong interpersonal skills, and appearance, and that the punctuality and flexibility of their applicants were subpar (White, 2013). Alarmingly, employers reported, "the entry-level candidates who are on tap to join the ranks of full-time work are clueless about the fundamentals of office life" (White, 2013, para 2-3). The needs for students with better soft skills is clear.

Developing and honing these skills is often incorporated into college curriculum as faculty, often technical instructors with personal experience in their fields of instruction, develop WBLOs for their students. WBLOs are "a structured, supervised professional experience at an approved site" that aligns with the student's career goals and affords the opportunity to earn academic credit (Gilroy, 2013, p. 31). The three main stakeholders are the student, the hosting organization with a corresponding professional supervisor, and the institution with a corresponding academic advisor. All three must be engaged for an increased likelihood of stakeholder satisfaction.

Globally, nationally, and now at the state level, hands-on learning is taking center stage in political discourse. In 2011, several central and northern European countries were found to have half of their secondary students spend their last two or three years in programs that combine classroom and WBLOs (Symonds, Schwartz, & Ferguson).

Symonds, Schwartz, & Ferguson (2011) stated that these programs "also advance a broader pedagogical approach: that from late adolescence onward, most young people learn best in structured programs that combine work and learning and where learning is contextual and applied" (p. 38). The United States has started to take heed.

> It is no longer defensible for the U.S. to behave as if it has nothing to learn from other countries. We believe that if the U.S. is serious about increasing the proportion of young people who arrive in their mid-twenties with a postsecondary credential with currency in the labor market, it is imperative that we closely examine the experience of several other OECD [Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development] countries, especially those with the best developed vocational education systems. (Symonds, Schwartz, & Ferguson, 2011, p. 18)

The proponents of applied and work-based learning in the US can learn from other countries and effectively apply their practices as appropriate. The effects of a positive WBLO are far-reaching.

Work-based Learning as a Pressing Issue in Kentucky

In addition to the performance-based funding indicators impacting Kentucky public educational institutions, in the 2016-2021 Strategic Agenda for Postsecondary and Adult Education, the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) released an agenda titled *Stronger by Degrees*. *A Plan to Create a More Educated and Prosperous Kentucky* (2016). The strategic agenda outlined 11 objectives and linked those objectives

to the primary three "urgent priorities" based on feedback from stakeholders in education, business, and public and private sector.

1. OPPORTUNITY. How can Kentucky encourage more people to take advantage of postsecondary opportunities?
2. SUCCESS. How can Kentucky increase degree and certificate completion, fill workforce shortages, and guide more graduates to a career path?
3. IMPACT. How can Kentucky's postsecondary system create economic growth and developments and make our state more prosperous? (CPE, 2016, p.5)

WBLOs have become a key role in the second and third priorities and institutions have been encouraged to incorporate these opportunities into the community college curriculum. This future incorporation was confirmed in the details, as an objective under the urgent priority, IMPACT, was, and is still current, Objective 9- *Improve the career readiness and employability of postsecondary graduates*. Subsection 9.3 states "Work with the employer community, foundations, and state agencies to provide 'work and learn' opportunities, including experiential or project-based learning, co-ops, internships, externships, and clinical placements" (CPE, 2016, p. 17). Within the CPE strategic plan, Goal 5 of House Bill 1 (1997) is referenced as a legislative mandate directing Kentucky Community and Technical College System to "develop a workforce with the skills to meet the needs of new and existing industries" and "improve the employability of citizens" (p. 19). CPE emphasized their collaboration efforts with the Workforce Development Cabinet, the Cabinet for Economic Development, and a partnership with Kentucky Center for Education and Workforce Statistics. This partnership was forged to

assist in tracking employment outcomes and "ensure our academic programs are producing the kinds of employees needed to fill workforce shortages" (CPE, 2016, p. 16). WBLOs, specifically internships and co-ops, will continue to support the CPE objectives and partnership goals discussed.

Often mentioned in the literature and in public discourse are the external benefits associated with WBLOs. For example, the student has a higher likelihood of being hired by the organization if they are perceived as competent, have experience that appeals to future employers, and demonstrate abilities to network and establish relationships within their desired field. How do WBLOs provide these attributes? Hayward and Horvath (2000) found co-op students to have a greater appreciation of work, improved social skills, increased understanding of work related to society and increased confidence in their career decisions (similar to topics discussed in Dr. Box's listening tour) (p. 7). Consequently, these values led to better employees overall through decreased absenteeism, better performance, willingness to accept greater responsibility, and less "social loafing" (p. 7). The authors also suggested that from the ages of 18-25, the age range of most KCTCS students, students are more receptive to vocational exploration and proposed this as a prime time for a co-op experience to potentially instill long-term values sought by employers (p. 8). They also found WBLOs to increase job experimentation among students (the willingness to examine and seek new career options), improve self-worth (acquiring and improving skills), enhance perseverance despite uncertainty (willingness to work even if unclear about expectations), and promote responsible risk-taking (willingness to face failure) (Hayward & Horvath, 2000, pp. 9-11).

In another study, Drewery, Nevison, and Pretti (2016) assessed students' vocational self-concept (VSC) and the role reflection plays in WBLOs. The authors posit that beyond skill development, WBLOs help to develop the student.

> Research has shown that [VSC] is associated with a number of positive outcomes, including a faster time to employment (Weisz, 2000), increased ability to learn new occupationally relevant information (Saunders et al., 2000), decreased occupational indecision (Tokar et al., 2003), and decreased anxiety about future work. (Johnson et al., 2002, p. 180)

As employers are looking more and more to previous education and credentials as indicators of motivation and success, WBLOs provide leverage to students seeking employment. Also, transition from school to work is easier for students with previous WBLOs in a related field.

In conclusion, the three main parties involved in any WBLO are the student, the organization or employer (with a site supervisor as a point of contact), and the educational institution (with an academic supervisor as the point of contact). An inclusive list of benefits associated with WBLOs for each party compiled by Weible (2009) describes student benefits as higher starting salaries and job satisfaction, more (and earlier) job offers, higher extrinsic success, development of communication skills, and better interviewing and networking skills (pp. 59-60). The compilation of employer benefits included an increased likelihood of filling a position with their top applicant, generation of new ideas, building partnerships with colleges, community involvement and service, and part-time help (Weible, 2009, p. 60). Lastly, examples of the main

benefits cited for the college were improved reputation, community partnerships, external curriculum assessment, and professional input.

Effective Implementation of WBLOs in Post-Secondary Education

To create a positive and impactful WBLO, Albashiry et al. (2015) recommended a five-step curriculum development phase of analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation. They also emphasize the need for "…extensive collaboration and deliberations between the curriculum developers and stakeholders throughout the development process in order to reach consensus about the main features of the educational programme, such as its outcomes, content, pedagogy, and assessment" (p. 3). Beyond curriculum maintenance they stressed that it was, and remains, important to continually strive for improvement. Upholding relevancy to stakeholders happens through continuous applicable updates, new and timely goals, and initiating change through relationships with senior management, experts, and potential employers of the graduates.

The Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) president, Doug Meyer, encouraged business and industry to be involved in development of programs and lend insight about what is happening in their field through mentoring, internship opportunities and instructor training (Meyer, 2016). Researchers deemed gaining and maintaining employer engagement as a necessary step.

> In healthcare, for instance, it could lead to a higher-quality, more motivated entry-level workforce, while providing a pipeline of people prepared to move up the healthcare ladder field. . . But because a well-designed program would likely

> increase the postsecondary completion rate, the long-term benefits would almost surely outweigh the near-term costs (Symonds, Schwartz, & Ferguson, 2011, p. 33).

The ability to maintain a relevant program must incorporate current stakeholder input. By doing this, the long-term benefits are more than just the actual WBLO. The student can grow professionally, the institutions can improve success markers like retention and completion, and the organization can help shape a potential future employee.

WBLOs as a high-impact educational practice is not a new concept. O'Neill (2010), the director of Integrative Programs at the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), completed an analysis of internships as high-impact practices and examined their quality. O'Neill discussed different practices to ensure a high-impact internship. Among those practices were making sure the students had a task that required long-term effort while providing an opportunity to establish "substantive" relationships with key stakeholders, work with a diverse group of people, receive meaningful feedback, and reflect on their experience. O'Neill referenced a standard from the Council for Advancement of Standards (CAS) differentiating internships from volunteer opportunities because of the measured learning that is balanced by the student, institution and site. She cautioned that all three parties involved must collaborate to "ensure that the balance is appropriate, and that learning is of sufficiently high quality to warrant the effort, which might include academic credit" (O'Neill, 2010, p. 6). O'Neill elucidated that while CAS used the term "deliberate" and AAC&U used "intentional," both agreed that when incorporating WBL into curriculum, it must be a thoughtful, data-driven, reflective process to ensure relevancy and benefit to the student (p. 6).

The employer stakeholder should be first invited by the college coordinator to co-lead the WBLO development. Much of the joint effort between post-secondary and employer partners should focus on the curricular integration of WBLO experiences throughout a student's program of study. Some argue that students should be made aware of WBLOs early in their college career. On campuses where WBLOs were a top priority, students meet with career counselors before they entered a classroom or during their first semester (Supiano, 2015). By giving students an early understanding of how a WBLO will support their classroom learning and long-term career goals, students were more open to seeing potential opportunities as they pursued their degree as opposed to finding one in a time sensitive situation.

Sharma, Mannell and Rowe (1995) cautioned that WBLOs must be relevant to the student's career aspirations to affect their professional development. Van Gyn, Branton, Cutt, Loken and Ricks (1996) expanded by adding that students with relevant work experience were more adept at understanding how their classes and skill acquirement directly related to their long-term career goals. The authors further stated that making this connection between classes and career could be used as a motivational source early in the program to support students in reaching their academic goals. Students were also able to more clearly define their career goals after participating in relevant work experience.

In addition, WBLOs are foundational in providing students with, what are many times, first experiences in the work environment. As a result, WBLOs offered in the last year or last semester of a program of study are little better than the student not having access to a WBLO experience at all. We all have heard of the nursing student who was

near the end of a course of study only to find out in his or her practicum that the sight of common medical occurrences was enough to make them not want to pursue a career in that field. Unfortunately, in this case, an entire academic career was spent in a field that will not lead to employment in that field. Such a realization could have occurred much earlier before such great time and financial resources were spent had the WBLO experience been incorporated near the beginning and infused throughout the program of study.

In a 2013 study, it was found that because Clemson University made WBLOs a priority by actively encouraging students to incorporate internships into their curriculum and by providing support services for placement, 67% of their graduating seniors participated in an internship or co-op as opposed to an average 36.9% in the 330 other colleges and universities surveyed (Gilroy, 2013, p. 31). Lending further support to the concept of early opportunities is Rosario, Flemister, Gampert, and Grindley (2013), who decided after a high-impact practice, cross-campus collaboration to offer an internship opportunity to first-year students at Hostos Community College as opposed to during their final semester. This practice was deemed a success by the college due to increased student employment and development. Faculty buy-in, student preparation and reaching out to locally-owned businesses supported the growth of the internships from fifty students to three hundred students annually (Rosario et al., 2013, p. 26).

For a student to develop professionally from a WBLO, previous research indicates the site supervisor must be engaged in ensuring the well-being of the student. Sustained internships "provide a structure to support the transition from adolescence to adulthood lacking for the majority of young people in the U.S. . . . Adult relationships are built on

support and accountability, mentoring and supervision" (Symonds, Schwartz, & Ferguson, 2011, p. 20). The most effective WBLO site supervisors, from the student's perspective in the NACE Foundation survey results, took the time to offer constructive feedback and teach, treated them professionally and respectfully, were open to consultation, and explained how the designated work was positioned in the long-term goals of the organization (Bottner, 2010; Fifolt and Searby, 2010). The value of an engaged site supervisor cannot be overstated.

Criticisms and Obstacles of Work-based Learning

WBLOs are not always positive. Even when WBLOs are available, students do not always have the availability, time, or commitment to participate in one. In a survey that with almost 10,000 student responses, results indicated that of the students that had not participated in an internship, the top reasons were a lack of time, the lack of pay for some internships (creating a financial hardship for some), a lack of flexibility in an internship opportunity, and lastly, a lack of confidence in their skills being "attractive to an employer" (Bottner, 2015, p. 27). Bottner also found criticism from the survey indicating that less than half of the internship sites provided some type of mentor or "buddy program" to help navigate the initial entry into the organization (p. 27). These are all reasons that surfaced as obstacles in our study as well.

A common complaint surrounding WBLOs is that if either the site supervisor or student is not engaged, the student may be charged with completing menial tasks for no other reason than to earn academic credit. This was a common complaint in this study among faculty members. Page, Geck, and Wiseman (1999) cautioned site supervisors to resist the urge to use interns as free labor and exploit their willingness to please. One

intern countered the criticisms, saying that "problems experienced by community college interns are countered by the interns' faith in the future resources which they believe will be available" (Broadhurst & Bartlett, 2014, p. 569). Interns are more willing to endure menial tasks with the hope of long-term networking benefits. For example, an intern may be more willing to file papers for two hours if they know it will maintain their good standing with the site supervisor. A good standing offers them potential positive connections in the field as well as a reference letter for future job searches.

It is a challenge to track and assess WBLO experiences. In KCTCS, the direction of the WBLOs are set by the program coordinator at each college. When practices are kept decentralized (unintentionally), there is no opportunity to gather and share rich data related to successful practices. (Nasr, Pennington, & Andres, 2004). We found that little information related to WBLOs was available interdepartmentally unless specifically sought by a coordinator. For example, one WBLO supervisor may have fewer requirements related to contact hours or a unique reflection component in their class and another program coordinator may have a best practice or an effective supervisor evaluation that offers constructive feedback to the student. However, there is commonly no centralized office to house WBLOs and related information (e.g., forms, internship opportunities, narratives about a specific site) is not readily accessible and collaboration is limited. This results in stalled improvement in the WBLO courses (Garis, 2014).

Finally, WBLO programs may not be fully supported in academic settings. The idea of WBLOs have frequently been portrayed as a threat to traditional education because it is skill-based training and not the more traditional idea of classroom education. O'Neill (2010) described this as antivocationalism and explained "the idea that

addressing career development in the context of the major would 'water down' the curriculum is a powerful one, with deep roots. It reveals a common reaction in academia against anything that smacks of vocationalism or apprenticeship" (p. 7). Making WBLOs palatable for varying degrees of academic traditionalists will continue to be an uphill battle.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

Increasingly seen as desirable in multiple industry sectors, WBLOS have been promoted by business and government leaders across Kentucky. The benefits are many. WBLOs provide a better understanding of career expectations for students. Employers develop a pipeline of skilled talent. Colleges and universities strengthen community partnerships and ensure that the curriculum is aligned with workplace needs. In addition, with performance-based funding for higher education a reality in Kentucky, the promising retention and graduation rates for WBLO programs are garnering attention. As a result, increasing the percentage of students participating in "experiential learning" is one of the ten goals included in the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) 2016-22 Strategic Plan.

The promise of WBLOs in KCTCS, however, will not be realized without an intentional response based on the fundamentals of successful WBLO programs. The purpose of this study was to explore two questions that could provide the framework for expanding WBLOs in KCTCS:

1. How have faculty and program coordinators experienced the development and implementation of WBLOs in KCTCS?

2. How do students make sense of WBLOs relative to their personal backgrounds and dispositions toward work and learning?

The intent of this study is to use the findings to support and inform the decision-making of faculty, staff, and administrators as they determine the strategic direction of WBLO expansion in KCTCS as a response to workforce, government, and educator demands to improve work readiness among students. A better understanding of how WBLOs within KCTCS are developed and administered and how students from differing backgrounds make sense of WBLOs can inform state-wide policy and practice in Kentucky as experiential learning continues to take a central role within KCTCS and the country.

To better understand the impact of WBLOs, our dissertation team created a two-pronged approach to gather a more holistic understanding of the potential influence of these opportunities. Lauren McCrary approached the research on WBLOs by exploring the educational process of coordinating WBLOs from a faculty perspective. Robert Boone studied the impact of WBLOs from the student perspective and the influence WBLOs have on student ability to navigate the workplace environment. In this collaborative dissertation, different perspectives, explored qualitatively, are utilized to assess the current landscape of WBLOs in Kentucky and offer recommendations for more impactful WBLO experiences.

Research Design

The research centered on exploring both the faculty and student perspectives of WBLOs at KCTCS colleges. The exploration of each perspective necessitated a specific research design.

For the faculty-focused research design, only programs with elective WBLOs were included. Elective WBLO programs offer the greatest opportunity for expansion and are less influenced by accreditation and licensing regulations. The purpose was to explore faculty experiences coordinating programs where students are given the choice of whether to participate in a WBLO. As a result, this study includes minimal data from medical fields because their WBLOs are mandatory. Data included anything faculty deemed important to the development or implementation (and associated obstacles) of their WBLO program. The faculty who participated were directly responsible for overseeing the WBLO experience of the student. Participants were technical faculty members who brought to the position experience and an expertise in a technical area but not necessarily advanced academic credentials. For example, some faculty participants worked in the manufacturing industry prior to coordinating a manufacturing program and others worked as an auto mechanic, a medical assistant or office assistant and now coordinate a related technical program. Also, aside from the senior administrator and two staff members who participated, all participants were responsible for assigning the grade associated with the WBLO. To ensure multiple viewpoints, programs with varying enrollments, in varying programs (logistics, IT/business, manufacturing, healthcare, other) and different geographic locations (urban, suburban, and rural) were included in the study. The final 17 participants consisted of 14 faculty, one senior administrator, and two staff members associated with WBLOs. The interview protocol (Appendix III) was designed to explore practices and influences on the development and implementation of the WBLOs. These questions also raised discussion of obstacles to success.

For the student-centered perspective of the study, we recruited 20 KCTCS students who had completed a WBLO experience no longer than one year prior to the time of the study from WBLO programs at Southcentral Community and Technical College (SKYCTC), Owensboro Community and Technical College (OCTC), or Maysville Community and Technical College (MCTC). WBLO programs at these colleges were selected based on their accessibility to the researchers as well as their developed infrastructure for WBLO participation. The students were not hand selected by faculty nor were students intentionally selected as first-generation college students, however all of the 20 students self-identified as being a "first-generation college student." Participating students were asked questions related to their family background concerning work experience, motivations for going to college, and specific questions about their WBLO experience. The full interview protocol can be found in Appendix II. The interviews were recorded, and reflective notes were taken throughout the interviews. The transcripts and notes were reviewed and studied to determine initial codes followed by a thematic analysis, similar to the process for the faculty-focused study.

The research team for this study was comprised of two former KCTCS employees: a former *Associate Professor* turned Assistant to the President at Brescia University (Lauren McCrary), and a former workforce development administrator turned CEO of the South Central Workforce Development Board and its non-profit entity (Robert Boone). McCrary led the research effort on exploring influences on the development of elective WBLOs offered by KCTCS. Boone studied how KCTCS students make sense of WBLOs related to family work experiences and other resources for career development. Each team member has been involved, in some cases directly, in

the implementation of WBLOs at the post-secondary level. As former coordinator of the Administrative Office Technology and Medical Information Technology programs at Owensboro Community and Technical College, McCrary led required and elective WBLOs in these academic programs. Boone is responsible for overseeing the public workforce development system in the 10 counties of south central Kentucky, which develops and administers WBLOs as one program in its portfolio of services. Prior to this role, Boone developed the Center for Career Development and Experiential Learning, which continues to serve 19 counties in northeastern Kentucky with experiential learning programming. Due to these responsibilities, each team member possessed skills and experiences that enabled them to serve in unique capacity as researchers.

Joint Findings

Clearly faculty coordinators are key to a successful program. Faculty background was determined to be influential when developing and implementing WBLOs as well as an obstacle in rural and suburban areas when faculty were not from the area. Faculty background included their previous employment, how long they had been in their technical field, and whether they were born and raised in the location in which they taught. Where faculty grew up and how long they lived in the area was important in rural and suburban areas. Faculty expressed being able to "pick up the phone" and find placements for their students. In urban areas, developing relationships was more tedious; however, opportunities for placement were more prevalent. Also influential was how much experience faculty had in their related field. Largely, the faculty interviewed brought expertise from a technical field to the program. Having relationships in their field

in the same area proved beneficial to developing WBLOs. One faculty member who was teaching in the area in which he grew up said of a meeting with potential employers:

> I would say I probably knew half of them in the room. There's probably maybe 15 companies in the room. I probably knew representatives from 7 of them because I had either worked with them, came across them, or worked with them in some capacity. Whether I worked with them directly or maybe they were a supplier or a vendor for us somewhere along the line. They were familiar with me; they knew what was going on. And familiarity helps. Because they know, "oh well, [redacted] might be okay, he might be a great guy." The quality of work I did when I was around those folks, unless I totally just dropped off the other end of the spectrum, they know that I'm going to try to instill that same quality in my students

Another faculty member echoed the sentiment:

> The companies let's say I'm out just wherever, I worked in manufacturing before I ever came to be a teacher, I know people here, there, across this place because it's real funny, we all kind of cut our teeth together.

By being able to speak the technical language and having ties to the town, faculty were at a greater advantage when actively developing WBLOs.

Beyond understanding the benefits to the key stakeholders, faculty had to be able to articulate and appeal to business partners. The first part of this articulation was the developing of relationships with community partners in order to discuss WBLO benefits with them. Faculty who were able to develop relationships with site personnel and explain benefits clearly, were more likely to gain access for their students. By expressing that a student intern is a good way to "test drive" a student for fit within the company, community partners began to see the benefits to them. Also conveyed were the ways in which WBLOs can help develop a pipeline to produce future employees as well as develop currently employed top talent.

Faculty engagement with the students was also important to a successful WBLO program. As one faculty member explained, "…sometimes all it takes is for somebody to speak positive toward them, toward something. And they'll gravitate to it. Way I see it, if they're in a [redacted] store they probably have a desire to work on stuff. They just may not have the skill." Engagement was also related to the time faculty have to spend to coordinate the many moving parts of a WBLO. There are so many variables to coordinate that it can be time-consuming and requires a lot of maintenance. One faculty went above and beyond to stay engaged with students and former students:

> And a lot of time I'll just go out in the community like on a day there's no school or on a Friday where I'm just 2 hours in here. And I'll stop by [redacted] and say, "Hey, how's everybody doing?" I actually do that intentionally to take and check in on my former students that are there employed. Oh yeah [they are all working in the field]. It's like I'm a celebrity when I walk in. It's like everybody's, "Mr. [redacted]". And like for 10 minutes I'm a movie star.

This demonstrates engagement and maintaining relationships with business and industry partners, both deemed influential in this study.

Faculty engagement with both student and industry stakeholders was directly related to their motivation for offering and/or expanding WBLOs. They may be motivated by external factors like compensation, reduced course load, or using the WBLO as an internal service initiative; however, faculty are also driven by internal motivations like the desire to see their students benefit from these opportunities or their belief it is the best thing for the students.

Advisory Boards

An unanticipated theme to emerge from our interviews was the role of the advisory board. The advisory board is group of community members, former and current students and employers. The advisory board members are stakeholders in the program, and they have an interest in the overall success and relevancy of the program. Some faculty claimed their advisory board played a big role in finding placements for students as well as general encouragement of using these opportunities to teach students. A faculty member in a manufacturing program claimed his advisory board was supportive:

> I can call them and ask them for anything. They're always willing to help. They do. They hire students. They'll let students come in and shadow. They'll give me whatever I need. It's a good group. A very professional group. Like I said, it's been more of a rubber stamp in the past. . .

Inactive advisory boards did not provide obstacles for programs, but they did not actively support WBLOs and definitely did not help faculty members develop relationships with potential WBLO sites. One faculty member said, "They are active in that they participate in those two meetings a year." As is the case in most organizations, there were those who actively participated and those who were not as engaged. Community support refers to the overall sentiment the faculty felt from their community. They made general statements like, "we are valued for our role and what we bring to the community." One faculty member added, "I think the community here does a really good job of working with our students and their schedules." This support both on the advisory board (composed of community employers) and in the community opened doors for new WBLOs sites.

What makes an impactful WBLO education is purposeful focus on student development. These high-impact practices included goal-setting for the student,

constructive and consistent feedback, and incorporating a reflection component into the WBLO. Goal-setting works with the stakeholder preparation but also important is feedback. If a student does not receive any feedback until the end of semester supervisor evaluation, there is nothing they can do to implement change or try to develop professionally at the site. By setting a schedule either weekly or every other week to have a conversation with the site supervisor, the student can learn and implement change as they progress through the WBLO. The interaction does not have to extensive and formal, it can be an informal conversation regarding the student's performance but with clear development opportunities and strengths.

The last area explored in the faculty-focused study were the obstacles associated with the development and implementation of WBLOs. One of the main obstacles to emerge was faculty did not feel supported to offer WBLOs. Faculty did not feel that senior administrators prioritized WBLOs and, consequently, because of many other campus initiatives, faculty did not prioritize them either. When one faculty member was asked why he did not utilize WBLOs, they replied, "Why would I create more work?" and had no qualms about their stance. If it became a priority for senior administration, they explained, they may reconsider but not of their own volition. Also, faculty did not always feel that administration appreciated the amount of work and coordination involved with WBLOs, one faculty claimed, "it's not as smooth of a transition [to start offering WBLOs] when you've got a vice president or a president or assistant dean that truly doesn't understand the needs of your program and it can become very frustrating." Faculty who did not offer the WBLO did seem to need administrative encouragement either through prioritizing WBLOs or acknowledgement of the amount of work-involved.

Having support staff (or not) was a recurring discussion in the faculty interviews. Support staff to help with WBLOs was not common among those interviewed and when there was support staff available, it was in very minimal role. Support staff also never had WBLOs as their only focus. It was mostly "in addition to" other responsibilities and therefore, the focus was lacking through no fault of the staff member. This was summarized by a faculty member:

> Many years ago, we had a staff member who worked with relationships with businesses, industry, do you have opportunities for our students? And would try to make those opportunities known. The amount of time that could give to that slowly whittled down and whittled down and whittled down.

Support staff utilization was usually as a point of contact for community members or as a person in an area to house agreements between the institution and the WBLO site.

A highly anticipated obstacle to successful WBLO programs was faculty compensation. Lack of compensation was an obstacle but we found that a lack of transparency and inconsistencies in compensation were also common complaints. One faculty member did not know from semester to semester if the WBLO was included in part of their course load, if they were paid per student, or if they would be paid at all. This was not uncommon. A couple of faculty on the same campus both had different understandings of compensation related to WBLOs. An additional hesitancy, or obstacle, was that WBLOs hold faculty accountable in the industry. If faculty members were teaching outdated techniques or their programs was no longer relevant, sending a student out to potential employers for a WBLO highlighted this deficiency. Faculty teaching outdated techniques or falling behind on maintaining program relevancy was tied to their compensation. Professional development was not heavily emphasized among the

community college faculty interviewed. There were opportunities for faculty development that were not often included in their workload or compensation packages. One opportunity was the faculty voucher that allowed both researchers (Boone and McCrary) in this study to pursue further education thought the doctorate cohort at the University of Kentucky. However, the vouchers for KCTCS employees were removed during this research period further signaling a lesser emphasis on faculty development and compensation for development and innovation.

The most tedious and nuanced obstacles to successful WBLOs were related to logistics. This included if there were sites available for a WBLO, whether the program had the available credit hours in the program of study so as not to exceed the maximum, hesitations by employers to take on students because of liability issues, low prioritization of WBLOs by faculty because of other demands placed on their time, and low prioritization of WBLOs by students because of personal obligations. One frustrated faculty member said, "And then there was that one semester when I had six interns in six different counties. I was going about every other week [out for site visits]. I rapidly quit that. It was dumbass work." Another faculty member was more articulate:

> So, in January, probably the end of January I'll start calling the clinical sites around here. It gets a little tedious. A lot of times if I start calling them in January, or even in December they want me to call closer to the time. It's usually about February, mid-February when I really start calling. It gets a little crunch time.

The time crunch and having available, recurring placements sites were common logistical headaches expressed by faculty. By better understanding the practices and influences on the development and implementation of WBLOs and being cognizant of obstacles, KCTCS is in a proactive position to strengthen WBLOs throughout the state.

What makes a meaningful WBLO experience?

The development of workplace cultural capital begins with meaningful workplace exposure provided by WBLOs. In analyzing student interviews, four consistent markers of the characteristics of a meaningful WBLO experience were identified. First, students matched with a work environment related to their field of study created a more meaningful experience. One participant noted, "I would not have been able to get experience like this in the medical field [without the WBLO experience]. This opportunity has been huge for me to know what I would like to do in the future." It is worthy of mention that all 20 of the interview participants indicated that they would not have had the opportunity to be involved in the WBLO field if not for the WBLO. Related to the concept of career pathways, another participant noted, "I thought I was open to any job in the area of manufacturing. My internship caused me to realize that I really wanted to lead a team of people in the maintenance department." This clarity was a result of a WBLO.

The second marker of a meaningful experience was students' engagement in work that is substantive, yet realistic given the individual student's skills. The level of work engagement is an important element of the WBLO experiences. One participant stated, "I went to my internship and they didn't really have anything for me to do. Finally, after about a half an hour they put me in a room to put labels on files. I was then supposed to transfer all old file material to new files, because the old files were falling apart." This participant noted that she was able to inform her internship coordinator that this WBLO site "was not a good fit," due to the trivialness of the work given the participant's desire to utilize the WBLO experience in a way to perform meaningful career exploration. The

internship coordinator was able to locate a WBLO site that utilized the participant's skills more fully and more meaningfully toward the participant's goals. The participant noted that the new WBLO site was "instrumental in narrowing my focus for careers, because it enabled me to learn from others and do challenging work."

A third marker was for the student to be involved in structured reflection throughout the WBLO experience. It is important to note that WBLOs are learning experiences. As such, there should be an element of structured reflection in order to maximize the WBLOs impact. One participant indicated his career exploration from his WBLO experience was meaningful, in large part, because the WBLO coordinator:

> …asked all of us to write short reflections each day in a journal from our SKY FAME experience. Having to write about our day really caused me to think about all that I had learned. It also caused me to be better at goal setting, so if there was something that I wished I would have done differently or asked, then I had the opportunity to follow-up on those things the next day….If I wasn't journaling, I'm not sure I would have asked all of the questions I should've or paid as much attention as I did…"

Reflection supports the student's professional development because it encourages them to closely examine what they have learned and how their responsibilities are situated into the overall landscape of the organization.

The last marker from this study to indicate a meaningful experience was student development of professional relationships with employees on-site at the WBLO. The concept of mentorship relationships that are tailored to the timeframe and duration of WBLO experiences is a concept that appeared repeatedly in the research analysis. One participant indicated, "I never met someone so knowledgeable about their job before I started my internship. It really causes me to want to be more like them…eventually I was

able to work closely with that person and learn a lot from them." Another participant stated:

> Shortly after starting [the WBLO], I was introduced to someone who was just going to show me how to do one job. That was a real blessing, because I was able to work with that person…I'll call her Sharon…and she really showed me how to be a good employee in my field of interest, which is to become an LPN at a nursing home. Sharon really helped me understand the technical parts of the job, but also the politics of the job…both were very important, and I feel that I'm much farther ahead than if I wouldn't had this experience.

The WBLO supported the student's sense of professional development resulting in a sense of accomplishment and the feeling of "getting ahead" in their professional environment. Participants stressed that their mentor helped them assimilate in the workplace culture through encouraging social interactions. Additionally, three participants indicated that their mentor helped them network outside of the WBLO to help with employment post-graduation.

WBLOs and the Attainment of Workplace Cultural Capital.

The findings of this study supported that participants were equipped to navigate the cultural environment of the workplace after completion of a WBLO. Student interviews demonstrated that a definite fluency with the cultural environment in the workplace resulted from meaningful WBLO participation. Such fluency was utilized during the course of the WBLO and afterwards to navigate the workforce environment, develop professional networks, establish a career pathway, and transfer the cultural capital obtained at the WBLO site to other environments that are focused on workforce outcomes (i.e. job interviews, other WBLO experiences, and employment).

The role of the WBLO seemed to be life changing for the students in the interview. One participant stated, "I didn't know I could succeed in college or at a job until I started working [at the WBLO site]. This experience really changed the way I feel about my ability to find a job that is going to support my family." Students stressed the impact the WBLO had on their ability to understand the work environment, transfer that knowledge to other work-related environments, develop confidence to navigate future and anticipated work environments with fluency, and become better students due to the transferability of some workplace skills to the educational environment. Students overall indicated a sense of being "fast-tracked" to career readiness by their WBLO experience.

An overwhelming majority of the students interviewed indicated that involvement in a WBLO allowed them to be more confident in their ability to locate employment in their desired field upon credential completion. These students used words and phrases like: "My internship caused me to think about the future of my career more…without this experience I probably would be at square one when it came time to find a job." "I feel that I could compete with a lot of other people with more experience because of the skills I gained in this [WBLO] experience."

All interview participants in the student-centered study indicated that WBLO participation was foundational in their career exploration. In addition, all participants indicated that they would not have been able to have meaningful work experience like those presented in the WBLO if not for the opportunity for WBLO participation. For 16 students, the WBLO opportunity was the first time they were personally exposed to work (outside of the public social service, educational, and healthcare systems) that did not consist of a combination of seasonal and part-time positions leveraged to constitute

income. For these 16 students, this was the first time they were exposed personally to employment that maintained benefits such as paid time off, health insurance, and retirement savings plans. Such exposure is instrumental in the development of a refined context for which to view the world of work.

WBLO experiences are important in developing a context for the work environment. Context includes a refined view of what the world of work, to borrow a descriptor from an interview participant, is "really like" (i.e. the world of work is not usually how it is depicted or described on TV or in media). That is, what the world of work *is not*. Context is also important in developing a notion of what the world of work *is*. The role of context is important for participants to understand the work environment. From context, workplace cultural capital is developed. Workplace cultural capital can be defined as the implicit skills needed to successfully navigate the workforce either for entry into the workforce or advancement within the workforce environment. The development of workplace cultural capital enables employees to navigate the intricacies of what is required to retain employment, advance in employment, and earn a raise, among other important markers of success in the workplace. The student interviews echoed assertions made in the experiential learning literature regarding the importance of purposeful work-based learning to increased confidence, soft skills, and the ability to navigate the culture of the workplace with more fluency.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings that suggest lacking infrastructure to carry out strategic delivery of WBLO programming, it is recommended that KCTCS first conduct an asset map and gap analysis to take inventory on what practices are currently

employed. Our research indicated that a disparity of WBLO practices are implemented at each KCTCS college in our study. Such a disparity points to practices that are inconsistent in terms of policy, implementation, and effectiveness. An inventory of these disparate systems is first needed to determine which stakeholders at each college are engaged in WBLOs and at to what degree, what are the regional "best practices" in the design and implementation of WBLOs, and what are the starting points for WBLO transformation. From there, KCTCS, as a supporting partner to the 16 colleges in its system, is called to initiate guidance and support for WBLO creation. This series of recommendations can be broken down in the following steps:

KCTCS-System Level Recommendations

Based on the research findings that suggest lacking infrastructure to carry out strategic delivery of WBLO programming, it is recommended that KCTCS first conduct an asset map and gap analysis to take inventory on what practices are currently employed. Our research indicated that a disparity of WBLO practices are implemented at each KCTCS college in our study. Such a disparity points to practices that are inconsistent in terms of policy, implementation, and effectiveness. An inventory of these disparate systems is first needed to determine which stakeholders at each college are engaged in WBLOs and at to what degree, what are the regional "best practices" in the design and implementation of WBLOs, and what are the starting points for WBLO transformation. From there, KCTCS, as a supporting partner to the 16 colleges in its system, is called to initiate guidance and support for WBLO creation. This series of recommendations can be broken down in the following steps:

1. The KCTCS System Office should establish and convene a work group among each of the 16 community and technical colleges in Kentucky. The purpose of the work group should be to compile and access the diversity of WBLO delivery models at each of the colleges.
2. The KCTCS System Office should provide guidelines for the design and implementation of evidence-based and impactful WBLO experiences. Guidelines for WBLO experiences should focus on the sociological perspectives of WBLOs, including their ability to transmit dominant workplace cultural capital and positively impact soft skill development. A focus on the sociological perspective of WBLO experiences is foundational in "fast tracking" student career development, particularly for first-generation career seekers who are the most "at risk" for being shut out of the pipeline of upward career mobility. Additionally, guidelines should follow the high-impact WBLO practices from O'Neill's (2010) research, including: students should have the opportunity to be involved in tasks that require long-term effort while providing an opportunity to establish "substantive" relationships with key stakeholders, work with diverse groups of people, receiving meaningful feedback, and reflect on their WBLO experiences. Additionally, Albashiry, et al. (2015) recommends a demonstrated five-step curriculum development plan for WBLO experiences: analyze, design, develop, implement, and evaluate.
3. The KCTCS System Office should develop a three-year plan to infuse WBLO or experiential learning opportunities into each semester's curriculum. Our research found that students are not likely to possess structured work experiences without

the opportunities provided by WBLO experiences. Structured work experiences within the educational curriculum are important in providing the career context needed for successful navigation of the workplace environment. Additionally, WBLO experiences, especially when integrated throughout an entire program of study, play an invaluable career development role by encouraging students to more fully understand career expectations post-graduation, find mentors, and to practice skills learned in the classroom. Research from Van Gyn, Branton, Cutt, Loken and Ricks (1996) found that students with relevant work experience obtained via a WBLO experience were more fluent in their understanding of how classes and skills attainment directly related to career goals.

College-Level Recommendations

Based on the research findings and national best practices (Rosario et al., 2013; Ferguson, 2011) that call for a centralized system to house related WBLO information and carry out cross-disciplinary administrative practices in each college is necessary. The infusion of WBLO programming throughout a student's entire program of study is beneficial and recommendations at the college-level can be made to positively impact student experiences in WBLOs, leading to career readiness and fluency in navigating the workforce.

1. Each college should maintain a centralized department for housing related WBLO information and for universal administrative procedures (maintaining current agreements with sites, obtaining student and site regulations, background checks, additional liability insurances, etc.) (Garis, 2014). Due to the employer-facing nature of Career Services departments, it is recommended that the WBLO

department (Center for Experiential Learning) co-locate with Career Services. Stakeholders, including employers, in the community should be able to easily contact a designated point person on campus if they are interested in hosting an intern (Rosario et al., 2013). Centralization is key because it allows one person (or multiple persons) to have a primary goal of WBLOs. Xanthis (2015) emphasized the need for a center with the work-based learning focus. As the coordinator at Orange-Ulster (OU) BOCES Career and Technical Education Center in Goshen, New York, pointed out:

> I'm passionate about the Work-based Learning program; it is my priority 24-7. Wherever I go, every day, I'm looking for locations and opportunities for student placement. I keep business cards handy, and whenever I visit a business, doctor's office, hair salon, etc., I introduce myself and give them my information. I also peruse ads in the newspaper and listen to the radio for additional placement opportunities (p. 30).

To ensure accountability, designating one person, or persons, to be responsible for the development and implementation of WBLOs is important. This practice also lessens obstacles for the general public who wish to take advantage of these opportunities with students. It

2. Senior administrators should promulgate a transparent compensation policy. Such a policy does not have to be prescribed by the system- level administration, but it does need to be accessible at the local level. It also does not need to be overly restrictive or detailed but a general policy will ensure faculty understanding and manage expectations. A report in Higher Education (2001) stated that "Several authors encourage higher education faculty to adopt a broader definition of scholarship and to broaden the activities for which a faculty member can receive reward (see Boyer, 1990 Rice, 1991)." It is important to recognize that an issue of

lack of transparency first has to be acknowledged before any changes to a compensation policy can occur. The same report offers steps to ensure all institutional goals are enveloped in the faculty compensation system. The initial steps offered are:

> to develop a faculty compensation system that supports the institutional mission first requires the governing board, president, chief academic officer, or faculty governing body to recognize that the institution should address this issue. The next step is the formation of a committee with a cross section of faculty, administrators, and perhaps students in its membership to examine the issue (2001, Vol. 28 Issue 2, p55. 12p).

Because of differences in college and departmental contexts, transparency in compensation policies and expectations of faculty is recommended as opposed to prescribing a particular compensation approach across the college.

3. A culture of WBLOs should be instilled at every college (Gilroy, 2013). One cost-effective and expedient way to build a culture of work-based learning is simply to increase the frequency that WBLOs are discussed and visibility surrounding WBLOs. This means to emphasize WBLOs at college assemblies, faculty assemblies, in department meetings, senior administration meetings, at advisory meetings, and among the student body as a mechanism to provide meaningful career development experiences (Sharma, Mannell and Rowe, 1995; O'Neill, 2010). By increasing the frequency that WBLOs are discussed both on campus and in the community, administrators can signal to potential WBLO stakeholders that they are valued and prioritized at the college.
4. For senior administrators, it is vital to promote and enable flexibility for faculty when they are developing WBLOs for their students. If faculty must be creative to work with companies or around student's schedules, administrators should

promote and support this within reason. For example, if a student needs to earn their WBLO contact hours at nights or weekends, then faculty should feel empowered to allow it. Senior administrators hold power in their voice, support, and in their authority. By implementing these recommendations, campuses are positioned to support WBLO development and implementation that are geared toward student-centered outcomes (Sharma, Mannell and Rowe, 1995).

5. Embedded into the idea of flexibility is the idea that advisory board should be innovative and flexible as well and senior administrators should encourage this notion. Advisory board members were a recurring topic among faculty members. Engaged faculty wanted engaged advisory board members. If they had advisory board members who were not engaged, they expressed concern. Faculty members who were not utilizing WBLOs or were less engaged, did not express concern about their advisory board's level of involvement. A way to address this area would be to offer professional development to advisory board members prior to their joining to outline responsibilities and associated tasks that the administration and faculty deemed necessary to support a program. Suggestions could include professional development or offering their organization as a host site once an academic year for students to experience a WBLO. It would be up to each campus to determine the level of necessary involvement from the advisory board and what types of training were most applicable to their needs. Karen Elzey, director of Skills for America's Future (SAF), said:

> Community colleges are all different, decentralized, locally funded and targeted at local priorities, which can be difficult for employers to deal with, she says. Business and industry may want to engage with local educational institutions to foster curricula that lead to a pool of new prospects to hire, to

> improve the skills of their existing workforce or for such altruistic reasons as raising standards of the community in general (2012).

She succinctly summarized the goal of a partnership between an educational institution and a business organization. The advisory boards for each program are the frontline to accomplishing these goals.

6. Colleges should encourage faculty to incorporate a three-year phase in of required WBLO or experiential learning curriculum by engaging employer partners in the region. Such engagement can be achieved through the facilitation of industry collaboration where employers can learn about the workforce benefits of WBLO experiences and model designs of impactful WBLO programs. The purpose of this level of engagement is to recruit employers to participate in offering meaningful WBLO experiences to students. A collaborative approach between post-secondary education and the employer community to increase quantity and quality of WBLOs, as previously noted, has been a goal of the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, which calls public post-secondary institutions in the state to "Work with the employer community, foundations, and state agencies to provide 'work and learn' opportunities, including experiential or project-based learning, co-ops, internships, externships, and clinical placements (CPE, 2016, p.17) For students who are not "WBLO-ready" the colleges should have experiential learning opportunities available on-campus or through a combination of on-campus experiences and workforce development software, such as CareerEdge. If WBLO opportunities are limited based on availability of WBLO sites, then students can also engage in WBLO and other experiential learning opportunities on campus and/or through impactful exposure to work environments

utilizing software, industry tours, and workforce roundtables facilitated by the colleges (O'Neill, 2010).

Colleges should develop an evaluation and tracking system measuring the effectiveness of WBLO engagement every semester (Albashiry, et al., 2015). The evaluation system should incorporate feedback from students and employers. Our research found that WBLO experiences within KCTCS have little evaluation in terms of consistency of practices and effectiveness. Moreover, our qualitative research highlights the importance of interviewing students and faculty to determine WBLO impact from perspectives that are not easily quantifiable.

Faculty-Level Recommendations

Based on the research findings, faculty are key in the implementation of impactful WBLO programming. The recommendation to build a centralized system for WBLO information and maintenance is not a substitute for faculty engagement with the promotion, implementation, and evaluation of WBLO programs. Rather, the goal of a centralized system is to provide faculty with a greater opportunity to facilitate WBLO programing at the curricular-level. Building on a center related to implementing WBLOs, there are other key practices faculty can utilize to strengthen WBLOs.

1. First, by introducing the students to the idea of a WBLO and associated benefits early in their college career, students can begin to see potential opportunities prior to the semester in which the WBLO occurs. This will support a more applicable WBLO for the student as well as share the responsibility of finding placements with the student. This also helps incorporate the WBLO into the student's

academic plan ensuring that the electives hours are available to the student. Supiano's (2015) research found that students who met with a career counselor before they entered the classroom or during the first semester of study were much better able to articulate career ambitions and career plans than students who did not have early involvement with a career counselor.

2. A second important recommendation is for faculty to educate and orientate all stakeholders whether they are students, community partners, senior administrators, or interested colleagues. By discussing the benefits and working with students and community partners to establish expectations and develop orientations, a positive experience is more likely. Also, the student knows expectations and is better able to prepare their schedule both academically and professionally. The site support can also prepare and plan for what best suits a student's professional development. A faculty member cannot assume that the site support or the student know how to best implement a WBLO that supports all stakeholders without proving some type of orientation. Even if everyone is engaged and has the student's best interest in mind that does not equate to knowing most effective practices. Preparation and orientation support student growth. Meyer (2016) found that employer engagement in the WBLO process is a major determinant of positive WBLO impact on the career experiences and plans of students.
3. One of the most important and impactful recommendations faculty can utilize is proactive advising. By proactively advising students that WBLOs are available to them and how they can impact their future career, faculty are creating a culture

that fosters WBLOs for the purpose of developing the student (Drewery, Nevison, and Pretti, 2016).

4. The last recommendation for faculty is to use flexibility and innovation in the development and implementation process. It is a suggested recommendation for senior administrators to enable and support flexibility and innovation, and it is a recommendation for faculty to exercise that right to benefit the student and community partners both with their students and in their community partnerships. By understanding students' personal obligations and community partners' needs, faculty are demonstrating a willingness to develop a collaborate experience that is mutually beneficial to all involved.

Conclusion

Each campus will need to exercise discernment when considering the recommendations and in determining what is the best fit for their institution and their campus culture. By understanding the amount of coordination that goes into WBLOs, administrators can be empathetic and guide change in an effective way. As it stands now, coordination takes place at the program level. Faculty first need to understand the perspective of the student and how these opportunities can benefit students. When there is buy-in surrounding WBLOs in general, faculty will be more inclined to explore WBLO development and implementation. Consideration of WBLOs is valuable from a sociological perspective, which highlights the ways in which work-based learning can help students acquire the "sense of the game" necessary to navigate workplace cultures. In unison with faculty development and implementation, senior administration's support and influence is important to the overall process.

Chapter 3
Influences on the Development and Implementation of Elective Work-based Learning Opportunities

Introduction

Anecdotal evidence from my personal experiences in Kentucky working with internship students resulted in my interest to further study work-based learning opportunities (WBLOs). I have found the internship experience ignites the most engaged reactions from students. They are excited, nervous, and ambitious when it comes to the internship experience. Talking with students about WBLOs evokes unusually candid conversations about career paths and ideals. When preparing the student for the internship, they discuss career aspirations and how the internship experience often confirmed their career paths. However, some students describe being disheartened because the work experience was "boring" or "more isolated" than they anticipated. Regardless of whether the internship solidified the student's program choice and career aspirations or dissolved their plans, it seemed to me that students gain a clearer picture of the field than what could be taught in the classroom. How can we expand these opportunities and what are the best practices for doing so?

Developing and implementing a WBLO that is mutually beneficial to all parties cannot be expected to emerge organically. Campus staff, typically faculty members, must develop relationships with business and industry partners and college administrators have to welcome these partners. Everyone involved has to embrace flexibility when delivering these experiences. Catering the WBLO to benefit both the student and the community partners is a balancing act that requires a supportive institutional environment. How is this balance achieved?

As in most community college systems, WBLOs in Kentucky community colleges are often isolated to specific programs and handled at the program coordinator level. Best practices for work based learning are not readily available to other disciplines nor shared across institutions. This study investigates how established WBLO programs in the Kentucky Community and Technical College system (KCTCS) work.

In order to study how WBLO's work, three stages of administration were identified: development, implementation, and sustaining WBLOs for KCTCS students. By interviewing the individuals responsible for coordinating these opportunities (typically program faculty) regarding these three areas, analyzing program documentation, and reviewing enrollment patterns and delivery structures, my goal was to develop a picture of the current landscape of WBLOs in KCTCS, best practices, organizational challenges, and future prospects.

A better understanding of influences on the development and implementation of work-based learning opportunities (WBLOs) can inform the state-wide policy and practice in Kentucky as experiential learning, specifically hands-on experience, is taking on a central role within the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS). Exploring challenges for sustaining these programs can also help faculty and campus administrators better prepare as they start the initiative to grow WBLOs. This study addresses the following overarching questions regarding the ways in which faculty and/or program coordinators develop and implement WBLOs in KCTCS:

1. What kind of recruitment tactics are used?
2. In what ways are outside stakeholders involved?

3. What policies and practices result in student engagement?
4. What kinds of opportunities and obstacles are encountered?

This qualitative study explores these questions through interviews with instructors and/or program coordinators at 12 KCTCS college campuses across the state. In addition, I collected existing documentation, reviewed websites, and examined syllabi and orientation materials where available. I conducted thematic analysis of these data to build a picture of the ways in which WBLO programs in KCTCS are imagined, built, and sustained.

Background for the Study

Largely, faculty who participated in this study were all linked to associate of science degree (AAS) programs or a "technical" degree. It is important to note that these faculty members brought to the position an expertise from a related field but not always academic credentials. Often when the term faculty is used, one conjures the image of a "sage on a stage" but these faculty members had extensive experience in manufacturing, automobile industry, business administration, and entry-to-mid level medical assisting. The faculty work with students to prepare them for positions that, in large part, will start out as entry-level positions. The student may become an automobile mechanic, or work on a factory line, become a medical assistant, or office support staff. The faculty did not often expect their students to transfer to a four-year institution. Faculty expressed that getting a student onto one of the WBLO sites was important to ensuring they had an opportunity in the field. These were not always students with community connections, or parents with post-secondary education, so a WBLO was even more important for them to gain access. The WBLO students discussed in this study were not students that planned

to transfer on for higher academic credentials. They were commonly interested in earning their AAS degree, getting their foot in the door in a related field, and starting work.

Sample of Persons, Sites, and Situations

The focus of this study is on elective rather than mandatory WBLO programs in Associate in Applied Science (AAS) degree programs in Kentucky. Currently, there is not an initiative to make WBLOs a required component for every credential. Consequently, to increase WBLOs, growth will most likely occur with more students *electing* to take a WBLO. Understanding how program coordinators build elective WBLOs is a logical place to start the exploration; therefore, programs with a required WBLO were removed from the study. The *KCTCS 2016-2017 Catalog* includes 74 active AAS degree programs (KCTCS, 2016). Of these programs, 31 have an elective WBLO. The remaining 43 programs either did not have a WBLO or required a WBLO through an internship, practicum, or other form. This included most allied health programs and they were removed from the study. Within the 31 remaining degree programs with elective WBLOs, 60 distinct course titles were identified. Of those 60 elective WBLO courses, in 2016-17 there were 273 different sections with a total enrollment of 1,204 unique students across KCTCS. Of the 273 course sections, only 33 classes had an enrollment of ten or more students. As the enrollment in each WBLO course throughout the 16 KCTCS colleges during the 2016-17 academic year ranged from 1 to 22 unique students over two semesters, ten or more students was considered high enrollment for the purposes of this study because of the increased likelihood for existing documentation and established operating practices.

In addition to offering elective WBLOs with substantial enrollment, geographic location was considered and each of the 16 KCTCS colleges were categorized as urban, suburban, or rural based on the population of the county of the main campus pulled from the US Census Bureau (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1

Work-based Learning Opportunity Geographic Locations

Classification **Urban (U), Suburban (S), or Rural (R)**	**College**	**County (Main campus)**	**Population**
U	Jefferson	Jefferson	771,158
U	Bluegrass	Fayette	321,959
S	Gateway	Boone	130,728
S	Southcentral	Warren	128,845
S	Elizabethtown	Hardin	108,071
S	Owensboro	Daviess	100,374
S	Hopkinsville	Christian	70,416
S	West Ky	McCracken	65,385
S	Somerset	Pulaski	64,449
R	Ashland	Boyd	47,979
R	Henderson	Henderson	45,928
R	Madisonville	Hopkins	45,547
R	Big Sandy	Floyd	36,271
R	Southeast	Harlan	26,713
R	Hazard	Perry	26,553
R	Maysville	Mason	17,174

*US Census Bureau 2017 estimated population

**Rural < 50,000; 50,000 < Suburban < 150,000; Urban > 150,000

The third potential criteria used to select programs offering WBLOs was labor market and potential access to employment opportunities for WBLO students relative to their field of study.

The labor market categories were logistics, IT/business, manufacturing, and healthcare from the Work Ready Scholarship offered to Kentucky residents. I used these categories because all the participants' programs, except two (categorized as *other)*, were already conveniently grouped in this way to allow students to utilize the scholarship. Also, the program categories offered enough generalization to still ensure participants in my study would not be linked to their specific program. Thus, the pool of potential sites for study were identified by geographic location as urban (U), suburban (S), or rural (R); enrollment as high (H), low (L), or not applicable (-); and the type of labor market as logistics (L), IT/business (B), manufacturing (M), healthcare (H), and other (O).

I purposefully recruited faculty or program coordinators from among the programs, starting with faculty associated with the thirty-three WBLO classes with ten or more students. In the event that there was more than one program in a similar geographic area, I only recruited one faculty member. After two separate email requests (with ten different potential participants each time) I received eight affirmative responses from faculty working with high enrollment programs in varying labor markets and geographic locations.

Because personal experience told me that the size of the program, while not an indication of quality, might reveal differences in operating practices, I then made sure to recruit faculty from low enrollment programs to compare with their high enrollment peers in the same geographic areas and labor markets. Six faculty participants coordinating low enrollment WBLOs were confirmed. Four of the six participants were suggestions from the initial high enrollment participants and two were from professional relationships. In all, 14 faculty, two staff personnel, and one senior administrator agreed

to participate in interviews representing multiple categories of WBLO program types to ensure a well-rounded study.

Matrix 3.1 *Site and Participant Selection*

		Geographic Location					
		Rural		*Metro Adjacent (Suburban)*		*Metro (Urban)*	
Type of Labor Market (Based on *Work Ready* scholarship categories)	*Logistics*						
	IT/Business	1	1	3			1
	Manufacturing			1	2		2
	Healthcare					1*	
	Other				1**		1**
		Low	*High*	*Low*	*High*	*Low*	*High*
		Enrollment					

* Healthcare programs largely require a WBLO and consequently did not have a large pool of participants offering elective WBLOs. One program did offer additional WBLOs beyond the required and was included in the study.

** These are AAS programs that did not fall into the *Work Ready* scholarship programs but still offer an elective WBLO.

Finally, in addition to the above program faculty interviews, I conducted three additional interviews with an executive level administrator (suburban) and two staff members (rural and suburban) tasked with coordinating WBLOs outside of degree program administration. The overwhelming feedback from faculty was the development of WBLOs took place at the programmatic level with little interaction from administration. The one administrative interview confirmed this sentiment, so no additional interviews with administration were deemed necessary for this study related to faculty perspective. This resulted in a total of 17 interviewees.

Of the programs that had faculty participate in this study, I offer a total number of potential participants as a reference guide in Matrix 3.2 *Total Potential Participants in*

the Same Programs. An important clarification is that this does not include every single program that is categorized. For example, under the category IT/Business, there are more programs that are included in the category but if a business administration faculty and an administrative office technology faculty participated (both housed under IT/Business along with other programs in the Work Ready scholarship), I looked only at the available participants in those two categories to use a reference. Also, as an added layer of protection for the participants, this matrix does not reflect enrollment.

Matrix 3.2

Total Potential Participants in the Same Programs at KCTCS

		Geographic Location		
		Rural	*Metro Adjacent (Suburban)*	*Metro (Urban)*
Type of Labor Market	*Logistics*	0	0	0
	IT/Business	16	16	6
	Manufacturing	8	16	5
	Healthcare	1	2	2
	Other	5	7	2

This matrix serves a guide for the reader to position the number of participants who were involved in this study in the overall availability of faculty in the same programs in KCTCS.

Generating Data

I used a constructivist approach in this study to build an understanding of WBLO program development and delivery from the perspectives of the faculty who coordinate or oversee WBLOs. Personal experiences indicated that most coordination took place at the

programmatic level and the interview with the administrator confirmed this. By constructing a picture of WBLO development and implementation from the views of those who administer the WBLOs, there was an increased likelihood that the information was current, accurate, and relevant. The participant pool also ensured that it was representative of cross-disciplinary programs with varying enrollments, in different geographic locations.

Interviews.

The main sources of data for this study were the interviews. I also reviewed program documents and websites; however, these did not prove to be fruitful sources of information. The documents were often generic and not specific to the WBLO. In one instance, three different programs used the same generic template for their WBLO website. The interviews data; however, proved to be rich.

The interviews took place in varying fields, positions, and geographic locations. I traveled to the participants' home campus and the interview took place in each participant's office. I obtained informed consent and digitally recorded each interview as well as taking notes which were later added to each interview transcript. The overall goal of the interview questions was to explore the faculty members' experiences with their respective WBLOs.

The interviews consisted of open-ended question asking the instructor to *talk about their WBLO*. The intent of this question was to determine what they thought were the most important aspects of their WBLO. This question worked well because it was so general the faculty could take it in any direction they wanted. Initially, faculty were not asked about specific practices and experiences in order to let them steer the conversation.

From there the faculty discussed *what the instructor thought supported their enrollment and how they recruit and promote their WBLO*. One of the themes that emerged from initial interviews was the importance of various support systems. And subsequent interviews included questions about support following a grounded theory approach to emergent design (Charmaz, 2007).

After discussing general administration and recruitment, the interview conversation turned towards discussion of *what happens prior to the class/WBLO starting* to explore how involved the instructor was in the student/site relationship and if/how the instructor cultivated and maintained relationships with their stakeholders. From WBLO development, the interview moved to *WBLO implementation and what occurs in the WBLO experience* and the instructor's level of involvement once the course starts. The detail and depth of the instructor's narrative surrounding what happened when the class started was one indication of their level of involvement. The last interview topic explored was *the advantages the instructors see for students enrolled in the WBLO*. To conclude the interview, the instructors were asked for *any additional ideas or influences they may want to discuss* which did lead to some further conversations regarding advisory boards and faculty attitudes toward student ability. These topics were subsequently added to the interview protocol.

Determining unique practices to develop, implement, and support successful WBLOs was the intent of this study. For example, if instructors in both high and low enrollment courses meet regularly with industry partners, that was not a unique practice to high enrollment WBLOs. That was a signal to look more closely at what happened in those meetings. A second example was if a coordinator intentionally spoke to each of

their advisees about the importance of a WBLO and a coordinator of low enrollment did not, that indicated the practice of proactive advising as unique to high enrollment WBLOs. One last example was if the high enrollment instructor was compensated with an overload course pay versus a low enrollment instructor who oversaw WBLOs with no compensation. Compensation would be a factor in how aggressively an instructor "pushed" WBLOs.

Document analysis.

Existing public documents related to the WBLOs were gathered via an internet search of the WBLO classes and faculty volunteered information before during and after the interviews. Potential documents included, but were not limited to, course descriptions, course competencies, academic plans, webpage text, and any available syllabi. The documentation was scarce. Most WBLOs had a syllabus but no concrete assignments outside of journaling or a timesheet. The main documentation examined and discussed were academic plans and graduation check off sheets. In several instances, the elective WBLO was listed and treated as a required course on a graduation checkoff list. When asked how students responded to being forced to take a WBLO the faculty member said that it had not ever been an issue. The faculty member left little room for the student to avoid the WBLO. A second type of documentation that was sought but not readily available were site supervisor evaluations, an evaluation on the student from the work-site supervisor. Faculty did offer student work but analyzing student work and perspective was outside the scope of this study.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

As the interviews were being conducted, a three- stage process offered by Guest, MacQueen, and Namey (2012) began. The authors explain that content analysis is valued for reliability but does not factor in context like thematic analysis. Their process, and the one used for this study, started with extraction of relevant data followed by initial coding and then a thematic analysis. My initial coding following each interview, for example, led to the addition of questions regarding advisory boards. In addition to open coding and emergent themes, I also used codes from an anticipated theme bank based off past WBLO experiences and the literature on work-based learning. Examples of these themes included stakeholder input/values, site preparation, agreements (verbal and written), trainings, course preparation, support systems/services, embedded course practices, course competencies, and course outcomes.

First, a coding of "line-by-line" text of transcripts and documents was completed. From the 17 transcripts, each potentially valuable or pertinent quote was formatted in an excel file, identified by their descriptive code from the participation matrix and given a descriptive code. For example, if a faculty member discussed compensation, the quote would be included in the excel file and assigned a code; SLB would indicate a suburban college, with a low enrollment WBLO in the IT/Business category. Also, all participants were assigned a color for easier recognition during data analysis as shown in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1:

Interview Data Collection Excel Excerpt

Compensation	*What about if you have a student who really wants to do one (WBLO)?* I try not to do that. Because if I do, I'm not going to be compensated for it. *Do you think you would get a per head pay?* That's the other thing. Is that it's different throughout our whole campus. And that is another thing to me, that is insulting.	SLB
Compensation	I'm not compensated at all. I look at it is as part of my job description. You know to do whatever it takes to have the program and the students succeed. So, I agreed to that when they hired me. Whatever it takes, that's what I do to keep the program running and keep making employees for the dealerships or whatever we got to do.	SHM
Advisory Board role	Like our advisory board members, a big thing they talk about all the time is them being prepared for interviewing. You know, they can't look you in the eye and talk to you or they are dressed in jeans, those kind of things. So, we kind of go over that kind of stuff too and that is also in that little workbook.	UHB

The 17 interviews led to over 400 excerpts and 41 initial descriptive themes as shown in Table 3.2. Becoming familiar with the initial descriptive codes was vital. From there, the descriptive codes were arranged and regrouped and discussed with the dissertation team member to ensure clarity to be used in the next phase of thematic analysis. These initial descriptors are grouped tighter to demonstrate findings from the thematic analysis in Appendix V. The transcripts and documents were coded as they were received to prevent a massive amount of data analyses from occurring at one time and to allow for thematic development. This practice also helped to guide future data collection. For example, if the first interview participant provided a site agreement and a list of student expectations as documents then when conducting the second interview these were examples of what to ask for from the second participant. Thomas and Harden (2008) caution that deciding what to extract and code as key concepts can be tedious and challenging. At times the process and the amount of transcription was overwhelming, but this was managed by

actively extracting and coding as soon as transcriptions were returned. All data was reviewed to "make sense of it" and to "organize it into categories or themes that cut across all data sources" (Creswell, 2014, p. 186). Creswell furthers that it is important for a researcher to complete both inductive reasoning to create the emerging list of themes and deductive reasoning to see where more data is necessary. The researcher's human intuition and experiences with WBLOs aided in the interpretation of the interviews and thematic analysis.

The third stage of the three-stage process was to conduct an in-depth thematic data analysis and interpretation from the abundant data from the participant interviews. During this phase I worked to identify patterns amongst the data through a "rigorous process of data familiarisation, data coding, and theme development and revision," (About thematic analysis, n.d.). I also paid attention to the sources of data, the size of the program, its geographic location, etc.

Validity and Reliability

It was important to understand obstacles that could influence the reliability and validity of the study. The team was aware of the potential power imbalances between participants—particularly students—and the researchers and the danger of "going native" by drifting into work roles (Creswell, 2014, p. 94). At the time of this study, I was transitioning from my position as an *Associate Professor* to a new role as Assistant to the President at Brescia University. My colleague, Robert Boone, was also in transition from workforce development administrator for KCTCS to CEO of Kenova (Robert Boone). We both shared a belief in the potential benefits of WBLOs, the critical need for open-

access higher education in Kentucky, and the importance of soft skill development, but we were also both deeply involved in work-pbased learning.

The use of clear data generation and analysis protocols as well as working together to provide feedback and challenging questions helped us capitalize on our knowledge of work-place learning and remain reflexive about our perspective. Neither of us had a vested interest in the individual programs. I worked hard to remain reflexive of how my own experiences might influence my analysis. Ensuring confidentiality, discussing data utilization, and informing faculty their participation was voluntary supported their ability to open up and share more sensitive thoughts, especially as they related to administration involvement and compensation. It was important to remember that with the lack of policy and procedure related to WBLOs at the system level, local levels have considerable latitude when offering the WBLOs. Remaining open-minded and actively listening was critical. As a dissertation team, periodic updates via weekly conference calls helped identify potential conflicts and ethical concerns.

Each interview began with an explanation of the research to the participant. The participant was provided with a consent form to review and sign (Appendix I). Once consent was obtained the interviews were conducted following an interview protocol (Appendix III) and recorded using an audio recording device. Each lead researcher developed their own interview protocols. The questions were meant to be "working guidelines" to help lead the conversation and careful attention was paid to use wording that supported an open and emerging design (Creswell, 2016, p. 140). Influences was defined as any area or practice faculty deemed pertinent to the development and implementation of their WBLOs. Themes were determined when these influences were

recurring among various faculty members. Faculty members were any faculty members who were responsible for the oversight of the WBLO. This was most frequently the program coordinator. The faculty members were most commonly from a technical field as well in an area related to their program. There were a couple of instances where it was a faculty member within the program other than the coordinator. Two staff members and on senior administrator were also interviewed to explore multiple perspectives.

All interviews were labeled with pseudonyms to preserve the privacy of the participants. After the interviews were transcribed all recorded material were stored on a password protected computer and will remain there for five years per American Psychological Association (APA) recommendations (APA, 2010).

The proposal was approved by the dissertation committee, UK IRB, and KCTCS and the plan guided the study and helped to ensure that there was no undue influence on the research. As a researcher, discernment in conversations, in reviewing the literature, and in document analysis was a necessary skill.

It is important to note that this study focused on WBLOs to better understand how instructors and students utilize these opportunities when given the choice. This did exclude many programs in the allied health fields because of the required WBLO component embedded in many of those programs. The WBLO instructors and who participated were largely "hard" technical programs like automotive technology and industrial maintenance. Although this does limit the findings, this research study aims to examine soft skill development which is cross disciplinary, and not technical skills development, lessening the impact of this narrowed focus. However, it will be important to be aware of the focus on soft skills in "hard" technical programs and be cautious of

how the findings may differ in other technical fields. Being able to articulate the outcomes and benefits and convey them to business and industry is important.

WBLO Workforce Potential

Conveying the benefits to business and industry.

When advising a student, faculty had the student's attention and could discuss the benefits of the WBLO. The hard part of engagement was working with business and industry. The difference in the two stakeholders was students had to listen to their faculty member and meet with them to be advised and graduate. The faculty member had the upper hand and possessed what the student needed (expertise, direction and class approvals). Faculty did not wield this power over the student, though. That was just the circumstance and power balance. On the other hand, the dynamic was different between faculty and community partners. The community partners had the power to let students in the site. Community partners were not a captive audience. Faculty members had to clearly define the benefits of the WBLO and convey them to garner interest from their partners in the community. The three categories that emerged that faculty said most appealed to the community partners were being able to "test drive" a student for employment through the internship, developing their current talent in their employee pool and making them eligible to advance, and creating a pipeline of future employees. These three areas were touted as important to business and industry partners. In the political and educational landscape, more emphasis is being placed on incorporating business and industry expertise into programs and curriculum. The 2018 Carl D. Perkins Reauthorization emphasizes the need for innovation and industry input at the secondary

and post-secondary level ("Recommendations for the Reauthorization of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act", 2018).

"Test drive" the student.

An intern benefits from the internship by being able to network within the field and apply technical skills learned in the classroom. The organization benefits because they can determine if the student has the technical skills and the professional skills to be an asset to the company. They can also see if they student is compatible with the culture of the organization. According to Bottner, WBLOs are the "single most-effective and cost-efficient college recruiting tool that employers can use to identify talented future hires" (2010, p. 28). One faculty member demonstrated this by speaking for a site:

> You know yourself if I am looking at a known quality that is entirely acceptable, I am probably not going to take a chance on anyone else. Because I know this person. This person has been here for 15 weeks.

Another site supervisor was forthright about it, "This is a real good cheap way to look at people." As far as orientating new employees, when hiring an intern, much of the training is already completed as one faculty member said:

> One way HR looks at it is this is a basically a two-month trial even for a job position. . . But a lot of students are actually offered jobs at the end. Or encouraged, strongly encouraged to go in and apply for this. They're getting to see how they are. They get to see their skills and they actually are knowledgeable. They've learned their computer system. So, a lot of that first little bit of training is already done.

Many of the interviewed faculty expressed this benefit to potential sites when they first met with them to discuss opportunities.

Develop talent in current employees.

Many organizations have talented employees they would like to see pursue further education. In some cases, a credential is required to advance further and in other cases the education helps the employee professionally but is not a direct requirement to advance. A strong WBLO supporter within a suburban community realized they needed their employees to pursue further education for long-term viability of the organization. The faculty member revealed the site supervisor encouraged his employees to go back to school:

> They're company was doing great, they were doing great, but they did not have, I would say less than 5% of their employees in this facility had some kind of education beyond high school.

Using the WBLO, and education in general, to strengthen current employees was the main goal.

Develop future employee pipeline.

Developing a pipeline of employees was a theme that recurred the most in the manufacturing programs. However, it is applicable to other programs. One site required the student to return the service if they were selected to be a paid intern:

> They owe [redacted] an equivalent number of semesters as an employee and when they are selected in the first selection process, they actually sign a contract, so their job is waiting for them when they get finished.

Teaching students modern technology in the field was also a tool to make them more employable. When a manufacturing site needs an employee, it can be urgent:

> Every minute that these companies are down or lines down or machines down stuff like that. Some of these companies are very straight forward and will tell you, every minute that goes back that we're not producing is anywhere from 10-15 thousand dollars.

Using internships and building partnerships with technical program faculty is one way site supervisors look to develop their pipeline of employees.

Implementing the WBLOs can be a long and arduous process but when done with intentionality, it can be effective for all the key stakeholders. By nurturing relationships and preparing stakeholders, and conveying benefits, the implementation of WBLOs can be less cumbersome and encounter less obstacles.

WBLO Development: Creating the Experience

Development refers to designing the work-based learning opportunity to reflect both student-learning outcomes appropriate to the program of study and work-based experiences appropriate to the site and the student's career interests. WBLOs might be repeated by different students, but each one must be developed to suit the site and the student(s). Faculty members (who ultimately were mostly the program coordinators) are the main source of development of the WBLO. These are faculty members in an associate of an applied science program and largely bring with them as qualifications experience in a related field, not always academic credentials. The experiences are influenced by faculty relationships with their advisory board, community support, faculty motivation, faculty background, and logistics.

In most cases, it was faculty members who were directly responsible for coordinating and overseeing the WBLOs for the students. Most often this was a faculty member who also served as the degree program coordinator but there were a couple of instances where the responsibilities fell to a faculty member within the program other than the program coordinator. In two instances staff were interviewed to gain a more

encompassing understanding as well as one administrator for the same reason. Deciding what "influences" a WBLO in practice was more difficult than expected; however, I identified five key issues that affect WBLO delivery and student experience. These include: faculty background, the relationship of the WBLO with the advisory board, community support, faculty motivation, and the amount of effort required of both the faculty and all the stakeholders involved to develop a WBLO. Faculty background includes the individuals' previous employment and how long they had been in their technical field as well as whether or not they were born and raised in the location in which they were currently teaching and coordinating WBLOs. All of the WBLOs had advisory boards made up of community members, former and current students and employers; however, the structure and role of the board varied, and this had an influence on the WBLOs. Closely related to the advisory board was general community support or the overall sentiment the faculty felt from their community. Faculty motivation played a role in why a faculty member might or might not actively use WBLOs or the extent to which they engaged in the process if they did offer WBLOs. Finally, the last key issue that emerged from the faculty interviews about their programs was the immense amount of effort from the variety of stakeholders involved the faculty member must coordinate to ensure a successful WBLO. Each of these issues is discussed in more detail below.

The influence of faculty background on WBLOs.

An unexpected, but not surprising, finding was the importance of the faculty member's work experience and their familiarity with the local context in which they were placing students. This background was critical to the development and maintenance of work-based learning opportunities. Whether or not a faculty member could speak the

"hometown language" played a role in WBLO relationships with stakeholders. One faculty member from a suburban area with low enrollment in the WBLO said:

> I very much feel as an outsider. I wanted [redacted] when she was hired to take over coordinating the internships. Because she knows everybody in the world in [redacted] and around here. She knows everybody. Plus, she's very charismatic you know. . .I can do it. But, I have to really work at. Let me introduce myself, establish a relationship, and we're not going to be buddy-buddy, but you know. With her, she's friends with everybody and so. Maybe she should take that over because she knows everybody. Because sometimes I do get that I'm an outsider.

When asked if it impacted her ability to find placements, she said:

> Yes. I think so. Yeah. Because I don't know as many people. And I don't know their relationships too. Because it's a small town. Not just family relationships. Who's friends with who? You know? Who knows who? Who's somebody's ex-husband? You know? That kind of stuff going on. I've had some little things where I said something wrong because I didn't know that that person, that person was their ex-spouse.

Familial backgrounds within the community and the history of places and relationships could be readily learned by someone from outside of the area but "learning it" as opposed to "knowing it" did not carry the same weight. Having local knowledge, or not, affected the development of WBLOs, particularly in rural areas, but also in suburban locations. "Hometown knowledge" weighed into whether the faculty member was able to easily access the people who would invite students in for a WBLO. For example, a faculty member who was raised in the same suburban area in which his program was located and had transitioned to teaching from work in local manufacturing agreed that his community partners readily took students based on his established relationships:

> I have definitely [worked to maintain relationships from working in the field]. I mean I worked for a company in [redacted] County for 20 years so. The way that trade works is you end up working with a lot of people that are in the same field and they come and go.

While speaking the hometown language helped gain access to site, speaking the technical language further strengthened the relationships. One faculty member in an urban, manufacturing program with high WBLO enrollment remarked:

> I've been out there working and managing a company at a high level, I'm not intimidated to go to [redacted] and talk to the vice president and say, "Help me. Tell me how to do this" . . .and I've got a strong connection to sports. So, I use lots of sports analogies. When I was growing up as a participant, as an athlete, if I had a coach that had played at a high level, what he said, or she said, meant a great deal more than the volunteer that just happened to be a school employee [on being able to speak the language].

Local knowledge and technical expertise defined in the previous faculty member's sports analogy of "playing at a high level" were useful to the development of WBLOs. Not having one, or both, of these strengths was a detriment.

Being an outsider, or not from the area, was problematic. It was not crippling to WBLO availability, but faculty did have to overcome more obstacles and extend more effort in nurturing relationships. Faculty not from their colleges' service areas perceive obstacles in gaining access to the businesses and organizations that would align with their student's program and interests. One outsider faculty member explained:

> They grew up with these people. I don't have that [the local connection to call and ask for a favor when placing a student].

Even being from the area was not enough if the faculty member had spent extensive time away. A returning faculty member commented on how much had changed after two decades away:

> Grew up in [in the town]. Went to [local college] a little while and then I decided I was, I went into the Navy. No. I just mean I was gone for so long everything changed.

One faculty member compared it to "cold-calling" asking for sites as compared to a faculty member from the area who said they could call any of their friends in the industry and place a student no matter how challenging the student.

In choosing the WBLO programs to study, I included geographic location in anticipation that local knowledge and the presence or lack thereof of employment opportunities would be an issue for WBLO delivery. One of the two main findings related to location of the program: urban, rural or suburban was indeed being able to speak the "hometown language"; however, this was not emphasized in urban areas where opportunities, when sought, were abundant as referenced by a faculty member with high enrollment in their business WBLOs: "We are in a bigger city here too. So, we have a lot of it just right here." Secondly, faculty in urban areas had available or created more automated processes for finding placements than in suburban and rural areas. One urban faculty member mentioned getting on call lists and randomly soliciting advisory board members. A second urban faculty member mentioned a cross-disciplinary website where students could apply for internships. In suburban and rural areas, this was not the case. Location played a minor role in WBLO development but may play a larger role when determining job placement from WBLOs; however, job placement was outside the scope of this study.

Advisory board support

One unanticipated finding from the study was the importance of the WBLO advisory board. From the Carl D. Perkins Reauthorization, various state leaders offered recommendations related to the update. In Maryland (2018) one recommendation directly ties to industry input read:

> Partnerships with business and industry – Strong partnerships between the [Career and Technical Education] CTE community and business and industry are essential to high-quality CTE programs of study. Federal CTE legislation should require local advisory committees comprised of employers and education stakeholders who will actively partner to design and deliver CTE programs of study and provide assistance in the form of curricula, standards, certifications, work-based learning opportunities, teacher/faculty externships, equipment, etc. States should have the flexibility to structure local advisory committees in a way that best meets the needs of their state (in terms of governance, funding, geographic and other influencing factors) ("Recommendations for the Reauthorization of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act").

One of the most applicable changes to the reauthorization was the emphasis placed on the involvement of business and industry partners through advisory boards.

Faculty who work closely with their program advisory board described being more likely to support WBLOs. After the first two interviews led to a lengthy discussion involving the level of participation between the faculty and the advisory board, the statement, "Tell me about your advisory board," was added to the interview guide for the remainder of the study when interviewing participants.

The composition of the advisory board.

The role of the advisory board varies by institution and by discipline. By design, the advisory board should play an active role in a program, ensuring it remains current. Depending on the structure and relationship of the program with its advisory board, this does not always hold true. One faculty member referenced having an advisory board as "a box to check". Furthermore, by placing former students on the advisory board, the coordinator knew they would be less likely to upset the status quo. Keeping members on the advisory board that were disengaged, too busy, or not likely to make changes was another strategy used by some faculty members to reduce the advisory board's influence. However, this type of "unplugged" advisory member was what another faculty member

considered a disservice to the program. A large part of intentionally choosing certain advisory board members appeared to be related to how comfortable the faculty member was with change. If the faculty member was ready and willing to edit curriculum and adapt lesson plans, they were more likely to seek active, participatory advisory members. The composition of the advisory board led to the level of its engagement, which then led to the members' interest level and participation in the WBLO process. The three types of members identified by the interview participants were: active members, "maintain-the-status-quo" members, and student/former student members. An additional factor that lead to the engagement level of the advisory board, was the faculty member's level of engagement. If the faculty member utilized WBLOs and was engaged, they recruited engaged advisory board members. These were the same faculty members who also expressed concern when they inherited advisory board members who were not engaged or were comfortable with the status quo. Faculty members who did not utilize WBLOs did not seem to express as much concern related to inactive advisory board members and more commonly had the same board for an extended period. Recruiting new members did was not seen as a need.

Active members reviewed and assisted in updating the program and gave relevant industry feedback that could then be translated into the program outcomes. One faculty member in an urban manufacturing program with high enrollment discussed his active members:

> We had a group of high level administrators and industry saying this is what we need. So that became, first of all, very valuable for the faculty and the instruction process, but all validated to the administration, "Here is a body that's actually employing these people". They're not just going to lunch with them on their lunch

> breaks because [they were] both employed at the same place. These are the guys that are hiring them.

He referenced other faculty members going to lunch with their colleagues in the industry and calling this kind of informal gathering an advisory board meeting. He said it in a way that implied that was not a good practice. Advisory members assuming an involved role was often welcomed by faculty members, especially by the following two rural area business faculty:

> I send an email out to our advisory board and say "hey, this date we are doing mock interviews. We would really like to have you here." And they do and they are so good. Our advisory board is wonderful. They'll come out and help.

And another:

> Most of them are very, very committed to the program and support our program. An example I can give you, our department, our program department, planned a career preparation workshop for our students at a restaurant in town. And we asked for presenters, just individuals that would speak about employers' expectations, the interview process, just reiterate what we're telling them in class. And every guest speaker was an advisory committee member. When we talked about this at our meeting at the beginning of the semester they volunteered before we even asked.

When advisory board members spoke about current practices and program needs, their opinion often resonated more with both administration and with students than faculty members as one urban manufacturing faculty with high enrollment noted:

> If I've got someone sitting there that's talking about what they're looking for in the next phase of graduates and what the job prospects are going to be. . . And, he's the vice president of a private [redacted] firm that's national and going internationally. Now the student has a better reference point. Not to knock high school counselors.

One former administrator (and now faculty member in an urban high enrollment, manufacturing program) understood the value of the advisory board:

> So, one of the things that I advocate, or would advocate, and did when I was in that administrative role, is if there's a way to take the stress off of the coordinators

> and the faculty members with regard to where you meet, how often you meet, and how are you going to put this board together? And put more of the emphasis on how strong can you make the board? Let's get the people out there who can really tell you how to run your program. So, our advisory board has been instrumental with rewriting curriculum.

Active advisory members have value and input that can help a program stay current and continue to graduate the students their labor market needs.

There are faculty members who describe their advisory board as little more than a box to check. Whether or not this was strategic on the faculty's part, or coincidental, varied. These are the "maintain-the-status-quo members." The findings were divided as to whether faculty found the advisory board beneficial:

> Most people have some valuable input. It's just how you get them there. How do you convince them that their time at that advisory meeting is as valuable as their time closing the next deal, or finishing up the bid that's about to go out this afternoon?

For two faculty members in an urban area with varying enrollments, the practice had little impact:

> The problem has been that for the college, it's more of a rubber stamp. The advisory committee asks questions, makes recommendations, and receives no feedback. I don't care; I'll tell you whatever you want to know. June is it for me, I'm out of here. I know we've all got, we've got more than enough going on. But it never was a priority. I think also SACS has put some emphasis on the importance of it that wasn't there before through the accreditation process.

The second said:

> It becomes almost an exercise rather than a beneficial relationship. I know this is recorded so I'll try to keep this as diplomatic as possible. Who we had on our advisory board [who this faculty member inherited] were all former graduates. Now, some of them were in industry. Some of them were in management roles in industry. But, the advisory board was more of a, "who's it easy to talk to?" "who can I get in here at a moment's notice?" "who can I change the date with?" "who can I get this set up with where I'm not going to be challenged?" And life goes on as it always has. This is what we've always done, this is what we're going to keep doing, yada yada yada.

There were faculty members who expressed frustration with members who remained inactive and disengaged. One faculty member said her advisory board did little more than attend the two meetings a year. Others accepted the inactivity, or even welcomed it, because it simplified their job. Inactivity was not always tied to an advisory member's level of engagement. Often, logistics interfered with the activity level of a board member:

> Really the in-person meetings, we don't get a lot of people that come to them because it is just hard to do meetings. But, we do talk to them quite often.

Additionally:

> Sometimes it's hit or miss. I think the fall is a lot harder than in the spring for any business. I think it's just, really tying up the business for the year.

Regardless of the reason for the lack of engagement, there are advisory boards that play a minimal role in maintaining the relevancy of a program.

The last type of advisory board member to emerge was the student/former student as a contributing member of the board. Student and former students on the advisory board turned out to be more layered and nuanced. The practice of using a current student is a requirement by KCTCS. Each program advisory board must include a current student according to KCTCS policy. This student was always a leader in the program because, as one faculty member said when referencing their student, "Oh yes. Yeah. I'm going to make sure we shine. Ain't no sense in shooting yourself in the foot." The responses related to current students were all similar.

When the conversation turned to former students, discussion was mixed. Faculty either extended an invitation to students who would maintain the status quo and not "rock the boat" or students who were not intimidated in front of professionals to give their input. The type of student asked to participate aligned with the other advisory board

members faculty pursued. For instance, if a faculty member invited someone in industry who was busy and disengaged, then the type of student invited would not be a student to offer up drastic changes to the program. All advisory boards' composition contained current and former students.

The role of the advisory board.

The role of the advisory board as described by the interview participants was diverse. The three thematic roles to emerge were: to maintain program relevancy, to develop soft skill and employability, and to encourage WBLOs in general such as helping with recruitment. The type of advisory board role did not seem to be related to the type of labor market represented. The most involved boards varied across programs, enrollment, and location.

The most emergent and widely accepted role of the advisory board is to maintain program relevancy. When the relationship between the faculty member and the advisory board is reciprocal, the students benefit. One urban, healthcare faculty member with high enrollment expressed of her advisory board members, "I want to make sure I'm giving them students that have the skills that they're specifically wanting." When faculty members utilize their advisory board's expertise they ensure the practices of their program are relevant to the field. One urban, business faculty member with high enrollment offered insight on conversations with his advisory board:

> We just talk to them about what is going on. What's the trends? Is there anything new that we need to be offering? Is there something we need to be focusing on? Something you need more from us? Those kinds of things.

Another suburban, manufacturing faculty with high enrollment supported the sentiment:

> Yeah, they give us suggestions. And we take those suggestions in. And they are actually the ones that helps keep these programs running. Like the needs that the shop needs they'll discuss; like, "ya'll need to update your [redacted]". Or "you need a better [redacted]". And they'll tell us the weak points of our students that they see and the strong points of our students.

In addition to seeking input related to general program happenings, faculty members with active boards solicited advice related to specific curriculum decisions as well. One rural business faculty with low enrollment demonstrated this:

> I think our system curriculum, I think I can say that we all value that [advisory board input]. Because whenever we say, "Hey, I took this to my board and my board said…" it's like we all stop to listen.

Another instance of valued advisory board expertise was offered:

> We have to have them. But we have a very active board. They are, a few years ago whenever we had to decrease our number of credit hours for our program, before I went to the system curriculum committee, I met with my advisory board.

The advisory board can be one of the most effective resources to help ensure students graduate with the necessary technical skills. In the current educational discourse, soft skills are emphasized more so than technical skills. Employers can teach the technical skills, granted the student often still needs the credential to obtain the opportunity, but soft skills are prioritized.

Community Support

Community support includes support received by the college or the WBLO students beyond the advisory board. The two overlap, but not all supportive persons or entities are linked to an advisory board. Faculty in rural and suburban areas were more likely to claim they felt supported by their community.

> I think [the] area understands the importance of the college. Because they know we are a community and technical college. We're here for them. I think they understand that relationship.

Along those same lines, because rural and suburban areas reported a greater sense of community support, faculty were more keenly aware of placing students who may create challenges. One rural, business faculty member with high enrollment cautioned:

> Because it is a small community. And if I place a student that's a little unprepared in an office, word will get around really fast that…and it's not just for our program. So that reflects on every program here. I'm real cautious about making sure that the students are prepared. I talk to them about making sure they dress appropriately, making sure that when they pull in the parking lot they look professional. When they open the car door that cans don't fall out.

Faculty in rural and suburban areas routinely spoke of the ease with which they could place students using their small-town connections or businesses seeking their students because of word-of-mouth reports. Two high enrollment faculty emphasized this:

> And, offices just by word of mouth will call and say, "I've heard the other offices had an intern, had a student. We'd be interested when you have one available." So, I just keep a running list.

And:

> Most of the community is very supportive of the program. . . it goes hand in hand. I can just pick up the phone and call and say, "I've got a young man, we need to get him in there, get him some work". And they say, "okay, send him over".

Involvement from the community and the advisory board can translate to an effective program that is embraced by the employers within the community. Utilizing the input from the advisory board and community signals to them that their opinion and expertise are valued. This, in turn, creates a positive relationship and cultivates an environment to grow WBLOs.

Faculty Support

As the study progressed, it became clear that regardless of the level of external involvement from community or advisory boards, internal faculty motivation was integral

to faculty who were more likely to create the opportunities. The faculty who were motivated to use WBLOs were further categorized into two groups: those who were internally and those who were externally motivated. Those who were internally motivated reported being motivated by their desire to see their students succeed. Those who were externally motivated reported being motivated by compensation or a course reduction (see *Compensation* under *Faculty do not feel supported).*

Faculty who are currently using WBLOs expressed many internal motivations to create WBLOs for their students. By "using" a WBLO, faculty are actively coordinating these opportunities between the community partners and the student. These motivations can all be grouped under the umbrella of the desire to see their students grow and succeed. They wanted to see their student reap the benefits that are associated with an effective WBLO. To ensure the student would benefit from the WBLO, the faculty member helped to prepare them by having them set measurable goals. Two examples were strengthening public speaking skills by completing three presentations and develop time management skills by using an electronic calendar or planner. The measurable goals were easy to identify. Other goals were less clearly defined but could be placed in the following categories of student development: increased confidence, ability to develop a network, career clarity, and ability to identify job placement opportunities. One faculty member had an overall goal he shared:

> We are going to get students from all walks of life, we are going to get students with different intellectual abilities and my goal is not pass and fail, my goal is "can I get you to the point where you're at the top of your game, whatever that is, and you can provide for yourself and your family" That's my philosophy.

Internal motivation for providing WBLOs could lead to increased vigilance for student learning outcomes, especially with regard for student engagement. For example, one faculty member who was internally motivated by student success readily cautioned sites supervisors to not take advantage of the interns. “They can’t just have someone to answer the phone, that’s not really helping them, get them prepared. . . Yeah, well, that’s not internship. That’s servitude.” Another faculty member with high enrollment said of his site supervisors, “If you’re not engaged with the students, then I don’t want to hear about it.” He meant he would not use them as a site for his students if they were disengaged. The faculty who were motivated by student success noticed that WBLOs increased students’ confidence and career clarity, helped them develop a network and increased job placements.

Increase confidence.

Faculty were able to articulate their goals for the students very clearly. One of the most voiced benefits for the student, regardless of enrollment, location, or labor market, was the goal to increase students’ confidence as a result of the WBLO. One faculty member expressed his main goal:

> To get employed. And to help them gain confidence. And to be independent. In this area, as you know, there’s a lot of dependency and co-dependency with our students. A lot of dysfunctional family issues. And once they break that cycle, just gaining independence. Getting away from mom or grandmother.

Another furthered:

> It helps their self-esteem. It helps them to just believe in their self a little more. And to feel that they have received the adequate training to be employed. A lot of times when they come in they’re just unsure. They’re unsure of everything. Unsure of life. It’s really, it helps their self-esteem. More confident.

The theme continued through additional faculty participants:

> Students are timid and nervous and it's an intense program, hand holding with financial aid, questions about company, but after first semester and [they get] fairly acclimated and can navigate it pretty good.

Along with the confidence, faculty noticed that maturity went hand-in-hand with the new-found confidence:

> The younger students grow a great deal because they're coming out of a high school setting with very little true understanding of what's required in the industry… they basically play on the computer, have pizza parties, enjoy their life.

And while the faculty readily noticed the changes, they acknowledged the students were not always as perceptive:

> Now, as far as, the depth of those benefits, they may not be fully aware of what those are until maybe further down the line as far as what they are benefiting from it. I think that they are aware that they are building skills that they will use in their career.

With the student's increase in self-confidence came the ability to develop relationships in the field. Students were able to talk to people in the field without being intimidated. As the students became surer of themselves, they were also more certain of their abilities and demonstrated this by actively participating in the WBLO. Faculty who perceived WBLOs as beneficial to students and improving their confidence were more likely to actively seek opportunities to develop and implement more WBLOs.

Increase career clarity.

Students can sharpen their understanding of how their career can actually look. Prior to an internship, one of my students told me she wanted to be a medical coder. After her internship she told me she wanted to be an outpatient medical coder in an orthopedic doctor's office. She was able to rule out inpatient coding, a hospital environment and narrowed down her field of interest. These are realizations that she would not likely have

experienced in a classroom setting. With the additional knowledge, she could more strategically pursue her career goals. The students are able to confirm their career aspirations, realize they need to alter their path, and even just get clarification on details related to their field through WBLOs.

The most common outcome expressed was to help students confirm for themselves that they were on the right path. One faculty said students confirm this "exponentially faster" in the work environment than in the classroom. One high enrollment faculty member in manufacturing explained what he wanted to hear from his students:

> Made them feel this is the job I wanted. And I'm on the right path. This is what I want to do. What else do I need to do to make myself hirable? Things like that. They really feel that way. It shows them a little bit about that. It shows them inside of it.

The WBLO also forces a student to examine their career aspirations more closely:

> I am sure, I'm positive there's a number of them that's somewhat disappointed. Mostly, that's because the job wasn't what they thought it was. And therefore…to me that's education. You learned. Now you make your life according to that. You didn't have to go get a job to find out, I hate this job, now you can move on.

This view was brought up repeatedly:

> Well, I think that it's important for the students to get out there a quick as possible. Also, to see what the industry has to offer. Or maybe doesn't have to offer. We sometimes see grand illusions.

Faculty also acknowledged that students learned minor details that they didn't learn in the classroom:

> They know how to type the letters or reports or do a PowerPoint, but it is those little things, I wore jeans to work and I wasn't supposed to, that they don't know.

Another faculty member offered an additional example:

> They learned that; hey, I'm going to get in trouble if I don't show up for work until I'm 2 hours late or if I can't be professional on the phone or if I can't do this or that.

Students learn a range of life and soft skills in the WBLO. Faculty who utilize the WBLO embrace this tool to enable students to learn to think more critically and improve their employability.

Ability to develop a network.

Faculty commented that through an increase in self -confidence and a greater sense of their career, students gradually became more comfortable talking to the people in their field. Students often were intimidated or hesitant when entering their WBLO site for the first time. As the semester progressed, they were more at ease talking to their supervisors and colleagues and began the process of developing a network in their field. One business faculty in a suburban area noticed the growth:

> And I tell people on the advisory board what does it for me is when you can watch that little light bulb that just goes "I get it. I understand". So, then they start networking with people and start lining up for getting involved and looking for that job before they actually graduate. That's what I push, I say, "if you're waiting until you graduate you're waiting to late". So, some of them see the benefits.

Faculty were intentional in advising the students to be aware of the impression they gave the site supervisors and counseled them to take advantage of the opportunity to impress the employers:

> Whatever you write on this will be your record. If you do very well on that you can trust me there will be someone who pays attention to it. If you squander that you take the consequences.

For a student, learning to express opinions to experienced professionals demonstrates enormous growth:

> The best thing they get is dealing with people. I think it just encourages them to talking to people and things like that. And after a while they're comfortable with it.

Developing students' soft skills is a priority for the faculty. However, the end goal is for students to be able to take their technical and soft skills and use them to find employment and become a contributing member of society.

Job Placement.

As much emphasis as was placed on improving soft skills, equal or greater emphasis was placed on finding employment for students. Technical program faculty were not hesitant to state employment as their ultimate goal. Goals for students were often expressed in abstract ways. Faculty want their students to think critically and work well in a team. However, many faculty were very frank about their main goal being to get their students jobs. WBLOs were the most discussed tool to achieve this. A business faculty member with high enrollment in a rural are explained why they treat their WBLO as a requirement:

> And the reason we require it is because it is, it's the factor that actually gets our students jobs. It's the one that actually puts them out there and actually gets them employed. We have a lot of students who during internship[s] the supervisors just think they're a great employee. They use it as a trial basis for them. And they will create positions for them. We've had a lot of students to be hired during the internship.

Students receiving job offers before they complete their credential was one problem a faculty member in a manufacturing program with high enrollment had:

> More often than not, and this can be looked at as a positive or a negative, once we send someone that we recommended as work ready into the work force, they end up becoming full-time employees for that company. They often become full-time employees for that company prior to finishing their credentials.

Counseling the student to perform to the best of their ability at the internship site was a common approach faculty took to support their students in finding job placement:

> If you're going in for an internship, yeah if you're not showing up for work for your internship, well they're probably not going to hire you to be a full- time employee because hey, you don't show up for work. So, if you're there and you're getting outside of your comfort zone. You're out there hitting the ground running, you're doing it of course they're going to offer you a job.

When asked if their students were readily hired, manufacturing faculty in all three demographics were the most emphatic:

> Yes, they do. A lot of them get more advanced jobs especially like in a [redacted]. They will get more advanced jobs than they had before.

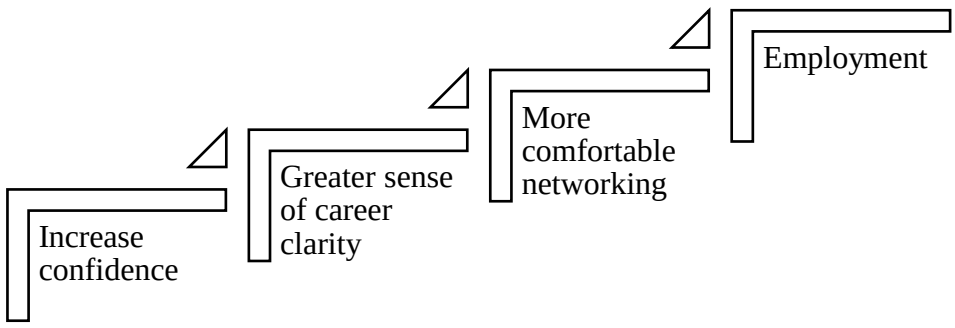
Manufacturing faculty readily promoted the open positions throughout Kentucky to their students.

> Right now, they get hired pretty easily. Because there's this considerable amount of work out there.

Each of these benefits builds on the previous one as illustrated in Figure 3.2 and ultimately supports student success and employment.

Figure 3.2

Stackable Student Benefits of WBLOs



Acknowledging the importance and usefulness of WBLOS is an important part of growing these opportunities. Faculty must "buy-in" to the notion that their students benefit from these experiences. Without this buy-in, students are the ones who miss opportunities.

Not all faculty were motivated to create or expand WBLOs. There were faculty with low enrollment who questioned why they would want to add more work to their current load. The sentiment was that if it was not being pushed by anyone in senior administration, there was no reason for them to try to increase their WBLO utilization. There were even a couple of faculty with high enrollment programs who voiced a similar sentiment but did not feel strongly enough to avoid or reduce offering the opportunities to the students in their program. Also, faculty who clearly did not want to develop WBLOs expressed that the demands on their time were increasing and this was not a priority to them. One staff member guessed at the motives of unmotivated faculty:

> It's a 50/50 toss up if you want to know the truth [on senior versus new faculty WBLO utilization] . . . And I think that we have, in every department we have those that will never do one, refuse to. And those that will do it every time they have a chance to. And it's just individualized.

Another influence that contributed to the lack of desire among some faculty were the caliber of students they perceived to be in their program. Faculty expressed hesitation at "burning bridges" with sites and advisory board members by placing students with them who may not perform and represent the program well. To avoid this situation, they avoided WBLOs altogether. Little push from senior administration, lack of time, no compensation, and challenging students were reasons faculty did not offer WBLOs.

WBLO Administration

The faculty described two key areas of practice necessary to implementing a successful WBLO. The first was preparing all the stakeholders and the second was utilizing high impact educational practices that focused on clear learning objectives. These strategies varied by institution and discipline but when a faculty member used intentionality to approach preparation and practices, the WBLO seemed to run smoother. A third important strategy, in support of the first two, was to convey these policies clearly to the stakeholders, so they could understand how the WBLOs benefited them and remain engaged.

Logistics play an integral role in WBLOs utilization.

Even when faculty are compensated and have leadership support, developing a successful WBLO is still an arduous process. The logistics necessary to coordinate the various stakeholders can stall the development process. Logistical obstacles fell into the following categories: finding and developing WBLO placements, curricular constraints, faculty time and interest, student's time and interest, and liability.

WBLO site availability and coordination.

Throughout the interview process, faculty never said that sites were not supportive of the idea of WBLOs. There were, however, obstacles and hesitancies when it came to actually allowing a student into the site. It was at this point that people within the organizations expressed their concerns. One health care faculty explained, "A lot of offices are so slammed that it's like, 'we don't have the time to teach.'" Another obstacle the same faculty member went on to relay was short windows to teach students, "A lot of sites don't want to have them just for two days. They want to have that continued

experience and that is the one thing that I have been getting from a lot of my clinical sites." The reasons sites would not accept students was wide-ranging. Examples included: the site just hired new employees and could not focus on a training a student as well, there was not enough physical space for the student, the office was too busy, there were only clerical or menial task they could offer, and in fall semester, many organizations expressed it was their busy time of year. The most common obstacle for faculty was they did not have enough steady, reliable sites to place students. Placements often fall though one faculty member described:

> I have before confirmed with somebody January/February or in December. Come February, March, two weeks before they start, and they say no or something's happened and they can't take them.

Faculty also voiced frustration when it came to accessing those people at an organization who could make the decision.

> And they both say, "wow, it's great what ya'll are doing. We see the value it what ya'll are doing." But, it's not up to just those two individuals. A lot like what we do here. You and I can make a decision, but it doesn't matter if the bosses on up the ladder don't approve it. Even though we think it's best, they may think it's best for them, they're not necessarily in the place where they bring them on board.

Finding sites willing to allow students to enter and developing relationships with the decision-makers at those sites is important and long process.

Curricular constraints

With the push from Council on Postsecondary Education to move the needle to make credit hours for associate degrees closer to sixty hours, many faculty discussed having to pick and choose program classes to align with the initiative. Often, WBLOs were not included because in-class lectures could not be forfeited. "Basically, what put it on the chopping block was its difficult to do in our field," one faculty member

rationalized keeping traditional program classes as a requirement as opposed to the WBLO. As one elective in a program, a faculty member took the blame for not promoting it. He said:

> They have to 12 [redacted] electives. So that's where the internship and co-op will fit in. But a lot of students want the coursework instead of. I think a lot of it is maybe, and we probably don't, it's probably our fault, is we don't promote the internships and the co-ops enough because of lack of time. We get no release time. I don't want to sound like I'm complaining. I'm very blessed for my job and I love what I do.

It is hard to promote a WBLO elective when a faculty member feels there is still so much to teach in the classroom. Choosing between a WBLO and in-class learning is a dilemma. A solution for one program was coordinator was to reduce the WBLO from three to one credit hour, "Hopefully by taking it down to one hour to where it's only 40 hours, I'm hoping I'll get a little bit more enthusiasm on that." This was an innovative solution that was supported by their curriculum committee and their administration. The WBLO can be time consuming so when it was no longer required, one faculty member did not recommend it to students:

> Well, when I first started the internship was a required course. It was dropped several years ago when programs were merged, and we had to cut down on hours. And so, we had to start dropping classes and one of them was required internship. It used to be required. So, it was the program coordinator's responsibility to take care of that. So, every semester I'd have like 10-15-20 students in internships. It was very difficult to do. Once that happened, and it wasn't a required course, then my numbers went down significantly.

Recognizing that is cumbersome and allowing that level of work to be incorporated into the responsibilities of a faculty member and not "in addition to" is an important aspect for growing WBLOs.

Another curricular issue for offering WBLOs is how often the faculty were able to offer the class. If they offered it every semester, in addition to their regular load, it became burdensome. Some faculty switched to only offering it once an academic year if they were not allowed to count it as one of their courses in their regular course load, as demonstrated:

> We do [offer it every semester] up until starting in the fall. Starting in the fall 2018, it will only be offered in the spring because usually I do it pay per student because it is very rare that we get ten to fill it.

One faculty member could count the WBLO class as part of their course load in both the fall and spring. Because the class regularly had low enrollment, this faculty member said using the WBLO course seemed to create a more hassle-free schedule and the students could enroll in it during whichever semester best fit their schedule. They also offered that the class had a lower course capacity as opposed to their traditional classes so enrolling ten students was not the expectation. There were no consistent practices to WBLO delivery frequency.

Marketing and recruiting for WBLOs.

Faculty who realized the benefit of WBLOs for their students actively promoted the benefits. They talked about it early in the student's career. There were several ways faculty promoted WBLOs to their students. Not only do faculty have to promote WBLOs to the students, they also must garner interest and involvement from community partners. Faculty discussed different tools to help them achieve these goals. Practices used were:

word of mouth and using a success story, using multiple communication avenues, seeking internal support, and there were those who did not promote it.

The two most frequently used promotion techniques used to highlight WBLOs were word of mouth and using a success story. Faculty relied heavily on word of mouth to generate interest from potential stakeholders. This practice included students talking about WBLOs to other students and business partners talking to other business partners, both with the intent of developing WBLOs:

> The word of mouth is probably the best advertisement. From one employer talking to another employer.

A second practice mentioned more than once was using a success story to inspire other participants. One suburban, business faculty with low enrollment stated:

> The main thing is getting the students to want to do it. You have it sell it to the students. They have to see a value. I tell people, "just give me a success story and I'll just advertise the crap out of that, so they'll know". Then they'll see it. And they'll go, "you know, I can do that".

One faculty member had a very active advisory board member who welcomed interns. The faculty member began introducing the advisory board member to other community partners, so they could hear the benefits of being involved firsthand. Similarly, one faculty member brought back former students who were successful in the industry to tell their story. The story consisted of the benefit of experiential learning while in school. One faculty member with high enrollment guessed:

> I guess I have to at first [bring up WBLOS to the student], but it repeats itself, they see the ones that are doing it and you hear them, "when can I do that?"

The student is more likely to relate to someone who has been through the same academic experience they are currently navigating.

Faculty members acknowledged they had to be alert and savvy when it came to reaching potential WBLO students. Faculty from the urban area used far-reaching techniques. They utilized a website for students to post resumes and manage the opportunities. One interesting technique a faculty member used was to extend an email invitation to any student in the program with a 2.5 GPA or higher. This framed the experience as an honor and something for which the student should strive. Other faculty members were less official and casually approached students. "You catch them in class. And you get around them," and take that opportunity to tell them about a WBLO. A rural staff member involved with coordinating WBLOs used other resources to reach potential students:

> So, really and truly I am blessed to have a couple of really good student workers that I can depend on. And, they promote everything that we do. They even set up a website, a Facebook website, that's a closed website about what we do.

This same staff member, along with two other faculty members, mentioned partnering with their workforce development department to determine prospective organizations for students to complete internships. One participant said of a workforce staff member:

> [Redacted] was our face in business and industry because with classes and advising it was hard for us to do it all.

Being able to coordinate with students, community partners, workforce departments, and any other stakeholders proved to be time consuming and tedious. This type of coordination is not readily noticeable, so faculty expressed that it often goes unnoticed by those in supervisor roles. This as part of the invisible workload that is part of the preparation process.

Proactive advising for WBLOs.

Finally, advising was sometimes used as a marketing strategy for building WBLO enrollments. Advising is routinely included in the regular workload for the majority of faculty. Included in advising is orientation for the student and the site supervisor. Guidance, expectation management, and orientation are important parts of a WBLO (Bottner, 2010; Fifolt and Searby, 2010). So, while this responsibility does not require a substantive amount of additional effort, it is an integral part in generating WBLO interest. The faculty outlined different ways they approached advising. Some described treating the experience as a requirement even though it is not, assuming that once they got students into placement they would benefit so much all involved would agree it was worth it. Alternatively, some discuss pursuing a WBLO as an elective option with their students, selling them on the benefits but leaving it up to the student to choose. Lastly, they link the WBLO directly to job placement. There were also faculty who did not discuss WBLOs at all with their students even if it was an elective for their program.

Two of the high enrollment faculty treated the WBLO as a program requirement. In both situations, the faculty member brought up the internship in their initial meeting with the student. Often, this was in the student's first or second semester which gave them approximately a year to prepare and make arrangements to complete the WBLO:

> The internship is always their last semester, which would be their fourth semester. . . We start talking to them actually when they first come in, we start talking to them about you know, thinking about where they want to work.

One faculty member questioned whether her own practice was deceitful but rationalized it with knowing that the student was the main beneficiary. This faculty member was in a

rural area and had one of highest enrollments in her elective business WBLO class. She said:

> We have it listed like it is a requirement [on their graduation check sheet] but, it's not really. Not according to the catalog. I don't know if that is necessarily being sneaky or what, but it is such a good class and something we want them to take. . . You and I both know that it is not a required class, but…We just list it on our check list like this is a class that you are going to have to take and they know it from the beginning. Some of them are really smart. They are like, "I looked in the catalog and it didn't say that." Usually we don't have any issues with them.

Another faculty member in a rural area made it a campus policy to require the elective for the students in the program. When pressed to see if this policy was something that needed to be approved, the faculty member stressed that it had been through the proper campus channels.

In contrast, another high enrollment manufacturing faculty member said he did not try to persuade students to take the WBLO. He merely mentioned it to the students. He uncovered that almost all his new students were not aware that it was an opportunity. By exposing the student to the option, he believed that was enough to spark their interest. When pressed to see how he talked about it with his students because they were enrolling in the class, he articulated:

> So, a lot of what I do in advising. And so, I give them those options. A lot of them don't realize that that's an option for them. We're going to get you out in the work force doing co-op. And get you some experience. So, if you don't like it, you're going to have a cheaper, a more efficient way of discovering it [than going to a 4-year university].

Students rely heavily on the expertise of their advisers when it comes to technical electives. By mentioning the class, his words carried weight and left an impression on the

students. Simply exposing students to a WBLO as an option could increase student experiences.

Another common approach to promote the WBLO, in particularly in the manufacturing programs, was linking the WBLO to job placement. One staff member took special care to spark the student's interest when it came to WBLOs:

> And trying to get students through with a job at the end of it. And make sure that they have everything that they need. Now, it's kind of like the old saying, "you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink". And a very wise person once said, "but you've got to make him thirsty".

Many faculty discussed job opportunities blossoming for their students through their WBLO experience. They know that it happens but rarely did faculty discuss using it as a promotion technique.

However, there were also faculty who readily and openly admitted to not promoting the WBLO also did not see the need to expose students to the opportunity. In most instances, omitting the WBLO from advising discussion was not an intentional act. It was not a priority to some faculty, so it was not discussed with students in advising sessions. One faculty member in a suburban area with low enrollment was not hesitant to reveal that the WBLO option was nowhere visible (outside of the academic catalog) to their students. This was demonstrated in an exchange:

> [Is the class, the title of it visible to the students anywhere?] No. [Is it on the syllabus?] Not on the syllabus. [Is it on the academic plan?] No. [So they don't know about it] Exactly.

The faculty member was unconcerned about exposing students to the opportunity. They felt strongly that program students were well-rounded and graduated with all the skills they needed to be successful in the field.

As is the case with many initiatives, there are those who, for a variety of reasons, chose not to participate. All faculty members who were not actively utilizing WBLOs were transparent about their decision. The majority of faculty in the low enrollment categories did not see it as a campus initiative and felt they already had many demands on their time. They questioned why they would add more to their workload when it was not a priority outside of current political discourse. One faculty referred to is as just another "headache" and, at the other end of the spectrum, a faculty member said he had no need to promote it because "We beat them away from the door". These were the two extreme ends of the spectrum. Most of the faculty fell somewhere in between as one indicated:

> Two or three students per semester that was pretty normal. And the reason being that, and maybe this is my perception, maybe I was never told this, or maybe it wasn't communicated to me, my perception was, I'm here to offer this support for these students who are seeking it. I didn't really see it as my role to go out and recruit students to take [redacted].

Another faculty paralleled this mindset:

> Not really [do I promote it]. It's there. It's an internship. It's one of our elective classes. You have to take 3 elective classes. 5 core then 3 elective.

Another faculty in a suburban area with low enrollment openly admitted he was not actively involved with business and industry because he was nearing retirement:

> I'm completely out of touch with any business situations [to find placements]. I was pretty in with things 15 whatever years ago. But, now I'm not at all. I'm just doing other things. Just doing other things. I am nearing the end of my, the sun is setting on me. And I'm just not…

On commonality among the faculty who did not promote WBLOs was that none of them expressed interest in starting to utilize them. Unless it was asked of them or became a campus initiative, they were not interested in creating more for themselves to do, nor were they hesitant to admit it. They did acknowledge that they were beneficial to the student but the pros to the students did not outweigh the cons of coordination.

Flexibility towards WBLOs.

Remaining flexible to both student and industry needs is one of, if not the most, important outlooks for developing WBLOs. There is a certain level of latitude, while maintaining academic rigor, that is required when developing new WBLOs. Faculty must be receptive to student circumstances. Faculty also must navigate the relationship with their community partners at the same time. Remaining flexible often creates more work for faculty because they are constantly having to re-invent the wheel and work with new partners and develop new relationships and practices.

Faculty must be receptive to students' circumstances. Many students want to experience a WBLO but have children and associated activities, full-time jobs, and are caregivers for parents and others. Using innovation to provide these students with a chance to learn in a professional setting takes patience and adaptability. One high enrollment, business faculty in an urban area discussed flexibility in student scheduling:

> They have to do 120 hours for a whole semester. They can do that in a week. They can do it in 4 months; however they want to do it. A lot of them will just go ahead and get it done and get it over. We sometimes work with students, for example, we had a student that worked for the school system so we don't offer it during the summer, but we let her do it over the summer and then gave her credit for it in the fall.

A high enrollment, manufacturing faculty member in an urban area explained his flexible course substitution process:

> We have been given, here, a little bit of open leeway of substituting courses. From leadership; that allows us to use the [redacted] across the board instead of having 2 co-op classes. So, if you go back and look at records for the last 2 to 3 years, you won't find COE in either [redacted] or [redacted]. You will find a combination of [different classes].

The same faculty member went on about how soon a student could pursue a WBLO. Most faculty wait until the student's last semester or their penultimate semester:

> I don't necessarily look for a student to complete 3 semesters of training before they can take a cooperative opportunity. So, it is really based more on the skill level of the student. . . Well, if I have got a freshman student in their first semester that really has a better skill set than a junior student in their third semester who is still struggling to be able to so real-life work, then we will recommend [them].

Several faculty members helped students coordinate WBLOs in their current employment. One faculty member demonstrated their willingness to work with a student:

> What I would typically tell a student [that is not working in a field related to their degree] is "we would need to work with your supervisor in order to expand what you're currently doing there to get that type of," if they're going for supervision, management type things then let's focus on that. If they're doing sales then let's focus on that. See if we cannot work with your employer to get that.

Being receptive and adaptable to the demands on a student's time outside of their academic career proves to be an important part of igniting a student's interest in a WBLO.

Beyond student circumstances, faculty must be receptive to business and industry needs. Business and industry partners are not going to as readily provide opportunities for students if they do not play a role in development. When the WBLO is too prescribed, with little room for innovation, community partners feel excluded from the process. Working with them to determine what the WBLO will look establishes a more engaged partner. Being adaptable to industry needs is vital. One faculty member with high enrollment in manufacturing discussed a site where his students were expected to be in school, but their site supervisor needed them at the site:

> A friend of mine, where I have I think 5 students [who were completing their WBLOs] called, and he said, "I need to ask a favor." . . . He was laughing. He said "well, I need 2 of my students. Is there any way I can get them all day on Wednesday?" This was before Thanksgiving. He said "we're just slammed."

The faculty member accommodated the request and helped the students make up their work and strengthened his relationship with the community partner. An executive-level administrator talked in a general sense about flexibility:

> We only see rules as guidelines [for setting up WBLOs]. There is always room for flexibility and opportunity. Flexibility with the company [is vital]. If we regimented it, then we would lose half the companies. Have to be flexible.

Community partners are the gatekeepers for the WBLO experience. The faculty member sets the tone for the level of rigor but collaboration and flexibility towards the site is necessary to see that WBLOs exist for the students.

Student eligibility.

One way to prepare students for the internship was to set up guidelines to ensure success. By setting eligibility requirements, faculty ensured the students were ready professionally and possessed the necessary technical skills. Prior to the start of the internship, faculty determined if a student was eligible. Eligibility requirements varied by program and discipline. They level of rigor and standards included in a WBLO ranged from only a minimum GPA requirement to GPA requirement, essay, letters of recommendation, and participating in an interview with faculty. This section differs from placing "good" students because it is predetermined factors that determine the student's eligibility. Placing "good" students is much more subjective and largely based on faculty opinion of the student. A fairly standard requirement to ensure the students were technically prepared was to set a minimum number of earned credit hours in the

programmatic courses. The faculty reviewed expectations with eligible students and worked with them navigate the initial steps of the WBLO.

First, engaged WBLO faculty provided the student with enough prior notice to prepare for the WBLO. One faculty member said the student was notified of the WBLO at their first advising appointment that usually provided six months to one year for the student to make arrangements depending on how far they were into their academic career.

> But we also give the students enough time to know the last 8 weeks of your classes, you will be at clinicals. And they are to stay through Friday.

Also, reviewing time expectations at this point was important to faculty:

> Internship is for 15 weeks. It's about ten hours a day and we've even told the students they can volunteer for more work if they want to work. And a lot of times the students will. Usually an internship, about the second week near the end of the semester, and a lot of them will continue to work another week or two just to get that additional experience. Just showing that good work ethic is also helping to get them employed.

Faculty then went on to discuss requirements of the students to be eligible for a WBLO:

> They have to be passing [to be placed]. They have to have passed, I use an online safety training program, and they have to have completed all of that. But that's universal for everyone. . . Now, understand that I have had those students who can make it GPA, but you don't want to turn them loose in industry. Either they're not mature enough, work ethic. They may get by. They may be struggling. They got by but that doesn't mean I can let them go out into industry.

Other expectations included reviewing and signing ethics polices and that the student demonstrated professionalism in the academic environment:

> We have something called, and you may have heard of this, it's called a Work Ethics Agreement. And the student basically signs off on that, that they read it and understand it.

This was echoed by another faculty member:

> We have an ethics policy here which addresses dress and attendance and professionalism and different things like that.

A business faculty member with high enrollment in a rural area met with her students for a month prior to sending them to the site to ensure expectations and professionalism:

> I usually meet with them during the internship class during that semester. I meet with them for about a month. We meet one to two days a week in the classroom. And we do mock interviews if that's, if I feel that's necessary.

Faculty also made students aware of what would happen if they were not acting professional or compliant at the site. Letting the students know they could be removed from the internship was often enough to ensure an agreeable experience:

> And I only take one complaint or concern from a supervisor and that students pulled. And then it depends on the extremity of that concern or complaint.

Complaints and attendance issues expressed by the site supervisor were taken seriously by all faculty members:

> I pull students because they'll call in and say "I can't be here today. I'll make my time up Friday" and my rules for internship is that they can miss one day. And only if it's an extreme emergency. And that's either death or hospitalization. They sign that if they don't agree to that policy that they are subject to being pulled from internship. And they sign that. And they sign a confidentiality form. Very, very strict with internship.

The majority of faculty agreed that the end-of-semester supervisor evaluation carried the most weight in their class:

> What if they had done all the other work but, so I setup my points so it was kind of like 50/50. So, the supervisor's evaluation was 50%. So, if you failed that part, you failed the course.

Making that a standard was suggested by one faculty member:

> Maybe we need to start out with a standard, at least a minimum. What I'm getting at here is I personally think that if the supervisor says that you did a terrible job, you should flunk it. Does everybody think that? To me that should be a standard.

Creating eligibility requirements increased the likelihood that students were prepared for their internship. Once eligibility standards were set, the next step was to use practices that students responded to and seemed to support the most professional development.

WBLO student placement.

The last category, related to the level of labor towards WBLOs, is the actual placement process. This part of the process relies heavily on relationships between the faculty member and the organization. Faculty members know if they have a student that may have more obstacles and they know which sites they can call on to work with that student and which ones to avoid. Also, students have requests. They want to be in certain types of environments that align with their future career goals. If a student knows they do not want to work in a hospital, a faculty member may work to place them in a doctor's office. Being accommodating, within reason, is part of the placement process, Also, if one student is high maintenance, placing them in a busy doctor's office would not be an ideal situation. Placing students is a layered process that requires much coordination and patience, especially with high enrollment classes and multiple sites.

Faculty involvement at the site.

In four separate high enrollment programs, the faculty members stressed the importance of going to the sites for a site visit. They offered different reasons for their visits, but they all maintained that it was impactful. Two faculty members did site visits to ensure student productivity and professionalism. One went to maintain a consistent relationship with those at the site, and another went to have a presence in the community. A suburban faculty member suggested the site visits were to appease his own curiosity and see how the students were doing:

> I'm pretty nosy. I always kind of check repeatedly about how are they, how are the people receiving them. Because that's key.

Another faculty member in an urban area "popped in" to make sure the students were maintaining professionalism standards and to offer any assistance to the site personnel in coordinating the WBLO experience:

> A lot of it, it's random, they know at some point I can pop in. But they don't know when. A lot of that is to make sure that they haven't paid off the worker that they're with, faking evaluations. . . I talk to the person they are with as well as just the student. Just a, "how are you doing? Is there anything fun you did today? is there anything you want to show me?" Just in general.

In one urban area, the faculty member did it to ensure consistency and conduct interactions face-to-face as opposed to coordinating everything remotely:

> Right. It's one of those. It's just more of just kind of getting out there. Other people see who I am. I get to see who everyone else is, who are actually filling out these sheets [to evaluate the student] if I haven't met them. . . It's really to just kind of be out there. I am a real person. They really are in school. That type of presence.

One faculty member said what he was looking for during his site visits:

> More input from the companies. I don't want them to sugar coat things. If we send them students and they're not happy I want to know why. And I want to know what we can do better. . . I think if I can meet the needs of the businesses, I can meet the needs of the students.

Regardless of their level of involvement, the participating faculty agreed that if a student was placed at a site for a WBLO it was important to maintain contact with the student and someone at the site.

Undesirable WBLO sites.

There was one theme that emerged that signaled to faculty to stay away from a site and no longer utilize it if they had in the past. The theme was using the students solely as free labor. If one student expressed to the faculty member that they were not

learning anything and were “only answering phones” then the faculty would usually try to prod the site for more engaging opportunities for the student. If the trend continued, faculty would no longer use the site for student placement. One attitude a faculty objected to was explained:

> And then they’ve got someone [site supervisors], “oh, we’ve got a damn college student around” so he’s giving them all the filing work.

A faculty member cautioned that when sites called seeking interns, it was most commonly for free labor and monotonous duties. They would still entertain the site but discuss the students’ development and see if there was a way to cultivate a mutually beneficial experience.

> I think it has always been, if someone wants them, they want to abuse them in my experience. I would be very leery of what precisely they wanted, some kind of free labor. I don’t mind if they make them work, I don’t care about that a bit, but I think that if they are not learning a bunch, I don’t care they have had them serve food at an events and things, I don’t care about that a bit as long as they are getting to learn something.

One faculty member expressed their frustration with a site:

> I wouldn’t send students there anymore because all they were going to have them do was the same thing over and over again. Free labor. And, no interaction with other people. No interaction with customers. So, no. There’s a few places where I won’t send them. Even if they call me, I’m like, “no I’m sorry. I don’t have anybody”. Because I’m not going to put a student into that.

Over and over again, faculty expressed their concern of sites using students as free labor. They understood that there would be clerical or monotonous work, but the student also had to have opportunities to learn and engage with people in the field. The most common grievance for discontinuing a site and deeming it as undesirable was taking advantage of the student and not engaging with the them or being completing disconnected to the student’s professional development.

Placing the "good" students

A practice that emerged that was a conundrum was the idea of placing the "good" students. This makes sense from the faculty standpoint. They did not want to jeopardize their relationships with partners they developed over the years. One faculty member said a community partner had a bad experience with a student intern and would not take any students after that semester. However, from a soft skills development view, students who are weaker could stand to benefit the most from a WBLO. Learning their own weaknesses and seeing how they can improve could increase their employability and help direct them to their improvement areas. Unfortunately, faculty expressed the most hesitancies about placing students that they deemed as "difficult" or "unprofessional". Theoretically, these students could benefit most, but they were usually the last ones the faculty chose, unless they had strong relationships with site personnel and could express their concerns about the student. In a couple of cases, the faculty and site supervisor worked together to develop a plan to help the student grow in their professionalism. This was not the norm.

"And I picked the cream of the crop. Best ones in there," one high enrollment faculty member from a suburban area said when discussing placing students. Another expressed similar feelings: "Because, when I have an opportunity open up, I send the information out to the students that are good students." Students that need to develop their skills the most are not the ones that come seeking WBLOs one faculty member explained, "I don't pick them out, but you know they just show up. The ones the will come to you for extra credit aren't the ones that needed it. It's the ones that have a 98%

average." When utilizing new sites, a faculty member expressed the importance of sending a "good" student the first time:

> What I usually do, if this is a first time in internship supervisor I make sure that they get our best student. I will not send them a student that I am not sure if they are prepared or professional. And if I have a student that is lacking in professionalism I usually will place them with a very professional student [and have two at the site] with a higher academic level. I'll put them together in the same office. That sort of helps the supervisor to know, to make a better judgement of the program.

This faculty member did take the time to work with the student and let them complete the internship and stayed in regular communication with the site supervisor. Although placing these students requires more effort, there are practices (consistent communication, goal setting, evaluations and feedback) that can support student soft skill development.

Placement process.

Developing an application process can be involved and create more work for the faculty member. One faculty member made the process straightforward and allowed any student with a 2.5 GPA or higher to be eligible for a WBLO. Another faculty member created a more rigorous screening process:

> There is an application that they need to complete. . . They have to have 2 letters of recommendation and they also have to write an essay.

This was in addition to a 2.5 GPA and the completion of certain classes. Every faculty member did concede that they had control over the selection process. Once all the preplanning and coordinating was complete, the process of implementation followed.

Student compensation.

Most faculty members supported the student receiving compensation for their time at the WBLO site. This improved student compliance and morale. It also helped students who had to sacrifice time at work to earn the academic credit. Along that same vein, faculty did not always seek compensation for their students. One faculty member thought it was best for the student to be compensated but explained when they had 8-12 students to place, they often had to take what they could get for a learning site. In my experience, I sought site participation and then addressed compensation. If the site would not compensate, I still offered the site to students. From there, the student had the opportunity to pursue a site that would compensate them that I would have to approve. If they could not find a site to compensate them, they would then have to determine if they wanted the WBLO experience without compensation.

In only one instance did a faculty member not want their students compensated. He explained:

> Then you have the other piece of it where you have the student that you are wanting to get good experience in industry and in order for them to do that, you don't want them to be paid. That was the reason I done the practicum program. Because when a student goes out into industry there becomes an expectation of the industry that they are going to not be an expense at least...what we find, and I've seen this in all programs, when that student is out there being paid, that employer is looking for a position they can put them in that is a profitable position. Now that could be working on the latest and greatest electronics [redacted]. Or it could be washing cars.

He furthered that when a student was not getting paid, the employer felt less obligated to "get their money's worth" and offered more engaging experiences to the student. One faculty member was harsher in their interactions with students, especially the closer a student was to graduation:

> We always tell them, they usually don't like this part, if it is not paid, get over it. If it is somewhere you want to work and something you want to do, you are going to get your foot in the door by going in there and showing them what you can do.

One reason students may not be paid, a faculty member explained, was because it impacted their financial aid. If the student was in a cooperative experience, it did not impact their federal financial aid, but a paid internship did.

Interaction with people in the field.

Interaction with people in the field has layered pieces. The "people" consists of the initial connection the faculty member made, often a manager or department head. From there, the student is often paired with someone within the organization and that person is not always the same as the initial contact. The term site supervisor is used to describe who supervises the student at the site. Again, this is not necessarily someone with an official "supervisor" title. Interactions consist of developing agreements, working to ensure the student is compliant, providing feedback to the student, and other practices.

The faculty members often started by discussing their expectations for the student with the site supervisor. As one business faculty member with high enrollment in a rural area put it:

> I tell the employers on the first day before they interview them, these are the rules, if they have visitors coming in, if they start using their phone, they're not dressed in business attire, you call me immediately. And I've had supervisors to call me. One called and said their phone's ringing off the hook and she won't even answer the phone. She just lets it ring. It's like…

A second faculty member in a manufacturing program with high enrollment took a less assertive route:

> I have expectations. It's not my place [to tell them] how to do their jobs and stuff like that. But, mostly my expectations for them are stuff they already do. That's

> assumed. The professionality. Mentoring the students. Just the mentoring the students. Having somebody be with the student in the facilities and stuff like that.

One faculty member in a health program did emphasize the importance of placing the student with someone at first to create an atmosphere of inclusion and learning:

> That's one thing I talk to them [the site supervisor] about too when we're first starting that relationship. Obviously don't necessarily just throw the students to the wolves. Let them learn your office routine.

Sending prepared to students to the site was one faculty member's focus. This helped to strengthen support for WBLOs by word of mouth. The person told another advisory member and their organization hosted an intern. The site supervisor saw the importance of educated employees and realized they were linked to the success of the organization. One high enrollment, manufacturing faculty member in a rural area parroted one of their community partner's opinions:

> We want you to get an education because we feel that education is vital to our company. We feel it's vital to the success of our company. The longevity of our company. And then it allows you to also improve yourself and grow as a person.

When asked about their interactions with organization, many faculty discussed developing specific agreements with the site. These were certain forms used, Memorandums of Agreement, and assignments for the students they developed with the site supervisor. A business faculty member with high enrollment in a rural area described what the site supervisor's and the student's responsibilities were:

> There's three evaluations during the time they're there. And then they do, they sign off on time sheets. And I'll let them do that just through email or electronically or they just do a hand copies. And most of the businesses in this area they want a physical copy of the evaluation form and time sheets. I had the students sign a confidentiality form and then a lot of times the facilities will require that also. Or they'll require an orientation.

Most frequently, faculty used their campuses' standard forms or KCTCS' standard forms and catered them to the needs of their programs.

A very important component of interaction in the field that faculty emphasized was the amount of effort site supervisors put into providing feedback to the students. When the site supervisor provided consistent feedback with direction, the students seemed to regard the internship as more beneficial. One faculty member complained about the site supervisor only giving feedback to the students at the end of their internship. The faculty member was frustrated when it was brought to their attention by the student. The student needs the feedback throughout, so they can grow and adapt to the organization's expectation. To ensure this practice, a faculty member developed a process:

> On each timesheet [turned in weekly to the faculty member by the student], the employer will write notes and say; she is an excellent employee, she comes to work every day, she is professional or needs to work on this or was late 3 days, those kinds of things.

The students were often pushed to discuss any issues with their supervisor when they went to the faculty member first. When asked if students ever do repetitive tasks, a faculty member said, "Number one, I tell the student 'go talk to your supervisors.' Say, 'I would like more responsibility, I would like to be able to do this or this or this.'"

In addition to streamlining processes with the organization, working with students to ensure they know what is expected of them, supports WBLO implementation.

WBLO Educational Potential

Faculty used their own expertise and experiences to determine which practices most directly impacted their students' experiences and progress. They integrated different

assignments and expectations depending on the needs of the student and the site. There were course competencies, but students also had individual tasks to support their advancement. Other practices revolved around whether an intern should be compensated for their time and what made a site desirable for internship placement. O'Neill (2010) discussed different practices to ensure a high-impact internship. Among those practices were making sure the students had a task that required long-term effort while providing the student the opportunity to establish "substantive" relationships with key stakeholders, work with a diverse group of people, receive meaningful feedback, and reflect on their experience.

Practices to support student development.

Practices to support student growth varied. The main categories that emerged from the faculty interviews were goal-setting and orientation (which overlapped), constructive and consistent feedback, and reflection.

Goal-setting.

Goal setting with action steps was an important part of the WBLO process and one that students were the most involved in before going to their WBLO site:

> And what I tell them when we're talking about these learning goals at the beginning of the semester is be conscientious about how you write these goals because when I ask you for an essay at the end of the semester I'm going to expect you to go back and say "these are the things that I wanted to do or learn or do better as a result of this" and I'm going to expect you to address those in the essay and be able to tell me that if you got better, how did you get better?

By working with the student to outline goals and set expectations, the students were more engaged. Allowing them to play a role in the process, the student was more committed:

> One of the things that I do work with them on is, in the packet, there is an area that talks about "what are your goals from this experience? What do you want to learn, what do you want to be able to do as a result of this experience?" I actually visit them during their orientation day and we talk about that and we talk about what types of goals should we set. What are things that we might be able to gain from this experience. So, I help them with formulating those educational objectives...And I help them to formulate their own learning outcomes for the experience.

Once at the site, there were additional expectations to ensure the student was prepared and knew the expectations. Keeping faculty informed was a component of the expectations, as well as, taking ownership over learning many of the course competencies. One faculty member provided the students with a competency checklist and told them the site supervisor had to sign it to signal they were completed. The student and the site worked together to determine how this was completed. In addition to broad goals, student and faculty worked together to set individual goals like improving public speaking or learning how to network. One manufacturing faculty member in an urban area created an interesting assignment to increase networking. He explained:

> They had to network with other students. And when I say network, all these students are going to be looking for jobs. So, if student A was at a facility then he would make contact with student B and go over and visit with them one day and find out who the [redacted] manager was, introduce himself, herself, that sort of thing. And vice versa so they all kind of had to shuffle around and do networking. So that when they did graduate they already knew who to get in contact with as far as looking for a job if I hadn't already found them one.

He furthered that creating innovative assignments engaged the students, especially if they had to work with each other.

Orientation.

Stakeholder preparation supports orientation. While preparation helps everyone involved know what to expect and determines objectives, orientation is more detailed.

Orientation includes reviewing company polices, discussing attire, scheduling, office procedures, and other stipulations the site requires.

A faculty member discussed an in-depth orientation her students experienced:

> They do get [an 8 hour] orientation to the position. During that orientation day, various people talk to the group about who they are and what they do. . . I think they also do some interpersonal training because a lot of what they do deals with having conversations with people, so they get some training on that. They talk about appropriate dress, appropriate demeanor when they are in that role.

A second faculty member said orientation varied greatly by site:

> I've had the orientations for students be an hour to six hours. Just again, it depends on the site and what they make them go through.

They furthered that orientation supported the students' sense of knowing and increased their comfort level related to their job performance.

Constructive and consistent feedback.

The practice that needed the most improvement was the amount and caliber of feedback the student received. Students craved the feedback and it was more common than not that site supervisors offered minimal feedback. For a student to develop professionally from a WBLO, research indicates the site supervisor must be engaged in ensuring the well-being of the student. Sustained internships "provide a structure to support the transition from adolescence to adulthood lacking for the majority of young people in the U.S. . . . Adult relationships are built on support and accountability, mentoring and supervision" (Symonds, Schwartz, & Ferguson, 2011, p. 20). Once faculty member had the site supervisor complete a monthly evaluation of the student. The faculty member knew she had a weak student at the site and the evaluation came back with the highest scores every month with no suggestions for improvement or opportunities. She

guessed there was little effort going into the evaluation. To force feedback, one staff member required students to provide weekly updates.

> They have to bring weekly information back to the instructor. Such as, what are they doing within that internship or co-op that applies to their degree. And then they also write about their experiences each week.

This did not directly promise feedback from the site supervisor but when the faculty reviewed the updates, they could make an educated guess and see if the student was learning new skills, working on projects, or if they were doing monotonous tasks. One faculty member explained that when students are routinely writing about new things they are doing, that parallels an engaged site supervisor.

Reflection.

One recurring high-impact practice for a WBLO was to integrate a reflection component for the student. The student must be able to link what they are learning at the site to the overall mission at the site and relate that to their overall career goals. Situating their tasks within an organization's mission helps them see how they are contributing to the greater good. They feel more valued and involved and see how their learning is improving their employability and development. One faculty member discussed reflection:

> Usually, they have to do, at the end, I guess you could call it a reflection. . . is there something more you think you should have had, how did you and your employer get along, did you use skills you learned?

Practices used by faculty to encourage reflection included requiring a reflection report at the end of their WBLO, journaling either weekly or monthly, offering guiding questions to consider before a face-to-face meeting with the faculty member, and a survey to offer

feedback on the experience. By incorporating these practices, faculty felt they were promoting reflection in their WBLO course.

Soft skill and employability development.

Faculty members emphasized that their advisory boards were especially focused on soft skills and employability development. Soft skills are at the forefront of most advisory board discussions. The majority of faculty interviewed highlighted the attention their advisory board placed on strengthening the soft skills of the graduates. This emphasis was cross-disciplinary, immune to location, and not correlated to enrollment:

> Like our advisory board members, a big thing they talk about all the time is them being prepared for interviewing. You know, they can't look you in the eye and talk to you or they are dressed in jeans, those kind of things.

How soft skills were defined did, however, vary. One faculty member described soft skills as being able to pass a drug test and show up to work on time. Other faculty members described more sophisticated skills including critical thinking, effective decision-making, collaborative efforts, and strategic planning (Brungardt, 2011). The advisory board knew the faculty could teach the students the technical skills, but the soft skills were described as more subjective and harder to teach:

> Yes, we get that a lot [of feedback] and their biggest things are soft skills. One big one we have is interview skills. Coming to work on time. Coming to work every day. Basically, don't expect everything handed to you, you have to work for it. Being personable. Being able to work as a team. That kind of stuff.

Advisory boards are composed of employers in the field and look to the faculty members to "produce" the students they need to operate their organization as seamlessly as possibly. By remaining active, advisory boards can support transition for students from

the program to the field with greater ease and less disruption in their day-to-day operations.

Every organization defines soft skills differently. Regardless of the definition from organization to organization, there was a consensus among faculty that one of the obstacles related to WBLOs was the student's lack of soft skills. The debate was not if this was new phenomenon because of smartphones and technology handicapping a generation's ability to interact, although that was mentioned. Whatever the reason, faculty agreed that current students are not as savvy at interacting and navigating professional settings as they were even a decade ago. This may be a generalization, but it is one faculty perceive as an obstacle.

Through a WBLO, faculty strongly agreed their students developed skills to help them succeed and increase their employability. A manufacturing faculty member with high enrollment in an urban area praised the WBLOs:

> So, it takes a student from learning how to [redacted] and being a student, a follower. And gets him up to a position where he's starting to come out of his shell. And he's starting to fit in these leadership roles. And you start seeing them shine when they do that. You just see their whole demeaner change and it's like that have that big epiphany out there. All of the sudden the light bulb goes off and everything just makes sense.

Others gave specific improvements they saw in their students:

> It helps them, their communication skills. Their social skills. And that's lacking in this area. The communication skills. I just think any time that they can work with a group or with a team, it helps with their teamwork. Not just doing the leadership but they see the importance of working together.

This theme continued through the faculty interviews:

> [They] came out of shell because of communication skills and knows what he is talking about and comfortable talking to tech support.

And:

> Soft skills-critical thinking, team work, work ethic. Punctuality and showing up on time are the employability schools.

Almost all faculty who utilized WBLOs expressed a similar sentiment:

> I would place them at above average with regard to other students in some of those interpersonal categories. Some of the soft skill categories. Talking about soft skills, another thing that often is a goal is time management.

In addition to the soft skill development, faculty also expressed WBLOs as a tool to strengthen a resume:

> I think it's really good for them to do it because then they have experience on their resume. I have a lot of students, I'm doing resumes right now, out of like about 12, 15 students I'd say at least 6 of them have never worked, period. They're real young. They're like 18-19 years old and they've never had a job. And so, that is really hard for them then to go out and get a job.

Faculty felt rewarded when students reported a positive WBLO. They enjoyed seeing their students grow in their career pursuit.

Conclusion

After conducting the 17 interviews, various recruitment tactics, stakeholder involvement, practices, and obstacles were discussed. Commonly discussed recruitment tactics were using a previous student's success story (obtaining employment at the site) when talking to community partners and students, maintaining open two-way communication avenues with community partners, utilizing recruitment personnel, and most importantly proactive advising by the faulty member with the student. Proactive advisors used practices such as discussing WBLOs with students and making sure the student knew it was available to them, linking it to an increase in potential employment, and lastly, in fewer cases but still occurred, were faculty who treated the WBLO as a requirement.

Supported by research, an important aspect that emerged from the study was the importance of keeping stakeholders involved (Meyer, 2016). Stakeholders included the student, the community partners, and the faculty member. One of the most prevalent findings was the need to be flexible with both students and community needs. Faculty who were actively using the WBLO were responsive to students' outside circumstances and life responsibilities (work schedules and children responsibilities) and as well as adaptable to industry needs. Also, incorporating orientation for all the stakeholders was an important component to the faculty interviewed. Stakeholder orientation also aligned with supporting soft skills development (Wilhelm, Logan, Smith, & Szul, 2002). By doing so, there was an increased likelihood the student and site supervisor would be satisfied with the WBLO.

Faculty interviewed shared a plethora of practices as they related to the varying stakeholders. One of the important parts of developing WBLO relationships was being able to convey the benefits to the community partners. These included the site being able to "test drive" a student, nurture and develop talent in their current employees, and develop a future employee pipeline. For students, faculty discussed the benefits of a WBLO and how it could increase their professional confidence, help them develop a network within their desired field, increase their employability, help with job placement, and increase their career clarity.

Of course, with such a complicated program there are bound to be obstacles. Both faculty who utilized the WBLO for their students and faculty who did not were readily willing to discuss the challenges they faced related to development and implementation. Faculty described being disillusioned at times, especially when they felt they did not have

administrative or community support. They also worried about their students' abilities to successfully navigate a WBLO. They reiterated the immense amount of time and effort it took to coordinate all the moving parts that are necessary in developing placement opportunities, recruiting and enrolling students, following up to ensure the educational impact of the experience, and sustaining relationships with everyone involved. Finally, they shared their concerns about the risks involved for themselves and the college, complaining that they often felt they held undue accountability for the success of the program, again without always having the support to do so.

By exploring these obstacles, faculty, and administrators, can be more prepared to find solutions to overcome the obstacles. Faculty do feel they can take a proactive position in the future of WBLOs. Faculty can introduce the idea of a WBLO to the students early in their college career, they can make it a practice to educate and orientate all stakeholders, they can proactively advise the students and remain flexible to students' and community needs as well as be innovative when developing the WBLOs. Based on comments from faculty, senior administrators can place someone in charge of the WBLOs to be the point of contact for community members and students. They can also have transparent compensation for the faculty who do offer WBLOs and create a campus-wide policy. A report in Higher Education (2001) suggested that there should be a wide range of activities for which faculty should be compensated. WBLOs should be included in this broader list of activities. The same report offers steps to ensure all institutional goals are enveloped in the faculty compensation system (2001, Vol. 28 Issue 2, p55. 12p).The policy does not have to be overly restrictive but does give the faculty members an idea of compensation for the WBLOs. Increasing visibility and encouraging WBLOs

at advisory board meetings, college assemblies, department meetings, and other community events, could generate interest in WBLOs. Lastly, senior administrators can promote and enable flexibility for faculty members to develop and implement the WBLOs. By understanding the current practices and obstacles within KCTCS, faculty and senior administrators are able to be both responsive to students and community needs as well as proactive when developing and implementing new WBLOs.

Significance and Utility of the Study.

Work-based learning opportunities (WBLOs) have been promoted by business and government leaders across Kentucky. Given that researchers have identified the potential for enhancing soft skills of students through WBLOs—and that KCTCS has been called upon to infuse soft skills into the curriculum—this dissertation suggests a framework for exploring faculty practices related to WBLOs in KCTCS.

This study offers practices and potential obstacles faculty encounter in WBLO development and implementation, it is particularly opportune given the emphasis on hands-on learning within KCTCS and it provides considerations in overcoming potential obstacles. KCTCS institutions can greatly benefit from these gained and apply the findings to strengthen WBLOs that are essential for many jobs available in today's economy.

The primary audience for these results are KCTCS faculty—both technical and general education—and administrators. The expectation for WBLO expansion and soft skill infusion has been placed on KCTCS at the local and system level. As a result, academic and workforce leaders at all levels KCTCS are likely to have an interest.

In addition to these audiences, business organizations, government agencies, and economic development groups also have a vested interest in preparing students for the workforce. The results are summarized and displayed in easy to digest narratives suitable for audiences both familiar with WBLOS and new to the idea of WBLOs.

In each of the above situations, the audiences have the same goal—to better prepare the Kentucky workforce of tomorrow and explore influences related to growing WBLOs in an attempt to overcome obstacles. This study provides guidance that will assist with this end.

Chapter 4
Using Intentionality to Foster an Environment to Overcome Obstacles and Grow Work-based Learning Opportunities

In the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, work-based learning opportunities (WBLOs) vary greatly. From allied health practicums, to business internships to manufacturing co-ops, the avenues to experiential learning are vast. Although there are many potential avenues, there are still many faculty who do not guide their students to pursue these opportunities because of the amount of labor and coordination involved for them or the lack of confidence in their students' abilities. To foster an environment that maintains and grows these work-based learning opportunities (WBLOs) for students, we need to first explore obstacles and secondly, ask questions about possible solutions. What can senior administration do to foster an environment that embraces WBLOs? What can faculty do? By addressing these questions with intentionality WBLOs can flourish.

This article focuses on obstacles related to the development and implementation of WBLOs and their potential solutions. As part of a study mapping the ways WBLOs are developed and implemented in Kentucky community and technical colleges, practical suggestions and cautions provide potential avenues for faculty and senior administrators to improve and expand WBLOs. At the time of this study, work-based learning opportunities were offered across KCTCS; however, information about development and implementation of WBLO programs was not widely shared between colleges or even within colleges. This research emerged from the need to gain a better understanding of the current practices within KCTCS as they relate to WBLOs. As internal and external pressure intensifies to increase experiential learning, it is important to have a holistic

understanding of the current state surrounding these opportunities. This research concentrates on elective work-based learning opportunities as a rich area for expansion less understood than mandatory programs often guided by accreditation and licensing standards.

The Research Design

31 Associates of Applied Sciences (AAS) degree programs with an elective WBLO were identified through the KCTCS 2016-2017 Catalog. AAS degrees are key areas for the development of WBLOs as they target technical education with direct ties to the labor market. In the fall of 2017, the 31 programs included 273 course sections representing elective practicums, co-ops, and capstone courses that provided hands-on experiences. These programs were further categorized by geographic location (rural, suburban, and urban) as well as labor market area (e.g. manufacturing). Enrollment in WBLO sections was also considered and programs with higher enrollment (N>10) were favored for initial selection due to their potential for richer data. Programs with lower enrollment were then identified to compare policies and practices that might influence enrollments.

These criteria—size, location, and employment context—resulted in a selection matrix used to recruit WBLO program staff from a broad range of programs serving different labor markets across the state. Fifteen program coordinators, two college staff members involved in WBLO delivery, and one college senior administrator with oversight of programs offering WBLO's were interviewed. Interview data were analyzed using three step process of close reading, initial coding, and finally thematic coding (Guest, MacQueen, and Namey, 2012). What follows is discussion of the areas of policy

and practice identified by the WBLO program faculty as obstacles to the administration and expansion of WBLOs in Kentucky.

Part One: Obstacles Related to WBLOs

Exploring obstacles is a necessary step to strengthen WBLOs. These obstacles were grouped through thematic analysis. The categories that developed were: Faculty are disillusioned and lack confidence in students' abilities, faculty do not feel supported to utilize WBLOs, the difficulty of logistics in offering and implementing WBLOs, and the ways in which administering WBLOs perhaps unfairly hold faculty accountable. By closely examining these obstacles, developing practices to circumvent or overcome them is possible.

Faculty are disillusioned.

Prior to the study, I anticipated certain obstacles based on my personal experience and issues raised in the literature. Demands on faculty time and compensation were expected difficulties. One theme that emerged the most frequently that I had not anticipated was how disillusioned faculty members had become in their students' abilities to successfully navigate a WBLO. They lacked confidence in their students' professional abilities. Repeatedly, faculty discussed their "good" students already having jobs and showed concern over placing their other students. This hesitancy had multiple layers. The faculty discussed challenging students' ones with no desire to utilize a WBLO, their own skepticisms about WBLOs, the lack of soft skill their students possessed, and the students' own perspectives toward a WBLO.

Faculty skepticism.

Faculty must buy-in to the idea of WBLOs and want to offer it to their students. For a faculty member contemplating offering a WBLO, their programmatic classes are important, and prioritizing a WBLO experience was often perceived as being at the expense of a technical elective. Determining if the WBLO outweighs an elective, or if the student benefits "enough" from a WBLO, is the decision. All the following commentary are from faculty with low enrollment. For example:

> Yeah. But at this [associate degree] level? I don't know. I think most of the stuff that goes at the very entry level of accounts payable clerk, that's kind of internal stuff. People just do that internally with their own people.

Similarly:

> I don't know [if students benefit]. I haven't done it for a while. There are some students that it's great for them. But, I don't know. Most of them I'd probably say it's a tossup. I don't know.

A discouraged faculty offered their viewpoint:

> I'll tell you something. I've been doing this for 35 years and I was just full of just excitement, energy, teaching was all I ever wanted to do. You know what I learned, one of the things I learned that I just hate to say I learned it? Is that I was much more interested in learning something and doing something than the people sitting in front of me were for the most part. And it's just so sad. But you can't dwell on that kind of stuff.

This thread of commentary was recurring. The students' lack of enthusiasm or hesitation towards WBLOs was an obstacle for faculty. The conversation often then transitioned to student's soft skill development.

Challenging students.

Faculty used the term "weak" or "challenging" to describe students who were lacking in some area. This was commonly described as lacking technical skills, soft

skills, or intellectual ability. A faculty member in manufacturing with high enrollment explained:

> Not every student is co-op material. Well, we get students from all different walks of life and different intellectual abilities. It's no different than anywhere else. So, you're going to have your A student and your B student and your C student and so on. That makes it a little challenging from the standpoint of there are some students that I will not put out in industry right away because either they're not intellectually ready and in some cases, they're not ready maturity wise.

When another faulty in business with low enrollment spoke similarly, I prodded him to clarify:

> That's ability. That's whatever, you name it. I mean right now, an A student right now for me, in my opinion, just between you and me and this recorder, an A student is really a C student or lower 10-15 years ago. And the slope of the line gets steeper.

He seemed disheartened by the caliber of students he had in his program. It is outside the scope of this study to determine if students are academically and professionally less prepared than previous generations. Regardless of the reality, it is many faculty's perception and, therefore, disillusionment is an obstacle. A suburban faculty member with low enrollment in business provided a comparative example:

> My hesitancies would be the same like putting people who are barely able to do math and they're sending us no remedial stuff, so you've got to go straight into college algebra. It would be the same kind of thing with this internship thing. I don't think they're ready. I don't think they've got the whatever it is to do it. For a lot of them.

Rural and suburban faculty hesitancies seemed to intensify when placing unprepared students:

> The students that aren't good students, I don't tell them about it. Because, I know they're going to go out and damage our reputation. Back when it was required I

> had students that I had to place, and I knew they were going to do a terrible job. In fact, one of them, she ruined our relationship with [redacted] because she was just really awful. I told the guy that she's not one of our best students. He said "okay" he would work with her. But she was that bad. She was awful. It wasn't like her technical skills, that was bad enough. It was more like just…Being on time, always trying to work, one of the things that just drove him nuts, she would just sit at the desk and not do anything unless someone specifically told her to do something. It just drove him nuts because she'd sit there for like an hour. That damaged our reputation and he said he didn't want any more of our students. Fortunately, that guy after maybe 2 or 3 years he moved on so now we have a relationship with them again. But, it's a small world.

This real example is the fear most faculty expressed when they discussed placing challenging students. They did not want to have to forfeit a positive working relationship with a site because of a negative experience with a student who was not technically or professionally prepared or mature.

A WBLO is not a priority for all students. They have outside obligations and adding a WBLO often does not fit in their budget, time, or even in their desire. They are caregivers to their parents, their children, they are working full-time and going to school. Their children have activities at night, and they have jobs during the day. With all the obstacles, factoring in a WBLO, especially an unpaid one, is not a priority. A business faculty with high enrollment explained a common theme among students:

> With all of the on-line courses, so many of the students work full-time already. So, they either have to take a completely different job doing this internship, in which case it has to be paid, or they have to take time off from their regular job to go do it, if it's unpaid. It is not necessarily that they are upset, it's just that life circumstances, this is the way it has got to be.

One faculty member offered another viewpoint. She expressed that she discovered some of her students were unable to manage money well and therefore could not afford to complete a WBLO:

> A lot of the students are on financial aid or not the best at budgeting money. Right now, time wise for my students they'll be graduating in December from [redacted]. It's Christmas. So, they'd rather take their money and spend it on Christmas. And I get it. That's the push back I get there. But it's not for actually taking it. It's "well I don't have the money".

Igniting a sense of engagement in a student can be challenging as one faculty member said, "Yeah. This age group that's coming through now. I'm trying to get them excited about anything." It is important to be strategic and intentional when discussing WBLO opportunities with a student. Being able to work with the student to create opportunities that work in their current life situation is key. One of the more surprising themes to emerge was the students' lack of interest in WBLOs. My experience led me to believe that students, while intimidated, understood the potential of a WBLO. They were often nervous, but it was important to them and played meaningful part of starting on the path towards their long-term career goals. Whether the student was not sure of balancing the internship with other demands or they had no interest in the WBLO at all, this theme was unanticipated. A business faculty member with high enrollment said: "One resented it. . . Having to go by there and spend this time." He furthered, "Some of them don't care [to do a WBLO]. It obviously has to be something you want to do and if you don't want to do it; that tells me a lot."

The lack of desire to take advantage of a WBLO was hard to understand for faculty. One faculty with high enrollment explored the reasoning for it:

> We have some students that may really never have any great desire to ever work, but they are going through the available options that are currently out there in our education system. So, often when we start talking to a student about a co-op position, some of them will get real nervous and they are apprehensive about going to work for someone else and what kind of responsibility and expectations there would be.

There was also the understanding that students thought it would be hard to go to school and work:

> I tell you one of the things I had difficulty in is students that are not yet working that are going to school; is getting them to take the step to get into the field. Because going to school relatively easy as opposed to going to work and going to school.

Several faculty members brought up the internship in class an explained that it generated little to no engagement from their students:

> Well as far as the internships goes, I started, when I first took over as the program coordinator here I tried to start the internship. And I had like 8 businesses saying they would take them. I couldn't find one student to do it.

He furthered:

> But, it went over like a lead balloon [bringing it up in class]. And I don't know why. I don't know why. It's kind of like the motivation just isn't there. You get out there and you try to sell it. You know you're going to be able to talk to these people, network. You might land a job. And it's like you just get this glazed over look.

Another faculty was just as colorful in this explanation:

> And you can watch the little light bulb on one or two of them [when the WBLO is presented to them]. The rest of them just kind of looking at you like you're smoking crack.

Faculty attributed students' low level of interest to fear of entering the workforce, inability to navigate the balancing act, disengagement, and no desire to go to work. Student disengagement was an obstacle related to strengthening WBLOs but also faculty expressed their students' lack of soft skills. Faculty believe the caliber of students has changed and have less confidence in the students' abilities, in particularly as it related to acting professionally and possessing soft skills. It was anticipated that soft skills would be part of the discussion, the level of disappointment was not anticipated. The overwhelming consensus among faculty interviewed was that students were not as

prepared to enter the workforce as "x" years ago. The "x" was anywhere from five to 20 years ago:

> I think that the faculty are leery of sending students out to companies because of their work ethics. We've had such a decrease over the past years. Getting them to come to class and do what they need to do was difficult. So, they would not put their reputation on the line to allow all of them to go and do the co-op. So, that's why it's optional.

Faculty also tended to attribute this to parents of students who were overly involved in their child's decision making and stunted or slowed their critical thinking development. A second concern for faculty was students who took all online classes and wanted to participate in a WBLO. They did not have a grasp on the student's abilities and this gave them pause when considering placement in a WBLO. Letting down students who were not prepared was part of the process one faulty member with a high enrollment WBLO said:

> Tried to let them [under-prepared students] down easy. Try not to say "you, hell no." Try not to treat them like that at all. But it just isn't happening. And some have slipped past me. You can't imagine how badly I was fooled.

When discussing the student's abilities and deficiencies, faculty often referenced traditional age college students. Faculty seemed more hopeful that soft skills could develop. The faculty did have to focus on helping the student leave the "high school mentality" behind them:

> My take is, you coddle a baby. You push a man. But, it does seem like when you ask them questions it's "well, my mom said". And I have told them if they go out and do an interview and say, "well my mom said" I would be very upset with them.

They often gave basic examples that caused them the most frustration:

> When I say your appointment is 9:00, and they show up at 9:30, then I know that I'm in for a struggle. Because I'm going to have work more with this student to make them understand that I have another appointment at 9:45.

Having direct conversations was hard but not all faculty avoided the conversation:

> I'm very, very clear. And if I see a student who is lacking. Maybe they need to clean up a little better. Or they need a little, clothes, I will ask. I'm pretty direct with them, but careful. Not to hurt feelings.

The direct conversations are hard for the faculty to have and hard for the students to hear but they are the most necessary. Taking the time and having the courage to address students in a direct, caring, and concerned manner is important. This proves to be more difficult when the student is strictly online. Faculty are not able to know the intricacies of the students' abilities outside of what they can evaluate online. One business faculty with low enrollment described his unsuccessful attempts to increase soft skill development in online students:

> Well, the weaknesses that I see, I kind of know what employers want. They want people to work in teams, to solve problems, they want people that has the basic knowledge in [redacted] or whatever. And, what's happening is, this is just another thing that's happening, most of my students are online. And when they're online I don't have any feel. So, I tried to do that [virtual group assignment to promote soft skills] a while back. But all I got was junk. And if I didn't get junk I got excuses. So, I just didn't…I learned a long time ago if you don't make it easy on yourself. You can make this as hard or as easy as you want to make it.

A second faculty with high enrollment allowed online students to take the WBLO class but would not be a reference for the student. They made them find their own placements to protect the established community relationships:

> I say, I can give you a referral on your grades, how well you did in my class, but I can't speak to your personal professionalism because I don't know you.

The positive side of the faculty perspectives was that many agreed that WBLOs did help to improve the perceived deficiency among their students. After they overcame their hesitancies, they usually did see the students develop professionally through the WBLO.

Faculty do not feel supported to utilize WBLOs.

Faculty expressed feelings of initiative fatigue. There seemed to consistently be a new initiative promoted by their college. It was not that they were opposed, but more that it was not a priority to others, so it could not be to them. The themes that emerged geared towards lack of support were the level of involvement form senior leadership, the role of support staff, and compensation. Before faculty began the development of WBLOs, they wanted to determine if increasing WBLOs was important to the student and administration and not just a "flavor of the month" as one faculty member put it. He furthered:

> I think that would be tough [growing internships]. For me it'd be tough to think about how am I going to pull this off? I don't see, my raw materials are getting weaker all the time in my opinion.

A manufacturing faculty member said, "I'm one man. I do 10 hours overload every semester. I'm here Saturdays, Sundays. And I've got no budget," and a support staff person echoed the feeling by saying, "Where do I find time to do it all? I wear so many hats." Even a senior level administrator acknowledged that successfully developing and growing WBLOs was intense. They said, "[It] takes up a lot of resources-faculty and staff wise." Across the board, everyone interviewed recognized, that when done effectively, WBLOs development and implementation was a high demand on faculty time and energy. It was not uncommon throughout the interview process to hear about budget cuts and how that impacted program WBLO offerings. As one overwhelmed faculty member

with low enrollment in the WBLOs explained she did not have time to offer anything outside of her current load, “So, me alone I have around 200 advisees that I take care of. So, we lost our division assistant due to budget cuts.” Time limitations were a common obstacle for WBLO development and implementation.

Level of involvement from senior leadership.

There were several viewpoints from the faculty interviewed on how involved senior leadership should be in the development of WBLOs. The themes that emerged were faculty did not feel supported but were not bothered by it, faculty were not doing it because they did not feel supported, and senior administration support was geared mainly towards manufacturing. The manufacturing programs were the only programs that claimed there was involvement and support from senior leadership. This was attributed to the political discourse and from the manufacturing job vacancies throughout Kentucky. Yet, there were other faculty who did not report support but did not feel slighted either.

The faculty who utilized WBLOs outside of manufacturing were not overwhelmingly concerned about senior administration being involved at all. A faculty member with high enrollment usually did not involve senior administration at any point in the process. Occasionally, he would provide an update to leadership and he was brief in his relay of these interactions: “This is what I did, this is why I did it. They tell me ‘oh sounds good to me.’” He furthered: “Never had any difficulty [dealing with internships]. I never asked permission though. I never had any difficulty with any of it in any way shape or form.” He was unhampered. A second faculty member, with low enrollment in business, was slightly more abrasive but still not overly concerned with the role of senior administration: “I’ve never gotten any kind of help from administration on it. Other than

do it." Contemplating senior administration involvement had never even occurred to a faculty member:

> "That's a really interesting thing. In my role as a faculty member I don't recall in anything related to my role as faculty like division meetings, faculty council meetings, things like that. I don't recall this has been discussed. "

Faculty who did not use WBLOs often linked their decision to senior administration's level of support. This was a recurring theme. The following narratives come from faculty with low enrollment. One faculty member in business said:

> Well, one they need to recognize that it's not easy to do. And they don't. It's my experience that most of administration, they've never dealt with internships. Now, some have. But, most of them don't. So, they don't know how it can be ugly.

A second faculty member echoed:

> I've got about three or four of these things [WBLO classes] and the level of appreciation is non-existent. So, after a while you start asking yourself "why am in the heck am I doing this?" "why is it another thing for internship I'm going to do for no money that's just going to take extra time?" Did I tell you I have 136 advisees?

That same colorful faculty member continued:

> Nobody cares what you're doing. Why are you going to do that? Why are you going to go out above and beyond if all you're going to get is just extra work and nobody cares. Oh, you're doing it for the student. Yeah, kiss my butt. That only works for so long.

Little support coupled with lack of understanding from senior administration led to a frustrated faculty member's explanation when discussing expanding WBLO opportunities with a vice president:

> And, [Vice President] said something along the lines of, "well, I don't understand. Don't you think people want free labor?" And I think that's their attitude is that "if you are giving them free labor, everybody wants that". Well no they don't. When they do something like that it's not good for anybody. It's good for the company, they're getting some menial tasks taken care of that they could care less about.

Another faculty member was equally as frustrated:

> And I don't blame them [people who don't offer it] because sometimes when [you] actually do a course you're not getting paid. You're just going out there and working for free. . . Because I looked at, got out the catalog and started doing research as to what all was involved with that. And I said, "there might be some students who actually want to do this". We have great opportunity for them to get out and start networking with people. And it will lead to employment. But as far as the support from the administration goes, it was nonexistent.

Other faculty were disgruntled by the level of involvement from senior administrators on all accounts, not just geared towards WBLOs, but it did influence one faculty with low enrollment:

> Instead of every time you see him, and I'm not busting on [redacted], but said "thank you for everything you do". It really tells me you don't know what I do. You don't even get out enough to see what I do.

Senior administrative support influences how readily faculty embrace using WBLOs. Whether it is through individual support and acknowledgment or a campus wide initiative to strengthen WBLOs, senior leadership can steadily influence WBLO development.

Manufacturing faculty agreed that senior administrators were involved in the development of their programs and their relationships with community partners. This directly influenced WBLOs. When a senior administrator collaborates with business partners, accessibility increases. This could mean access for the faculty member to develop a relationship or access for a student to enter the site. A manufacturing faculty member expressed his feelings of support:

> I think our senior administration is supporting it right now because, at least locally, [manufacturing work and learn program] is the big thing right now.

A second faculty member articulated his feelings towards the shift towards manufacturing support:

> I think more than anything it's [the increase in manufacturing in political discourse] probably that it's kind of elevated our program in that they see more value of it. It used to be 30 years ago, it was the old vocational school. And then it became the Tech College. Now it's, we have a higher standing. . . So, it's allowed us to elevate the program. . . More than anything it's educated other folks as to what the program is and why it is valuable.

Manufacturing faculty did feel support from senior administration at advisory meetings and in the community.

Contributing to feelings of no support was the amount of time it took administration to make decisions surrounding WBLOs. Faculty took this as a sign of indifference or an additional, unnecessary, obstacle. By not working with faculty to streamline processes and provide quick, definitive, and transparent decisions, faculty were hesitant to say senior leadership supported their efforts as they related to WBLOs. "Every decision we make around here involves a committee," one faculty member with high enrollment complained. An additional faculty member with high enrollment in manufacturing program expressed his frustration when he sought a decision from his leadership team:

> Crickets. They don't want to discuss it. I set down with the VP here at the college, of academics, we had a long discussion. He then handed that off to the Dean, to find out where are we with [the decision]. The Dean contacted KCTCS, emails flew back and forth for about 3 weeks, and they were avoiding the question like the plague. So finally, I just had to set down and send, I sent an email. I said, "here's the bottom line. Here's it. It's a yes or a no. It's really simple. Yes or no." And I laid it out and I sent it in and I got an email back. "No." That was the only thing that was on the email was "no". No further discussion. So, I had to back off, not because it wasn't a good thing. It was because my concern for the students. So, I backed off of it.

Faculty members did not frequently seek help from senior leadership but when they did, there were several faculty who interpreted the slow decision-making as labeling their efforts as insignificant. Circumventing bureaucracy and red tape were a recurring theme,

one that hindered the efficiency of programs in some instances. One manufacturing faculty with high enrollment explained:

> That I'll probably get in trouble for, but I'll still allow this to go on the record, education is historically 3-5 years behind industry with what industry wants. And our model of change is so slow that we can never, with the current methodology that we use, could never catch up to what industry wants.

To prevent faculty from misconstruing the decision-making process, leadership teams could offer transparent and periodic updates when a decision takes an inordinate amount of time. This will foster buy-in and acceptance.

Varying degrees of backing for support staff.

One unexpected finding was the varying levels of interest in using support staff. Because of the repeated obstacles related to demands on faculty time, it was anticipated that faculty would be eager to use support staff. However, faculty either did not have access to support staff or minimally used available support staff. Regarding the support staff who were available, WBLOs were not their sole, or even top, priority. The responsibilities were "in addition to" their normal job duties. For example, in addition to duties as an administrative assistant to technical programs, the support staff would also be tasked with maintaining all WBLO memorandums of agreement between the institution and the organization. The duties were mainly clerical and database maintenance. Most faculty who utilized the support staff were content with this level of involvement. In only one instance was support staff tasked with recruiting opportunities for WBLOs. This person was interviewed and was very intentional in emphasizing the importance of faculty authority. They deferred to faculty for final approval of the site and expectations and whether the student was ready to enter a work environment. This person paid special

attention to not "step on any faculty toes" or overstate information related to WBLOS. When asked what her role was after the student was placed, she said:

> Over to the instructor. No. That is up to the instructor to do that [site visits]. So far, since being over here [at career services] I haven't done anything with the actual class. It's been done through the instructors. I really prefer it that way. Because they're the ones that's giving that grade. They know what that person should be doing. Basically, I take everything. . . give it to the instructor, and the instructor would actually assign the grade. Bottom line it is the instructor who has the last say. As it should be. Support staff, I mean, I don't want to give [academic] credit to someone and then find out it didn't fly because they can't do the job. Because I didn't know that they weren't doing it correctly. I can do a lot of things. But, there's some things that I don't' want to do. I don't want to do HVAC. I don't want to do welding.

The majority of interviewed faculty did not have access to support staff. There were instances where career services worked with the faculty members, but these instances were rare. One faculty member claimed that the campus previously had a staff member who was the coordinator for the internships. When that person left, this faculty member quit using internships. He said, "Show me the college budget and I will tell you what is important to them." He was implying that since the previous WBLO coordinator position was not filled, this demonstrated that internships were not a priority for senior administration and, consequently, were not a priority for him.

When discussing support staff there were those who had support staff and who reviewed the staff's role. Faculty with access to support staff discussed how the staff members were situated in the overall WBLO development and implementation. Overwhelmingly, the support staff was clerical. Also, a consistent finding was that there was not support staff designated to WBLOs specifically. One faculty member in an urban area spoke of their support staff:

> She doesn't necessarily maintain. She just really, she's the contact. When somebody says to me, "who do I need to email this to?" I say email to [redacted] and CC me on it. That way I know it's been sent. And then [redacted], she prints them off the way it's supposed to be printed to and takes it to the president, gets [the president] to sign it, uploads it, sends it either to me or right back to the company.

This description of role responsibility was echoed by another faculty member when I asked if they had support staff:

> Yes and no. Well, we created this position but then that person that had been in the position was asked to do a couple of other things. So, it's kind of morphed. And now even though I think they still kind of manage some it, do some of it. They're pulled off in a different direction. So, the focus isn't there. Most programs here that do a lot of co-op, the coordinator and the faculty have always managed.

A second faculty member at the same campus spoke of the same support staff member. The sentiment was the same. The support staff person had a strong work ethic but had varied responsibilities that limited the ability to offer any significant help. The faculty member discussed the process:

> Even though she's no longer, she is division office manager for [redacted]. But she had just done it [clerical support for WBLOs] for so many years it was just asked upon her, "would you keep this responsibility?"

There was only one faculty member who said their support staff was able to offer the time commitment necessary to feel supported, but the clerical support was delegated to a department and not an individual. He said:

> No, I definitely feel in my role as a faculty member, I definitely feel supported. Like I said, a lot of the kind of grunt work of collecting time sheets, things like that, that normally the faculty sponsor for [class title] would have to do, they're taking care of that for me in the admissions office.

The findings of those who had access to support staff were largely underwhelming as it related to faculty relief when developing WBLOs. This was never do to the individual,

but more geared towards the many and varied roles these individuals were asked to perform.

The faculty who were interviewed without access to support staff fell into two categories. They either saw the necessity of support to grow their WBLOs or they did not see the need because one person tasked to speak for multiple programs could not be as efficient and knowledgeable as the program coordinator with the expertise in the area.

There were several faculty members with low enrollment who expressed an interest in support staff because of the current demands on their time. When asked if he would place a student in an elective WBLO one faculty member said, “If there was someone to line up all the jobs. I don’t have time to do that for all my students.” When asked about support staff, a faculty member remembered a WBLO support staff member who had retired:

> And students would go through [redacted] who was the co-op coordinator. She would find employers who wanted to have co-ops students and then we would just have a few students. Maybe 7 or 8 per semester, something like that. . . We did that for a while and then [redacted] retired and it just kind of faded away. She went out to basically just get the employers connected up with us.

When I asked that same faculty member if he would be hesitant to use support staff to find placements because he knew the intricacies of his program better, he seemed unconcerned, “I don’t think you really need to know specific [program] details. You just need to know they’re going to be working in the field.”

There were faculty members who felt they knew their program better than anyone and, therefore, they would be the most competent in securing WBLOs for their students.

One high enrollment, manufacturing faculty member without access to support staff was unfazed and preferred it that way. He explained:

> A person needs to understand too, when you're talking about technical programs, it's hard to have someone else trying to work the co-op piece of it. The person who's most suited, the person who's most familiar with the student, with the facility, is the instructor. That's who needs to be handling that. You have to. Otherwise it's not going to be successful. You're going to end up with employers who have expectations that aren't met. And therefore, they're not interested in anymore of your students.

There was consistency among faculty that support staff tasked with logistics and clerical work could benefit WBLOs. There was not consistency among faculty to support a staff member seeking placements and speaking for a program. The consensus was support staff personnel could be tasked with being a point of contact, maintain current agreements between site and institution, maintain a database of community members seeking students and where students have been placed, and centralization of forms and other cross-disciplinary information.

Compensation.

Compensation was a recurring and anticipated topic among those interviewed. Compensation for administering a WBLO occurred either through payment as an overload or the WBLO was considered one of the faculty member's regular courses. For example, an average course load for a program coordinator was four classes. Some faculty could count their WBLO course as one of those four classes and other faculty taught four classes and a WBLO course but were compensated the standard overload pay for the WBLO course. These were both considered compensation. There were also faculty who were not compensated and were told it was part of their program coordinator responsibilities, it could be counted as part of their required internal service or it was not

addressed, and they still taught their four classes, excluding WBLOs. From my own personal experience with WBLOs, I was compensated differently the first three years. When I was provided an answer to ensure consistency, it altered how frequently I delivered the WBLO course. Other faculty, without me sharing my experiences, expressed similar attitudes towards course offerings.

Overload pay varied because the WBLO enrollment did not routinely meet the standard class numbers expected to "make." There was an extra layer of discrepancy because some faculty were allowed to consider 5-7 students as a full WBLO class because there was an understanding that these classes traditionally did not have high enrollments, especially when the WBLO was an elective. They received full overload pay. Other faculty were offered a "per head" pay until the class reached the minimum number of students. The minimum enrollment varied from campus to campus but was commonly ten.

A faculty member in health care in an urban are with high enrollment stated:

> With me it's always been an overload. Because the numbers are low it's basically I'm compensated per student per credit hour. And there's some math formula that's used to calculate that.

I asked a faculty member if their compensation influenced their WBLO course offering. They responded:

> Starting in the fall 2018, it will only be offered in the spring because usually I do it pay per student because it is very rare that we get 10 to fill it. It is part of my course load, but it is not considered a full class so usually if I have a full load, I will have 2 to 3 in there that I will be compensated for per student.

A business faculty member with low enrollment explained why he did not routinely offer a WBLO:

> If I offer, with our number of electives, if I'm teaching an elective, I would rather have 30 students in that, and I get paid for a class, than I have an intern, an internship that I'm overseeing that if it doesn't have 10 in it, they don't consider it a class so I'm only going to get paid per student. So, I think it's a money thing.

Counting the WBLO as part of the course load was one form of compensation. One faculty member said, "Wow. Compensation…see this is part of my regular load. I am considered the program coordinator." A WBLO staff member explained the faculty compensation:

> It can be any type of thing. It can be part of the workload. It could be that they, it's another class. If we have enough students to do a co-op. If they have 15 students that's doing a co-op in 15 different factories, then they would get compensated for that.

The faculty members who could count it as part of their course load or were compensated for an overload were content and deemed both practices fair.

When faculty were not compensated, they did not offer the WBLO course or they were internally motivated (see *Faculty motivation*). They offered the class because they were motivated by their students' success, not for monetary reasons. One faculty member with high enrollment explained:

> I'm not compensated at all. I look at it is as part of my job description. You know to do whatever it takes to have the program and the students succeed. So, I agreed to that when they hired me. Whatever it takes, that's what I do to keep the program running.

Other faculty members were not as positive. Throughout the interviews, lack of compensation was the most controversial topic and the one that ignited the most emotion. A faculty with low enrollment said:

> But then when I got moved into a different division they didn't pay me anymore for it. Well, when it got changed to that, that really bothered me just on principle. Because when you do it right it's a lot of work.

The discontent was a common theme. Another faculty member went on to say:

> I know people and they will have opportunities [for WBLOs], when they have they'll tell me about it. So, when they stopped paying me for it, I found it insulting. That de…what's the word I'm looking for? Desenta…[*Demotivating*?] Yeah. And not that I, it's good for the student, on the other hand you have to draw a line in the sand.

Offended by the lack of pay, one faculty member steered students away from the WBLO.

When asked what happened if a student brought an opportunity to them, they said:

> I try not to do that. Because if I do, I'm not going to be compensated for it. That's the other thing. Is that it's different throughout our whole campus. And that is another thing to me, that is insulting.

There were faculty members that were bothered but not upset enough to forgo WBLOs altogether. For instance:

> So, some of it is personal motivation. What does it for you? Why you get involved. And if you're not pushing it or your attitude is "well, I'm not going to offer a [redacted] class because nobody's going to pay me". Which the one that I'm getting ready to do, I'm not getting paid either. I mean I'm not real happy about it.

One coordinator combined courses to ensure the WBLO was included as part of the faculty load:

> Where I've always been able as the coordinator to kind of manipulate his workload where we dump the co-op and the practicum in there, stack it up with some low enrollment classes and say, "okay, here you go. This is his workload". And they've been accepting that. But to go to administration today and say, "I'm fully loaded, and I've got these 4 co-op students and here is how much I want to be paid to manage this co-op." we would get rejected. We would be told to cancel the class.

One faculty member explained his thought process:

> So, without a lot of push back we are now normally told that an independent study, a practicum or a co-op does not count toward workload nor would it be

> compensated as overload. Now what the faculty members do when that happens, you quit offering the classes. If you're not going to get paid for them, you don't offer them.

When he asked for answers, he explained the response, "I am told, for me, is where I am not out at the sites providing training to the student it does not count as a class for me."

Compensation was one of the more divisive motivators when it came to WBLO course offerings.

Liability issues.

Seasoned faculty discussed living in a more litigious society. An increase in fear of being sued or making sure students are covered by insurance hindered WBLOs. Faculty explained they were often referred directly to the human resources departments at sites as opposed to working with the individuals in their field. A faculty with low enrollment described a concerning incident:

> Well, I had a student that worked for the city one time, this was when it was required. He was working for the city, he wiped out one of their databases by accident. He wiped it out. His boss called me, was very upset and everything. I'm like, "I don't even know what to say". Fortunately, they had backups. But still. He was mad. He didn't want the guy there anymore and all that. Eventually I went down there and talked to him. Smoothed it over. The kid, well, the kid that did it, it was an accident, they eventually, everything got worked out. But, is that a lawsuit potential there? Would I be sued? Would the school be sued? I don't know.

The faculty member was understandably nervous. Another faculty member revealed they were often asked about student coverage:

> One of the things I started getting questions from some of the employers was, what about liability? What about liability insurance for the students? They're here and we're not paying them and therefore they're not on our insurance. We have liability insurance for our health fields. But KCTCS has nothing for anything else other than health. There is absolutely nothing.

Developing relationships with actual people in the field, as opposed to HR, was also a complaint:

> Yeah, a lot of the placement sites are handled through HR, you contact HR and we already have the MOA in place and say I have 4 students, here are the dates and they will say ok I will let you know what I can find and they will shoot me an email back saying management agreed, and sometimes I don't even actually get the experience with the actual office managers.

Not building the relationships with people in the field also makes it easier for the site personnel to say no to student placements. When the faculty member and the office manager, or site supervisor, communicate WBLOs develop more naturally and readily than going through and HR department.

WBLOs, perhaps unfairly, hold faculty accountable.

WBLOs hold faculty accountable by ensuring the program curriculum is current/relevant or by highlighting classroom complacency. In technical programs, the technology to learn the skills changes frequently. If a student enters an internship having learned outdated technical skills, the faculty (and most likely the program coordinator) tasked with keeping the program relevant is immediately faced with revising the course(s) and possibly the curriculum. This is time consuming and laborious. If a faculty member is complacent and does not adequately maintain the program, the WBLO is the obvious place where a student would notice any shortcomings in their education. While this was not a recurring theme, it was an insight to discuss. Faculty member with high enrollment in his manufacturing WBLO articulated:

> The co-op holds faculty more accountable. See I can teach from now on and teach the same thing I've been teaching year after year after year and never get questioned by a student. But if I put a student out in industry and that student finds out that what I've been teaching them is wrong, then I'm accountable. So,

> it's valuable both ways. It's valuable for industry to see the students. It's valuable for faculty to be aware that there's an accountability. You can't just say stuck in the same routine you've been doing for the last 10 years because it's easy. Because when you send that student out into industry, you will be exposed. And the students will let you know.

When the student is learning current skills, the WBLO confirms their education in the classroom. A business faculty with high enrollment said, "When they actually see it hands on in the office, that's a really good learning experience for them. It validates the training that they received here." The WBLO holds faculty accountable and spotlights a need for change or confirms the program teachings are relevant to the workplace.

Part Two: Solutions

There are steps to take to address the common complaints and obstacles. Both senior administrators and faculty play a role in the solutions. Both groups have different capabilities and influential powers.

What Can Senior Administration Do?

Senior administration has the power to set policy, direct initiatives, compensate faculty, enable flexibility, and delegate responsibilities. Faculty have the power to introduce WBLOs to students, educate and orientate stakeholders, increase WBLO visibility, be innovative and flexible, and have candid conversations with students. Taking the time to explore influences and set intentional direction can prove to be rewarding when intentionally seeking to grow WBLOs.

Put someone in charge.

Senior administration can indicate their support of an initiative by prioritizing associated tasks (Xanthis, 2015). In this case, by creating a centralized contact person for internal and external inquiries, senior administration demonstrates they believe in the

initiative enough to delegate. By tasking someone with responsibilities, as opposed to leaving everyone to their own devices, there is a sense of accountability. This creates less obstacles for community partners when they would like to partner with the institution. Sharing and centralizing practices would be to create collaboration not uniformity. Currently, at most institutions where I interviewed faculty, when an outside company is interested in hosting a KCTCS student, they have to decipher who would be the right person because the information is not readily available. In many cases discussed, the interested party contacted admissions who then decided which academic program the company was most related to (which is not always immediately apparent) and directed them to an email or phone number of a program coordinator. In the summer months, faculty are not usually contracted to perform their faculty duties. With this delay in communication, the company could be disheartened or frustrated and forfeit the idea. If there were a person in charge, everyone on campus could direct inquires to that person and the individual could disseminate information appropriately.

An unanticipated finding from the faculty interviews was not all faculty were eagerly wanting a WBLO coordinator. The consensus was that a person was necessary to be the point of contact. This person would serve as the administrative coordinator. Tasks would include maintaining Memorandums of Agreement, creating a contact person for employers, maintaining a database of opportunities and sites utilized, and housing cross-disciplinary forms. Faculty opinion varied on whether a person outside of the program could competently go to companies and "sell" the programs. Some faculty were hesitant to give this ability to someone who was not trained in their field. However, for the most part, faculty agreed that if the person were tasked with finding WBLO sites, a basic

understanding of each program, familiarity with of WBLO technicalities, and knowledge related to campus polices, would be enough.

For senior administrators, it would be a delicate balancing act of delegating responsibility. In two instances during the interviews, faculty mentioned a staff member who had campus wide WBLO responsibility. Through no fault of the staff member, the faculty did not find the person to be of significant assistance. It would be up to the campus to determine if they needed a person solely for WBLO coordination. This would largely depend on the size of the campus, the interest level of the faculty, and the influence from senior administration to start to incorporate WBLOs. If that were not the case, ensuring the WBLO point of contact person was not overburdened with other responsibilities would be key. This study did not find that a person with sole WBLO responsibility was prescribed. It could benefit in many ways, but the faculty opinions did not overwhelmingly lend themselves to every campus having a full-time WBLO coordinator. I anticipated faculty would eagerly welcome a staff member to help develop and house WBLO related activities. That was not the case.

Transparent compensation.

To foster faculty cooperation, and even eagerness to participate, senior administration must be transparent in the compensation for the faculty's WBLO efforts. It is important to make the distinction that faculty were more concerned with transparency than a set amount of compensation, or other monetary reward. The inconsistences (on the same campuses) between compensation across disciplines was frustrating. A report in Higher Education (2001) suggested that there should be a broader scale of activities that faculty should receive. WBLOs should be included in this broader list of activities. The

necessary changes related to transparent compensation has to start with realizing something needs to change. The same report offers steps to ensure all institutional goals are enveloped in the faculty compensation system (2001, Vol. 28 Issue 2, p55. 12p).

Faculty compensation elicited the most engagement among the faculty interviewed. They frustration was around consistency and clarity as opposed to a set dollar amount. Administration can best determine what works for their campus and the recommendation does not have to expand though all 16 KCTCS campuses. Each campus should have the flexibility to determine what pay structure works best for this campus and then ensure that it is available and accessible to all faculty.

In many of the interviews, especially among faculty with low enrollment tin WBLOs, the type of compensation was not apparent or consistent across campus. A manufacturing WBLO on one campus was included as part of the regular faculty course load, while a business WBLO on the same campus was an overload. Also, faculty members, myself included, received conflicting information and different compensation scales year to year. One year the WBLO was part of the course load and ten students was the minimum number to receive full pay and not switch to a per head amount. The following year, it was overload, but 5-7 students garnered full course compensation. Ensure that faculty are aware of the anticipated head count prior to offering the course and it should not be expected to be as high as a traditional course. If that is not feasible, allow faculty to be compensated through an overload pay.

There is a need in the WBLO environment to allow flexibility but not as it relates to compensation. Similarly, to the WBLO staff position findings, there was not a

prescriptive dollar amount to compensate the faculty. The faculty did voice that it needed to be a transparent pay scale, not as subjective and fluid as they interpreted it to be, and it needed to be consistent from semester to semester. The faculty overwhelmingly discussed the need for compensation. One faculty member expressed being insulted when finding out the different pay scales for WBLOs on their own campus. When a WBLO is implemented effectively, it is a tedious task with multiple factors. Compensation, included as a normal course load or as an overload, is a practice that is necessary to generate the majority of faculty support. This was an anticipated finding. Create a fair and transparent compensation structure. Ensure that faculty are aware that the WBLO course is part of their expected load with an anticipated head count which should not be expected to be as high as a traditional course. If that is not feasible, allow faculty to be compensated through an overload pay.

An example of a fair and transparent compensation policy would be one that appears in the faculty handbook. It may read as follows:

This policy is to provide general guidelines of compensation for faculty who provide experiential learning opportunities for their students that results in the student having the opportunity to be awarded academic credit. This policy is to encourage and support faculty productivity in developing contextualized and experiential learning for their students. Examples of experiential learning opportunities can be, but are not limited to, internships, cooperative education, practicums, clinicals, externships, capstone courses, certain independent study opportunities, and service learning projects. Faculty who offer these opportunities to their students will work with appropriate campus administration to determine the following factors prior to the course implementation:

Appropriate enrollment with the qualification that experiential learning opportunities do not traditionally have the same enrollment numbers as traditional courses. A general expectation of at least ten students in a traditional course is standard. For experiential learning, an enrollment number of 5-7 students would be manageable for placements.

After the enrollment number is determined and conveyed to all faculty, the next step will be to determine whether the course will count as part of their regular course load. Allowing the course to count as part of the course load once in an academic year is a suggested practice.

If the practice of allowing the course to count once an academic year is adopted, then determining compensation for faculty who offer it twice a year would be the next step. Paying faculty a full overload pay for more than 5-7 students would be suggested. If the enrollment is less than 5-7 students, a per head amount should be offered.

Regular review of this policy is necessary to ensure that it remains current.

This policy does not demand a system-wide compensation schedule, nor does it give a prescribed amount. Those specific numbers should be determined by the individual campuses. It is written to promote discussion and transparency, as well as campus-wide consistency. Also, campuses should determine for themselves if compensating faculty for 5-7 students is feasible for their campus. If not, the standard minimum should be used and conveyed to faculty.

Emphasize and increase visibility for WBLOs.

It is important for senior administration to express their support of WBLOs and increase the visibility and discussion surrounding them. Frequently discuss WBLO opportunities at department meetings, college assembly meetings, division meetings, and any applicable trainings. Faculty interviewed did not feel WBLOs were a priority for most senior administration and attributed that perception to the fact that WBLOs were never mentioned. Make an intentional effort to talk about WBLOs more and show support, faculty will realize it is a priority for the leadership team.

Increasing visibility of WBLOs is also important. Increasing visibility can be completed by promoting WBLOs and hands-experience on college websites and individual program sites. Ensure the WBLO class is visible outside of the academic catalog. WBLO classes should be listed on program cards, academic plans (even as an elective), and any marketing for a program. By talking about WBLOs and making sure the opportunities are more visible, senior administration can generate more enthusiasm and capitalize on faculty backing.

Through the interviews, faculty expressed that senior administration did not fully comprehend the amount of coordinating and work embedded within a WBLO. Faculty perceive senior administration to consider WBLOS easy to set up and less work throughout the semester. Several faculty sought acknowledgement from senior administration to concede to the amount of work involved with WBLOs. This simple act would increase their own goodwill. Senior administration must emphasize their support of WBLOs and acknowledge the work that goes into developing the business relationship, obtaining the opportunity, and creating a positive WBLO.

Promote and enable flexibility.

When faculty discussed WBLO practices, being flexible with students and community partners was a mainstay. Prior to the start of this study, determining cross-disciplinary WBLO policies seemed to be a logical step. That can still work, but not the extent initially thought.

Policies cannot be universally or cross-disciplinarily regimented. There is no "one size fits all" solution for these opportunities because, next to proactive advising, flexibility was key to securing WBLOs. Granted, the WBLO must integrate rigorous learning to award academic credit but there also must be enough leniency for the faculty member to be innovative in how they work with the student and community partners. This flexibility is related to the WBLO development and implementation, not the embedded course competencies. For example, one faculty member allowed her full-time working mother to intern at the hospital on the weekend. Another faculty member allowed a WBLO student to work 40 hours a week (as opposed to the normal 10 hours) to complete the internship mid-semester prior to a health obligation. One student rode the bus to school twice a week because of a fear of driving due to being hit by a drunk driver years prior. The faculty member found an on-campus WBLO that tied to the student's program and overall career goals to decrease obstacles. Another faculty member had a good working relationship with an industry partner. The partner called the faculty member and had a big project and could use ten students. The faculty member was assured that the students would learn and not be used for menial tasks. Consequently, the faculty member worked to get the students started in the WBLO mid-semester and allowed the students to complete the remaining hours the following semester. These are

examples of faculty having the freedom to make these decisions. Senior administration can award faculty the ability to make flexible and "outside of the box" decisions to ensure their students have access to a WBLO.

What Can Faculty Do?

Faculty are the main influence for growing WBLOs. There are other potential ways to grow WBLOs, but without student interest, there is little upon which to build. Faculty have direct contact with the students. They are their mentors, advisors, and teacher. It is through those capacities that faculty can take multiple avenues to generate interest among students. There are several intentional paths faculty can pursue to develop WBLOs. Faculty can introduce the idea of a WBLO to a student early in their academic career, they can educate and orientate all stakeholders, practice proactive advising, increase WBLO visibility (similar to senior administration influences), have direct conversations with students about expectations, and be innovative and flexible with the WBLOs.

Early introduction.

The idea of early introduction benefits students and faculty in multiple ways. First, from the standpoint of simplifying faculty's involvement, it provides the student with ample time to find their own placement if they are introduced to the idea in their first semester. Even if the student could complete a WBLO earlier than traditionally allowed (last or penultimate semester), they would have a full semester to look for the site. This would help alleviate faculty coordination in finding the initial placement. Introduce the student to the idea of the WBLO early in their college career through an introduction to college class and/or new student orientation. Help the student think

through potential WBLO sites that may interest them and how to increase the likelihood they will be afforded the opportunity. This can happen through networking, club participation, resume and cover letter workshops, practicing interview skills, and approaching multiple sites.

Early introduction of WBLOs supports student research into their chosen career. By including the student in the search process, they gain a clearer sense of what their career may look like. This can help confirm or dissuade a student from continuing down the same academic career path. Lending further support to the concept of early opportunities is Rosario, Flemister, Gampert, and Grindley (2013), who decided after a high-impact practice, cross-campus collaboration to offer an internship opportunity to first-year students at Hostos Community College as opposed to during their final semester. This practice was deemed a success by the college due to increased student employment and development. Faculty buy-in, student preparation and reaching out to locally-owned businesses supported the growth of the internships from fifty students to three hundred students annually (Rosario et al., 2013, p. 26).

Educate and orientate all stakeholders on benefits.

The three main stakeholders in a WBLO are the student, the people at the site, and the people within the institution. These stakeholders are not all readily aware of how a successful WBLO can benefit them. If faculty members can convey the benefits to business and industry partners and to students, that will generate interest. Faculty can create professional development opportunities to educate their colleagues on the benefits to students and how to incorporate WBLOs into their programs. Faculty can utilize advisory boards and other community events to talk about WBLOs within the community

and nourish relationships for future placements. This will help create meaningful collaboration with business and industry partners. It is important to let the students and community partners help establish practices to meet the determined course competencies. By seeking input from all stakeholders, there is more buy-in and a greater chance of satisfaction.

Proactive advising and increased visibility.

Proactive advising is the most important practice. If a student is unaware of a WBLO, there is little to do to grow the opportunities. Faculty must invest the time to discuss the opportunities and benefits with students. This can be through individual, face-to-face advising sessions, via email, or even in a group or class setting. Creating an environment to promote and embrace WBLOs within an academic program starts with the faculty member conveying the benefits to the student.

In addition to advising, increasing oral and print visibility is vital. By intentionally maneuvering the WBLO to the forefront in marketing, websites, program cards, academic plans, and other avenues, faculty can reach more students. Not only should WBLOs move to the forefront in print, but also at meetings and gatherings. By making WBLOs an agenda item at an advisory meeting or within a division meeting, or creating development opportunities, faculty can signal that that WBLOs are important to them and beneficial to the stakeholders.

Enveloped in proactive advising is the faculty member's ability to have open, candid, conversations with their students. Faculty should feel supported to have honest conversations with students about expectations and potential obstacles for the student in a

work environment. If a student lacks certain soft skills or does not present a professional appearance, discussing potential improvements only benefits the student. It can be a difficulty, but necessary, conversation for a faculty member but supports the student's long-term professional growth.

Flexibility, innovation and responsiveness.

WBLO practices related to flexibility may cause academic traditionalists to balk. However, to allow students the richest learning environment that works with their schedule and with available business opportunities, flexibility is vital to creating a flourishing WBLO environment.

> We do [substitute the internship], sometimes we will work with them as far as if they have a job. We had 1 girl this semester, she worked in a kind of like a Joann's Fabrics type place and she just did checking out and stuff so we had her talk to her employer and said "can I help keep the books, can I help do inventory, can I do all this other stuff" and her employer was willing to work with her so she got to keep her full-time job while doing her internship. We do that a lot.

Working with the timing of the WBLO (second, third, or fourth semester), the site (current employment or other), hourly schedule (nights, weekends, or five hours a day versus three hours a day), and responsibilities (hands-on versus observation) are all ways to increase flexibility. Remaining open to different and innovative ways to help the student obtain hands-on experience is important. If senior administration is supportive of flexibility, faculty feel empowered to be creative when working with students and site expectations and needs.

Future Avenues to Explore Related to WBLOs

Throughout the data collection process, different ideas were discussed. Many of them were important to the faculty member being interviewed. However, not all the

ideas and passions recurred enough to be categorized as a theme as it relates to this study.

To gain an even more holistic understanding of WBLOs, future researchers could explore more topics. The topics to explore include requiring WBLOs, on campus opportunities, general education WBLOs, and the sentiment of anti-vocationalism.

In many programs, especially allied health programs, WBLOs are required. The hands-on, real life experience is necessary to understand the nature of the work. However, when this sentiment was discussed, two faculty members were hesitant. Concerns were the continuous, recurring placement, academically weak students, students with poor social skills, and removing a class from the curriculum to WBLO while external pressures increase to reduce credit hours to a degree.

When faculty members discussed flexibility in WBLOs, on campus opportunities for students were suggested. However, these opportunities were limited to faculty and staff willing to participate. One campus offered an Information Technology (IT) hub staffed by IT students. Students in automotive programs often offered services to employees for a discount. Business students completed work study in the financial aid office. These are ideas of innovative ways to utilize on campus opportunities to support the student in a WBLO. Researching on campus opportunities could support a campus initiative to grow and strengthen WBLOs.

One theme that was briefly discussed but was not dominate was the idea of a WBLO for students in a non-technical program. This study involved faculty in technical programs. In all cases, there were opportunities in the job market that directly tied to the student's career goals. However, it is equally important to provide these opportunities to

students who are not in technical program. WBLOs could help inform students' long-term career goals; however, the idea that vocational, or technical education, is subpar to traditional academe is not a new, or removed, sentiment. O'Neill (2010) describes this as antivocationalism and explains "the idea that addressing career development in the context of the major would 'water down' the curriculum is a powerful one, with deep roots. It reveals a common reaction in academia against anything that smacks of vocationalism or apprenticeship" (p. 7). However, further research indicates that WBLOs are more than a means to acquire and develop skills. They are also an avenue to increase one's vocational self-concept (VSC), professional confidence, and many other positive attributes. Generating buy-in from faculty and staff who have the deep-rooted notion that post-secondary education happens inside the walls of the classroom is a monumental task. Future researchers could explore the idea that traditional classroom learning is perceived to be of a high standard in many realms. This study did not encounter antivocationalism but was also conducted in a community and technical college system and the faculty interviewed were all from technical programs. WBLOs are a tool that can enhance education and support soft skill development. Studying them from multiple angles and researching obstacles can only help to better inform future faculty interested in developing the opportunities for their students.

Chapter 5
Conclusion

By using intentionality in their efforts to grow WBLOs, community college faculty and senior administrators can move the needle. This study offers a holistic understanding of the college's role in developing and implementing WBLOs. Through seventeen faculty interviews, varied practices in developing and implementing WBLOs were explored. Early in the process it became apparent that there was so much to learn. In KCTCS, faculty approached WBLOs from many different angles. By listening to their recommended practices and considering the tensions and obstacles that may arise, future program staff and faculty will be better prepared to implement or expand their WBLO programs. By using intentionality, KCTCS can overcome obstacles and create an environment that allows WBLOs to flourish.

The key findings for KCTCS administrators included assigning someone to be a point of contact for WBLOs, creating a transparent compensation policy for faculty who offer WBLOs, increase written and oral visibility of WBLOs in marketing materials and in campus and community meetings, and empowering faculty to be innovative and flexible in the development and implementation process. Faculty can introduce the idea of a WBLO to their students early in the students' academic career to support the students' ability to plan for the opportunity and begin to think about potential sites. Faculty can also make sure to educate and orientate the student and the community partners and they can proactively advise students to consider the WBLO and associated benefits, and they can strive to be flexible and innovative in their own process. Faculty also need to examine their own practices to see if they can be accommodating to students who are nontraditional. If students are working and caregivers, working around other life

responsibilities would be an integral part to ensuring students are able to take advantage of a WBLO.

Exploring WBLOs in an attempt to support student professional development opportunities was a deliberate and purposeful choice. A recurring theme faculty expressed through interviews were the students' lack of soft skills. WBLOs offer a learning environment to learn about professionalism, how an organization operates, what is and is not acceptable, and how their responsibilities and duties situate themselves in the overall mission of the company. My colleague, Robert Boone, explores this bridging of student cultural capital and workplace capital in more detail, indicating that WBLOs may offer an opportunity for colleges to accelerate student learning in positive ways. By conducting this research, Robert and I hope more students are afforded the opportunity to participate in a WBLO.

Reflection

The process of completing course work and a dissertation for the Educational Policy Studies and Evaluation program at the University of Kentucky had many influences on my life. There were personal influences that mainly revolved around a work and life balance. My support system was how I was able to progress through the program. The greatest influences were on my professional life. I do not believe I have yet seen the impact this process and the earned credential will have on my career. The greatest impact to emerge was my own increased confidence and sense of belonging. Prior to this process, I knew I was a talented faculty member, but I was also fairly new to the world of academia. I believe in my application to the doctorate program, I said I was "just exiting the infancy stage," and the words rang true. This program supported my

growth and as I learned more about education and the researchers in the field, I felt more empowered. It allowed me to feel as though I had more of a voice. I was less fearful of giving my opinions at meetings. I strengthened my academic writing. I realized with this increased knowledge and confidence, I was being asked to do more and lead more initiatives. This process offered me many of the same benefits a WBLO offers students only further strengthening my resolve to ensure students have a similar opportunity. I grew in my confidence, was able to network thought KCTCS, and gained a clearer sense of KCTCS as a whole.

Having recently accepted a position outside of KCTCS, I believe this process has supported me in being a well-rounded employee at different educational institutions. The skills transfer from one institution to another. The knowledge this program has given me has strengthened my employability. I believe I will continue to advance my career and apply the skills I have learned. I strive to move into a position in college administration that will afford me the voice to impact student's lives in a meaningful way.

The EPE cohort design proved to be beneficial. My other classmates became friends and we all leaned on each other at different times. We talked through ideas, research designs, and helped each other navigate the process. Without my classmates, the program would have been harder and more isolated. They also were my KCTCS colleagues and helped to open doors through the process. Robert Boone and Kevin Beardmore became a support system. We edited each other's works, had conference calls to ensure we were all on the right track, and supported and encouraged each other to continue through the program. Going through the process with them has been rewarding. It is necessary to be able to talk through research ideas and designs with someone. They

can help to see potential obstacles or oversights, and this can help to streamline the process. Working on such a monumental task without a support system seems insurmountable. Collaboration was key to completing the coursework, the dissertation, and will no doubt prove to be in any future career moves. This program promoted sensible collaboration further emphasizing the need to be able to work in a group effectively to support productivity.

Appendix I: Informed Consent Forms

Forms Used in the Study

You are invited to participate in a research study by Lauren McCrary, a graduate student in the Department of Educational Policy Studies and Evaluation at the University of Kentucky. The purpose of the study is to explore current work-based learning opportunities (WBLOs) within the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) to gain a better understanding of the how they are established.

You have been invited to participate because you have offered a class that includes a work-based learning component for your student(s) in the 2016-17 academic year. The class is an elective class for the student and your enrollment numbers indicate that you could assist in the exploration of strengths and opportunities related to work-based learning in KCTCS.

The expectation if you choose to participate is to be interviewed face-to-face (or via Skype) about your practices related to your WBLO. The only two expectations of you are to 1) participate in a recorded interview, and 2) provide any curricular documents you determine to be important to your WBLO. It should take approximately sixty minutes for the interview.

The interview will be audio-recorded and transcribed. The transcripts will be uploaded to a qualitative study data management software called ATLAS ti8. From there the transcript will be assigned codes to determine themes. You will be provided these themes via email to confirm accuracy.

There are no potential inconveniences or discomforts related to this interview. There are no guaranteed personal benefits related to this interview.

Any information that is obtained in this study that can be identified with you will remain confidential. You will not be personally identified. When referencing the interview, the interviewee will be identified only by a broad title.

Your participation is voluntary and at any point you may refuse to participate. In addition, you can ask to skip questions during the interview process. There will be no penalty should you decide to no longer participate.

I, _____ _____, have had the opportunity to ask any questions and have received answers. Lauren McCrary is the primary researcher and she can be reached at lauren.mccrary@kctc.edu or 270-686-4593.

Dr. Jane Jensen is the dissertation committee chair and provides guidance throughout the study. Her email address is jjensen@uky.edu.

The Office of Research Integrity staff directory is available online at: http://www.research.uky.edu/ori/staff.htm or you may call the department at 859-257-9428 if you have any concerns.

_____ _____

Signature of person agreeing to take part in the study Date

_____

Printed name of person agreeing to take part in the study

_____ _____

Name of [authorized] person obtaining informed consent Date

Appendix II: Participation Request Email Sample

Hello (Insert Participant's Name),

This email is an invitation to consider participating in a study I am conducting as part of my Doctoral degree in the Department of Educational Policy Studies and Evaluation at the University of Kentucky.

The purpose of the study is to explore influences on the establishment of elective, work-based learning classes. Essentially, how do these classes "come to be?" Some examples of work-based learning classes include internships, co-ops, apprenticeships, and practicums. Your class (insert class title here) falls into this category and your enrollment numbers indicate that you may be able to assist me in further exploring this topic.

I would enjoy the opportunity to talk to your more about this. I want to gain a better understanding of:

- What kind of recruitment tactics are used?
- In what ways are outside stakeholders involved?
- What policies and practices result in student engagement?
- What kinds of opportunities and obstacles are encountered?

Sharing any documents, you consider to be important to your class would also be greatly appreciated (syllabus, assignment descriptions, agreements between any parties, etc.).

If you would be willing to participate, and I hope that you will consider it, I can speak with you at your convenience. Please contact me via email by (insert one business week from the date the email was sent) if you are willing to participate. Also, if you are unwilling to participate, please let me know.

I would like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Research Ethics Review Board both through KCTCS and UK but the decision to participate is yours.

I very much look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your consideration in assisting with this project.

Thank you,

Lauren

Lauren McCrary, Assistant Professor
OCTC Program Coordinator
Medical Information Technology
Administrative Office Technology
Lauren.mccrary@kctcs.edu
270-686-4593

Appendix III: Interview Protocols

Interview Protocol for Instructors of Work-Based Learning Opportunities: A Need for Intentional Design

Provide introduction (see Email Participation Request) and informed consent (see Informed Consent Forms).

During the instructor interviews, the following numbered questions were constructed by the researcher to help to guide the process. These questions will serve as markers for areas to discuss. The intended goal of each question (a) is also discussed as well as how it will be recognized (b) by the researcher. There are additional subquestions (c) to probe the instructors if a question does not initially engage the participant.

It is important to note that many of these questions are yes/no questions. In those cases, a follow up "why" and prodding questions will be used as needed.

1. Tell me about your (insert WBLO course title here).
    a. The goal of this question is to start the interview with the instructor describing the WBLO. It is purposely open to gain an understanding of what topics related to the WBLO the instructor deems important.
    b. There is no recognizable marker for this question to ascertain the goal has been reached. It is simply to see what the instructor wants to talk about related to their WBLO.
    c. Probing subquestions (as needed)
        i. How did it come about?
        ii. What are your goals for it?
        iii. Do you have any personal experiences with a WBLO?

2. What do you think drives your enrollment in (insert WBLO course title here)?
    a. The goal of this question is to determine the factors the instructor thinks influence their enrollments. One of the expected themes is support systems and understanding them is important to future growth. Additionally, is the instructor driven by intrinsic influences (they see the benefit and growth in the student) or extrinsically (the are compensated satisfactorily or industry drives the enrollment)?
    b. The goal will be recognized when the instructor has a candid conversation about what motivates them to have the higher enrollment in their WBLOs
    c. Probing subquestions (as needed)
        i. Do you promote and recruit for it? If so, how?
        ii. What are the expected skills that students need for employment in this field? How important is prior work experience for the student's employment in the field?
        iii. Do your business and industry partners encourage student learning at the site? If not, how do you garner support for new sites for your students? How do you keep stakeholders involved?
        iv. What administrative support do you or the students receive? Compensation?
        v. What else might bring students to this WBLO? What might discourage their enrollment?
        vi. Who most supports your WBLOs?
3. Tell me about what you do before the class even starts.

a. The goal of this question is to understand how the instructor prepares for the class. Do they work to establish partners in the community and how do they nurture the student and site relationships? What is their thought process and expected outcomes behind the assignments they develop?
b. It will be recognized when the researcher has a clear understanding of what the instructor does to form and create placement opportunities and what is involved.
c. Probing subquestions (as needed)
    i. How do you engage the students and get them interested?
    ii. How do students find placements?
    iii. What types of interactions do you have with people at the placement site/s?
    iv. When does the student first interact with the site?
    v. What paperwork is required? Agreements? Student contract? Polices? Procedures?
    vi. What types of formal or informal orientation occurs for the stakeholders (student and site supervisor)?

4. What happens in the class?
    a. The goal is to understand how involved the instructor is in the site/student relationship.
    b. It will be recognized when the instructor completes their narrative of the class activities. Whether it is a detailed narrative, or a brief narrative will be indicative of their involvement.

c. Probing subquestions (as needed)

    i. Assignments? The “why” behind them? (reflection)

        1. Possibly use their documents as prompts

    ii. Other expectations? (e.g., introductory interview or thank you note)

    iii. What types of evaluation or assessment?

5. What are the advantages you see for your students enrolled in a WBLO?

    a. The goal is to ascertain how important the instructor deems the WBLO to the growth of the student and the development of their soft skills.

    b. It will be recognized by the instructor’s impression of the students’ growth during the WBLO.

    c. Probing subquestions (as needed)

        i. Do they seem more professional?

        ii. Do they have a better understanding of their career field and related expectations?

        iii. What are the challenges for you? The student? The site supervisor?

6. Is there anything else you would like to share with me that you think influences your enrollment?

    a. The goal is to see if there are any areas the researcher neglected to discuss that the instructor deems important.

    b. There is no recognizable marker for this question to ascertain the goal has been reached.

    c. Probing subquestions (as needed)

i. What are some strengths about how your WBLO is set up?

ii. Where do you encounter obstacles?

iii. The student experiences?

iv. Your community partnerships?

Other obstacles/success related to enrollment?

Appendix IV: Confidentiality Agreement for use with Transcription Services

Research Study Title: [insert your study title here]

1. I, _____ transcriptionist, agree to maintain full confidentiality of all research data received from the research team related to this research study.

2. I will hold in strictest confidence the identity of any individual that may be revealed during the transcription of interviews or in any associated documents.

3. I will not make copies of any audio-recordings, video-recordings, or other research data, unless specifically requested to do so by the researcher.

4. I will not provide the research data to any third parties without the client's consent.

5. I will store all study-related data in a safe, secure location as long as they are in my possession.

6. All data provided or created for purposes of this agreement, including any back-up records, will be returned to the research team or permanently deleted. When I have received confirmation that the transcription work I performed has been satisfactorily completed, any of the research data that remains with me will be returned to the research team or destroyed, pursuant to the instructions of the research team.

_____

Transcriber's name (printed) Date

_____

Transcriber's signature Date

Form adapted from The University of Chicago's Social and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board

Appendix V: Work-based Learning Thematic Analysis

THEMATIC	DESCRIPTIVE
Obstacles related to WBLOs	
Faculty are disillusioned and lack confidence in students' abilities to successfully navigate a WBLO.	Challenging students Faculty skepticism and buy-in towards offering their programmatic WBLOs Soft skill development Lack soft skills Online concerns Improve soft skills through WBLO No desire to use a WBLO Student perspective toward WBLOs
Faculty do not feel supported to utilize WBLOs.	Level of involvement from senior leadership No support but not bothered by it No support and faculty question why they are doing it Not doing it because of lack of support Support geared towards manufacturing Varying degrees of backing for support staff Have support staff Role of the support staff Don't have support staff See the need for support staff Do not see the need for support staff Slow decision making/ processes by senior administration Compensation Overload pay or part of course load No compensation or internal service How does this impact course offerings (see faculty motivation)?

Logistics play an integral role in WBLOs utilization.	Coordination WBLO availability Available credit hours Time and prioritization based on demands made of faculty Time and prioritization based on student's personal obligations Liability
WBLOs hold faculty accountable by ensuring the program curriculum is current/relevant or highlighting classroom complacency.	Faculty accountability
Developing the WBLOs	
Accessibility to WBLOs is influenced by faculty background and work experience, particularly in the locality of the college	Faculty background/ employment history Insider Speaking the technical and hometown language (who knows who) Outsider Demographics
Faculty who work closely with the advisory board and community are more likely to support WBLOs.	Composition of advisory board (is it a box to check or is the coordinator actively seeking input?) Active members Maintain the status quo Participation obstacles related to logistics Students and former students The role of the advisory board Maintain program relevancy Soft skill and employability development Encourage WBLOs Relationship with business partners Community support
Faculty who utilize WBLOs are internally motivated (student benefits) not externally (course reduction or monetary gain).	

	Faculty goals for the student Student benefits Increase confidence Develop a network and strengthen employability Job Placement Career clarity
Faculty actively using the WBLO maintain that it is labor-intensive.	Marketing/ recruiting for WBLOs Word of mouth Using a success story Communication Avenues Recruitment personnel Do not promote or recruit Proactive advising Treat it as a requirement Discuss it as an option Tie it to a job Do not discuss Faculty involvement at the site Frequency offered/ delivery method Flexibility Receptive to student circumstances Adaptable to industry needs Placements Placing the "good" students Placements driven by all stakeholders Placement process
Implementing the WBLO	
Stakeholder preparation increases likelihood of satisfaction from all involved (versus leaving it up to chance).	Program and the site relationship Interaction with people in the field Student responsibility Orientation

There are high impact practices related to WBLOs	Business and Industry benefits "Test drive" the student Develop talent in current employees Develop future employee pipeline WBLO student requirements (forms, assignments, hours) Reflection Paid/unpaid/co-op Poor site
Other (parking lot)	
	Cross disciplinary coordination Requiring WBLOs On campus opportunities AA/AS WBLOs

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Vita

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EDUCATION

Western Kentucky University — Bowling Green, Kentucky
Master of Public Administration — January 2010- May 2012
Public Administration

University of Kentucky — Lexington, Kentucky
Bachelor of Science — August 2001-May 2004
Merchandising, Apparel and Textiles

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

CHIEF OF STAFF — February 2019-Current
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT
Brescia University — June 2018-Current

PROGRAM COORDINATOR for Medical Information Technology and Administrative Office Technology
Owensboro Community and Technical College — August 2012-July 2018
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR — 2018-2018
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR — 2015-2018
INSTRUCTOR — 2012-2015

Lifeline *COMMUNITY OUTREACH MANAGER*
Owensboro Medical Health System — September 2009-July 2012

Men's Express *STORE MANAGER* — March 2003-May 2008

AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

- Awarded the Dissertation Enhancement Award by the Department of Educational Policy Studies and Evaluation faculty at the University of Kentucky (2018)
- Awarded the Arvle and Ellen Turner Thacker Endowment Fund by the Student and Faculty Recognition Committee through the University of Kentucky (2018)
- KCTCS Innovative Educator (2016)
- "Making a Difference for the Most Students" recipient (2015-1016)