Embedding Essential Workforce Skills in Program Curriculum: An Accreditation Approach

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“Soft Skills”

Poll Question: With Regard to Soft Skills:

a. I know exactly what soft skills are and can define them.

b. I know soft skills when I see them and can talk about them with some certainty.

c. I have a general idea of what soft skills are, but can’t define them.

d. I thought there were going to be doughnuts at this presentation.
“Soft Skills”

In the Chat Box Feature, write your definition of “soft skills.”
Soft Skills - Working Definition

The set of skills necessary to continuously succeed in the workforce.
“Soft skills” then are Essential Workforce Skills.

But, What Are They? (Wait for it, it's coming)
Essential Workforce Skills

Focusing Only/Primarily On “Hard Skills” is Insufficient for the Future

The Path is not Straight
Essential Workforce Skills

The Path to Success is Constantly Challenged and Varied
Essential Workforce Skills

Students Need More Tools
Essential Workforce Skills

Schools “say” they address soft skills.

Then why do employers continue to find graduate ill-equipped in these areas?
Essential Workforce Skills Matter. Candidates Lack Them. They are Hard to Find.

92% of executives say soft skills are equal to or more important than hard skills
- Wall Street Journal

89% of talent professionals said bad hires typically lack soft skills
- LinkedIn

44% of U.S. senior executives think Americans lack soft skills
- Adecco

40% of new hires fail within 18 months because of inadequate soft skills
- Leadership IQ
Essential Workforce Skills – A New Accreditation Approach

Where Are They? Show Me.
Essential Workforce Skills – A New Accreditation Approach
Essential Workforce Skills – A New Accreditation Approach

➢ Defined Set of Skills for the Workforce
➢ Map to Embedded Curriculum
➢ Co-Curricular Activities
➢ Engagement and Practice
➢ New Accreditation “Badge”
### Essential Workforce Skills – A New Accreditation Approach

#### Six Macro Skill Areas

- Self-Management Skills
- Communication Skills
- People Skills
- Analytical Skills
- Planning Skills
- Career Management Skills
Essential Workforce Skills – A New Accreditation Approach

- 43 Sub-Skill Areas
- 186 Micro Skill Areas
Work to Achieve Personal Goals
- Develop effective goals
- Prioritize goals
- Distinguish between short-term, medium-term, and long-term goals
- Manage a plan to complete your goals
- Monitor progress toward goal completion
- Adjust strategies to ensure goal completion
Speak with Intention

Think before speaking
Organize your thoughts before speaking
Distinguish types of “noise” that disrupt verbal messages
Reduce distractions when speaking
Match verbal and nonverbal messages
Verify that verbal messages are understood as intended
Essential Workforce Skills – A New Accreditation Approach

➢ Create a Career Path
  ➢ Identify Your Career Preferences
  ➢ Assess Your Skills Accurately
  ➢ Evaluate Potential Careers
  ➢ Set Personal Career Goals
  ➢ Manage Career Action Plan
Solve Problems Effectively

- Identify “Problem”
- Diagnose “Root Cause” of problem
- Generate Possible Solutions to problem
- Implement Solutions
Essential Workforce Skills – A New Accreditation Approach

➢ EWS Embedded in Curriculum
  ➢ Solve Problems Effectively
  ➢ Welding “Problem” Assignment
    ➢ Identify Problem - Improper weld requested
    ➢ Diagnose Root Cause - Spec Sheet includes incorrect materials
    ➢ Generate Solutions - Return to Manager (Faculty)
    ➢ Get Spec Sheet corrected and complete proper weld
Essential Workforce Skills – A New Accreditation Approach

- EWS in Co-Curricular Activities
  - Orientation Course
  - Goal Setting
  - Personal Finance
  - Communicating with Faculty and Peer Students
  - Community Service Projects and Activities
  - Student Government
## Essential Workforce Skills – A New Accreditation Approach

### Mapping Exercise

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manage Time</th>
<th>Real-World Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Prioritize tasks</td>
<td>A truck driver optimizes her time to deliver loads by planning optimal driver routes, avoiding city streets and traffic, and adhering to a tight schedule.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Estimate time required to complete tasks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Create a time management plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Complete planned tasks</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Control time-wasters</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Essential Workforce Skills – A New Accreditation Approach

Accreditation “Badge”

- By Program
- School Maps Skills to Curricular and Co-Curricular projects
- School Demonstrates Introduction, Engagement, Practice
- Not a Measure of “Competence” or “Mastery”
- Lifelong Development of EWS
- Upon Demonstration, Earns Accreditation Badge
- Assisted by MaxKnowledge (CareerPrepped, Robert Starks)
Essential Workforce Skills – A New Accreditation Approach

➢ Why Do This...

➢ Employers Need These Skills for the Workforce

➢ Students Need These Skills for the Workforce

➢ Differentiation
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