



1.2. TIPS FOR SCHOOL LEADERS - ADVOCATING FOR APPLIED LEARNING

Identify your audience

- Tell a coherent story to students, their families, teachers, local employers and the local community.
- Understanding your audience means recognising their concerns, fears and questions. This will allow you to be proactive in building a consistent positive and strong story about applied learning at your school.

In preparing your story, consider:

- What are the values that represent your school?
- Who makes up your school community?
- What kind of school is needed now and in the future?

Analyse

- What are the common stories told in your community about applied versus academic learning?
- How does your school and local community describe the strengths and potential of inclusivity and applied learning?

Establish

- Present context – Start with your community's thinking about applied learning and provide positive examples that resonate with them.
- Focus on pathways to employment and opportunities for further study.
- Emphasise that applied learning is found in education at different levels and across diverse occupations.
- Promote the role of applied learning in fostering engagement or in building the types of capacities that young people need in a rapidly changing world.

Promote

- Tell your school's applied learning story and ensure that it is part of the broader school narrative.

MYTH BUSTER - ADVOCATING FOR APPLIED LEARNING

An inevitable part of building a positive narrative around applied learning involves addressing fears, prejudices and misinformation.

Myth: applied learning is for academically weak students

Response: Applied learning is an approach to education that is not intrinsically tied to either the level of institution or qualification or to student abilities. For example, applied learning is central to the initial preparation of people entering some high-priority professions such as medicine, engineering and management. There's a shift in focus from 'what you know' to 'what you can do'.

Myth: applied learning is fine but not for my child

Response: Generative artificial intelligence, digitisation and automation are transforming education and employment. Potential employers are interested in what your child can do, not just what they know. Internationally there is a shift to skill-based hiring even for university graduates. Given the level of change and uncertainty, young people will be better placed if they can demonstrate the capacity to contribute to a team, solve problems, think critically, and communicate effectively. Applied learning can contribute to the development and documentation of these human capacities in a world of work increasingly infused with artificial intelligence.

Myth: a focus on applied learning will harm the reputation of the school

Response: Applied learning provides innovative opportunities for our students but also for our school to go beyond textbooks and traditional classrooms and engage with the real world. Rich applied learning curriculum and pedagogies enable us to better prepare our students to thrive and flourish in a changing labour market. It also provides an opportunity for our school to become known for innovative education that engages our students and prepares them for both work and society.

Myth: introducing applied learning into my subject will reduce academic rigour

Response: Academic rigour is strengthened through real-world application of theoretical knowledge. Students' creativity, critical thinking and adaptability are stimulated when they are encouraged to design solutions to real-world problems. Determining what students can do requires assessing a complex set of knowledge and skills, moving well beyond measuring students' ability to recall information.