Dimensions of Mentoring

A Handbook For Union Mentors Who Are Participating In A Union/Employer-Sponsored Student Internship Program
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Welcome to your important role as a union mentor within a union and employer-sponsored student internship program! This booklet is a tool to help you get started in your capacity as a mentor. Each student intern will also receive a companion “Student Guide” which will help the intern better understand your role as a mentor and how to get the most out of this special work-based learning program.

Your intern’s working experience in your worksite may be the only chance he or she gets to learn about the many skilled career opportunities in your industry. It may also be his or her first experience in a unionized workplace and first introduction to the concepts of “working union” and “being union.” It is up to you, the mentor, to ensure that your assigned intern receives a warm and welcoming introduction to both your worksite and your union.

During the course of the internship, you will want to introduce the student not only to your specific occupational title and its skill requirements but also to the wide array of other jobs and occupational paths that are a part of your overall place of employment. Also, if the student wants to observe another aspect of the workplace, try to arrange for this to happen. In addition, be sure to familiarize the student with your union’s structure and your current union contract. Talk about the union’s commitment to worker training; workplace safety; family-sustaining wages and benefits; and dignity, respect, and a worker voice on the job. Also, if possible, invite the intern to a union meeting if one is scheduled during the course of the internship.

Overall, this is an opportunity for you, and your sponsoring union, to make a difference in a young person’s life – and it should be a rewarding experience for both you and your assigned intern.

This booklet has been adapted from material used in the training of union mentors and the orientation of student interns in the IBEW’s “School-to-Work on the High Road” Project. It is designed to be used with any joint union and employer-sponsored student internship and mentoring program. In using or adapting this booklet, credit should be given to the IBEW®. Much of this material was originally developed by the Massachusetts Community Colleges and the Massachusetts Office of School-to-Work Transition. Specific source references are included in individual sections of this booklet.
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I. Introduction to Mentoring

Your interest in serving your union and community as a worksite mentor for a young person attests to your willingness and ability to help others in the workplace. Yet each of us has different ways of providing this help.

Your Mentoring Style

The following exercise identifies different approaches to helping friends and co-workers that union mentors bring to the mentoring program. Read the following statements and rate each on a scale of 5 to 1 with:

5 = this statement is very true for me
through
1 = this statement is not at all true for me

Section A

☐ Co-workers often come to me for help with “how-to” questions, such as how to use particular equipment, how to fill out paperwork and forms, or how to use computer applications.

☐ I’m often viewed as an expert in certain aspects of the job.

☐ People often turn to me for tips on areas of mutual interest (such as gardening, carpentry, or sports).

☐ I enjoy reading “how to” books or magazines about areas of personal interest.

☐ When others ask me how to do something, I take the time to demonstrate for them and/or have them do it themselves while I explain what to do step-by-step.

☐ I enjoy teaching others or explaining how to do things.

☐ Total points for Section A
Section B

- People frequently turn to me with personal concerns when they want someone to listen.
- I am usually aware of any personal concerns that may affect my co-workers or fellow union members.
- I am usually the one in my office who sends cards or flowers to co-workers.
- I believe that work life and personal life are closely intertwined.
- I have a talent for knowing when to listen and when to talk.
- I can often help others solve problems simply by asking them the right questions and getting them to think of answers and solutions.

Total points for Section B

Section C

- Co-workers and fellow union members often look to me for advice on dealing with supervisors or other departments.
- Co-workers and friends come to me to talk about career-related decisions.
- Friends and acquaintances often contact me for ideas when they are job hunting.
- I often think about my own career direction and/or read about jobs and careers.
- I am good at recognizing and drawing out other people’s talents.
- I take pleasure in helping others set goals and achieve those goals.

Total points for Section C
Add your points in each of the three sections. In which section did you have the most points? In which did you have the next to most points? The fewest points?

**Section A/Skills Focus.** Section A describes a person who enjoy helping friends and co-workers obtain skills to succeed in the workplace. The skills-focused person tends to value the concrete. He or she enjoys challenges at work, likes learning new skills, and takes pleasure in helping others to do the same. This person tends to have good instructional skills and knows how to use a variety of techniques to teach others. As a mentor, the skills-focused person provides student interns with a work experience rich in interesting and challenging activities.

**Section B/Personal Focus.** Section B describes a person who tends to focus on helping friends and co-workers on a personal level. This person is comfortable listening to others and encourages friends and co-workers to talk about whatever is on their mind. This person is usually talented as an advisor, helping others solve problems simply by asking the right questions and helping the other person to talk out the problem. As a mentor, this individual helps to provide a supportive work environment in which the student intern can adjust to the world of work.

**Section C/Career Focus.** Section C describes a person who places a high value on career development, both in his or her own life planning and in an approach to helping others. The career-focused person enjoys planning for the future, likes gathering information to support this planning, and naturally finds career development issues interesting. The career-focused person tends to have good planning skills, and, as a mentor, will inspire a student intern to set goals and will provide the support and information needed to help the student start pursuing these goals.

- **My strongest area**

- **Second strongest area**

- **Third strongest area**

These three areas represent three key dimensions of mentoring. Each mentor will bring different interests and skills to the mentoring relationship, based on his or her unique mentoring style.
What Is A Mentor?

A mentor is a:

➤ Role model
  • Provides a model of appropriate workplace behavior and work ethic
  • Is someone the student will respect
  • Demonstrates a positive attitude

➤ Teacher
  • Helps the student to acquire knowledge, information, and skills
  • Participates in learning with the student
  • Offers constructive criticism
  • Encourages the student to set goals and make plans on how to achieve them

➤ Companion
  • Spends time with the student
  • Shares interests and experiences with the student
  • Enjoys being with the student
  • Conveys caring about the student

➤ Support
  • Listens to the ideas and concerns of the student
  • Shows interest in the success of the student
  • Encourages the student to overcome obstacles
  • Expresses confidence in the efforts of the student

➤ Resource
  • Provides opportunities for new experiences
  • Introduces student to new people, places, ideas
  • Suggests new sources of information

Original source: Cape Cod Community College (Massachusetts)
2. The Role of the Union Mentor

Mentors in union/employer-sponsored student internship programs are selected by the union based on their willingness to serve in this capacity, their interest in working with a student intern, and other factors as determined by the union. Not every worker has a desire or temperament for working with a teenager. Therefore, first and foremost, the mentor should want to serve in this role. Workplace mentors can and should play specific roles in helping students in their skill development, personal development, and career development, as listed below.

A Mentor Should:

- Introduce intern to all aspects of the industry – including unions, labor-management relations, and worker rights.
- Assist intern with career options and career plans.
- Help intern develop job skills – particularly transferable job skills.
- Help intern develop good work habits and attitudes.
- What else? What other roles should a union mentor play in mentoring a student intern as part of a work-based learning program?

Original source: Middlesex Community College (Massachusetts)
Some Common Sense Ground Rules for the Mentoring Relationship

Start by defining the working relationship. As you begin your mentoring experience with your student intern, set mutual goals and define how you will work together. These goals can change and evolve over time, but you should have some goals set from the start. In addition, adhere to the following basic “ground rules” to help you develop and maintain a successful working relationship:

➢ Maintain mutual respect. Maintain mutual consideration and respect for each other. Both the student and the union mentor are bringing a valuable contribution to this work experience and mentoring relationship. Listen, ask questions, and be open to learning new things.

➢ Understand your role clearly. A strength of mentoring is that it is an unstructured relationship – you are free to set your own goals. But it is important to define the relationship as a professional working relationship focused on the workplace and on career development. A union-mentoring relationship should not try to resemble other non-work-related relationships, such as parent-child, teacher-student, or counselor-counselee relationships. Nor should a union mentor be cast in the role of management or “boss.” As a union mentor you will guide, direct, and even critique the intern’s work, but you are also the intern’s union peer, not “the boss.”

➢ Use common sense. Union mentors and students should follow common sense in their work experience. This means, for example, avoiding any unsafe behavior. For students, it means following the same rules that apply on school property and keeping people informed about your whereabouts during working hours and breaks. If in doubt about anything, be certain to ask. Students should consult first with the mentor and then, as needed, use established union procedures to report any workplace concerns, problems, or incidents.

➢ Maintain confidentiality. Mentors and students should respect any confidential information that is shared, whether this information consists of personal thoughts, information about workplace issues, or concerns about school or career. Students will be consulted about any referrals made on their behalf.

Original source: Bunker Hill Community College (Massachusetts)
Getting Started: The First Meeting

The first meeting between the student intern and the mentor is a time to get acquainted and outline initial expectations. Here are some tips for mentors for making your first introduction to your assigned intern a positive experience:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tip</th>
<th>Advice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Don’t try to accomplish too much.</td>
<td>The first meeting (or first day of work/orientation) is just a time to meet, get acquainted, and outline initial expectations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be yourself.</td>
<td>Don’t try to be someone you are not in order to impress the student. Be yourself; your genuineness will be appreciated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiate conversation.</td>
<td>Initiate conversation. Ask open-ended questions that encourage detailed answers instead of yes and no.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be a good listener.</td>
<td>Be a good listener, don’t interrupt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep an open mind.</td>
<td>Don’t judge the student based on appearance or first impressions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be respectful.</td>
<td>Adolescents appreciate adults who are not condescending.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show sincere interest.</td>
<td>Show sincere interest in the student and enthusiasm for your role as mentor.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conversation starters
- School and hobbies
- Present job and future career goals
- What attracted the student to this internship?
- Union knowledge and experience: What does the student know about unions and unionized workers?
- Expectations: What does the student hope to gain from the program? What is expected of the student and mentor?
- Suggest keeping notebooks to record activities, ideas, thoughts, and goals
Remember: The first meeting between the mentor and student is a time to get acquainted. It is also a time to establish a trusting relationship. At some point during the first meeting, the mentor should describe the aspect of confidentiality. This should include explaining that the questions, ideas, and thoughts discussed during your work together will not be shared with others.

Original source: Cape Cod Community College (Massachusetts)

The Job Description

A key to success in a workplace internship for a young person is how well the student understands the occupation of the mentor (which generally is the job to which the student will be assigned during the internship). The intern’s actual work contribution should add value to the specific worksite to which the student is assigned – without displacing, replacing or taking away work or earning opportunities from another full-time worker and union member. The job should also provide opportunities for learning so the student can use this job as a stepping stone to future work in this industry or career field, if he or she chooses to do so. Also, the job should have a balanced mix of duties – both challenging work and more routine tasks – so the orientation and “learning curve” are manageable for both the student and the mentor.

The following questions and checklist can be helpful tools for mentors as you prepare to welcome and successfully integrate the intern into your worksite and work flow. Mentors should not hesitate to ask for support, input, and accommodation as needed from your supervisors and co-workers.
Planning For What The Intern Should Do: A Checklist

Comments…

- My intern has been provided with a current description of my job (if applicable to the intern’s work assignment).

- The job adds value to the worksite.
  - The job duties are necessary
  - The student will have enough work
  - The work clearly contributes to worksite goals

- The job provides opportunities to:
  - Apply academic skills to the workplace
  - Observe different aspects of the workplace
  - Perform challenging tasks

- The job provides a mix of tasks:
  - Including challenging/new tasks
  - Including easier-to-learn, routine tasks
  - Training/learning needs are manageable
In addition to a formal employer-provided job description for your job, you can work directly with your assigned intern to do your own job analysis. The box that follows provides a worksheet for such an exercise. Sharing this job analysis exercise with the student at the very beginning of the internship can be a good ice-breaker as well as an excellent one-to-one orientation tool.

### Job Analysis Worksheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Title:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary Duties:</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic Skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>Required:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Soft” Skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Available:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needed:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Comments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Observations</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Teaching Specific Technical Tasks to a Young Learner

Workplace trainers within the U.S. Army have suggested the following four-step approach for teaching specific tasks or skills to young learners. These basic techniques might be helpful to union mentors also as you plan how to teach and demonstrate your workplace skills and knowledge to your assigned intern during the course of the internship.

4 Steps for Teaching Worksite Tasks

1. Preparation
   Prepare the materials, worksite, yourself, and the young learner.

2. Presentation and Demonstration
   Introduce the task; demonstrate while providing an explanation of what you are doing; point out different things to be considered.

3. Tryout
   Have the learner try the task; ask him or her to explain the steps. Provide positive feedback; be patient and allow sufficient time to complete the task.

4. Follow-up
   Provide an opportunity to ask questions; review materials; check back.
Coaching vs. Supervising

A union mentor is not meant to be an intern’s “supervisor.” While the student clearly is a “learner” and the internship is designed as a workplace learning experience with the mentor as a coach or a guide, you should also treat the intern with the same dignity and respect as any other co-worker and fellow union member. As you move through the internship experience, ask yourself: If an outside party were to ask your assigned intern who his or her worksite supervisor is, what would your intern say?

What is the difference between a mentor and a supervisor? The following exercise will help you, as the mentor, determine how you perceive these different roles.

Supervisor or Mentor? – An Exercise

Write an S next to the behaviors you associate with a supervisor. Then circle the behaviors you associate with an effective coach or mentor. Do the two overlap? Where? Add any additional attributes of being an effective mentor that are missing from this list.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expect mistakes</th>
<th>Expects good performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focuses on the person</td>
<td>Focuses on performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focuses on problems</td>
<td>Focuses on how to do better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tells what is wrong</td>
<td>Asks what caused something to go wrong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directs, tells</td>
<td>Demonstrates, teaches, observes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Points out errors</td>
<td>Describes outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reacts to defensiveness</td>
<td>Accepts defensiveness as normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personalizes comments</td>
<td>Objective, factual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deals with symptoms</td>
<td>Deals with root causes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts too soon, too late or never</td>
<td>Acts in a timely fashion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts where the problem arises</td>
<td>Selects a private setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses power to produce results</td>
<td>Recognizes that power intimidates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeks ideas only when needed</td>
<td>Encourages initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commends acceptable work</td>
<td>Commends only outstanding work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expects improvement as norm</td>
<td>Rewards improvement as special</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Seven Communication and Mentoring Techniques

Good communication is the key ingredient for a successful mentor-internship experience. Solid communication skills are also a key to long-term success for your student intern. Therefore, as you practice the communication techniques listed below, you will also be providing a wonderful behavioral model and some lasting lessons for your student intern.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technique</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active listening</td>
<td>Highly attentive listening: including maintaining eye contact, using attentive body language, and listening and repeating back what you heard, thereby encouraging further discussion.</td>
<td>Encourages open discussion of thoughts and questions; shows concern and respect; avoids judging speaker or shifting focus to one’s own concerns or experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking questions</td>
<td>Asking simple questions to encourage further discussion of a topic. Tone of voice should be objective and polite; questions should be open-ended to encourage conversation.</td>
<td>Encourages open discussion of thoughts and questions; helps the student analyze a situation, develop solutions, and make well-thought-out decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing feedback</td>
<td>In providing both positive and corrective feedback, be specific; focus on the output rather than the person. With corrective feedback, explain what can be done differently rather than what was done wrong.</td>
<td>Student can learn from specific feedback; by focusing on specifics and on remedies, student’s self-esteem is not tied to day-to-day performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modeling behaviors</td>
<td>Share information about how you handle common challenges, such as organizing your morning to arrive at work on time or handling a difficult job situation.</td>
<td>This technique helps you think through how you handle challenges; it also helps the student consider additional options for handling similar challenges.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Communication Tips and Techniques for Union Mentors (continued)**

| **Visual communication and demonstration** | Demonstrate skills or techniques, give tours of various work areas, draw a sketch or diagram to communicate an idea, or provide printed materials about topics of interest. | Use a variety of communication methods to facilitate understanding of a topic or task. |
| **Body language (non-verbal cues)** | Use an open posture, relaxed expression, and good eye contact to convey a positive message. Smile, nod head, and use other cues to communicate a supportive, caring, and understanding attitude. | Awareness of body language and other non-verbal cues is important for mentors (so they can convey a positive message) and for interns (who can learn about the messages and image they present in the workplace). |
| **Choice of language and vocabulary** | Use positive and respectful language and vocabulary. Use soft, clear tone of voice. | Thoughtful choice of language shows respect for others, a willingness to listen, and, most of all, conveys the message that language matters in the workplace. |

Original source: Bunker Hill Community College (Massachusetts)
Skills for Workplace Success – The SCANS Report

If you hear educators or workplace trainers talk about preparing young people for workplace success, you are likely to hear reference to the SCANS report (or SCANS skills). This report, produced by the U.S. Department of Labor through the Secretary’s Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, describes the knowledge and “foundation skills” needed by young adults entering the workplace in order to secure a good job at good wages. Many student internship programs and other work-based learning initiatives have been prompted by a common desire among school and workplace partners to devise successful, hands-on strategies for introducing students to various SCANS skills.

The core competencies highlighted in the SCANS report are briefly described in the box below. As a union mentor, you can think about what aspects of your own job are dependent on the achievement of SCANS skills, and you can consider what ways you can introduce these skills to your assigned intern. Mentors also can discuss with students how these same skills apply to being a good union leader or a successful union organizer or negotiator.

The SCANS Competencies

Resources: Identifies, organizes and allocates resources.

A. Time: Selects goal-relevant activities, ranks them, allocates time, and prepares and follows schedules.
B. Money: Uses or prepares budgets, makes forecasts, keeps records, and makes adjustments.
C. Materials and Facilities: Acquires, stores, allocates, and uses materials or space efficiently.
D. Human Resources: Assesses skills, distributes work accordingly, evaluates performance, gives feedback.
**Interpersonal: Works with others.**

A. Participates as Member of the Team: contributes to group effort.
B. Teaches Others New Skills.
C. Serves Clients/Customers: works to meet or exceed the customer’s expectations.
D. Exercises Leadership: communicates ideas to justify position, persuades and convinces others, responsibly challenges existing procedures and policies.

**Information: Acquires and uses information.**

A. Acquires and Evaluates Information.
B. Organizes and Maintains Information.
C. Interprets and Communicates Information.
D. Uses Computers to Process Information.

**Systems: Understands complex inter-relationships.**

A. Understands Systems: knows how social, organizational, and technological systems work and operates effectively with them.
B. Monitors and Corrects Performance: distinguishes trends, predicts effect on system operations, diagnoses deviations in system’s performance and corrects malfunctions.
C. Improves or Designs Systems: suggests modifications to existing systems and develops new or alternative systems to improve performance.

**Technology: Works with a variety of technologies.**

A. Selects Technology: chooses procedures, tools or equipment, including computers and related technologies.
B. Applies Technology to Task: Understands overall intent and proper procedures for setup and operation of equipment.
C. Maintains and Troubleshoots Equipment: Prevents, identifies, or solves problems with equipment, including computers and other technologies.
3. All Aspects of the Industry

One of the key elements of a School-to-Work (or School-to-Career) student internship and work-based learning initiative is a focus on helping students learn about all aspects of an industry. “All aspects of an industry” can include the following elements that are common to all industries or sectors: Planning • Management • Finance • Technical and production skills • Underlying principles of technology • Labor issues • Community issues • Health, safety and environmental issues. These eight aspects are further described below.

All Aspects of Industry – Eight Core Elements

Planning: Examined both at the industry level and at the firm level; various forms of ownership, including cooperatives and worker ownership; relationship of the industry to economic, political, and social context; the specifics of business plans, product development, market analysis.

Management: Methods typically used to manage enterprises over time within the industry; methods of organizing work and managing workers, including methods for expanding and diversifying workers’ tasks and broadening worker involvement in decisions; management styles and philosophy within the company and industry.

Finance: Ongoing accounting and financial decisions; different methods for raising capital to start or expand enterprises; the financial environment of the industry.

Technical and production skills: Specific production techniques; how to organize workflow, including methods which diversify and rotate workers’ jobs; computer applications used in the industry; use of technology in design, quality control, and production; how to choose among available technologies.
**Underlying principals of technology:** Broad principles of technology; mathematical, scientific, historical, social, and economic context; how new technology is developed and implemented; how technology impacts the workplace.

**Labor issues:** Workers’ rights and responsibilities; labor-management relations and collective bargaining; labor unions and labor history; methods for expanding workers’ roles; skills used in negotiating and problem-solving.

**Community issues:** The impact of the enterprise and the industry on the community, and the community’s impact on and involvement with the enterprise.

**Health, safety, and environmental issues:** In relation to both the workers and the larger community; health and safety principles and procedures; legal rights and responsibilities of employers and employees; techniques for identifying hazards and controlling risk; ability to use and understand health and safety information; scientific context of environmental issues; understanding of how the natural environment and community economics affect location and growth of an industry; environmental protection measures in the industry.

As a mentor, think about how you can introduce your assigned intern to multiple aspects of your industry during the course of the internship. Through the internship program’s “Labor History Day” and other special activities, clearly you will be touching on a variety of “labor issues.” Further, union awareness and workplace safety issues should be a daily topic of conversation between you and the intern. Company managers will probably touch on a general overview of your company or industry during the internship program’s first day orientation. In addition to the above, however, what additional means are there for you, as a mentor, to introduce your assigned intern to “all aspects of your industry?” And, what other resources or resource people will help give your student intern this broader view?

Sources: Adapted from material developed by the Center for Law and Education and by Holyoke Community College (Massachusetts)
To get you started thinking about all aspects of the workplace, make a list of what is distinctive about your workplace that would be important, or valuable, for student interns to know. Use the categories below as a guide – or create your own. It is sometimes helpful for multiple mentors in a single workplace to collaborate on this brainstorming exercise.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Aspects of Your Workplace</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>INTERNAL ASPECTS OF THE COMPANY OR EMPLOYER</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operations or Production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Affairs/PR/Community Outreach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Aspects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXTERNAL ASPECTS OR INFLUENCES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State or Federal Regulatory Agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vendors or Suppliers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Impact (political/community support or attitudes toward the company); economic development subsidies, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental/climatological surroundings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Aspects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tools for Exploring “All Aspects of an Industry”

Union mentors in a student internship program can involve students in a variety of activities that will reinforce interns’ knowledge and awareness of all aspects of the industry. The following list provides just a few examples of such activities.

- Discuss industry trends with your intern, including what the future of the industry is expected to be, what future jobs might look like.

- Discuss technological developments and arrange demonstrations of new technology.

- Set up job shadowing or work rotation opportunities for your intern so he or she can experience other aspects of the company or worksite.

- Arrange for the student to attend union meetings and worksite meetings.

- Set up a company tour (if this is not done on orientation day) or a “walk through” of other departments or work areas.

- Provide reading material such as job postings, safety materials, the union contract, or company reports.

- Encourage your intern to look for newspaper articles about the company, and, where applicable, to follow the company’s stock on the business pages.

- Other activity ideas: ____________________________________________________
  ____________________________________________________________________
  ____________________________________________________________________

Source: Middlesex Community College
Active Learning for Students – About “All Aspects” of the Workplace

The companion “student manual” to this mentor handbook (titled Learning At Work) coaches student interns to be “active learners” at the worksite by asking questions, listening attentively, seeking out information, touring other work areas, observing other workers, and much more. The following “active learning tips” are provided to each student intern. By helping the student intern make use of this list of tips, you, as a union mentor, can play a key role in ensuring that the student remains engaged in “active learning.”

“Active Learning” Tips and Techniques for Student Interns

Ways of Learning at Work

• Ask questions
• Try out a task yourself
• Read
• Watch an instructional video
• Use computer-based instruction
• Use computer help screens
• Watch as someone demonstrates a task
• Observe and listen to various activities around the department or work area

Learning About a Department or Work Area

• What is the name of this department or work area?
• What type of work does the department or work area do?
• What technology is used?
• What equipment is used?
• What are some of the rules and guidelines followed in doing this work?
• What are some of the special terms and definitions used in this department or work area?
• Do people like working here? Do they get a sense of accomplishment from what they are doing?
• What do I need to know and do to be safe on the job?
• Is there anything I can read to learn more?
“Active Learning” Tips and Techniques for Student Interns (continued)

Learning About the Work Culture

• What attitudes and behaviors are most valued in this department or work area?
• How do people manage their time?
• How do people dress?
• How many years do people usually work in this department or work area? Do people often move to other jobs within the company?
• Do many people in this department or work area pursue further education? Do they go to school during the evening or weekend? Has the union bargained for a tuition reimbursement benefit as part of its collectively bargained contract with the employer? Can I work and get a college degree at the same time?
• Do workers have access to on-the-job training? Is there a formal registered apprenticeship program at this worksite?

Learning About Unions and Labor Management Relations

• What is in the union contract? When does the contract expire? When will the employer and the union be negotiating for a new contract? If contract negotiations are going on right now, what are the major issues and concerns – for the workers? for the employer?
• What are the rights of a union member?
• What are the responsibilities of a union member?
• How are workers’ rights protected?
• What is the full name and what is the structure of the union that is sponsoring my internship program?
• How does my local union fit into an International Union – and into the broader Labor Movement?
• What other kinds of union jobs and what kind of Labor Movement are there in my city (town) or region?

Learning About Careers

• What are the job titles in my department or work area?
• What training and education are required to secure these jobs?
• Do other types of companies have these job titles? Are the training and education requirements similar?
• Do other departments in this company offer similar job opportunities? What are some career paths for people in this type of work?
• How did most of the people in this department or work area find their jobs?
• How many different job titles exist in this company overall? Which sound the most interesting (to me)? Can my mentor arrange for me to visit with, or observe, a worker who has another job title or occupation that might be of interest to me?

Original source: Adapted from a work-based learning guide developed by the Education Development Center, Inc. Center for Education, Employment, and Community, Newton, MA
4. An Introduction to Career Development

Mentoring gives you an excellent opportunity to support another person in his or her career development. Career development is a lifelong process. The stages of career development include:

- Early career exploration
- Career planning
- Ongoing career management

As student interns are engaged in career development (especially the first two stages), mentors are ideally situated to provide support and encouragement. Questions and personal exploration that are common to each stage are noted in the box below:

**Typical Questions During the Stages of Career Development**

**Career exploration (learning about yourself and about careers)**
- Who am I?
- What are my strongest skills?
- What are my interests and values?
- What type of job do I expect to have in the future?
- Are there any interesting careers I’m not yet aware of?
- What careers would best match my skills, interests and values?

**Career planning (making career choices and plans)**
- Do I have a specific career goal?
- If so, how can I reach my career goal?
- What education do I need?
- What skills will be important?
- Can internships and volunteer work help me get started?
- Where can I get a first job in my chosen field?

**Career management (ongoing assessment of skills, interests, opportunities, and next steps)**
- What aspects of my job do I enjoy most?
- What skills would I like to develop or enhance?
- What projects and activities would I like to get involved with?
- What will my next assignment or job be?
- Do I have a network of people with whom I can trade career information and ideas?
The Student’s Career Development Portfolio

The handbook for student interns encourages participating students to create their own career notebook or portfolio – as a roadmap or a chart for where they want to go. To assist mentors in understanding the kinds of career planning and self-inventory information student interns are being encouraged to compile, the inventory guide provided to student interns is repeated below. During the course of the internship experience, you can ask your assigned intern if he or she is putting together such a portfolio or inventory. If so, show an interest in the information the student is compiling.

### Elements of a Student’s Personal Career Development Inventory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where I Am Now</th>
<th>Skills needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experiences and accomplishments</td>
<td>Notes from informational interviews, job descriptions, or company and union materials</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Values</th>
<th>Notes developed in collaboration with a union mentor or other advisor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career values checklists</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal essays</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your own list of values</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interests</th>
<th>Occupational information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interest checklists</td>
<td>Information from books, computer searches, other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal essays</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your own list of interests</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current skills</th>
<th>Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A skills checklist</td>
<td>People to contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job evaluations</td>
<td>Books and publications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aptitude and skill testing</td>
<td>Websites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Schools</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A career action plan</th>
<th>Next steps for achieving your goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
5. Adolescent Growth and Development

Anyone who has ever dealt with a teenager (as a parent, a relative, a friend, a coach or in some other role) knows that teens sometimes think and behave in “mysterious ways.” Perhaps you can reach back and remember your own psycho-social struggles during your teen years. Sixteen to eighteen year olds (the age group for most student interns) typically are at an age when they are exerting their independence, beginning to develop “adult” habits and styles, possibly engaging in risk-taking behaviors, and engaging in more abstract reasoning and complex moral reasoning. Teens at this age are often more aware of race, class and gender roles than in their earlier teen years.

The table below briefly highlights each of these areas of development and what the implications might be for the workplace and for the mentor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of Adolescent Development</th>
<th>Implications in the Workplace</th>
<th>Strategies and Suggestions for Mentors and Other Adults</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independence: Emerging independence</td>
<td>Independent decision making about careers; interests; educational plans</td>
<td>Adults should be careful to respect the student’s parents and background; even when the student is growing increasingly independent of family and background.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Styles: Beginning to develop adult work habits and personal work style.</td>
<td>Likely to display variable energy levels; tendency to overachieve or underachieve</td>
<td>Provide clear expectations about the amount of work expected in a day; point out that too little is boring; too much can compromise quality, safety, or other outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judgment: Risk-taking behavior</td>
<td>Starting to make own judgments (rather than accept adult direction). Relatively high rate of workplace accidents; hesitance to report accidents for fear of repercussions.</td>
<td>Provide information to help students understand risks and to think logically about workplace safety. Make sure that students feel safe reporting incidents without fear of repercussion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of Adolescent Development</th>
<th>Implications in the Workplace</th>
<th>Strategies and Suggestions for Mentors and Other Adults</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thinking:</strong> Development of abstract reasoning</td>
<td>Ability to see how ideas relate to one another; ability to grasp theories and abstract concepts.</td>
<td>Provide information about the union contract and worker voice issues, management and policy questions, or scientific theories that guide your workplace; challenge student to connect school-based learning with workplace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Moral reasoning:</strong> Complex moral reasoning</td>
<td>Strong positive impact on newly developing career values, work ethic, social concerns; growing interest in how one’s work fits in with the broader society.</td>
<td>Communicate ideals and values by modeling behaviors and by asking questions rather than by telling. Provide information to guide exploration. Students prefer to develop values through their own exploration but still value information and guidance from adults. Students may be especially interested in hearing about the strength and motivation workers derive from union values and solidarity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-image:</strong> Growing awareness of race, class, and gender roles.</td>
<td>May affect workplace behavior, career aspirations, and educational plans.</td>
<td>Encourage and model business-like behavior; emphasize the idea that the workplace can be class-neutral. Encourage student to aspire to a career, regardless of boundaries of class, race, or gender.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bunker Hill Community College (Massachusetts)
Normal Adolescent Psychosocial Development

As you work with a young intern, it is often very helpful to remain aware of the normal stages of adolescent growth and development. Teenagers often seem to have their own “foreign culture” with their own communication style and language, their own dress and appearance, their own food and eating habits, their own time and time consciousness; their own way of forging and maintaining relationships, and their own beliefs and attitudes.

Libraries are filled with books and research documents on the topic of adolescent behavior and development, so the information below only “scratches the surface.” However, mentors can still use the information outlined below as a reminder of what is typical for adolescents – including, perhaps, the intern who is assigned to you.

➢ Developmental tasks of adolescence: What every adolescent must do to achieve maturation

- Pulling away from the “control” of parents and other adults
- Education and training directed toward economic independence
- Psychosexual development leading to adult sexual identity
- Achieving an adult self-identity based in reality

➢ Stages of Adolescence

1. Early Adolescence
   Begins to reject family  ■ Things of childhood rejected – hobbies, clothes, dress, toys, even friends  ■ Reluctance to accept advice  ■ Onset of dependence-independence struggle – intensifies in mid-adolescence  ■ Intense friendships with members of the same sex; crushes on adults  ■ Seeks adult model – often teacher  ■ Big mood swings/manifest ambivalence / say “no” just to say “no.”

Problems of early adolescence
Loneliness (psychological void)  ■ Depression  ■ School failure (slight fall in grades not unusual)  ■ Truancy (occasional not unusual)  ■ School phobia  ■ Eating disorders such as anorexia or bulimia  ■ Childlike regression  ■ Drug use
2. **Mid Adolescence**

   Strong peer group allegiances  •  Fad behavior  •  Excessive physical activity  /  Alternates with lethargy  •  Development of abstract thinking  /  Begins to ponder philosophical/cosmic issues  •  Behavioral experimentation and “testing” includes the following: (a) sex; masturbation common; (b) jobs and vocation-like activities; (c) special academic interests (d) group antisocial behavior / retesting values / looking for limits; (e) group drug experimentation (distinguished from drug abuse); (f) Risk taking behavior / feeling of invulnerability.

   **Problems of mid adolescence**
   No friends / “An adolescent without friends is an adolescent in trouble”  •  Poor peer group ties  •  Promiscuity  •  Drug abuse  •  Depression  •  Delinquency

3. **Late Adolescence**

   Physical relocation / to college (relatively easy) / to adult lifestyle (hard)  •  Economic self-sufficiency (in today’s society, achievement of economic self-sufficiency often takes many years)  •  Mature sexual identity  •  An evolving ethical and moral value system in reasonable agreement with society / may achieve this within a very wide range of lifestyles.

   **Problems of late adolescence**
   Delay in gaining independence  •  Regression  •  Depression  •  Also, many of the same problems of early and mid adolescents

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**General Concepts Regarding Adolescent Development**

- There is a wide range of “normal” in adolescent behavior and development.
- Normal for one stage may not be normal for another.
- To adequately assess adolescent behavior, one must determine the adolescent’s developmental stage. Essential areas to explore include the adolescent’s functioning at home, with parents, at school, and with peers.
- Relate situation to stages of adolescence, keeping developmental tasks in mind.
- Whatever else it might be, adolescence is not a time when psychopathy is normal. Significant psychological or behavioral problems in an adolescent must be treated with the same gravity as those in a child or an adult. “He’ll grow out of it” is not an appropriate or helpful response.
- Most important, remember that the conceptual framework of dividing adolescence into tasks and stages is of no value in and of itself. Its purpose is to allow those dealing with adolescents – parents, teachers, workplace mentors, medical personnel, and others – to better understand the often bewildering and frustrating moods and behaviors of the developing adolescent. It is hoped that such understanding will allow for less hostility and more compassion and support for adolescents who truly need our help.

Source: Dr. Robert Johnson
Barriers to Student Motivation

Mentors should keep in mind that not all students, households, and adolescent living situations are created equal. Therefore, mentors should be mindful of clues that a student intern has motivational or other personal barriers that may be obstacles to workplace success. Many of these barriers, once understood, can be easily overcome. In one instance, a mentor discovered that an intern’s tardiness was resolved with his getting his own alarm clock – and getting regular reinforcement about using it. In another instance, a group of workers offered an intern the use of a bicycle after discovering his family’s lack of transportation to and from the workplace.

Here are just some examples of the challenges or barriers that an individual student may face:

- The student may need to work to help support family.
- The student may have low academic standing due to poor skills; basic skills in reading, writing, and math may be weak.
- The student may lack familial support or have family economic or health problems.
- The student may lack good role models.
- The student may be unaware of resources/opportunities.
- The student may have low self-esteem and a negative sense of self-worth.
- The student may have developed a pattern of attitude or behavioral problems.

In addition to recognizing these challenges of adolescence, there are proven techniques for working with a teenager to help him or her overcome or move beyond various obstacles to success. Mentors are not expected to be therapists or social workers and should not try to play this role or take on this sense of responsibility (and you should never hesitate to make a referral to outside resources – after gaining the student’s permission to do so). However, many barriers can be overcome through practical problem-solving and common sense.

One union mentor who worked with an intern facing chronic familial money problems tells of encouraging the intern to open a bank account with her union pay. According to her mentor, the intern’s ability to watch her bank account grow over the course of the internship really gave her a sense of hope for the future. In addition to such a simple activity that can help overcome a student’s feeling that he or she faces financial barriers to success, there are other steps that mentors can take to help student interns address the real or perceived motivational barriers in their lives. The following box provides some examples.
Barriers and Motivators: Some Ideas

**Academic**
- Assign high school credit for work experience
- Instruct student about job tasks in a well-organized, sequential manner
- Break job into small steps, assuring competence in one area before adding tasks
- Explain, step by step, the handling and operation of all tools and equipment
- Demonstrate, step by step, the handling and operation of all tools and equipment
- Encourage student to ask questions
- Respond to student’s questions with patience and understanding

**Family Support**
- Meet with family members to explain program and gain support
- Invite family members to work site

**Role Models**
- Introduce student to a variety of workers, from entry-level to president of the union and the company
- Include student in union meetings, workshops, social events
- Schedule break time with student (i.e. coffee breaks, lunch, after work)
- Learn about student’s culture and background; share stories

**Awareness of Resources and Opportunities**
- Discuss career opportunities within your workplace
- Discuss career goals, interest, talents
- Explore training, college programs, job requirements for areas of interest
- Accompany student to job fairs
- Prepare student for interviews

**Self-esteem**
- Respect student as an individual
- Recognize student as a valuable member of the work team
- Compliment student’s work; praise student’s efforts
- Offer constructive feedback when necessary
- Listen to student’s ideas; ask for suggestions, input
- Publicly recognize student’s contribution to the work team
Barriers and Motivators: Some Ideas (continued)

**Self-worth**
- Recognize student as a competent member of the work team
- Add responsibility when appropriate
- Discuss short-term and long-term goals and ways to achieve them
- Publicly recognize student’s achievements and progress
- Engage student in conversations; ask for opinions

**Attitude**
- Encourage student to discuss thoughts and feelings
- Encourage student to discuss problems and frustrations; assist with brainstorming about strategies for problem resolution

**Behavioral**
- Inform student of expected behavior
- Discuss appropriate versus inappropriate behavior
- Include discussions of appropriate dress, language
- Reward, comment on, compliment appropriate behaviors
- Discuss unacceptable behavior in private; recommend, suggest alternatives

Source: Mount Wachusett Community College (Massachusetts)

### What to Do About Inappropriate or Discriminatory Behavior

Occasionally student interns, like other young people (and even adults), will say and do things that are inappropriate and simply unacceptable in the workplace. Statements that are derogatory, discriminatory, or harassing or that show bias, stereotypes or prejudices should not be tolerated. This is the only way a young person will learn the importance of treating others with dignity and respect and will achieve an understanding of our union ethic of treating our co-workers as “brothers and sisters.”

What should a mentor do about such behavior or speech?

1. Don’t ignore it! Don’t let an incident pass without remark. To do so sends the message that you are in agreement with such behavior or attitudes. The intervention may not always take place at the exact time or place of the incident, but it must be brought up as soon as possible.

2. Explain and engage when raising the issue – don’t preach or be self-righteous.
3. Don’t be afraid of possible tension or conflict. In certain situations, it may be unavoidable. These are sensitive and deep-seated issues that won’t change without some struggle.

4. Be aware of your own attitudes, stereotypes and expectations and be open to discovering the limitations they place on your perspective. We are all victims of our misconceptions to some degree, and none of us remain untouched by the discriminatory images and behaviors we have been socialized to believe.

5. Project a feeling of understanding and forgiveness when problematic events occur. Don’t guilt trip!

6. Recognize that such attitude change may be a long term struggle, so try not to get too frustrated. The “isms” won’t be eradicated in a day. It is a constant process of growth and change.

7. Be aware of your own hesitancies to intervene in these situations. Confront your own fears about interrupting discriminatory behavior, set your priorities, and take action.

8. Be a role model. Always reflect and practice the positive values – the union values – you are trying to teach.

9. Be nonjudgmental but know the bottom line. Issues of human dignity, equality, and safety are non-negotiable.

10. Distinguish between categorical thinking and stereotyping. For example, “redheads” is a category, but “redheads have fiery tempers” is a stereotype.

Original source: Multicultural Project, Boston, MA (Patti De Rosa) and Springfield Technical Community College (Massachusetts)

Finally, GOOD LUCK, HAVE FUN, and enjoy your mentoring experience!