

# INCREASING ENGAGEMENT: ADDING INDUSTRY AND REAL-LIFE CONTEXTS TO YOUR LABS AND WORKSHOPS

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## BACKGROUND

There is a push to increase the connection of teaching and learning materials to the real world (aka context-based learning or CBL) (Pilot & Bulte, 2006), increasing engagement by having the student work on real world examples as opposed to a theoretical focus. The original desired theories are present but within the lesson, rather than the sole focus (Gilbert, 2006).

If the context within the lessons is industry focused, CBL can also improve workforce readiness as students are more familiar with workplace issues, processes, and communication styles. Connection to industry can be achieved through existing or purposely developed relationships between industry and higher education, or through using those external contexts without participation of a partner.

## WORKSHOP

We will provide training on how we approach both the industry focused (partnered and unpartnered) as well as the real-life focused version of CBL in the laboratory and workshops, respectively. As part of the two-hour session, we will first unpack several examples undertaken by the facilitators. During the final hour, we will help people brainstorm CBL ideas for their classes, up to and including helping them plan how to find industry linked resources or contacts into industry for help in developing the lessons.

## REFERENCES

- Gilbert, J. K. (2006). On the Nature of "Context" in Chemical Education. *International Journal of Science Education*, 28(9), 957-976. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09500690600702470>
- Pilot, A., & Bulte, A. M. W. (2006). Why Do You "Need to Know"? Context-based education. *International Journal of Science Education*, 28(9), 953-956. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09500690600702462>

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