

# Integrating Employability Skills: A Framework for All Educators

April 2016

**COLLEGE & CAREER  
READINESS & SUCCESS** Center  
at American Institutes for Research ■

Center on  
**GREAT TEACHERS & LEADERS**  
at American Institutes for Research ■



# Welcome and Introductions

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# Professional Learning Modules

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- Professional learning modules (PLMs) are free and customizable train-the-facilitator resources.
- PLMs help build a common language and understanding.
- This module is a collaborative partnership among:
  - College and Career Readiness and Success Center (CCRS Center)
  - Center on Great Teachers and Leaders (GTL Center)
  - RTI International

# PLM Materials

<http://www.ccrscenter.org/>

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- Professional learning module
- Presentation slides, handouts, and a facilitator's guide
- Free and customizable train-the-facilitator resources

# Comprehensive Centers Program

## 2012–17 Award Cycle





# RTI International

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- RTI International is a research institute dedicated to improving the human condition by turning knowledge into practice.
- RTI partnered with the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education at the U.S. Department of Education to develop the Employability Skills Framework.

# Employability Skills Framework

**EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS FRAMEWORK**

About Explore the Framework Choosing an Assessment Developing Skills Resources **Home**

**The Framework is comprised of nine key skills, organized in three broad categories: Applied Knowledge, Effective Relationships, and Workplace Skills.**

[LEARN MORE](#)

**Skills for College and Career Readiness**

Individuals require many skills to be college and career ready, including academic knowledge, technical expertise, and a set of general, cross-cutting abilities called employability skills.

Employability skills are general skills that are necessary for success in the labor market at all employment levels and in all sectors. These skills have a number of names— soft skills, workforce readiness skills, career readiness skills— but they all speak to the same set of core skills that employers want.

The Employability Skills Framework is a one-stop resource for information and tools to inform the instruction and assessment of employability skills.

**Featured Resources**

 The source matrix compares the employability skills identified by a sample of national and state standards and assessments used to develop the framework.

[VIEW MATRIX](#)

**Access resources and tools for...**

-  **EDUCATORS**
-  **EMPLOYERS**
-  **POLICYMAKERS**

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Visit the Perkins Collaborative Resource Network | Contact Us  
Visit the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education

[cte.ed.gov/employabilityskills](http://cte.ed.gov/employabilityskills)

# Agenda

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- Review the Employability Skills Framework.
- Explore employability skills in your current practice.
- Crosswalk state college and career readiness standards and educator performance with the Employability Skills Framework.
- Understand how to prioritize employability skills at the state, local, and classroom levels.
- Review the lesson planning tool for embedding employability skills into classroom activities.



# Objectives

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Participants will do the following:


- Understand what employability skills are and why they are important.
- Understand connections between the Employability Skills Framework and other instructional initiatives.
- Learn strategies to prioritize employability skills at the state and district levels.

# What Are Employability Skills?

# Importance of Employability Skills

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- Employability skills are cited as among the most important skills by employers (Hart Research Associates, 2015).
- A lack of employability skills may contribute to a “talent shortage” (ManpowerGroup, 2012).
- The demonstration of employability skills is correlated with better hiring rates, success on the job, and earnings (Lippman et al., 2015).



# Activity 1: What Are Employability Skills?

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- When you hear the term *employability skills*, what are some of the terms, considerations, and contexts that come to mind?

# Defining Employability Skills

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Employability skills are the general skills and knowledge that are necessary for success in the labor market at all employment levels and in all sectors.

# Activity 2: Identifying Employability Skills

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Brainstorm activity:

1. On your own, generate a list of your **top five** most important employability skills.
2. Record each skill on a sticky note.
3. Discuss your list with your table.
4. Remove duplicate skills.

# Activity 2: Categorizing Employability Skills


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1. Referencing your table's sticky notes, where would you place your employability skills?
  - Effective relationships
  - Workplace skills
  - Applied knowledge
2. Discuss with your table.
3. Place your sticky notes on the appropriate chart paper.

# Activity 2: Identifying Employability Skills

1. On your own, generate a list of your **top 5–10** most important employability skills.
2. Record each skill on your handout.
3. Referencing your list, place each skill into one of the three categories of employability skills.

<u>Effective Relationships</u>	<u>Workplace Skills</u>	<u>Applied Knowledge</u>
<i>Recategorized Skills</i>		





# Employability Skills Framework

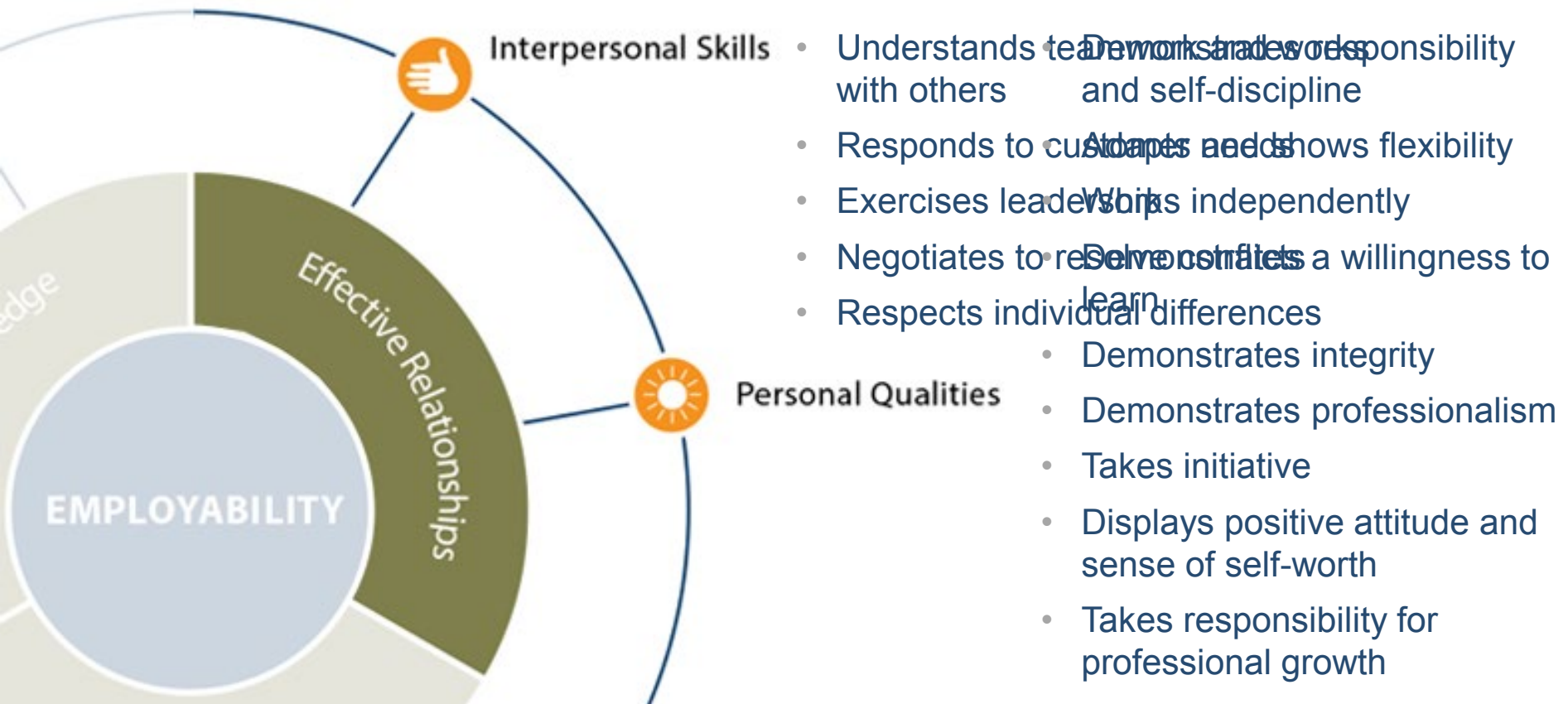
The thoughtful integration of academic knowledge and technical skills, put to practical use in the workplace



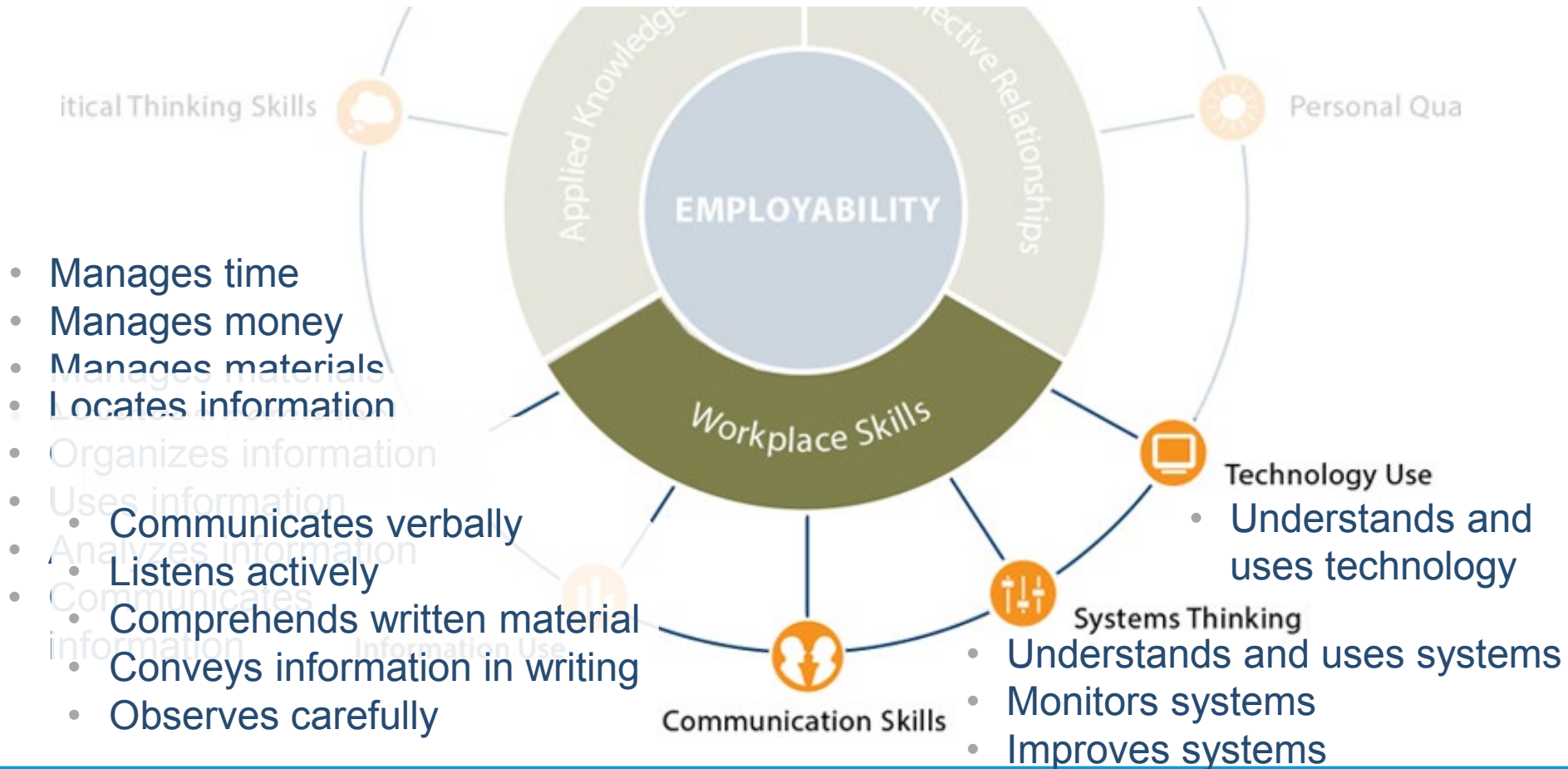
The skills that enable individuals to interact effectively with clients, coworkers, and supervisors

The skills employees need to successfully perform work tasks

# Effective Relationships



# Workplace Skills



# Applied Knowledge

- Uses reading skills
- Uses writing skills
- Uses mathematical strategies and procedures
- Uses scientific principles and procedures

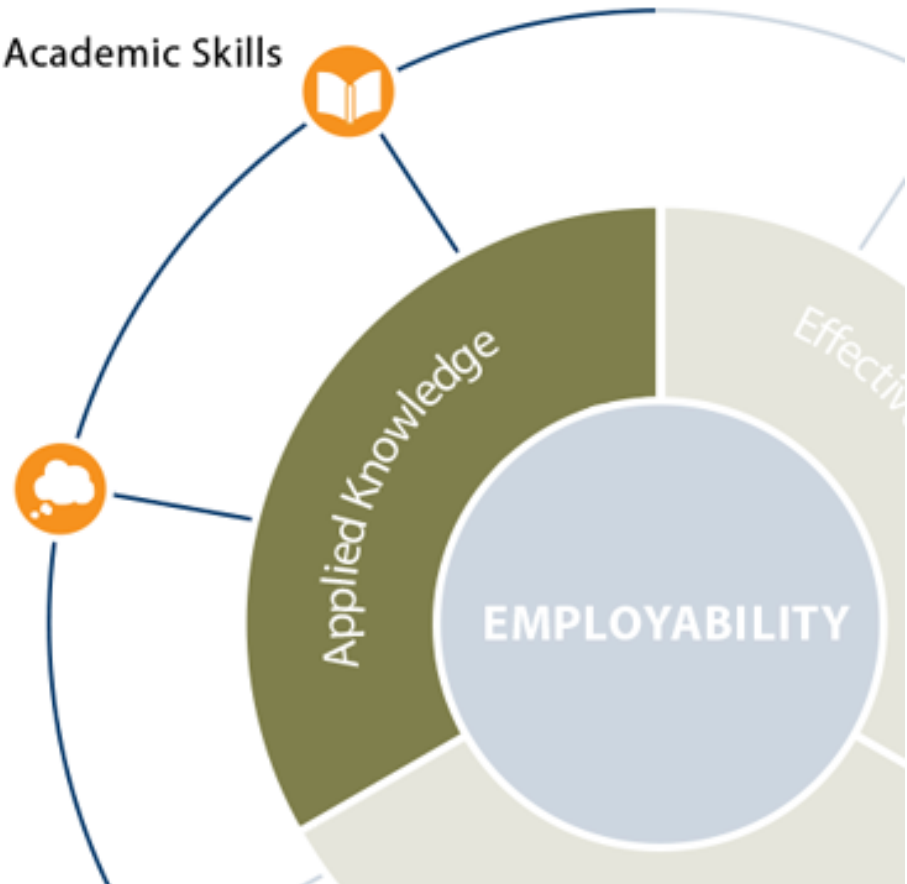
## Applied Academic Skills



## Critical Thinking Skills




- Thinks critically
- Thinks creatively
- Makes sound decisions
- Solves problems
- Reasons
- Plans and organizes



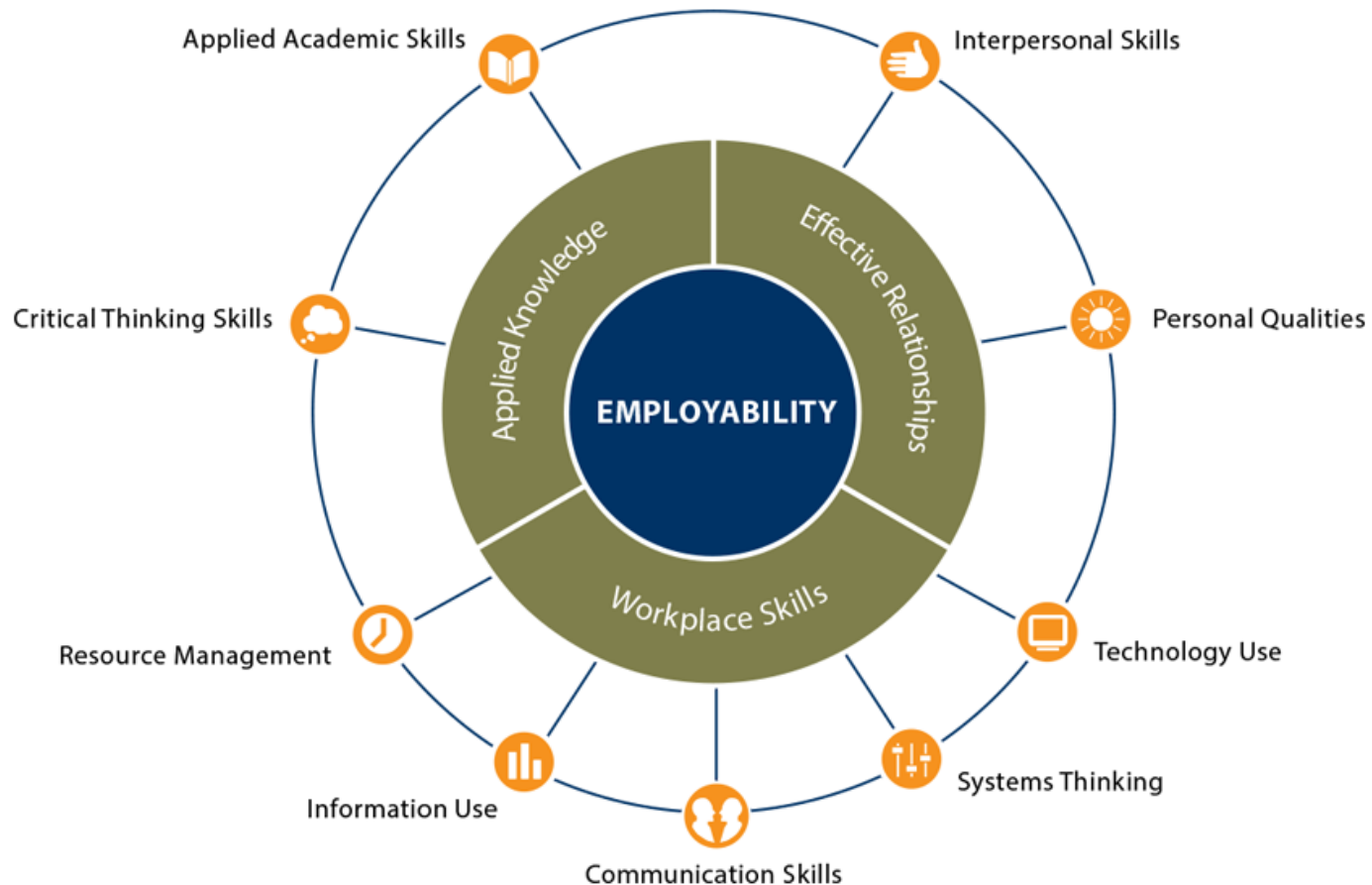
# Identifying Employability Skills

Revise your categorization of employability skills based on this additional information.

<u>Effective Relationships</u>	<u>Workplace Skills</u>	<u>Applied Knowledge</u>
<i>Recategorization</i>		



# Employability Skills Framework



# How Does This Work Connect to What You Are Already Doing?



# Employability Skills Connections

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- National Career Clusters Framework (Advance CTE)
- Industry Competency Models (U.S. Department of Labor)
- Equipped for the Future (Center for Literacy, Education & Employment)
- National Career Readiness Certificate (ACT)
- National Work Readiness Credential (National Work Readiness Council)
- Partnership for 21st Century Skills



# Employability Skills Connections

## Employability Skills Framework — Source Matrix

Sort Resources:  | Show:  | Export: [Excel \(34 KB\)](#)

Resource	Applied Knowledge		Effective Relationships		Workplace Skills				
	Applied Academic Skills	Critical Thinking Skills	Interpersonal Skills	Personal Qualities	Resource Management	Information Use	Communication Skills	Systems Thinking	Technology Use
21st Century Skills for Workplace Success, NOCTI	X	X	X	X			X	X	X
Arizona's New Workplace Skills, Arizona Department of Education		X	X	X	X		X	X	
Assessing 21st Century Skills, Board on Testing and Assessment, the National Research Council		X	X	X	X		X		
Assessment and Teaching of 21st Century Skills, Cisco, Intel, and Microsoft		X	X	X	X				X
Career Clusters Framework, National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Citizenship Foundation Skills and Knowledge Clusters, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services						X	X		
Common Employability Skills, National Network of Business and Industry Associations	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Comparative Analysis of Soft Skills: What is Important for New Graduates? U.S. Department of Agriculture		X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Employability Assessment Rubric, Chicago Public Schools		X	X	X		X	X		X

# Policy and Practice Connections

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- Find connections with your college and career readiness initiatives:
  - Postsecondary preparedness expectations and definitions
  - Social and emotional learning
  - College- and career-ready standards
  - Deeper learning
  - Competency-based education
- Materials focus on two relevant policy initiatives:
  - New state college and career readiness standards
  - Professional practice rubrics

# College- and Career-Ready Standards

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- **State college- and career-ready standards**
  - Represent what students must know and be able to do at each grade level to be college and career ready
  - Standards for mathematics and English language arts (ELA)
  - Tailored to state context
- **Common Career Technical Core (CCTC) developed by Advance CTE**
  - Includes a set of technical skill standards for 16 career clusters as well as career-ready practices common to all clusters

# Sample Crosswalk Language

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## Critical Thinking Skills

- Thinks critically
- Thinks creatively
- Makes sound decisions
- Solves problems
- Reasons
- Plans and organizes

## Common Core

- ELA Anchor Standards
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to **make logical inferences** from it; **cite specific evidence...** to support conclusions drawn from the text.
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that **listeners can follow the line of reasoning** and the organization, development and style are appropriate to the task, purpose and audience.
- Mathematics Anchor Standards
  - CCSS.MATH.PRACTICE.MP2: Reason abstractly and quantitatively
  - CCSS.MATH.PRACTICE.MP3: Construct **viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.**

# Sample Crosswalk Language

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## Critical Thinking Skills

- Thinks critically
- Thinks creatively
- Makes sound decisions
- Solves problems
- Reasons
- Plans and organizes

## CCTC

- Career-Ready Practice 8. Utilize critical thinking to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them

# Crosswalk With College- and Career-Ready Standards

Employability Skills		State CCR Standards	Common Career Technical Core
Applied Knowledge	Applied Academic Skills	X	X
	Critical Thinking Skills	X	X
Effective Relationships	Interpersonal Skills	X	X
	Personal Qualities		X
Workplace Skills	Resource Management		
	Information Use	X	X
	Communication Skills	X	X
	Systems Thinking		X
	Technology Use	X	X

# Crosswalk With College- and Career-Ready Standards

Employability Skills		State CCR Standards
Applied Knowledge	Applied Academic Skills	
	Critical Thinking Skills	
Effective Relationships	Interpersonal Skills	
	Personal Qualities	
Workplace Skills	Resource Management	
	Information Use	
	Communication Skills	
	Systems Thinking	
	Technology Use	

# Crosswalk With Professional Practice Rubric

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- Reviewed a common professional practice rubric against the Employability Skills Framework.
- Crosswalk translates teacher expectations to student actions.
- Not a one-to-one connection for each of the skills in the three categories.



# Sample Crosswalk Language

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## Communication Skills

- Communicates verbally
- Listens actively
- Comprehends written material
- Conveys information in writing
- Observes carefully

3b. Discussion techniques. Effective teachers promote learning through discussion. A foundational skill that students learn through **engaging in discussion is that of explaining and justifying their reasoning and conclusions**, based on specific evidence. **Teachers skilled in the use of questioning and discussion techniques challenge students to examine their premises, to build a logical argument, and to critique the arguments of others....** Furthermore, in conducting discussions, skilled teachers build further questions on student responses and **insist that students examine their premises, build a logical argument, and critique the arguments of others.**

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# Sample Crosswalk Language

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## Interpersonal Skills

- Understands teamwork and works with others
- Responds to customer needs
- Exercises leadership
- Negotiates to resolve conflicts
- Respects individual differences

2a. **Student interactions with other students, including both words and actions.** As important as a teacher's treatment of students is, how students are treated by their classmates is arguably even more important to students. At its worst, poor treatment causes students to feel rejected by their peers. At its best, **positive interactions among students are mutually supportive** and create an emotionally healthy school environment. **Teachers not only model and teach students how to engage in respectful interactions with one another but also acknowledge such interactions.**

# Crosswalk With Professional Practice Rubrics

Employability Skills		Danielson Framework
Applied Knowledge	Applied Academic Skills	X
	Critical Thinking Skills	X
Effective Relationships	Interpersonal Skills	X
	Personal Qualities	X
Workplace Skills	Resource Management	X
	Information Use	X
	Communication Skills	X
	Systems Thinking	X
	Technology Use	

# Employability Skills Crosswalk and Planning Workbook

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1. Review your college- and career-ready standards or professional practice framework.
2. Complete the workbook.
  - Review selected standards or performance criteria for evidence of explicit or implicit alignment with each of the skills and skill components in the Employability Skills Framework.
  - Summarize alignment findings across all standards.
  - Identify immediate next steps and long-term goals.
3. Plan for next steps and complete action planning.

## 2. Critical Thinking Skills

Employability Skills in This Category	Alignment to Standard or Performance Criteria				
	Explicit <i>(does not require an inference beyond the description)</i>	Implicit <i>(requires some inference beyond the description)</i>	Great	Minimal	None
<b>Thinks Creatively:</b> Students create innovative and novel ideas or solutions and display divergent thinking. This thinking can be seen in oral presentations, creative-writing assignments, open-ended tasks, and project design.					
<b>Thinks Critically:</b> Students display analytical and strategic thinking. This thinking can be seen in debating an issue, converging on an understanding, assessing a problem, and questioning (e.g., playing devil’s advocate).					
<b>Makes Sound Decisions:</b> Students differentiate between multiple approaches and assess options.					
<b>Solves Problems:</b> Students assess problems involving the use of available resources (i.e., personnel and materials) and review multiple strategies for resolving problems.					
<b>Reasons:</b> Students negotiate pros and cons of ideas, approaches, and solutions, and analyze options using an “if-then” rationale.					
<b>Plans and Organizes:</b> Students plan steps, procedures, or approaches for addressing tasks. This planning occurs naturally in most assignments, ranging from solving one problem to completing long-term projects in mathematics and science classes.					
<b>Reflections on Explicit and Implicit Alignment:</b>					

# How Do We Prioritize Employability Skills?

# Integrating Employability Skills

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- Integrate employability skills purposefully and strategically
  
- Different opportunities exist for different stakeholders:
  - State
  - District
  - Educators
  - Employers

# State Role in Prioritization



Create collaboration opportunities and partnerships and communicate the importance.



Highlight connections to key instructional initiatives, such as career pathways.

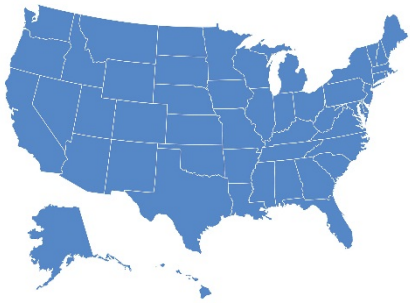


Embed employability skills in professional development, preparation accreditation requirements, and evaluation activities.



# Employer Role in Prioritization

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Identify needed employability skills and share them to inform curriculum or program development.

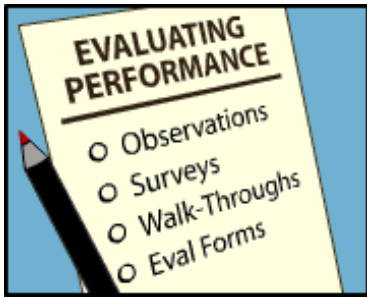


Partner with schools, community colleges, and adult education and training programs.

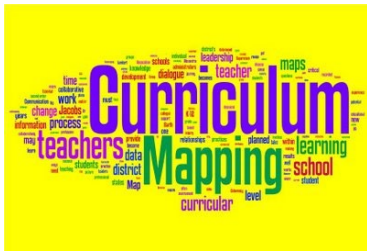


Provide work-based learning opportunities for students to develop employability skills.

# District Role in Prioritization



Assess employability skills in educator evaluation systems.



Integrate employability skills across content areas and grades.



Facilitate opportunities for career and technical education and general educator collaboration.

# Teacher Role in Prioritization

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Identify the most applicable employability skills and integrate those skills into instruction. Monitor the depth and breadth of skills in lessons.



Share what employability skills are and why they are important to call attention to as they are being taught to students.



Help students communicate their own employability skills to employers.

# Activity 4: Employability Skill and Instruction Matching Activity

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- Read through the instructional techniques or models in the handout.
- Match the instructional techniques or models to the employability skills they support.
- Discuss with your group.

# Formative Lesson Planning Tool

<b>Outcomes or Standards</b> <i>What do you want them to learn or experience in the course?</i>	<b>Teacher-led elements</b> <i>What do you do during class to guide student learning?</i>	<b>Student-led elements</b> <i>What do students do? How will they interact with each other?</i>
<p>General Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students will work independently and take responsibility for their own learning</li> </ul> <p>National Standards for Family and Consumer Sciences (<a href="http://www.nasafacs.org">www.nasafacs.org</a>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8.2 Demonstrate food safety and sanitation procedures.</li> <li>8.2.6 Demonstrate proper purchasing, receiving, storage, and handling of both raw and prepared foods.</li> <li>8.2.7 Demonstrate safe food handling and preparation techniques that prevent cross contamination from potentially hazardous foods, between raw and ready-to-eat foods, and between animal and fish sources and other food products.</li> <li>8.2.11 Demonstrate ability to maintain necessary records to document time and temperature control, HACCP, employee health, maintenance of equipment, and other elements of food preparation, storage, and presentation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine team roles for vocabulary presentations</li> <li>Work together as a team</li> <li>Show seriousness in group presentations</li> <li>Be observant, make informed decisions, and think critically in bacterial growth lab</li> </ul> <p>Work independently and responsibly for extended learning project</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pose open-ended and closed questions</li> <li>Explain and share key information to the group</li> <li>Observe student work and listen to students to assess understanding</li> <li>Provide feedback</li> <li>Prepare materials for student lab</li> <li>Encourage and motivate students</li> <li>Grade student work and provide feedback</li> <li>Manage class pacing</li> </ul>

# Activity 5: Lesson Planning

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- Review Handout 6: Formative Lesson Planning Tool for Integrating Employability Skills Into Practice (Career Technical Education Sample).
- Identify connections between the standards, teacher-led activities, student-led activities, and employability skills.
- Discuss these connections with your colleagues.

# Activity 6: Lesson Planning

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- Read through the introduction to Handout 7: Formative Lesson Planning Tool for Integrating Employability Skills Into Practice (English Language Arts Activity Template).
- Identify at least three teacher-led activities in which the teacher can model or teach specific employability skills.
- Identify at least three student-led activities in which students can practice or demonstrate specific employability skills.
- Write down the specific employability skills in the second row of the handout.

# Summative Lesson Planning Self-Reflection Tool



## Critical Thinking Skills

<i>Skill Components</i>	<i>Number of Lessons Including This Skill (from Part 1)</i>	<i>Number of Lessons Including this Employability Skill Component</i>	<i>How is the Employability Skill Component Incorporated in Lessons?</i>
Thinks creatively			
Thinks critically			
Makes sound decisions			
Solves problems			
Reasons			
Plans and organizes			



# Action Planning and Next Steps

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- What is the breadth and depth of the employability skills that are embedded in your instructional practice?
- In what ways can you strategically embed these skills across your grade level or content area?
- What can you do to ensure that employability skills are being reinforced in the classroom?

# Activity 7: Scenarios for Business: Employability Skills

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1. Individually read the assigned scenario.
2. Discuss the scenario in your breakout groups and answer the questions in the template.
  - Outcomes and standards (students)
  - Staff- and employer-led elements
  - Student-led elements
  - Employability skills
  - Communication and engagement with school or youth program
3. Place responses on chart paper.
4. Select a report and share out with the larger group.

# Activity 8: Scenarios for Business: Self-Reflection

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1. Identify an activity or program initiative conducted by business or industry that engages students.
2. Discuss the activity or initiative in your breakout groups and answer the questions in the template.
  - Outcomes and standards (students)
  - Staff- and employer-led elements
  - Student-led elements
  - Employability skills
  - Communication and engagement with school or youth program
3. Place responses on chart paper.
4. Select a report and share out with the larger group

# Whole-Team Action Planning and Next Steps

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- What are the priorities your team has identified for next steps or future work concerning employability skills?
- What are some decisions your team needs to make?
- What are the challenges your team needs to consider?
- Where do you need more support to do this work well?

# Resources

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# Employability Skills Framework Website

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- One-stop resource for information on employability skills for instructors, administrators, employers, and students
- Key content:
  - Interactive Skills Framework
  - Assessment Comparison Worksheet
  - Lesson Planning Checklist
- Access audience-specific landing pages

<http://cte.ed.gov/employabilityskills/index.php/framework/>

# CCRS Center and GTL Center Websites

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- Free resources, trainings, briefs, and guides available on a variety of education topics
- Key content:
  - College and career readiness
  - Educator quality
  - Professional learning
- Access to experienced technical assistance providers who can work in close partnership with state education agency staff

[www.ccrscenter.org](http://www.ccrscenter.org)

<http://www.gtlcenter.org/technical-assistance/professional-learning-modules>

# Competency-Based Education

## Ask the CCRS Team Brief

- How can we help ensure that college and career readiness is a realistic and attainable goal for all students?
- Key content:
  - Overview of the core elements of competency-based education (CBE)
  - State strategies for supporting the development of CBE through policies, guidance, and expanding assessment mastery

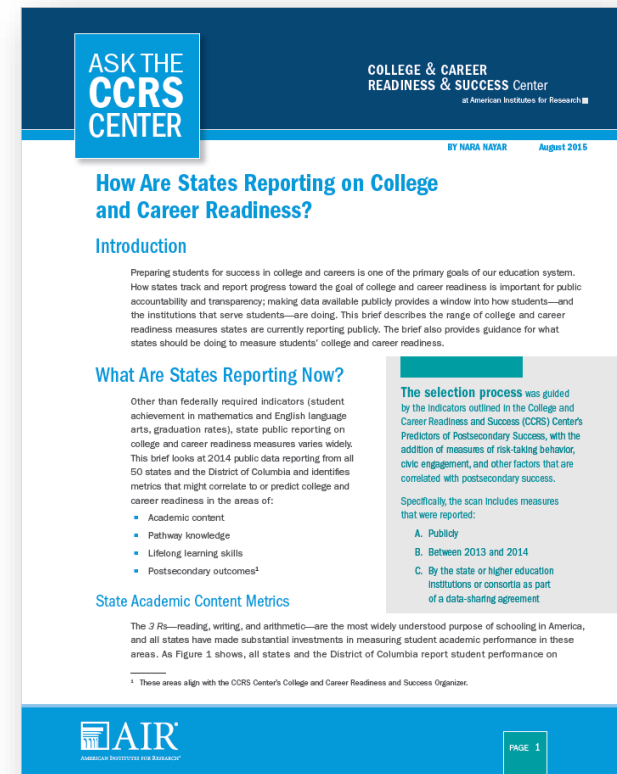




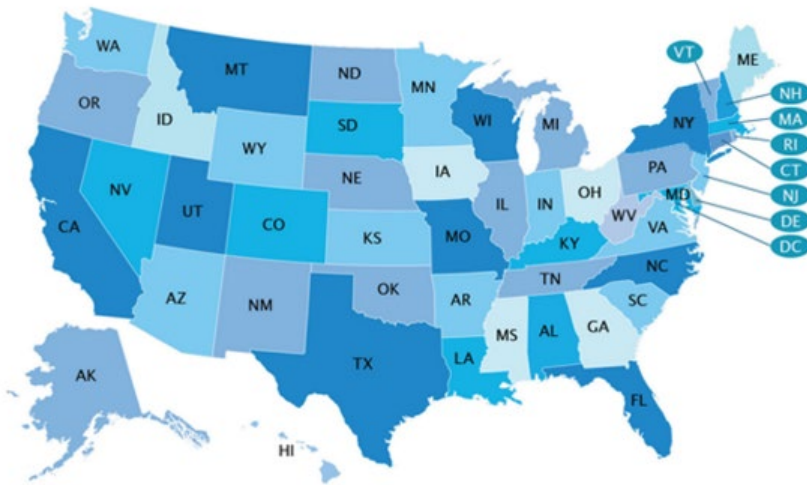
# Accountability Measures

## Ask the CCRS Team Brief

- How are states tracking and reporting progress on college and career readiness?
- Key content:
  - Scan of college and career readiness measures across states
  - Overview of metrics associated with college and career readiness in the areas of academic content, pathway knowledge, lifelong learning skills, and postsecondary outcomes



# CCRS Interactive State Map

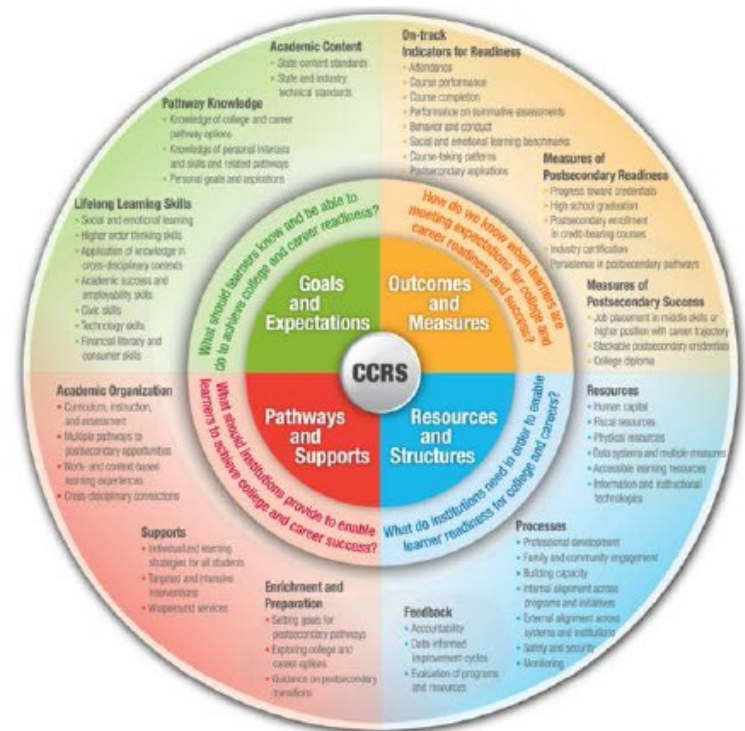


- Broad landscape of key college and career readiness policies across the country
- Key content:
  - College- and Career-Ready Definitions
  - College- and Career-Ready Metrics
  - Programs and Structures

<http://www.ccrscenter.org/ccrs-landscape/state-profile>

# CCRS Organizer

- Visual, consolidated overview of the many elements that impact a student's ability to succeed in college and careers
- Key content:
  - Outcomes and Measures
  - Resources and Structures
  - Pathways and Supports
  - Goals and Expectations



<http://www.ccrscenter.org/ccrs-landscape/ccrs-organizer>

# Wrap-Up and Next Steps

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# Feedback and Thank You

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- Complete the postevent survey to provide valuable insight into revisions and finalization of the module.
- Feel free to write any additional feedback to help improve the module.

# References

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- Hart Research Associates. (2015). Falling short? College learning and career success: Selected findings from online surveys of employers and college students. Washington, DC: Hart Research Associates for the American Association of Colleges and Universities. Retrieved from <https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/LEAP/2015employerstudentsurvey.pdf>
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