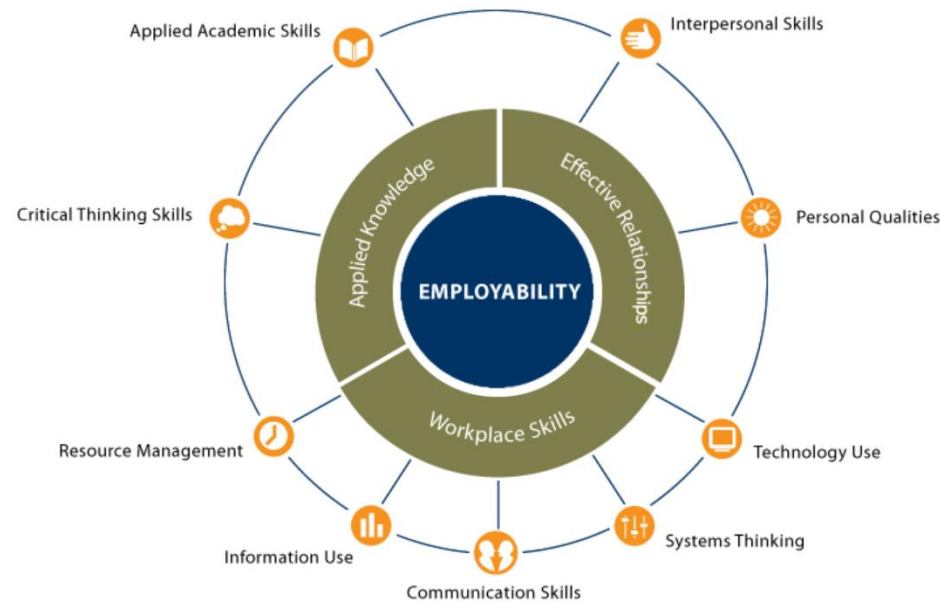


# Employability Skills Self-Assessment Tool

## Introduction

Employability skills are a critical component of college and career readiness, and the education and workforce communities are increasing their focus on how these skills can be embedded into instructional practice at all levels and in all content areas. The [Employability Skills Framework](#), an initiative of the U.S. Department of Education, defines employability skills as the “general skills that are necessary for success in the labor market at all employment levels and in all sectors.” These skills fall into three categories: applied knowledge, effective relationships, and workplace skills (Figure 1).

**Figure 1. Employability Skills Framework**



This self-assessment tool is designed to help educators reflect on the extent to which they are already embedding employability skills into instruction and the opportunities for further embedding these skills.

## **Overview**

Employability skills often are integrated into academic and technical skill instruction and are not intended to be taught on their own. In other words, teachers are not asked to add employability skills to their list of teaching responsibilities but merely to seek opportunities to emphasize the skills when possible. Other guidelines to keep in mind when teaching employability skills are as follows:

- Employability skills, along with academic and technical skills, are a critical component of college and career readiness.
- Documenting employability skills that are embedded in classroom practice helps students to realize the connection between education and employment.
- Opportunities exist for teachers to integrate employability skills in everyday lessons, at every age, and in every content area.
- Development of employability skills does not occur in one or two classes but grows during a student's educational career.
- Classroom activities can emphasize various employability skills, but not all skills can be addressed in every lesson.

The [Lesson Planning Checklist](#) from the Employability Skills Framework is a tool to support the instruction and assessment of employability skills. Teachers can use it to document how employability skills are being reinforced in the classroom as a planning and reflection tool and as a vehicle for communicating with parents, students, employers, their peers, and other stakeholders. State and local administrators can use the tool to inform curriculum development, classroom observations, and professional development activities and as confirmation of classroom practice through teachers' self-reports.

## Self-Assessment Exercise

The purpose of this exercise is to reflect on the extent to which employability skills are embedded in teachers' instructional practice, using the Lesson Planning Checklist as a guide. Because employability skills can be taught in different ways and in different contexts, this exercise allows teachers to share strategies for teaching certain skills and identifying any gaps in practice. It does not assume that a single teacher would embed every skill in each lesson. This exercise can be repeated on an ongoing basis (e.g., monthly) to reflect on how employability skills are embedded into instruction over time.

The self-assessment has three parts:

- 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.

### Part 1: Use the Lesson Planning Checklist as a Self-Assessment Tool

Using the charts of employability skills on pages 4–11, think about whether these skills are reflected in your current instructional practice. Although the Lesson Planning Checklist is intended for use at different levels—such as a lesson, unit, or standards—for self-assessment purposes, it may be helpful to think about a group of lessons to see how employability skills are embedded throughout a unit. Think about whether a skill or multiple skills are addressed in the lessons, meaning that students have the opportunity to display these skills in a way that is obvious to an observer. Give yourself 1 point for every “yes” in a section. Use the last column (“Description of Activity”) to record notes about how the skills are being taught.

#### Rating Scale

Yes, this skill is embedded in most activities in this lesson. Students have opportunities to learn about, practice, or demonstrate this skill during most of the instructional time (2 points).

Yes, this skill is embedded in some of the activities in this lesson. Students have opportunities to learn about, practice, or demonstrate this skill during some of the instructional time (1 point).

No, this skill is not embedded in activities during this lesson (0 points).



## Applied Academic Skills

Skills	Sample Classroom Applications	Yes, Embedded in Most Activities	Yes, Embedded in Some Activities	No, Not Embedded in Any Activities	Description of Activity
Reading skills	Students apply or demonstrate reading skills by interpreting written instructions or project directions and constructing responses, interpreting technical language, using print and online materials as resources, completing worksheets, and seeking clarification about what they have read.	2	1	0	
Writing skills	Students rely on writing skills to construct lab reports, posters, and presentation materials; take notes; and compose responses to essay questions.	2	1	0	
Mathematics strategies and procedures	Students use computational skills appropriately and make logical choices when analyzing and differentiating among available procedures. These skills occur in real-world contexts that integrate academic skills in authentic situations in all classes, including mathematics, science, language arts, and social sciences.	2	1	0	
Scientific principles and procedures	Students follow procedures, experiment, infer, hypothesize (even as simple as “what if we do it this way”), and construct processes to complete a task. This work can occur outside of mathematics and science classes.	2	1	0	
TOTAL POINTS		_____			



## Critical Thinking Skills

Skills	Sample Classroom Applications	Yes, Embedded in Most Activities	Yes, Embedded in Some Activities	No, Not Embedded in Any Activities	Description of Activity
Thinks creatively	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.	2	1	0	
Thinks critically	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).	2	1	0	
Makes sound decisions	Students differentiate between multiple approaches and assess options.	2	1	0	
Solves problems	Students assess problems involving the use of available resources (i.e., personnel and materials) and review multiple strategies for resolving problems.	2	1	0	
Reasons	Students negotiate pros and cons of ideas, approaches, and solutions and analyze options using "if-then" rationale.	2	1	0	
Plans and organizes	Students plan steps, procedures, or approaches for addressing tasks. This planning occurs naturally in most assignments, ranging from solving one problem to completing a long-term project.	2	1	0	
TOTAL POINTS		_____			



## Interpersonal Skills

Skills	Sample Classroom Applications	Yes, Embedded in Most Activities	Yes, Embedded in Some Activities	No, Not Embedded in Any Activities	Description of Activity
Understands teamwork and works with others	Students participate in cooperative groups or with a partner, contribute fairly to the task, and show respect to others.	2	1	0	
Responds to customer needs	Students help fellow students understand tasks, find resources, and fulfill assigned roles (e.g., by thinking of fellow students as customers).	2	1	0	
Exercises leadership	Students participate as team leaders or effective team members in project assignments, and organize work and utilize team roles to meet project goals.	2	1	0	
Negotiates to resolve conflict	Students keep team members on track, suggest alternatives, and discuss options. This work can be as much about agreement as conflict.	2	1	0	
Respects individual differences	Students listen to and consider all team members' ideas, respond supportively to ideas given in class or in teams, use proactive approaches to prevent conflict or misunderstanding, and work well with all teammates.	2	1	0	
TOTAL POINTS		_____			



## Personal Qualities

Skills	Sample Classroom Applications	Yes, Embedded in Most Activities	Yes, Embedded in Some Activities	No, Not Embedded in Any Activities	Description of Activity
Demonstrates responsibility and self-discipline	Students actively participate in class, asking questions, volunteering answers, completing and submitting assignments, and working well in groups.	2	1	0	
Adapts and shows flexibility	Students adapt easily to different modes of instruction and different types of assignments.	2	1	0	
Works independently	Students commit to time-on-task during class and begin work without hesitation.	2	1	0	
Demonstrates a willingness to learn	Students are cooperative and noticeably engaged. They communicate with peers and superiors with respect and confidence, sharing information and feedback clearly and accurately.	2	1	0	
Demonstrates integrity	Students treat work assignments with respect in that work is either original or credited correctly.	2	1	0	
Demonstrates professionalism	Students treat others with respect and consider all ideas.	2	1	0	
Takes initiative	Students seek out and take the opportunity to take on a leadership role on tasks and projects.	2	1	0	
Displays a positive attitude and sense of self-worth	Students contribute new ideas or thinking to the class tasks, projects, or discussions.	2	1	0	
Takes responsibility for professional growth	Students are active listeners, seeking clarification and understanding when needed.	2	1	0	
TOTAL POINTS		_____			



## Resource Management

Skills	Sample Classroom Applications	Yes, Embedded in Most Activities	Yes, Embedded in Some Activities	No, Not Embedded in Any Activities	Description of Activity
Manages time	Students demonstrate time management when organizing and planning project activities with a team or when organizing and managing themselves and individual class assignments and homework. Time management is apparent in almost all assignments, which are completed on time and with high quality.	2	1	0	
Manages money	Students manage money in group projects requiring allocation of limited finances and resources (e.g., designing or marketing a toy, flipping a house, or planning a trip).	2	1	0	
Manages resources	Students manage resources in projects requiring allocation of limited finances, resources (e.g., materials), and personnel.	2	1	0	
Manages personnel	Students gain experience managing personnel (i.e., each other) in group projects requiring allocation of limited finances, resources (e.g., materials), and role assignments. They also manage their own behavior and participation.	2	1	0	
TOTAL POINTS		_____			





## Information Use

Skills	Sample Classroom Applications	Yes, Embedded in Most Activities	Yes, Embedded in Some Activities	No, Not Embedded in Any Activities	Description of Activity
Locates	Students use analytical strategies to determine the best medium for finding necessary information.	2	1	0	
Organizes	Students use any graphic organizer (e.g., outline, concept map, organization chart, or tables) to sort information or data.	2	1	0	
Uses	Students use classification and analytic skills to determine the necessary information to complete task.	2	1	0	
Analyzes	Students assess information to determine which is relevant (does not have to be a mathematical analysis).	2	1	0	
Communicates	Students summarize information to compose written or oral presentations, posters, reports, or slides. This work also can be as simple as a student explaining a problem in front of the class.	2	1	0	
TOTAL POINTS		_____			



## Communication Skills

Skills	Sample Classroom Applications	Yes, Embedded in Most Activities	Yes, Embedded in Some Activities	No, Not Embedded in Any Activities	Description of Activity
Communicates verbally	Students provide oral responses. Evidence ranges from impromptu short answers during a lesson to completing a formal oral presentation.	2	1	0	
Listens actively	Students are noticeably engaged through note-taking, questioning, and responding. They respond well to constructive feedback and are able to adapt accordingly.	2	1	0	
Comprehends written material	Students use or demonstrate reading skills by following written instructions or project directions, reviewing print and digital resources, completing worksheets, and asking questions about what they have read.	2	1	0	
Conveys information in writing	Students rely on writing skills to organize lab reports, posters, and presentation materials and to take notes and reply to essay questions.	2	1	0	
Observes carefully	Students interpret verbal and nonverbal communication efforts of others and follow and take directions from teachers or peers.	2	1	0	
TOTAL POINTS		_____			



## Systems Thinking

Skills	Sample Classroom Applications	Yes, Embedded in Most Activities	Yes, Embedded in Some Activities	No, Not Embedded in Any Activities	Description of Activity
Understands and uses systems	Students understand their roles and assignments when collaborating as a team (e.g., system) and contribute to the organizational structure and function of the team.	2	1	0	
Monitors systems	Students devise methods to assess team (e.g., system) progress.	2	1	0	
Improves systems	Students negotiate midcourse corrections and adaptations to team (e.g., system) tasks if necessary.	2	1	0	
TOTAL POINTS		_____			



## Technology Use

Skills	Sample Classroom Applications	Yes, Embedded in Most Activities	Yes, Embedded in Some Activities	No, Not Embedded in Any Activities	Description of Activity
Understands and uses technology	Students often rely on various digital technologies for calculating, collecting and displaying data, conducting research, creating presentations, and writing reports.	2	1	0	
TOTAL POINTS		_____			

**COLLEGE & CAREER  
READINESS & SUCCESS Center**

at American Institutes for Research ■

Center on  
**GREAT TEACHERS & LEADERS**

at American Institutes for Research ■

1000 Thomas Jefferson Street NW  
Washington, DC 20007-3835  
877.322.8700

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



1000 Thomas Jefferson Street NW  
Washington, DC 20007-3835  
877.322.8700

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



AMERICAN INSTITUTES FOR RESEARCH

[www.air.org](http://www.air.org)  
**Scoring Guide**

Copyright © 2015 American Institutes for Research. All rights reserved.

This work was originally produced in whole or in part by the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders with funds from the U.S. Department of Education under cooperative agreement number S283B120021. The content does not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Department of Education, nor does mention or visual representation of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the federal government.

The Center on Great Teachers and Leaders is administered by American Institutes for Research and its partners: the Council of Chief State School Officers and Public Impact.

Add up the total number of points from each of the sections and include them here.

Skill Set	Category	Points
Applied Academic Skills	Applied Knowledge	___/8
Critical Thinking Skills	Applied Knowledge	___/12
Interpersonal Skills	Effective Relationships	___/10
Personal Qualities	Effective Relationships	___/18
Resource Management	Workplace Skills	___/8
Information Use	Workplace Skills	___/10
Communication Skills	Workplace Skills	___/10
Systems Thinking	Workplace Skills	___/6
Technology Use	Workplace Skills	___/2

## Part 2: Reflect on Self-Ratings

Use the scoring guide to add up the total number of points from each section. As you review the results of the scoring guide, consider the following reflection questions:

1. Which employability skills are embedded in the selected lessons?
2. What strategies are you using to teach these skills?
3. Are you teaching skills from each of the three categories (applied knowledge, effective relationships, and workplace skills)?
  - a. Is one category more represented in your instructional practice than others?
  - b. Is any category less represented?
4. What skills are not embedded in the lessons? Why?
5. What support or training do you need to further embed employability skills into instruction?
6. In what other ways can these skills be embedded across your grade level or content area?
7. What can you do to ensure that employability skills are being reinforced in the classroom?

