The International Conference for Training and Organizational Development **TOD'26**

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Driving Skill Shift:

Competency and Innovation

for Sustainable Organizational Development





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Building Future-Ready Workforce Competencies Through Technology-Enabled Applied Learning



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2017

- Human capabilities such as critical thinking, creativity, emotional intelligence and cognitive flexibility were already being identified as essential amid automation. (World Economic Forum--Global Human Capital Report, 2017)

2020

- Employers ranked critical thinking, leadership, active learning, creativity, emotional intelligence, resilience and complex problem solving among the leading emerging skills. (World Economic Forum, Future of Jobs Report, 2020)

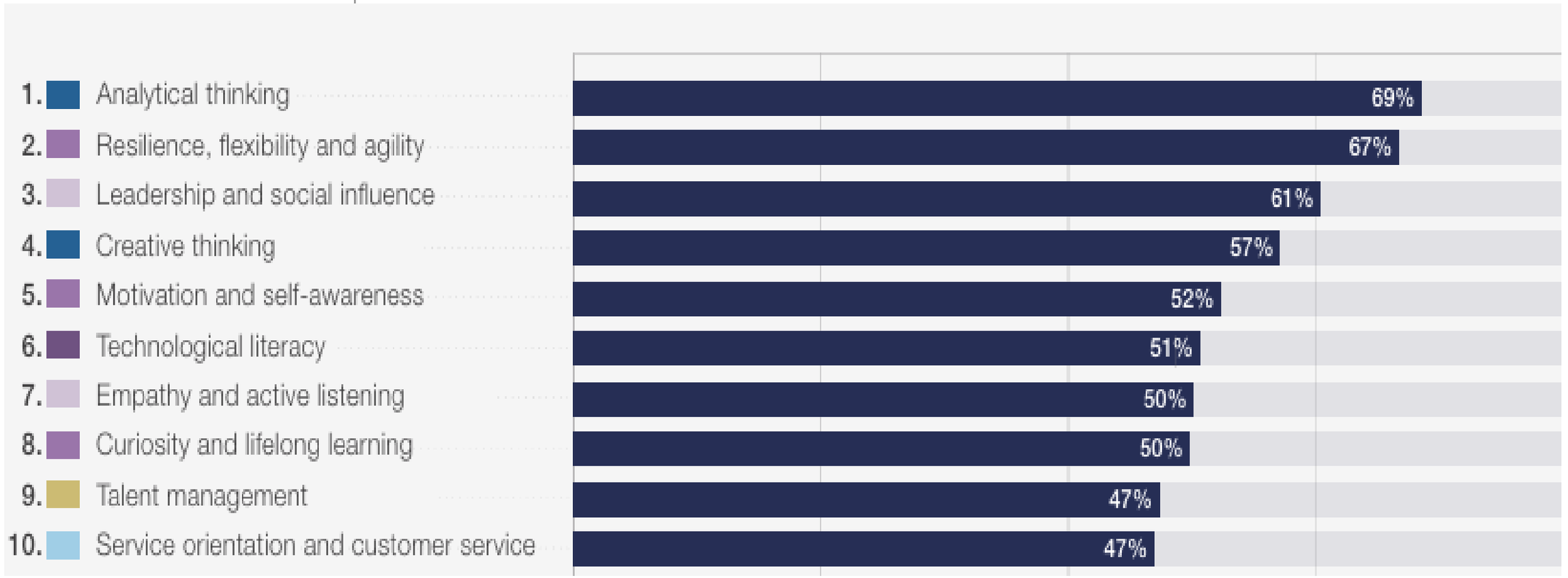
2025

- "Across nearly a decade of workforce research…the skills that remain most necessary are distinctly human: critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving, collaboration, emotional intelligence, adaptability, and the ability to learn." (WEF, World of Work Report, 2025)

FIGURE 3.3

Core skills in 2025

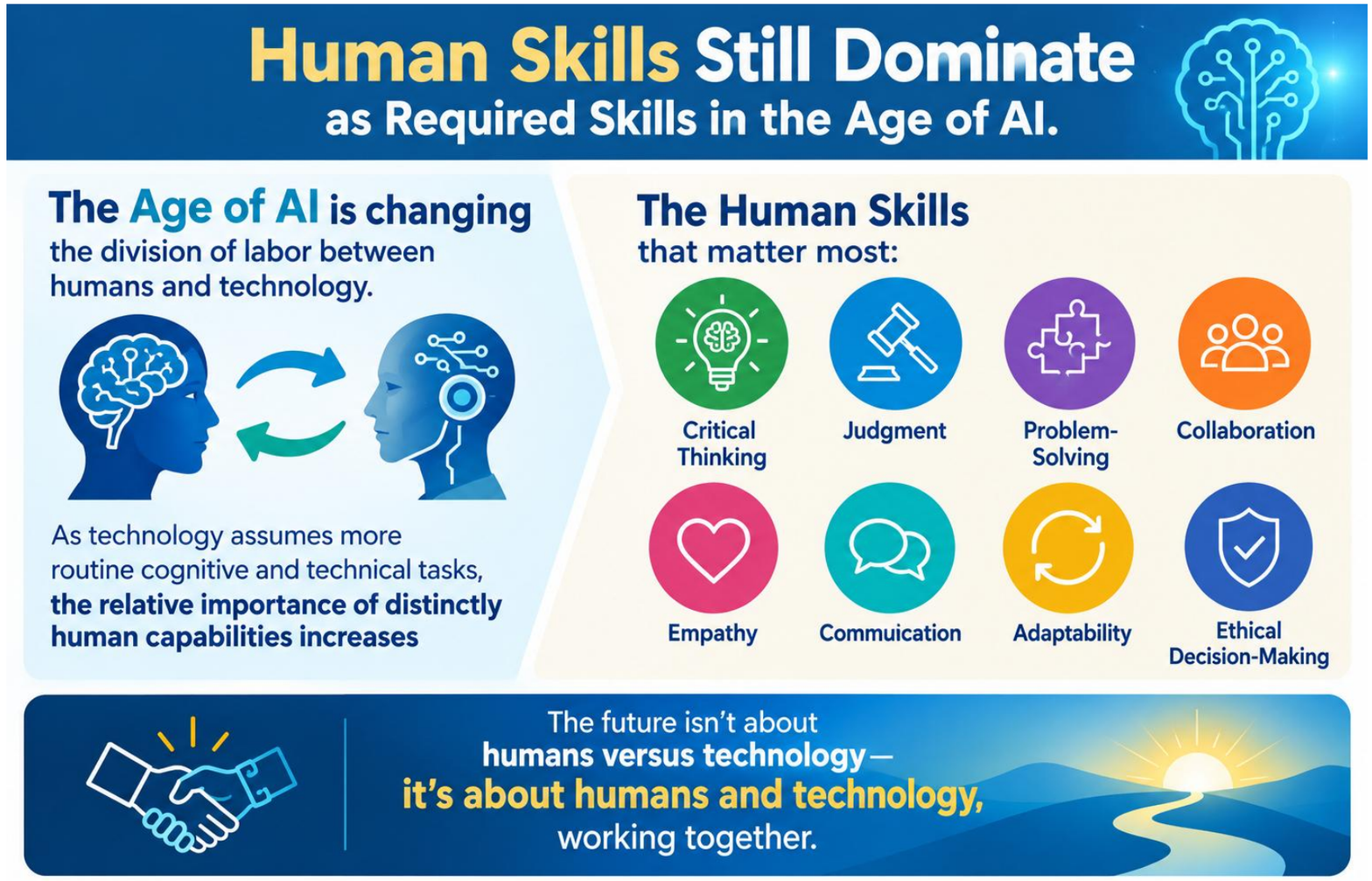
Share of employers who consider the stated skills to be core skills for their workforce.



2026 Critical Skills in the AI Era

"In the AI era, demand is increasing for higher-order cognitive and socioemotional skills, adaptability, resilience, and human agency."

(ILO et al., 2026, Changing Landscape of Skills in the Age of AI, 2026)



Proven Active Learning Methods That Develop Human Skills



Problem-based Learning (Aboderin & Havenga, 2024)



Project-based Learning (Aboderin & Havenga, 2024)



Case Study Analysis (Nohria, 2021)



Action Learning (Noel & Charan, 1992)

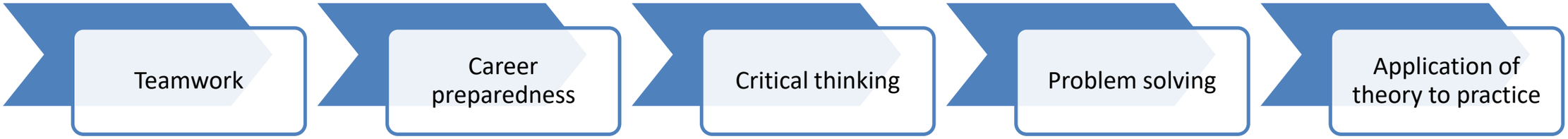
Work-Integrated Learning Prepares Students

"Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) intentionally integrates academic learning with authentic, meaningful work through active student engagement with an external stakeholder, enabling students to apply and integrate theory and practice." (Ferns, Zegwaard, Pretti, & Rowe, 2025)



Work-Integrated Learning Develops Skills

WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING (WIL) is where the student experience incorporates industry/community engagement, the integration of theory and practice, and involves meaningful and authentic work-related tasks. (Zegwaard et al., 2023)



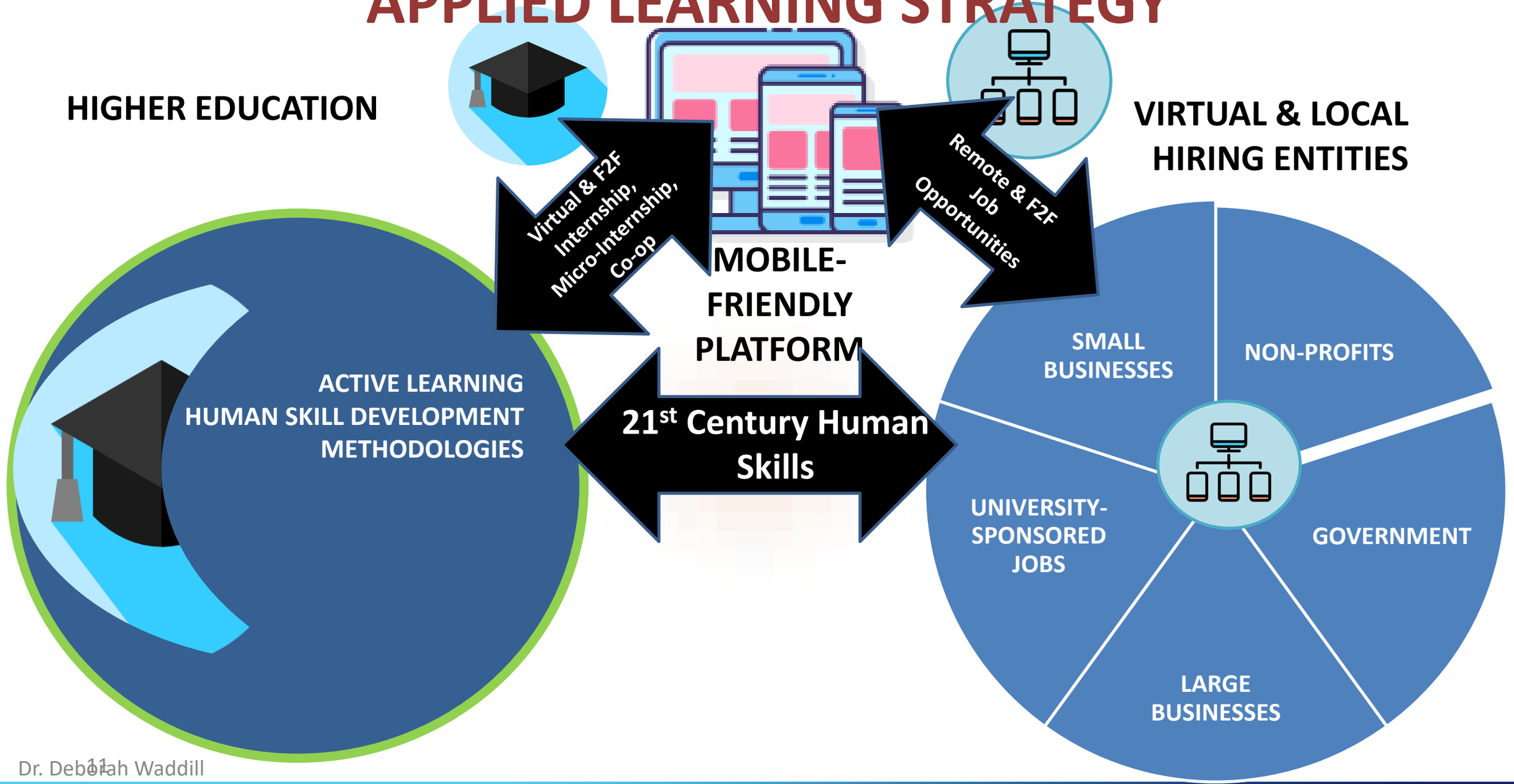
(Arnot, Kim, French, Lin, Pashley, & Laposa, 2025).

How Can an Organization Connect With Skilled Student Workers?

Platform	Paid?	Real employer work?	Short-term/project-based?	Undergraduate focus?	Competitive overlap
Parker Dewey	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	—
Extern	Yes, for selected programs/experiences	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
Udrafter	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
P3•E / similar university-sponsored paid project programs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Moderate–High
Traditional paid internship marketplaces	Yes	Yes	Usually longer	Yes	Moderate
Riipen	Depends on project	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partial
Forage	Generally no	Simulated	Yes	Yes	Not direct

In the future of work, rather than waiting until graduates enter the workplace to discover whether they have the skills employers need, we can create opportunities for them to **practice, demonstrate, receive feedback, and build those skills while they are still students.**

APPLIED LEARNING STRATEGY



IT IS A WIN/WIN/WIN FOR ALL!



The Applied Learning Strategy adds value on all sides:

Organizations gain access to emerging talent with up-to-date human and digital skills/competencies and fresh solutions.

Universities strengthen the connection between learning and employment.

Students gain experience applying their human and digital skills.

The connection of students to employers is conducted virtually.

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