Real World Learning

Client-Connected Projects
An asset to guide your thinking
Quick Exercise

Jot down an idea for a client-connected project.

It could be
• One you’re already engaged in
• One you’d like to launch

Think about some of the necessary elements and steps to put in place
Building Client-Connected Projects

- Definition and Value
- MVA Criteria
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Project Content
- Project Process
- Student Approach
What are Client-Connected Projects? What value do they provide?

Client-Connected Projects are... Authentic problems which students solve in collaboration with professionals from industry, not-for-profit, or community-based organizations.

Client-Connected Projects provide value for...

**Students**
- Authentic project work
- Increase in professional network
- School credit

**Educators**
- Authentic project ideas
- Exposure to industry trends and expectations
- Stepping stone for future internships

**Clients**
- Access to emerging talent
- Increased awareness of client organization
- Leadership development opportunity for client liaison
What are the MVA Criteria for Client-Connected Projects?

Client-Connected Projects are MVA-level experiences when they are...

- Sourced (at least sponsored) by the client
- Supplementary to students’ professional network
- Resume-worthy (meaningful)
- At least 24 hours worth of work, with at least 4 hours engaged with client
- Jointly evaluated
What are potential roles and responsibilities?

**Students**
Learners
Will do the work
Responsible for self-management (attendance, effort, engagement)
Contact for direct feedback on project work

**Client Liaison**
Employer Representative
Will initiate/validate and react to the work
Responsible for initiating project prompt and evaluating student performance throughout process, will work hand-in-hand with Facilitator/Coach
Contact for feedback on job performance

**Facilitator/Coach**
Educator/Guide
Will “coach the daily work”
Responsible for helping students manage the project work and internalize lessons, will work hand-in-hand with Client Liaison
Contact for feedback on overall student performance and learning

**Subject Matter Experts**
Informal Consultants
Will serve as primary resource for industry know-how
Responsible for making sure students’ approach is viable

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What should be considered in planning the content of the project? Who should lead?

To plan the work of the project, the Facilitator/Coach and the Client Liaison should work hand-in-hand while considering the following:

1. Evaluate Work
   - What work is available?
   - Is work appropriate for student involvement?
   - Which work optimizes student and organizational needs?
   - Who would be most appropriate to serve as the primary client contact?

2. Set Appropriate Goals
   - What would make this client project experience a success for the employer?
   - Which critical skills can be developed throughout this project?
     - Self-directed learning
     - Adaptive problem solving
     - Project management
     - Documenting problem-solving process
     - Communicate and collaborate
     - Create value for others
     - Seek and use feedback

3. Set Project Expectations
   - Establish project parameters to help students understand the project and plan execution
     - Key Challenge/Problem Statement
     - Student Goals
     - Engagement with SMEs
     - Feedback and Reflection Cycle
     - Documentation of Approach
     - Finished Product

4. Create Timeline
   - Establish key milestones for students
   - Ideate back-up plans for any surprises
What would the process look like for everyone?

Consider this process outline as you plan the phases, roles, and respective activities throughout the project.
How could students approach the project?

Within the greater process, set the conditions and expectations around regular consultation with the client, and iteration.

- Project Content
- Level-setting
- Project Work
  - Refine: Solicit feedback from Facilitator/Coach, SME, Client
  - Design: Form hypothesis on problem statement
  - Build: Create solution
- Delivery
- Post-work

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Definition and Value

MVA Criteria

Roles and Responsibilities

Project Content

Project Process

Student Approach

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