

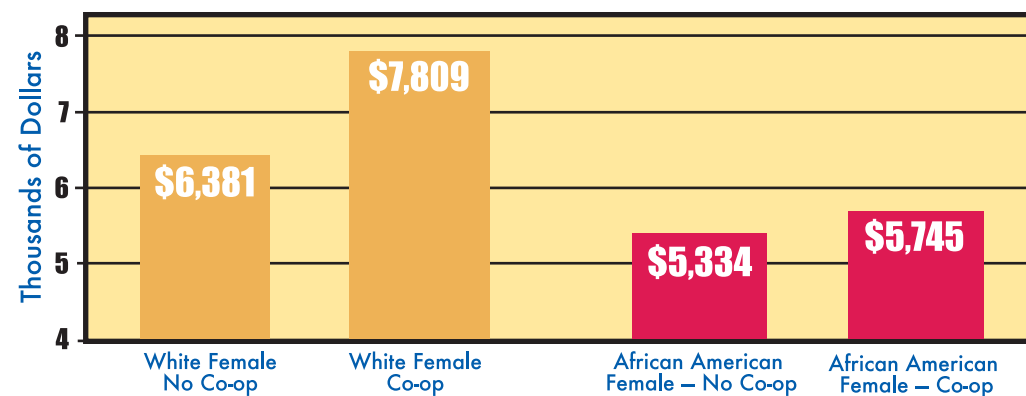
Earnings Gains by Ethnicity and Gender

“I have learned more useful knowledge about my future career ideas this semester through interning than I have in any other class that I took.”
Music & Marketing student

Finally, we examined how participation in work-based learning influences earnings for students of different racial backgrounds by gender.

The effect of Co-op participation proves to be statistically significant in two cases: first year earnings of white females and average earnings of African American females.⁴ In both cases, Co-op participation increases earnings for these students. In the example below, we present estimated first year earnings for white females with one three-unit Co-op course and average earnings for African American females with one three-unit Co-op course.

Co-op Earnings Effects for White and African American Females



Work-based learning has significant effects for African American and white women.

⁴ Further research would be required to ascertain why this is the case, but it may be possible that this phenomenon is related to the participation of women in the Community Colleges’ CalWORKS programs that provide additional support, such as child care subsidies and counseling, to women who are moving off of welfare.

For more information, or to obtain a copy of the full report, *The Benefits of Work-Based Learning and Occupational Coursework in the California Community Colleges*, please see www.calworkplace.org.

For curriculum and resources related to work-based learning, please see <http://wbl.occ.cccd.edu>.

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The Benefits of Workplace Experiences

for Students in the California Community Colleges: Highlights of a Recent Study February 2004

A Study Prepared for the California Community College Chancellor’s Advisory Committee on Work-Based Learning and Employment Services

By Hatchuel Tabernik and Associates

Berkeley, California

This brochure highlights the results of a recent study that examines the influence of work-based learning (such as internships) for California Community College students. Our goal in this research was to see if work-based learning provided any benefits to students, regardless of their academic programs. If benefits were



found, an argument could be made for expanding access to work-based learning experiences to more students – both inside and outside of occupational programs.

The results indicate significant benefits of work-based learning in California Community Colleges. Students who participate in work-based learning

- find jobs faster, and
- earn more than their classmates during the first years of employment.¹

This translates into a high return on investment for students and benefits for their communities.

Based on the results, we recommend that the California Community Colleges encourage the integration of work-based learning throughout the curriculum and examine recruitment practices, counseling services and other support systems to ensure that all students have equal access to the benefits of these programs.

The full report also examines the impact of occupational coursework on student academic and employment outcomes. We find that students who take more occupationally-oriented courses graduate sooner, find employment faster, have steadier work and earn more than their classmates.

¹ Some of the benefits of work-based learning do not persist for more than four years after graduation.

“This was the best hands-on experience in the job field I could have ever had.”

Fashion student

What Is Work-based Learning?

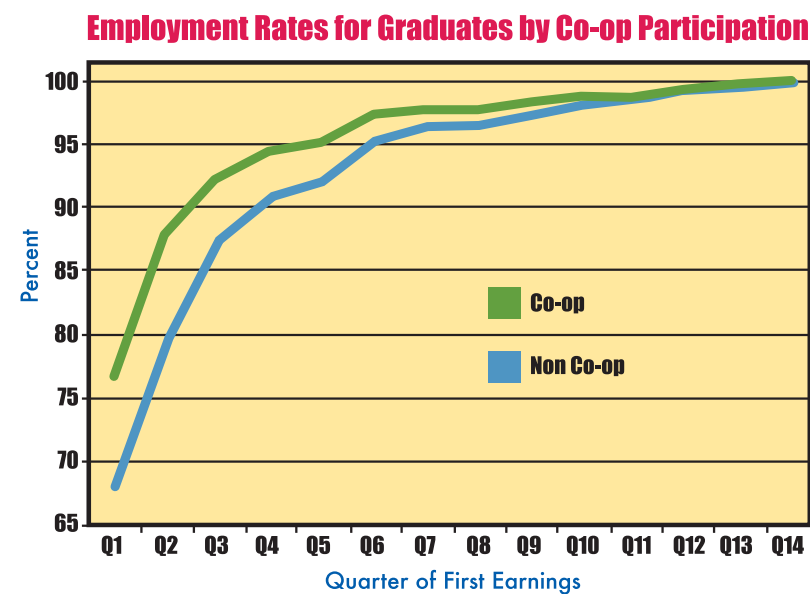
"I did learn a lot that could not be learned from a book or class, and to still have it show on my transcript is very valuable."
Marine Science student

Work-based learning – including internship, extended job shadowing, apprenticeship and “cooperative work experience” – is an instructional strategy that integrates classroom study with planned and supervised experiences in the workplace to enhance learning. In this study, we focus on “Cooperative Work Experience” (Co-op) as a surrogate measure for all work-based learning.² Co-op courses allow students to earn credit for paid or unpaid employment that is related to a specific program of study.

Time to Employment

"It opened the employer to challenge me and expand my skills and I made great business connections. I also found a job related to my (previous) job but more suited to my tastes."
Costume Design student

A key measure of students’ post-graduation success is how long it takes them to find a job. Those who participate in Co-op appear to find jobs sooner than their non-Co-op classmates: Co-op students record first earnings on average at about 15 weeks after graduation, while non-Co-op students find work after about 17 weeks. Further, Co-op students enter the workplace faster than their classmates for up to two and a half years after graduation. After this time, all graduates have roughly equal employment rates.

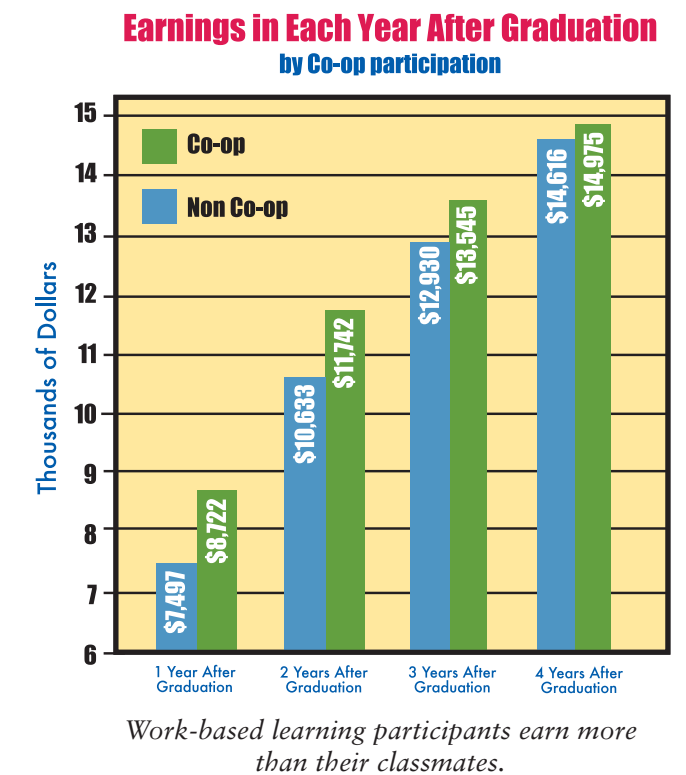


Work-based learning participants have higher employment rates than their classmates.

² The Community Colleges have created a data element to flag other work-based learning experiences, but it is in the initial implementation stage. Therefore, “Co-op” was the only designation available to the researchers to assess work-based learning.

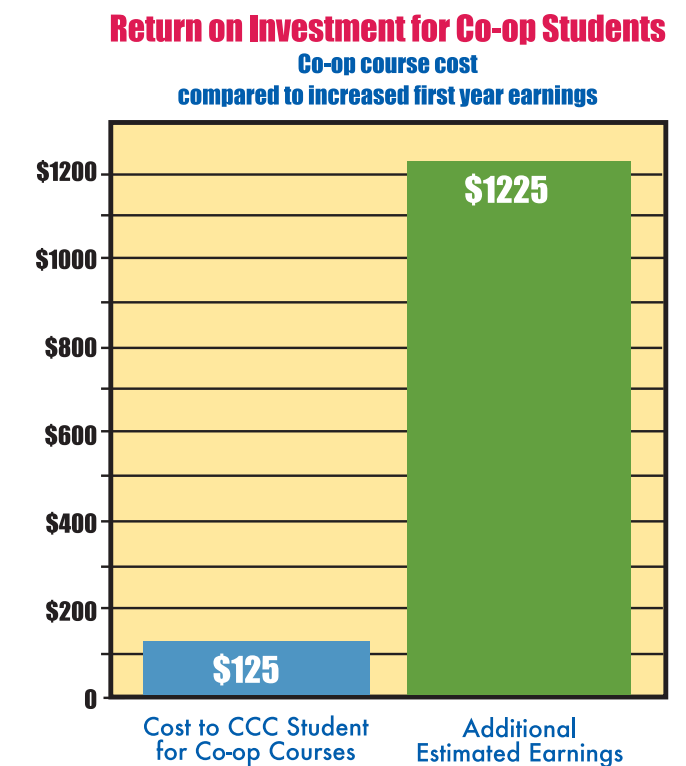
Average Earnings

We find that the benefits of work-based learning are also reflected in graduates’ paychecks. Students who participate in work-based learning have higher average annual earnings than their classmates in all four years after graduation. Although the earnings gain enjoyed by Co-op students diminishes over time, Co-op students earn about \$3,300 more than their classmates overall.



Work-based Learning: Benefits from the Student’s Perspective

The study finds that work-based learning has immediate financial benefits for students. As shown above, students with Co-op experience earn \$1,225 more in the first year of work. Given the reasonable cost of taking classes in the community colleges³, students participating in work-based learning can therefore earn back their course fees and materials costs up to 10 times over in just one year. This additional income also generates benefits to communities, as well as higher tax revenues to the State.



³ The mean number of Co-op credits for students who took these courses is 4.84. At \$18 per unit plus modest direct expenses, we estimate average course costs for Co-op to be \$25 per unit or \$125 for 5 units.