Integrating Employability Skills
A Framework for All Educators

Facilitator’s Guide

JULY 2015

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING MODULE
About This Booklet

This *Integrating Employability Skills: A Framework for All Educators Facilitator’s Guide* is intended for use with the following additional resources:

- *Integrating Employability Skills: A Framework for All Educators* Handouts
- *Integrating Employability Skills: A Framework for All Educators* sample agenda
- *Integrating Employability Skills: A Framework for All Educators* slide presentation

Adapting This Booklet

This booklet is designed so that facilitators can adopt it as written or modify the content to reflect state and local context, needs, and priorities. If modifications to content are made, the CCRS Center and GTL Center requests that the following disclaimer be included in the revised materials:

*This booklet was modified in whole or in part with permission from the College and Career Readiness and Success Center, the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders, and RTI International.*
Integrating Employability Skills: A Framework for All Educators
Facilitator’s Guide

July 2015

College and Career Readiness and Success Center
Center on Great Teachers and Leaders
RTI International

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Module Overview

The professional learning module on *Integrating Employability Skills: A Framework for All Educators* was developed collaboratively by the College and Career Readiness and Success Center (CCRS Center), the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders (GTL Center), and RTI International. This module contains the materials designed to implement a work session that builds the knowledge and capacity of leaders and staff members from regional comprehensive centers (RCCs), state education agencies (SEAs), and within-state regional centers on integrating employability skills into existing initiatives and prioritizing employability skills at the state and local level.

Staff members from these agencies may wish to modify and turnkey the work session based on this module for use with SEA staff, career and technical education staff, business and industry leaders, district leadership teams, educators, or other roles. The duration, scope, and sequence of the work session may be customized to accommodate local needs and conditions. The entire work session is designed to take place during a three- to four-hour period but can easily be broken into smaller portions and accomplished during multiple sessions to accommodate participant time and availability.

Materials

The following materials are part of this module:

- *Integrating Employability Skills: A Framework for All Educators* handouts
- *Integrating Employability Skills: A Framework for All Educators* sample agenda
- *Integrating Employability Skills: A Framework for All Educators* slide presentation

All materials are available on the GTL Center’s Professional Learning Modules webpage. These materials may be used and adapted to fit the needs of the state context. To cite the content, please use the following statement: *These materials have been adapted in whole or in part with permission from the College and Career Readiness and Success Center, the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders, and RTI International.*

Work Session Goals

The work session based on the Integrating Employability Skills module has the following goals for participants:

- 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.
**Intended Audiences**

**Participants:** Stakeholders that would benefit from participating in a work session using this module include staff from multiple departments within an SEA or other state agencies, such as staff from the offices of Career and Technical Education, Educator Effectiveness, Early Childhood, and School Improvement. District and school leaders, especially those involved in professional development planning and structures for instructional improvement, would also benefit from participating. These stakeholders focused on Grades K–12 education can craft strategic action plans for integrating and prioritizing employability skills based on participation in a work session based on this module.

Other key stakeholders to consider include state and local business and industry leaders as well as members of local chambers of commerce. These stakeholders focused on the workforce needs of local, regional, and global businesses and industries can help to prioritize employability skills in Grades K–12 education and make explicit connections for students, parents, and educators between these skills and career opportunities.

**Facilitators:** Facilitators for a work session based on this module can include staff from the CCRS Center or the GTL Center, RCC staff, regional service agency staff, or other technical assistance providers. Staff from the CCRS Center or the GTL Center also can help regional and state agencies consider how to use this module in locally led working sessions.
Using This Facilitator’s Guide

This facilitator’s guide provides suggestions for structuring the work session, notes on how to implement the suggested activities, and talking points to be used with the slide presentation.

Materials

The following materials are recommended for the work session and associated activities:

- Computer, projector, and screen for the Integrating Employability Skills slide presentation
- Internet access for participants for the Employability Skills Framework site resources (optional)
- Name table tents (optional)
- Poster paper (preferably the kind with adhesive backing; if these are not available, bring masking tape to post the papers on the wall)
- Colored markers
- Sticky notes
- Adequate reserved space, time, and materials
- Tables arranged to support small-group discussions
- Necessary materials printed:
  - Sample agenda
  - Employability Skills Framework: Source Matrix handout
  - Employability Skills Framework: Definitions handout
  - Employability Skills Workbook
  - Employability Skills Framework: Using the Lesson Planning Checklist as a Self-Assessment Tool handout
  - General Education Example Lesson Plan: English Language Arts and Health and Physical Education Collaboration handout
  - Career and Technical Education Example Lesson Plan: Culinary Arts handout

Preparation for Work Session Activities

Prior to the start of the work session, prepare the following materials:

- Sticky notes and markers at each table for all participants
- Poster paper
- A sheet of poster paper for each group with lines dividing the sheet into thirds
- A sheet of poster paper divided into three sections, labeled “Day 1,” “Days 2–3,” and “Extended Learning”

Also, become familiar with the facilitator’s guide and the handouts.
Agenda Outline

Table 1 provides a detailed outline of the agenda for the work session. It includes timing, slide numbers, activities, and materials. This outline provides facilitators with a big-picture view of this workshop and the corresponding activities. You may need to allot additional time for the activities depending on the audience’s familiarity with the content.

Table 1. Detailed Outline of the Agenda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agenda Item</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Slides</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Materials Needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcome, Introductions, and Agenda</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td>1–8</td>
<td>Whip-around introductions</td>
<td>Agenda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Are Employability Skills?</td>
<td>45 minutes</td>
<td>9–18</td>
<td>Activity 1: What Are Employability Skills?</td>
<td>Chart paper, sticky notes, and markers for each table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Activity 2: Identifying Employability Skills</td>
<td>One piece of chart paper divided in thirds for each table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Activity 3: Categorizing Employability Skills</td>
<td>Employability Skills Framework: Definitions handout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Does This Work Connect to What You Are</td>
<td>60 minutes</td>
<td>21–35</td>
<td>Activity 4: Employability Skills Planning Workbook</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Already Doing?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Break</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Do We Prioritize Employability Skills?</td>
<td>45 minutes</td>
<td>36–48</td>
<td>Activity 5: Using the Self-Assessment in Lesson Planning</td>
<td>Chart paper and markers for each table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>One piece of chart paper divided in thirds and labeled with “Day 1,” “Days 2–3,” and “Extended Learning” for each table</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Employability Skills Self-Assessment</td>
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<td>Culinary Arts Sample Lesson Plan</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ELA Sample Lesson Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td>49</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrap-Up and Next Steps</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td>52–54</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Script

The following section is a slide-by-slide script that provides guidance to facilitators as they present the content and learning activities included in this work session based on this module. Reviewing the entire guide prior to facilitating the work session is highly recommended.
Integrating Employability Skills Work Session

Section 1—Overview (15 minutes)

**Purpose:** This section provides an overview of the work session, including the introduction of the presenters, introduction to the GTL Center, review of the agenda, and review of the program outcomes.

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**Facilitation Note:** Officially welcome the participants. Introduce yourself and fellow facilitators. Discuss your relevant background experiences to build participant confidence in your skills as facilitators.

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**Facilitation Note:** Ask participants to introduce themselves by sharing their name and role. Let participants know that we will start with some background information and a review of the agenda.

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**Explain:**

“This professional learning module or PLM is a resource that is intended to serve as a train-the-facilitator resource that regional comprehensive centers, state education agencies, and local education agencies can use for their own individualized sessions. The module is free to use and can be customized to meet the individual needs of the state or local agency. This PLM is just one in a larger series of PLMs focused on various topics. Each PLM is intended to build a common language on the topic it addresses as well as to create a common understanding of the key elements, perspectives, and policies related to the topic.

This module was developed in collaboration with College and Career Readiness and Success Center (CCRS Center),
the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders (GTL Center), and RTI International. We’ll talk a little more about who we are in the next set of slides.”

**Facilitation Note:** If working with a particular RCC, note which one is supporting the session. If working with an SEA, note the RCC they belong to.

**Explain:**

“For those of you who are not familiar with the technical assistance network, the CCRS Center and GTL Center are two of seven content centers that support the work of 15 regional comprehensive centers. The CCRS Center is focused on providing technical assistance support to state education agencies on college and career readiness initiatives, and the GTL Center is dedicated to supporting state education leaders in their efforts to grow, respect, and retain great teachers and leaders for all students.”

**Explain:**

“RTI International conducts qualitative and quantitative research and analysis and provides technical assistance across several disciplines, including education and workforce development. RTI created the Employability Skills Framework for the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education at the U.S. Department of Education. They partnered with GTL and CCRS to create this module.”

**Facilitation Note:** If there is Internet access, presenters may show the Employability Skills Framework website after showing this slide.

**Explain:**

“Today’s session draws on content from the Employability Skills Framework, an online resource from the U.S. Department of Education designed to support the instruction and assessment of employability skills. It is based on a crosswalk of existing employability skills standards and assessments. Researchers from RTI International reviewed various employability skill initiatives and found that existing skills overlapped on many dimensions, despite differences in terminology. Therefore, they were able to group the skills into an organizing structure, which is depicted in the Employability Skills Framework. Additional content and tools were created to support use of the framework in the
classroom, at the workplace, and in other settings. This work was guided by a technical work group with representation from key stakeholders in the career and technical education, adult education, and workforce fields.”

**Explain:**

“Today’s session will begin with a discussion about what employability skills are. First, we will discuss a definition of employability skills and brainstorm a list of possible skills. We will then explore how these skills are categorized in the Employability Skills Framework.

Next we will highlight connections between the framework and other instructional strategies to see how you may already be addressing these skills. We will explore how state CCR standards and performance rubrics address employability skills in general and participate in an activity to identify connections specific to your state(s).

After we explore your current practice, we will discuss strategies for prioritizing employability skills at different levels and by different stakeholders, including state and district administrators, teachers, and employers.

Finally, we will introduce a tool for teachers to reflect on how they are teaching employability skills and identify skills to incorporate into classroom activities.”

**Facilitation Note:** Read the outcomes, or paraphrase them in your own words. Remind participants that they will leave this session with concrete tools and strategies to help meet these objectives.
Section 2—What Are Employability Skills? (45 minutes)

**Purpose:** This activity is designed to help participants begin to think about current perceptions and understanding of employability skills. We will use this initial exercise as a way to connect participants’ previous knowledge and ideas to the Employability Skills Framework.

**Explain:**
“Now we’re going to take some time to talk a little more about what employability skills are.”

**Facilitation Note:** While describing this activity or in advance, provide each group with a piece of poster paper to record their ideas.

**Explain:**
“In this first activity, we want to get a general brainstorm discussion going about your current perceptions of and understanding of employability skills. So, take a few minutes and jot down on your paper some of the terms, considerations, and contexts that come to mind when you hear the term employability skills.”

**Facilitator’s Note:** Slide is animated.

**Explain:**
“How are we defining employability skills? Employability skills are general skills that are necessary for success in the labor market at all employment levels and in all sectors.”
**Explain:**

“You may have heard employability skills referred to by other names, such as soft skills, workplace readiness skills, noncognitive skills or 21st century skills, but they all point to this same set of general, crosscutting skills.

Our working definition is that employability skills are general skills and knowledge that are necessary for success in the labor market at all employment levels and in all sectors.

What’s important to note about employability skills is that they are not career- or industry-specific skills. No matter what jobs your students ultimately pursue, they will need employability skills to be successful.”

**Explain:**

“From research, we know that employers highly value workers who can think critically, work well with others, apply their knowledge, and adapt to changing workplace tasks and technologies. In a recent survey conducted by Hart Research Associates (2015), employers identified employability skills as among the most important skills needed for work (and, according to other surveys, often more important than job-specific knowledge). Likewise, another survey found that employers feel that the lack of these skills in the current labor force is part of a growing talent shortage. This research confirms our need to work with our students to develop these skills.”

**Explain:**

“We now have some time for our second activity. First, on your own, generate a list of your top five most important employability skills. Record one skill on a sticky note.”

*Facilitator’s Note: After five to 10 minutes, go on to Step 3 in the directions.*

**Explain:**

“Now that each person at your table has five employability skills, discuss your list with your table. As you go through the list, remove any duplicated skills.”

*Facilitator’s Note: Allow 10 minutes for this part of the activity.*
**Facilitator’s Note:** This slide is animated.

**Explain:**

“Now we’ll turn to the Employability Skills Framework to provide context for our discussion and to see how the skills you’ve brainstormed match the skills in the framework. We know that the text in the graphic may be hard to read, so we will be passing out a handout with the framework once we dive deeper into it.”

**Facilitator’s Note:** Click for animation to highlight inner green ring.

**Explain:**

“Employability skills can be organized into three categories: effective relationships, workplace skills, and applied knowledge. These categories are represented by the inner green ring of the framework. We will go into more detail about these categories and the rest of the framework in just a moment, but before we do that, we want to think about the skills that each of your tables has listed and how they relate to this part of the framework.”

**Facilitator’s Note:** While describing the activity or in advance, provide each table or group with a sheet of chart paper divided into thirds.

**Explain:**

“Let’s take a couple of minutes to sort the skills you’ve identified as a table into the three categories: effective relationships, workplace skills, and applied knowledge. Each table has a piece of chart paper with three sections. Start by labeling each section with the categories. Then, as a group, place each of your skills into one of the three categories (eliminating any duplicates). Discuss why you think the skill belongs in a particular category.”

**Facilitator’s Note:** Small groups sort their sticky notes into the three categories on the chart paper.

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**Activity 3:**

Categorizing Employability Skills

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.
**Facilitator’s Note:** This slide is animated.

**Explain:**

“Now we’re going to look at the categories that comprise the framework in more detail.”

**Facilitator’s Note:** The slide starts with the whole framework and then zooms into the current category. Provide all participants with the Employability Skills Definitions handout.

**Explain:**

“The first category we will discuss is Effective Relationships. When we say effective relationships, we mean the interpersonal skills and personal qualities that enable individuals to interact effectively with clients, coworkers, and supervisors successfully. Looking at your handout, you can see that we are specifically referencing interpersonal skills [CLICK FOR ANIMATION TO SHOW LIST OF INTERPERSONAL SKILLS], which are skills that enable employees to collaborate as a member of a team or work independently, as appropriate, and contribute to the overarching goals of the workplace. For personal qualities [CLICK FOR ANIMATION TO SHOW LIST OF PERSONAL QUALITIES], we mean a set of behaviors and skills that enable employees to establish effective relationships and function appropriately in the workplace. I will give you a couple of minutes to read your handout.”

**Facilitator’s Note:** Direct participants to the Effective Relationships section of the handout and provide them with two to three minutes to read it. Continue with the activity once they are done reading.

**Explain:**

“Take a couple of minutes to review the skills that you placed into Effective Relationships at your table. Given the definition we’ve just read, think about whether there are any skills that you placed into this category that do not belong. You can move them off the chart paper and just set them aside for now. Then look to see if there any skills that you placed into other categories that should be moved into Effective Relationships.”

**Facilitator’s Note:** Participants work in small groups to review the Effective Relationships category and move any skills into or out of it.
Facilitator’s Note: This slide is animated. The slide starts with the whole framework. Click to zoom into the current category.

Explain:

“The next category is Workplace Skills. By workplace skills, we mean the analytical and organizational skills and understandings that employees need to successfully perform work tasks. Specifically, we are talking about resource management [CLICK], information use [CLICK], communication skills [CLICK], systems thinking [CLICK], and technology use [CLICK]. Take a couple of minutes to review these skills on your handout.”

Facilitator’s Note: Direct participants to the Workplace Skills section of the handout and provide them with two to three minutes to read it. Continue with the activity once they are done reading.

Explain:

“Look at the skills you’ve grouped into Workplace Skills at your table. Given the definition of this category, what skills do you need to move out of Workplace Skills? What skills should be moved into the category? Take a couple of minutes to discuss with your table and move any skills accordingly.”

Facilitator’s Note: Participants work in small groups to review the Workplace Skills category and move any skills into or out of it.

Facilitator’s Note: This slide is animated. The slide starts with the whole framework and then zooms into the current category.

Explain:

“The third framework category is Applied Knowledge. Applied knowledge refers to the thoughtful integration of academic knowledge and technical skills and how to put these skills into practical use in the workplace. It includes both applied academic [CLICK FOR ANIMATION] and critical thinking skills [CLICK FOR ANIMATION]. Take a couple of minutes to review these skills on your handout.”

Facilitator’s Note: Direct participants to the Applied Knowledge section of the handout and provide them with —two to three minutes to read it. Continue with the activity once they are done reading.
Explain:
“Once again, review the skills you’ve placed into Applied Knowledge and your table and make any final changes to move skills into or out of this category.”

Facilitator’s Note: Participants work in small groups to review the Applied Knowledge category and move any skills into or out of it.

Explain:
“Now that we’ve discussed each of the individual categories of the Employability Skills Framework, we thought it’d be helpful to see how all of these pieces fit together. Again, you see the three categories— Effective Relationships, Workplace Skills, and Applied Knowledge— along the inner green ring and the nine sets of skills along the outer rim.”

Facilitator’s Note: Depending on time, the facilitator may want to debrief this series of activities with the goals of (1) highlighting the broad range of skills that are considered employability skills and (2) understanding the extent to which participants were able to identify employability skills on their own. Some sample discussion questions include the following:

- Did your tables’ initial lists of skills include skills that fit within each of the three framework categories?
- Which skills, if any, were missing from your lists?
- Were you surprised about any of the skills that are included in the framework?

After this discussion, you will transition to the next section. Ask if participants have any questions about the framework before moving on.

Explain:
“As you can see, and as you probably already discussed, there is a lot to think about when it comes to incorporating employability skills in a meaningful way in your current instruction. Hopefully you’ve discovered that you are already teaching some, if not many, of these skills. For those that you are not currently teaching, it may seem like some skills are easy to incorporate and that others might require deeper consideration about how they can be integrated into your work.

In our next sections, we are going to help you think about how to incorporate these skills in two ways. First, we want to identify existing opportunities in your work...
where these skills are already prioritized by looking at connections to other instructional initiatives. The second is to identify strategies for educators at all levels—the state, district, and classroom—and employers to prioritize the skills.”

Section 3—How Does This Work Connect to What You Are Already Doing? (60 minutes)

Purpose: This presentation helps participants make connections between employability skills and the teaching and learning standards already in use in their context.

Explain:

“As I just mentioned, in this next section we want to discuss how employability skills are already be embedded in some of your instructional activities. The changing nature of work is such that all teachers have a responsibility to prepare students for the future workplace, starting at an early age. The future workplace requires employees to be versatile and flexible, especially when it comes to adopting new technologies. Employability skills aren’t necessarily new skills, nor are they skills that you need to teach in addition to what you’re already doing. But they are skills that can and should be taught throughout the education system—not just in CTE programs.”

Explain:

“We recognize that the list of employability skills may seem overwhelming and hope to explore in this next set of activities how you may already be embedding employability skills in different ways.

Employability skills are one of the three critical types of skills necessary for college and career readiness, along with academic and technical skills. The academic field has, to date, mostly focused on the college readiness component of college- and career-ready standards. Employability skills provide an important opportunity to better connect college AND career readiness.

There are many connections between employability skills and other standards-based initiatives at the state policy level, especially those focused on state-adopted college- and career-ready standards (such as the Common Core State Standards) and professional practice rubrics. These initiatives are supported by many of the major pieces of federal legislation that you are probably familiar with, including the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Race to the Top, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, and the Carl D. Perkins

Other related initiatives are shown on the next slide, but for the purposes of our discussion today, we’re going to focus on how employability skills may be embedded in state college and career readiness standards and professional practice rubrics. In this, we will discuss how employability skills connect to standards for both students and educators.”

**Explain:**

“The Employability Skills Framework is based on an inventory of national, state, and local resources related to employability skill standards and assessments. You may be familiar with many of the sources used to develop the framework, such as the Partnership for 21st Century Skills, the National Career Clusters Framework, and the National Work Readiness Credential.

Other related initiatives that weren’t part of the framework inventory but still have important connections include LinkedLearning, Pathways to Prosperity, and social-emotional learning.”

**Facilitation Note:** Use a pointer or physically gesture to the sections of the matrix as you describe them below to help participants understand the information. If you prefer, you may navigate to an Internet browser page to view this resource online rather than using a screenshot of the page. Provide all participants with the Employability Skills Framework: Source Matrix handout.

**Explain:**

“This slide is a screenshot from OCTAE’s Employability Skills website. On the left hand side of this table, you can see the different sources used to develop the framework, including the examples we shared in the previous slide. Here, you can see the Career Clusters Framework document we mentioned previously.

Looking at the columns to the right of the source documents, you can see the three categories included in the framework: applied knowledge, effective relationships, and workplace skills. You can also see the specific skills included in each of these categories that we discussed previously. Each of the Xs shows that this specific employability skill was found in the corresponding source document. For instance, we can see here that all the employability skills can be found in the Career Clusters Framework, whereas only Information Use and Communication Skills can be found in the U.S. Department of Citizen and Immigration Services’
Citizenship Foundation Skills and Knowledge Clusters document. Looking across all source documents, we can see that there are some skills with broad representation and other skills that are not included across all documents. For example, the majority of the sources include Communication Skills, but fewer of the source documents include Systems Thinking.

This matrix may be helpful in two ways. First, this matrix can help practitioners and policymakers alike to make connections between frameworks and standards that are already being used in your context and the Employability Skills Framework. Second, this matrix can help to highlight how specific employability skills may be prominent or underemphasized in your context. For instance, a CTE program that has been using the SkillsUSA Employability Skills Blueprint may find that while relationships and communication skills are well-integrated in instruction, information use (which is not included in the blueprint) may represent an area for improvement.”

Facilitation Note: It may be helpful to show the websites on the Common Core and the Common Career Technical Core on an Internet browser during the presentation.

Explain:

“As mentioned previously, we want to specifically look at the connections between college- and career-ready standards and professional practice frameworks. Let’s start with college- and career-ready standards. A student who is college and career ready is prepared to enroll and succeed in credit-bearing courses—and prepared to complete the course sequence—at the postsecondary level, including two- and four-year academic, trade, or technical degree programs. College- and career-ready standards, such as the Common Core, represent what students must know and be able to do at each level to be college and career ready by the time they graduate from high school. These standards are specific to ELA and mathematics and are often tailored to each state’s context. For the purposes of this presentation, we will look at the Common Core as a “generic” representation of college- and career-ready standards across the country.

As we mentioned previously, the field has primarily focused on college readiness in the past few years. One set of standards that focuses specifically on career readiness is the Common Career Technical Core (CCTC), which includes a set of standards for each of the 16 career
clusters and outlines common national benchmarks for the skills and knowledge necessary to complete career and technical education programs of study. The Career Ready Practices, which are a component of the CCTC, outline 12 general workforce readiness skills common to all career areas that are to be taught in conjunction with technical skills.”

**Facilitation Note:** Use a pointer or physically gesture to the sections of the matrix as you describe them to help participants understand the information. If you prefer, you may navigate to an Internet browser page to view this resource online rather than using a screenshot of the page.

**Explain:**

“This table shows a crosswalk between the Employability Skills Framework, state college- and career-ready standards, and the career-ready practices of the Common Career Technical Core. The X’s indicate that a particular employability skill is embedded in the standards. (This was done with the Common Core.) As you might expect, employability skills are well integrated with the CCTC career-ready practices: All but Resource Management are included. Employability skills are slightly less integrated with state college- and career-ready standards, which don’t explicitly include skills like personal qualities, resource management, and systems thinking. It is important to note that this matrix provides a high-level overview; it may be possible to find more connections by examining elements of college- and career-ready standards at a more detailed level.”

**Explain:**

“Let’s look at an example of what this alignment looks like between the Employability Skills Framework and the Common Core. The Employability Skills Framework describes critical thinking skills as enabling ‘employees to think critically and creatively in the context of their work, solve work-based problems, and make sound decisions at work.’ An individual who uses critical thinking skills thinks critically, thinks creatively, makes sound decisions, solves problems, reasons, and plans and organizes. Although there are many connections to critical thinking embedded in the Common Core, one example can be found in the ELA Standards for Science and Technical Subjects for Grades 6–12. These types of text analysis require critical thinking, reasoning, and organization of information and ideas.”
Explain:

“Let’s look at an example of what this alignment looks like between the Employability Skills Framework and the Common Career Technical Core. Career Ready Practice 8 clearly connects to the critical thinking skills outlined in the Employability Skills framework, especially perseverance in problem solving.”

Explain:

“In addition to considering how the employability skills framework aligns with college- and career-ready standards, we should also think about how teacher professional practice aligns with and supports the development of employability skills in students.

It’s important to keep in mind that while the curriculum or the particular standards being taught may vary, teacher professional practice is anchored by what is known to be best-practice across subjects. In this case, reviewing the employability skills framework against professional practice rubrics can yield insight into the degree to which employability skills are being taught, modeled, and reinforced in the classroom.

Teacher professional practice rubrics include criteria that define teacher behaviors that communicate expectations for, as well as model and reinforce the underlying skills students should be acquiring throughout the learning process. Although it won’t necessarily provide a one-to-one connection with each of the employability skills we’ve presented, a crosswalk of a common teacher professional practice rubric—for example, the Framework for Teaching by Charlotte Danielson—with the Employability Skills Framework illustrates how teacher professional practice can be intentionally aligned with the Framework to support the development of employability skills for all students.”

Sample Crosswalk Language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical Thinking Skills</th>
<th>CCCTC</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Thinks critically</td>
<td>* Career Ready Practice 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Thinks creatively</td>
<td>Utilize critical thinking to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Makes sound decisions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Solves problems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Reasons</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Plans and organizes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Crosswalk With Professional Practice Rubric

- 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.
Explain:
“You can see, here, that the criteria for teacher professional practice align with nearly all of the skills outlined in the Employability Skills Framework. With the exception of ‘Technology Use,’ the foundational skills for employment are directly supported by the overarching teacher professional practice guidelines, which are a constant across subjects.”

Explain:
“We can see that, within the professional practice rubric—in this case FFT—there are specific guidelines and teacher actions that align with and support the skills outlined in the Employability Skills Framework.

For example, communication skills—which include effective written and verbal communication, active listening, and comprehension—are supported by components 3a, ‘Communicating with Students,’ and 3b, ‘Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques,’ of the FFT professional practice rubric.

These components require that students understand classroom content and instructions, make effective use of academic vocabulary, and are able to explain and justify their reasoning to the teacher and other classmates, while the teacher challenges them to carefully examine their own premises, as well as evaluate and respond to the teacher’s and other students’ ideas.”
**Explain:**

“Turning to another employability skill, ‘Interpersonal Skills,’ which includes teamwork, responding to client needs, leadership, negotiation and respect, we can see that the teacher professional practice rubric provides supports for this at multiple levels. Specifically, components 2a–2d of the FFT professional practice rubric outline teacher behaviors and student expectations that support the development of interpersonal skills.

The guidelines call for the teacher to demonstrate knowledge and caring about students beyond the classroom, encourage and validate student efforts, create an environment where students participate without the fear of put-downs, and challenge students to take an active role in building and sustaining that environment by engaging with and assisting classmates with work, as well as maintaining order and attending to the efficient management of classroom procedures.”

**Facilitation Note:** As describing this activity or just prior to presenting this slide, provide each participant with the Employability Skills Workbook handout.

Please note that this activity may take more or less time depending on the audience. Facilitators may choose to take more time for this activity so that participants have adequate time to complete the workbook activity or use the time to focus on a select group of standards.

**Explain:**

“We’ve developed an Employability Skills Planning Workbook for you to evaluate your own college- and career-ready standards, professional practice rubrics, and professional development opportunities—against the Employability Skills Framework—in much the same way as we just described.

You’ll see that we’ve organized the workbook to include three steps: (1) Review your professional practice rubric OR your college- and career-ready standards; (2) fill out the crosswalk table to evaluate how the rubric aligns with the Employability Skills Framework, considering what professional learning opportunities or policies would help to create a stronger connection between the two; (3) discuss the results with your team to plan action steps and begin to address policy priorities.

The active and intentional contemplation of how Employability Skills currently fit within college- and career-ready policies and professional practice supports can help to inform the development of coherent and

**Sample Crosswalk Language**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interpersonal Skills</th>
<th>Employability Skills</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understands</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teamwork and works</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responds to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>customer needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercises leadership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiates to resolve conflicts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respects individual differences</td>
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</table>

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.

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**Employability Skills Planning Workbook**

1. Review your college- and career-ready standards OR professional practice framework.
2. Complete the workbook:
   - Identify explicit or implicit connections.
   - Discuss the actions, habits, or practices needed to demonstrate proficiency in the specific employability skill.
   - Identify the professional learning opportunities teachers need to effectively implementing those actions, habits, or practices into their instruction.
3. Plan for next steps and complete action planning.

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comprehensive policies and practices which support the goal of producing students who are prepared to succeed in whatever postsecondary and career paths they choose. Let’s take a look at a completed example to get started.”

**Explain:**

“As you can see in this example, we’ve first identified some ELA and mathematics practice standards that explicitly include critical thinking skills to a great extent. Next, we’ve identified some actions, habits, and practices that teachers and students need to demonstrate to be proficient in critical thinking skills. Specifically, we’ve identified that explicit models, such as Socratic discussions and ‘fishbowl classroom configurations,’ can facilitate critical thinking and that teachers and students in this context do this most of the time. Finally, we’ve identified some professional learning opportunities to help train teachers in these approaches that are not in place right now but that might be implemented in the future.”

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**Section 4—How Do We Prioritize Employability Skills? (45 minutes)**

**Purpose:** This section is designed to help participants think about how to prioritize employability skills in both state and local initiatives as well as in everyday classroom instruction in all grades and subject areas.

**Explain:**

“Now that we’ve talked about how employability skills are embedded in current practices, we’ll consider strategies for prioritizing employability skills at the state and district levels and explore a tool to help teachers reflect on their own practice.”
When it comes to prioritizing employability skills, it is important to note that it is not the responsibility of one teacher—or even one grade level—to teach all of the framework skills. Instead, you’ll want to think about how all teachers can integrate employability skills in their everyday classroom practices as well as long-term planning processes. Education leaders at all levels can help to ensure this integration by looking across district curricula, state programs and initiatives, common professional development opportunities, and messaging around student expectations to ensure that all of the skills are prioritized where appropriate.

Keep some key points in mind when communicating about employability skills with various stakeholders statewide.”

Facilitation Note: Either read or paraphrase the slide bullets.

We will now explore initial ideas about how employability skills can be prioritized by state and district administrators, teachers, and employers. You may have other suggestions that we can add to our lists.”

At the state level, employability skills can be prioritized through partnerships with key stakeholders, including state policymakers and employers. States can also provide clear and engaging messaging and communication around employability skills to facilitate understanding and help districts communicate with local stakeholders. You also will want to look at how these skills can be incorporated into curriculum and instruction, as well as into teacher professional development, hiring, and evaluation activities. It’s especially important to identify connections to key state initiatives, such as career pathways and content standards, that may offer an existing way to prioritize these skills. Finally, states can prioritize opportunities to help students attain these skills in a practical way, such as through work-based learning that includes personalized learning, performance-based assessments, and capstone.”

Facilitator’s Note: Ask participants to suggest other ways that state administrators might prioritize employability skills.
Explain:

“Employers also play an important role in prioritizing these skills and you’ll want to look for opportunities to develop and strengthen partnerships with employers at the state and local levels. Employers can help to identify the skills that are most important to their workplaces and work with their education partners to ensure these skills are emphasized in curriculum and instruction and to offer work-based learning opportunities, such as internships.”

Facilitator’s Note: Ask participants to suggest other ways that employers can prioritize employability skills. You may want to ask participants to share how they are currently partnering with employers.

Explain:

“Districts can prioritize employability skills by building in a review of how teachers incorporate these skills into teacher performance evaluation systems and provide professional learning opportunities and support for further embedding employability skills into curriculum across content areas and grade levels. Districts can also use structures such as teacher collaboration, evaluation, coaching, and professional development to build and facilitate conversations about how to integrate employability skills into classroom instruction. At the district level, partnerships between CTE and general education teachers are important to understand how employability skills can be taught in different ways and different settings—for example, to identify opportunities for contextualizing instruction so that students can see real-world application of these skills.”

Facilitator’s Note: Ask participants to suggest other ways that districts might prioritize employability skills.
Explain:

“Again, a single teacher isn’t responsible for teaching every employability skill in every course or every lesson. When employability skills are integrated into instruction across all grades and content areas, students will be exposed to all employability skills in sustained and meaningful ways. Teachers can work to identify and prioritize skills that are most relevant to their courses and students. They can then plan and reflect on lessons that incorporate these skills (using a tool that we’ll introduce next). Teachers also can reinforce students’ understanding of employability skills by highlighting which skills are being taught and why they are important. By clearly communicating about the expectations students are likely to face in college and their careers, teachers can help students assess and communicate about their own readiness around these skills. In courses for older students, this includes planning lessons that focus on resume writing and practice interviews and that incorporate work-based learning opportunities.”

Facilitator’s Note: Ask participants to suggest other ways that teachers might prioritize employability skills and what support they might need to do so. The next section focuses on the lesson planning self-assessment tool. Before moving on, see if participants have any questions about state, employer, district, and teacher roles.

Explain:

“Our next activity builds off of the Lesson Planning Checklist, a tool on the Employability Skills Framework website that can be used to help teachers plan and reflect on lessons that incorporate employability skills. It also has a variety of other uses for teachers and advisors, administrators, employers, and students, which are described on the site. At the district level, for example, the checklist can be used to develop and review curricula; guide classroom observations; report on school or districtwide efforts to incorporate employability skills; and train teaching staff on employability skills. At the teacher level, it can be used to help teachers reflect on how their lessons already incorporate employability skills and how they can improve these connections. Again, tools like this are a critical component in ensuring that employability skills can be meaningfully integrated and sustained in classroom-level practice.
For our purposes, we are going to use a version of the checklist that has been modified as a self-assessment and show you how you can use this tool to help teachers embed employability skills.”

**Facilitator’s Note:** Hand out the Employability Skills Framework: Using the Lesson Planning Checklist as a Self-Assessment Tool handout.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explain:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“The self-assessment has three parts: The first asks users to review a current lesson plan or series of lesson plans to identify which employability skills are included, scoring one to two points for each skill. The second part includes reflection questions to help users think about skills that are being included and identify any gaps, especially within the three framework categories. In the third part, users discuss their lessons with a colleague to consider other skills that may have already or can be incorporated and to share strategies for teaching these skills. Note that the purpose of this activity isn’t to get a perfect score, but rather to reflect on teachers’ current practice and identify areas for further prioritizing employability skills. Next we will walk through some sample lessons to show how the tool can be used.”</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity 5: Using the Self-Assessment in Lesson Planning</th>
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</table>
| • Review sample lesson plans for a CTE course (Culinary Arts) and a non-CTE course (ELA)  
• Use the self-assessment tool and standards section of the lesson plans to identify the extent to which employability skills are embedded in the lesson.  
• What skills are strongly emphasized?  
• What skills are included but need to be reinforced or better integrated?  
• What skills are missing that should be included? |

<table>
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<tr>
<th>How to Use the Lesson Planning Checklist for Self-Assessment</th>
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| • Part 1: Use the Lesson Planning Checklist to self-assess the extent to which employability skills are embedded into instruction.  
• Part 2: Reflect on self-ratings and make plans to address any skills that are not being embedded.  
• Part 3: Discuss strategies for teaching employability skills with colleagues. |

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<td>Slide 43</td>
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</table>
connections to the employability skills integrated in each part of the lessons. As you read the lesson plans, think about which employability skills are strongly emphasized, which employability skills are included but need to be better reinforced, and which employability skills might be missing from the lesson that should be integrated.

We will be working in small groups, so make sure everyone in your group has access to a copy of each lesson plan. Please also note that this activity is designed to promote conversation on how to practically integrate employability skills at the classroom level. You do not have to have had a teaching background to engage in this activity.”

Facilitator’s Note: Please note that slide is animated. In advance, prep poster paper with three titles (Day 1, Days 2–3, Extended Learning). Provide all groups with this poster paper as well as a blank sheet of poster paper.

Explain:

“Let’s start with the example CTE culinary arts lesson plan. This is an example of a typical culinary arts lesson that integrates several different employability skills, which are identified in the standards section of the plan. Because this lesson includes a variety of different activities, students will have opportunities to demonstrate many different employability skills. Take about 10 minutes to read the lesson plan with your colleagues, and think about where the employability skills listed in the standards section are reflected in the lesson. Write the names of these employability skills on the poster paper that represents that part of the lesson, with a short example of how or why it’s reflected. For example, under Day 1, I might write that students will use reading and writing skills when they put together the vocabulary presentations.”

Facilitator’s Note: Give groups time to read the lesson and populate their sheets. Ask groups to share examples of one or two strong examples of where employability skills have been emphasized. As groups share out, use slide animation to show some of the skills identified in each part of the lesson.
**Facilitator’s Note:** Slide is animated.

**Explain:**

“Now let’s do the same activity with an ELA lesson plan for high school students. Take about 10 minutes to read the lesson plan with your colleagues, and think about where the employability skills listed in the standards section are reflected in the lesson. Write the names of these employability skills on the poster paper that represents that part of the lesson, with a short example of how or why it’s reflected.”

**Facilitator’s Note:** Walk through the ELA lesson plan in the same way that you facilitated the culinary arts lesson plan.

**Explain:**

“Through this activity, we can see how employability skills can be embedded in common activities and projects at the classroom level. In fact, many teachers already ask students to demonstrate many of these skills to ensure that they are engaged in the content and can access learning in a multitude of ways. For teachers, using the self-assessment tool can be a good way to begin to make connections between the employability skills and their current practice. Using the tool, teachers can reflect on the depth and breadth to which employability skills are already embedded in their practice, how they can strategically embed this skills in instruction across their grade level or content area, and how they can ensure that employability skills are consistently reinforced in their classrooms.”

**Example Self-Assessment:**

**ELA Lesson Plan**
- Small-group work creating brochure
- Uses reading and writing skills
- Thinks creatively
- Understands framework, exercises leadership, and respects individual differences
- Locates, organizes, uses, analyzes, and communicates information

**Action Planning and Next Steps**
- What is the breadth and depth the employability skills 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?
Explain:

“This professional learning module is designed to provide you with a framework for understanding and prioritizing employability skills at the state and local levels. The work you’ve done today can help spark conversations about how policy and practice can support students in attaining these skills and make a measurable impact on student outcomes. As we close out this session, take a few minutes and discuss as a team, table, or individually and think about each of the questions posed on this slide.

What are the priorities your team has identified for next steps or future work around employability skills? Depending on your needs, you may consider completing the policy crosswalk activity using the Employability Skills Workbook or examining existing teaching and learning policies to assess the alignment between current standards and policies with employability skills. Likewise, you may consider doing an inventory of current student outcome and practice measures to assess the extent to which current measures capture employability skills. You may also consider what existing professional learning opportunities there are for all educators that may be used to introduce employability skills to teachers.

In thinking about the concrete next steps you would like to take as a team, you may also want to consider the following questions:

- 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?”
Section 6—Wrap-Up and Next Steps (15 minutes)

**Purpose:** This section discusses next steps and brings the session to an end.

**Explain:**

“As we end the day, we have just one more thing with which we’re hoping you can assist us.”

**Explain:**

“We have a feedback survey that we are hoping you can complete to provide us some concrete feedback as we finalize the module. We will collect the data today and work to incorporate the feedback in future iterations of the module.

Thank you.”

**Facilitator’s Note:** The CCRS Center and the GTL Center have a survey developed for feedback; however, RCCs and SEAs should use their own surveys to collect the necessary feedback for your continued improvement.

**Facilitator’s Note:** Show this slide as participants fill out the survey and exit.

**References**


About the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders

The Center on Great Teachers and Leaders (GTL Center) was created to help states leverage their strengths to improve the educational attainment of all students by ensuring an effective teacher in every classroom and an effective leader in every school. Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, the GTL Center is part of the U.S. Department of Education’s Comprehensive Centers program, which includes seven content centers that focus on specific areas of expertise and 15 regional centers that provide services primarily to state education agencies to enable them to assist districts and schools.

In its role as a content center, the GTL Center is responsible for providing in-depth knowledge, expertise, and analyses to regional centers and the states they serve. The GTL Center disseminates information about scientifically based research on effective practice, creates research-based products, and provides expertise that regional centers can use in delivering technical assistance to states.