

## Work-Based Learning across Vermont: Practitioners Share Best Practices

In July of 2013 the General Assembly of the State of Vermont enacted Act 77: Flexible Pathways to Secondary School Completion in order to foster a system of public education in which every student graduates college and career ready. One flexible pathway opportunity articulated in Act 77 is work-based learning. Work-based learning is an educational program or experience involving student interactions with industry or community professionals in real, virtual, online, or simulated work environments that exposes learners to postsecondary options, provides opportunities for skill development and proficiency attainment, and allows students to reinforce and deepen their school-based learning. Through work-based learning experiences, educational programs can become more relevant, rigorous, challenging, and rewarding.



Image: Students working in a WBL deployed classroom.



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On January 23<sup>rd</sup>, educators from the field were invited to present in a [WBL Collaborative webinar](#). The purpose of the webinar was to advance the sharing of effective practices around work-based learning programs in Vermont and to collectively brainstorm issues regarding education and workforce relationships. Ken Cadow, Director of Career Pathways and Workforce Development, Randolph High School shared The Deployed Classroom: The Meeting of Graduation Standards with and through the Working World. Ellen Berrings, Employment/Transition Specialist and Rachel Potts, Internship and Transition Coordinator, Harwood Union High School shared The Next Step Program: Aligning Graduate Expectations to Work Based Learning. To learn more about Work-Based Learning best practices, visit the [WBL webpage](#)

## Digging Deep Expert Series Kicks Off In April!

This spring, the VT PLN will be offering two professional learning series to energize efforts and educator practices. Andy Hargreaves will be facilitating a two-day series focused on leveraging collaboration to effect powerful, lasting change in our schools. Allison Zmuda will lead a two-day session focused on creating student-centered learning experiences.

For more information, click on the links below:

[Andy Hargreaves \(April 10, 2018 and June 19, 2018\)](#)

[Allison Zmuda \(May 2 & 3, 2018\)](#)



## Question of the Month

### HOW CAN PORTFOLIOS SUPPORT PERSONALIZED LEARNING PLANS?

Portfolios have long been used with students in Vermont. We've come to understand that student learning portfolios have a tremendous potential for all students to demonstrate and reflect upon their learning in a way that is genuine and authentic. Portfolios can be used at a number of levels. They can be for a course, a content area, a grade span, or a whole career. The best portfolios are not only reflections and demonstrations of learning but also celebrations.

A portfolio is a great tool in a personalized, proficiency-based system because it is the perfect balance of guidance and freedom. Nearly every decision around the portfolio is up to the student, but the goals (also set by the student, in conversation with advisors) are clear and actionable, and hold the student accountable. The portfolio also has an intuitive strength. It makes sense that a student should gather their best work and reflect on it at key points in their learning. For stakeholders, parents, or community members, portfolios make sense. If you would like to learn more, be sure to explore our Practices In Personalized, Proficiency-Based Learning self-paced course, which you can find on the [our VT PLN website](#).

## How to Use Self-Paced Courses

All of the self-paced courses are designed to address the implementation of Education Quality Standards with fidelity. Completing an entire course should take approximately 6 to 14 hours in total. The courses have been designed to meet needs of practitioners based on their role, experience level, and goals regarding the topic under study. They are divided into series of questions so that users can either quickly find a resource that meets their needs or spend a longer period of time delving more deeply into a topic. Each addresses a question of practice and has tasks for the learner to complete, either by answering a prompt or engaging in reflection. To learn more about using self-paced courses, visit the [How to Use Self-Paced Courses webpage](#).

## Vermont Stories

### DIGGING DEEP EXPERT SERIES: FOSTERING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING IN VERMONT

During the 2016-17 Digging Deep Expert Series, Dr. Karin Hess led four days of learning on research-based frameworks, practices, and tools for personalized, proficiency-based learning. Click on the link to find a [brief video](#) about her time with educators in Vermont last spring. A district leader expressed that, "I brought a team of people from three different schools, three people from each school to the Digging Deep series to learn more about proficiency-based learning...getting the professional development to help guide us, because we've had different people have had bits and pieces of PD, but to have everyone in the same room hearing the same thing, and then to think about the entry point for them has been really powerful."

To learn more and to find resources for using this video as a learning tool with your team, check out [our VT PLN website](#).

## We Want to Feature You

Have an awesome photo, story, or resource that you think other Vermont educators would benefit from? Email us at [vtclg@ccebos.org](mailto:vtclg@ccebos.org).

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The Professional Learning Network (VT-PLN) is a statewide system to address the need for a coordinated, cohesive, and consistent approach to professional learning across the state with an emphasis on geographic equity and comparable quality articulated in one specific scope of work.