

## Resource Guide

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### Career-Connected Learning

Students enter degree programs with an idea of their future career aspirations, yet they often lack the knowledge of how to successfully navigate a transition to the workforce and how to advertise their skills to perspective employers (Gray, 2021). This disconnect has important implications for the types of learning environments we design for students and the learning experiences they encounter in our classrooms. To assist students in connecting their learning in your course or field to a prospective career, consider the following strategies:

- **Immerse professional experiences with course content:** Connecting your research and past life experiences to course topics can assist students in developing an identity as a professional. Inviting guest speakers or using case studies that simulate hypothetical situations in a field enable students to form real-world connections with course content. These lived experiences give meaning to key concepts and help students identify next steps in their professional development (Leven and Mudd, 2018).
- **Incorporate authentic and performance-based learning activities to give students practice with foundation skills:** By design, authentic and performance-based learning activities enable students to act on prior and new learned knowledge in applied, meaningful, and personally relevant ways. Project-based learning exercises, simulations, labs, mock patient meetings, and/or case studies give students practice developing these skills and the opportunity to make mistakes in a low-stakes environment. Providing multiple activities for students to practice these skills will deepen their learning and enable them to better identify, strengthen, and advertise their strengths to prospective employers.
- **Help students develop a disciplinary workforce literacy.** Spencer (2021) defines “disciplinary workforce literacy” as the ability of students to articulate the ways in which knowledge and skills learned in the classroom are applicable to diverse occupations (p. 409). Students often feel constricted by the parameters of a particular major or field, not knowing how knowledge and skills learned in one discipline are transferable to others. Equip them to make these connections by moving beyond disciplinary-specific examples to broader applications. Students can also prepare a professional portfolio as part of a culminating classroom experience to showcase these skills in various contexts.

## Resources

Gray, K. (2021). "Competencies: Employers weigh importance versus new grad proficiency." National Association of Colleges and Employers Center for Career Development and Talent Acquisition.

Levin, J. and C. Mudd. (2018). From curriculum to career: Connecting curriculum outcomes to future careers. Faculty Focus.

Spencer, S. (2021). A comprehensive, iterative, and integrated model for developing psychology workforce literacy. Canadian Psychology 62(4): 409-419.

*For more information or to discuss how you might incorporate these ideas into your courses, contact the Reinert Center by email.*