

Integrating Industry Concepts with University Learning: Attempting to Combine Classroom Learning and Workplace Training

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Abstract

Transitioning from the university setting to industry is a daunting proposition. The suggestion that you will learn what you need on the job is a common theme and can be overwhelming. Universities are great at conveying fundamental concepts to students, but many have fallen short when it comes to teaching certain techniques and knowledge that are utilized in the workplace. The university system emphasizes traditional geology classes, like mineralogy or sed/strat, which are necessary; However, strict traditional geological education is often not enough preparation for industry careers. Integration of basic geologic concepts and tools and techniques used in industry is the key to better preparing students for after graduation. Teaching workplace standards like building cross-sections and making maps in conjunction with geology fundamentals like mineral chemistry and sedimentary structures will leave students with not only concepts but also applications. Recently this concept was applied to a mineralogy class with a lesson on physical properties of minerals. The lecture incorporated typical concepts like hardness and crystal habit, but also included economic minerals and how their properties influence how they are utilized. In the lab, students first learned how to identify mineral properties and then matched hand samples with associated products based on these properties. The feedback was encouraging on both the lecture and lab and will be further developed in other classes. This integration methods provides students with not only a base knowledge of geology but a smoother transition into actual workplace practices.

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