

Culinary Skills Arts Employability Skills Initiative



Georgia Employability Skills Task Force Recommendation No. 3 School Goal 4

- ▶ Identify integrated learning experiences that allow students to combine academic, technical, and employability skills learning.

Overview

The primary goal for establishing the Culinary Arts program at McIntosh County Academy in Darien, Georgia, was to create an experience as close as possible to real-life work experience for the 65 students in the Culinary Arts pathway and 15 special education students in a partner class. Employability skills are taught in a performance-based instructional model.

At the academy, the year started with introduction of basic employability skills that would be used to evaluate students daily. These skills and the school's Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) standards (Respect, Responsibility, and Readiness) are used to provide a daily employability grade. Students were assigned job titles that determined their level of responsibility based on Escoffier's Brigade System. Titles were assigned based on a student's employability grade. Students are compensated for their performance with PBIS points based on both their level of responsibility and task performance.

The unit on Culinary Arts employability skills is based on the Georgia Career, Technology, Agriculture, and Education Resource Network (CTAERN) Instructional Resources. Jobs for students included public relations, dry pantry manager, linen closet manager, and safety officer. Students submitted a resume and interviewed for positions. Awards for job performance included PBIS points to monthly "Free Cook Fridays," when students could bring their own ingredients and use the kitchen to cook food of their choice. Responsibilities of students included taking inventory, making sure chef whites were turned in and cleaned, following safety regulations, representing the Culinary Arts program at events, and hosting visitors in the classroom.

Audience & Initiative Impact

Employability skills are taught in an ongoing spiral, picking up a skill and revisiting as necessary, but adding that skill to a toolkit that students use daily. They learn to communicate effectively, ask challenging questions, think critically, and solve problems. Students work independently, interpret data, and apply team work skills. They present a professional image through appearance, behavior, and communication with community stakeholders and each other in a respectful and considerate manner. They also learn an important lesson that when you show that you are responsible, those in charge may move you into positions requiring more responsibility and may provide you with more perks. Students experience as close to real-world employability, from paper to practice, as possible.

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Georgia Employability Skills Task Force Recommendations

1. Integrate employability skills into curriculum and learning experiences from prekindergarten through postsecondary education.
2. Support educators and other stakeholders in developing employability skills instruction.
3. Develop deeper and stronger relationships between industry and education to enhance teacher and mentor roles in quality work-based learning and career development opportunities.

To learn more about college- and career-readiness work in the southeast states, please contact Beth Howard-Brown (bhoward-brown@air.org), Southeast Comprehensive Center (SECC) director, or visit the SECC website (southeast-cc.org).

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