Facilitator's Manual

signal success

Be career ready.

HQCCP: Employability Skills

Signal Success

Introduction

This guide serves as a companion to the Signal Success teacher's manuals for The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) High Quality College and Career Pathway (HQCCP) Initiative work readiness curriculum.

DESE and the Commonwealth Corporation collaborated to develop this version of CommCorp's Signal Success curriculum. It is designed primarily for students in high schools that offer internships, cooperative education or other youth employment programs, with a special emphasis on students enrolled in designated Innovation Pathways programs.

The training material in this manual will help students get ready for an internship or other type of placement in a business or community setting. Students who complete this training can feel confident that they understand what businesses or organizations will expect of them.

Course Overview

The curriculum consists of 20 sessions (There are 10 foundational lessons (Module A) and 10 Optional, Extension lessons (Module B). Each session offers several activities in which students will learn how to:

- Approach internships and work-based learning with a focus on learning and growth
- Identify and exhibit professionalism and essential employability skills
- Apply their strengths and emerging professional strategies to problem-solve workplace challenges

Each session encompasses 45 to 60 minutes of curriculum. However, if time is a concern, the teacher's manuals also include suggestions for condensing or skipping certain less essential activities.

Skill Focus

Students will have an opportunity to develop an understanding about work-based learning and workplace safety, and practice each of the following employability skills through a variety of presentation, individual, partner and group activities:

- Dependability
- Initiative
- Communication
- Collaboration
- Relationship-building
- Perseverance
- Problem-solving

Content of Modules

The curriculum map for the entire course is included below. It includes the relevant Common Core and Massachusetts College and Career Readiness standards. Learning targets for each module are also included.

Signal Success Career Readiness Curriculum for ESE HQCCP Initiative

Course Overview	Relevant Massachusetts Focus Standard
10 Modules (10-20 lessons) **Key Learning Objectives:** Students will be able to: • Approach internships and work based learning with a focus on learning and growth. • Identify and exhibit professionalism and essential employability skills. • Apply their strengths and emerging professional strategies to problem-solve workplace challenges. **Common Core College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards:** • Reading- 1. Reading for meaning and inferences; citing textual evidence • Speaking & Listening- 1. Clear expression in conversation and collaborations.	**MA Career Development Education (CDE) Benchmarks:** Learners will develop and demonstrate: • A2: Communication and literacy skills for self-advocacy and presentation • PS-1: Attitudes, behaviors and skills that promote self-knowledge, personal responsibility and self-direction • PS- 2. Attitudes, behaviors and interpersonal skills to work with others • PS- 4 Behaviors, attitudes, and skills that foster respect for diversity • W-1. Knowledge and skills in the planning and decision-making process • W-2: An Exploratory attitude toward self, life and the world of work • W-3. Knowledge and skills for employment and advancement. **MA Career/ Vocational Technical Education (CVTE) Frameworks:** • Strand 4.B.1.01- **Communication in the Workplace** – Communicate effectively for a variety of audiences • Strand 4.B.1.08- **Communication in the Workplace** – Identify and demonstrate professional nonverbal communication • Stand 4 B 1.2.01-1.2.03- **Communication in the Workplace** – Demonstrate effective active listening skills • Strand 4.C.1- 4.C.6- **Work Ethic and Professionalism**- Demonstrate attendance and punctuality, proper workplace appearance, responsiveness to feedback, ability to handle conflict, respect for diversity in the workplace, and collegiality.

Module	Foundational Lesson	Optional Extension Lesson
	(all lessons can be delivered in 45-60 minutes)	
	Topic/ Sample Activities	
Module 1- Understanding the Opportunity of Work-Based Learning **Key Learning Target:** • I can analyze and discuss opportunities to grow and develop my employability skills.	**Learning from Work** What Do You Think: Chandra's First Weeks (Internship case study –introduces **Work Based Learning Plan**) Overview of Course and Final Project Team builder with Activity Debrief: Tower of Us Partner and Individual Activity: Understanding **WBLP Employability Skills** and Learning at Work	**Developing a Growth Mindset for the Workplace** What Do You Think: Which Quote Do You Connect With? (Learning and Development Quotes) Gallery Walk: Growth Mindset in the Workplace Small Group Activity: Sorting & Improving Mindsets (Internship/ Co-op) Individual Reflection: Working through New Skills

Module 2- Dependability and Your Best Professional Self **WBLP Skill #1** – Attendance and Punctuality **Key Learning Target:** • I can identify ways to be dependable and professional.	**Being a Dependable Professional** What Do You Think: The Most Professional Person I Know Presentation: Professional Actions and Attire Small Group Activity: Dealing with Unprofessional Behavior Partner and Individual Work: Professionalism Scenarios and Dependability Case Studies	**Strategies for Time Management and Dependability** What Do You Think: What Would You Do? Small Group Activity: Time Management Styles Activity Presentation: Time Management Strategies Partner Activity: Dependability Dilemma
Module 3- Professional Communication **WBLP Skill # 3** – Communication **Key Learning Target:** • I can demonstrate my understanding of professional communication by using effective nonverbal and verbal techniques.	**Professional and Positive Communication** What Do You Think: Nonverbal Communication Group Activity: Tone Activity Small Group Activity: Practice Active Listening Partner Activity: How I Communicate Best	**Effective Written Communication At Work** What Do You Think: Written Communication Strategies for Written Communication Partner Activity: Make it More Professional Small Group Activity: Writing a Professional Email
Module 4- Communication with Purpose **WBLP Skill # 3** – Communication **Key Learning Target:** • I understand that effective communication requires different strategies for different audiences and goals.	**Effective Communication for Different Audiences** What Do You Think: Communication Scenario Strategies for Effective Communication Small Group Activity: Communication by Audience Partner and Individual: What Would You Say? **Session Wrap-up connects to WBLP**	**Addressing Challenging Situations** What Do You Think: Root Cause in Conflict Small Group Activity: Exploring Approaches to Conflict Partner and Individual Activity: Effective Self-Advocacy with Colleagues and Supervisors
Module 5- Collaboration for Professionals **WBLP Skill #4** – Teamwork and Collaboration **Key Learning Target:** • I can identify how I work best in collaborative settings and try new strategies to be more effective.	**The Importance of Collaboration & Teamwork** What Do You Think: Teamwork Survey Small Group Activity: Teamwork Roles in Specific Work Settings Partner Activity: Exploring the Benefits of Diverse Workplace Teams	**Strong Communication and Collaboration for Networking** What Do You Think: Networking Case Study Small Group Activity: How Can I Use my Network? Partner and Individual Activity: Making the Pitch
Module 6- Collaborating to Build Relationships and Skills **WBLP Skill #4** – Teamwork and Collaboration **Key Learning Target:** • I can use positive strategies to develop and maintain effective relationships in the workplace.	**Collaborating to Build Effective Relationships** What Do You Think: Quote Activity Partner Activity: Analysis of a Workplace Scenario Presentation: Building Positive Relationships Team Builder: Marshmallow Tower	**Making the Most of Workplace Mentors** What Do You Think: What is a Mentor Small Group Activity: Understanding Leadership and Mentorship Partner Activity: Working with Informal and Formal Mentors

Module 7- Motivation and Feedback	Motivation and Workplace Evaluation	Giving and Receiving Feedback
WBLP Skill #2 – Motivation and Initiative **Key Learning Target:** • I know what motivates me in the workplace, and I can use critical feedback and evaluations like the MA WBLP to drive my growth.	What Do You Think: What Motivates You **Partner Activity: Work Based Learning Plan Case Study** Presentation: Workplace Evaluation Group Activity: Evaluating Others: **WBLP Scenarios**	What Do You Think: Feedback Presentation: Constructive Criticism and Feedback Small Group Activity: Giving and Receiving Feedback: Glows and Grows Method Team Builder and Debrief: Feedback Loop
Module 8- Taking the Initiative and Persevering in the Face of Obstacles **WBLP Skill #2** – Motivation and Initiative **Key Learning Target:** • I take the initiative to contribute positively and approach challenges head on.	**Taking Initiative and Persevering** What Do You Think: I relate to this quote because Whole Group Activity: Initiative Scenarios Individual Activity: Quitting was Never an Option Presentation: Resilience and Perseverance Team Builder: Perseverance Challenge	**Overcoming Obstacles** What Do You Think: A Closer Look at Obstacles Challenge Activity : Journaling Your Obstacles Partner Activity: Next Steps and Action Plans Whole Group Activity: Goal Gallery Walk
Module 9- The Professional Landscape (and how it is different from school) **WBLP Skill #6** – Workplace Policy, Culture and Safety **Key Learning Target:** • I can embrace workplace culture and policies to be safe and successful.	**Safe and Successful at Work** Partner Activity: What Employers Value Team builder and Debrief: Hazard Walk-Communicating for Safety Partner and Individual: Advocating to Stay Safe	**Workplace Culture** What Do You Think: Workplace Behavior Small Group Activity: Workplace Expectations Small Group Activity: Analyzing the Company Partner and Individual Activity: Work Culture
Module 10- Problem-Solving and Finishing Strong **WBLP Skill #5** – Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving **Key Learning Target:** • I can use effective problem-solving and decision-making to make the best impression from my first day through my last.	**Effective Decisions to Showcase Your Most Professional Self** What Do You Think: Difficult Decisions Presentation: Effective Decision-Making Whole Group Activity: Responsible Decision-Making Partner Activity: Deciding How Best to Showcase Your Brand (Activity tied to **WBLP- employability skills**)	**Finishing Strong and Looking Beyond** What Do You Think: Finishing Strong Case Study Small Group Activity: Problem-Solving Scenarios Small Group: Looking Ahead- Future Decisions Group Activity: Connections Web

Course Methodology

Signal Success is designed to help students build essential skills and knowledge that employers value. *Signal Success* provides support for consistent delivery of work-readiness and career exploration content relevant to older teens that addresses employers' needs, and provides teachers with clear instructional guidance. The organization, strategy and content of the curriculum feature several key aspects:

- **Well Defined Instructional Methodology** that supports targeted work-readiness skills or competencies. Each activity has a similar format that helps teachers support effective learning and streamline preparation time to focus on successful implementation rather than on lesson planning and content creation.

- **Supporting Materials** such as PowerPoint presentations and all the required student worksheets are included. This allows for immediate and successful implementation of the curriculum.

- **Skill development** focused on the following four areas identified by O*Net data and by other research as key skill requirements of entry-level occupations. The four skills are:
    1. Dependability
    2. Communication
    3. Collaboration
    4. Initiative

- **Task-Oriented Student Interaction** in groups and pairs that mirror the postsecondary world and support learning in multiple modalities and learning strengths.

- **Ethic of workplace** that promotes a sense of accountability and performance. Students are expected to incorporate practice of the target skills.

Best Practices for Using the Core Module Components

Since all of the modules are organized in a similar manner, understanding how to effectively facilitate the core components will dramatically improve the quality and experience of this course. Where applicable, the teacher's manual includes suggestions for specific activities, but some tips and practices are helpful throughout. This section contains information about how best support a successful work and learning environment across the entire curriculum.

Solid Skill Gain

While some sessions provide opportunities to explicitly discuss and work on the core skills, collaboration, communication, dependability and initiative, all of the modules are designed to provide students with an opportunity to practice these skills. Each session starts with a "What Do You Think" activity that sets an immediate expectation of work production, and students are expected to participate actively and produce throughout. Opportunities to demonstrate initiative abound. Students can volunteer to share during discussions, serve as the "group reporter" during team activities, present their end-of-the day reflection to the larger group, and much more.

In order to maximize all these teachable moments and practice opportunities, it is important to acknowledge students whenever you see evidence of collaboration, communication, dependability or

initiative. Encourage students to observe when they use the skills from the module during their shift and encourage students to share their experiences.

Tips to support solid skill gain:

1. Have students acknowledge when they see others engaging in the skills and behaviors that they learn in each session. Consider having a small "shout out" session to encourage this.
2. Pay attention to how students plan to use what they have learned.

Consistent Expectations and Accountability

The more students engage with the learning the more they will develop. Some students will come to the work willingly and demonstrate consistent effort. Other students will resist and try to do the least possible work. The exact blend of management, motivation and relationship building specific to each teacher often requires consistent effort and is sometimes a source of conflict, but the practices here will benefit most teachers and students.

Tips that support consistent expectations and accountability:

1. **Notice and accommodate student skill levels**.
   a) If students struggle with independent reading, make sure to have volunteers read harder texts aloud. Please note that there is a **"Literacy" tip box** for any case study or story included in a session. This includes the **word length** and **grade level** associated with the text.
   b) For students who struggle with written expression, write example sentences on the board and have them mimic your sentence structure.
   c) Pair stronger students with students who need a little extra work.
   d) Pair yourself with students who struggle the most.
   e) For students with very limited English language skills offer opportunities to draw key ideas rather than write them out.

2. **Be clear** about what you need from your students and stick to it. For example, do not consider a "What Do You Think" activity or "Session Wrap-Up" reflection complete if a student has not given a thoughtful response or has only written a few words.

3. **When giving instructions,** tell students that they **should not start the activity or assignment until you finish explaining**. Consider using the same process for all instructions. For example, go to the same spot in front of the room, get every students attention, and say, "I am going to explain the next activity. Please listen carefully. When I am done explaining you will have a chance to ask questions." Have students reiterate what they are to do. Once you have answered all the questions, check with students, one more time before giving them the cue to begin.

4. **Structure transitions carefully**. If you need students to get up and move, consider having part of the room move first.

5. **Use the same method to get the group's attention every time**. You can try pairing a visual cue with an auditory cue.

6. **Require that students listen** to everyone speaking in the group. Resist the urge to speak over students. It may seem slow and tedious to have to refocus the group's attention, but the practice will benefit learning and productivity.

Effective Group and Partner Work

Almost all jobs require employees to be able to work with others. In order to give students an opportunity practice their collaboration skills, this curriculum includes many partner and group activities. It can be difficult to keep students focused and accountable during these interactions, but emphasizing structure, roles and responsibility helps ensure better results.

Tips that support effective group and partner work:

1. **Focus on equity** and adhere to the idea that each student will contribute equally. Structures like Timed Pair Share allow each student to talk for an equal amount of time. This forces students who are normally excessively chatty to think carefully about what they want to say most and encourages shy students to speak more and expand on their thoughts.

2. **Structure the time** so that there are multiple checkpoints with explicit progress expectations. All too often groups will socialize until the last five or ten minutes of the allotted time and then rush to put something together. You can prevent this by setting mini-deadlines and checking in with groups. Most of the group activities in this curriculum are broken down into multiple steps so you can tie completion of a step to a certain timeframe.

3. **Be purposeful when dividing groups** and avoid letting students determine their own partners and groups. In a work environment, we rarely get to choose who we work with, so help students understand the importance of being able to work effectively with all kinds of people. When you break students into groups, think about which factor matters most. Sometimes you will want to be sure each group or pair has a strong member so you will need to think about groupings in advance of the workshop. Other times it might be fine to count students off by number.

4. **Limit group size.** Groups of three are often very effective, but even groups of four or five can be productive. Once you get above six, productivity drops.

Structuring Group Discussions

In any setting, it will be important to communicate and contribute to team efforts. Some students will take opportunities to share and make great contributions to the group. Others will need more time to feel comfortable in a group setting and share. This curriculum includes several places to practice structured communication in a larger group. Creating a safe environment where each student is seen, heard and contributes to the discussion may require time and protocols.

Tips that support effective group discussion:

1. **Allow a few minutes for writing.** Some students may need a few moments to process the activity before discussion. Writing down ideas and thoughts can help with organization. Students will have a statement they can share and increasing the chance they will participate.

2. **Try a "Fishbowl" discussion** and assign roles for all students. Have two chairs face each other and create a circle around the chairs. Ask two volunteers to share while seating in the middle chairs and have the other students act as observers. The students around the outside share connections, ask questions, and make connections to the material. The volunteers in the middle should be replaced with another pair a few times. Observers summarize what they have heard. Everyone should be in the middle at least once.

3. **Make participation interactive** by having students stand before you start the discussion. Students may seat after they add to the discussion. You may increase participation by having the last student who spoke toss a beach ball to the next student who wishes to speak. Students will contribute when they are ready.

4. **Use co-teachers or stronger peer leaders** to lead discussions in a smaller group. If the whole group seems a little too large, you may choose to divide into two slightly smaller groups. As the groups are smaller, more students may speak.

Meaningful Self-Assessment and Reflection

Acquiring new knowledge alone often does not result in growth or behavior change. In order for students to become more employable they must gain new skills and change ineffective behaviors. The various career and learning inventories in this course provide students with opportunities to think critically about their skills, abilities, interests, values and strengths. Identifying these aspects of the self is the basis for connecting actions to goals and desires. Reflection plays an important role in this process because it allows students to actively engage and evaluate their experience. When they were younger, students might have relied on teachers or parents to evaluate their progress, but as workers, they will need to engage in a daily practice of self-assessment of their work, life and future. The reflection and self-assessment components of this curriculum are designed to build the habit and practice of self-reflection and responsive action.

Tips that support meaningful self-assessment and reflection:

1. **Make assessment safe.** Be clear with students that a skills inventory is not like a traditional test. There is no right or wrong answer.

2. **Consider the physical space and privacy of students.** You may want to have students move their seats a little farther apart to allow for more privacy. If space is an issue, have students sit in opposite directions.

3. **Shift the perspective when students struggle**. For example, is a student can't seem to answer a question like, "What are your best skills?" or "How well did you do on your presentation?" try asking them to think about how someone who knows them will might evaluate them. Avoid allowing students to focus on all negatives.

4. **Try a "Popcorn Share" type reading:** Have different students volunteer to read as much or as little as they want. This structure allows confident readers to read more, developing readers to try a few lines, and struggling readers to follow along and listen.

5. **Take reading and writing skills out of the equation**. If students are struggling with reading, consider doing a group read aloud. Have volunteers read small parts and make sure that struggling readers are following along. Similarly, if you notice that some students are really struggling with because of writing skill, offer to have them tell you their thoughts and encourage participation in discussions.

Making Decisions about Activities — Planning Each Module

As mentioned in the introduction, there are many opportunities to adjust the modules to better meet the needs of your students. The sessions are designed to be delivered one at a time or combined. In addition, teacher's guides contain suggestions about which activities to consider optional if time is an issue. These are highlighted on the table of content page. One activity called "Mini-Interview Practice" is never marked as optional. These "Mini-Interviews" give students an opportunity to practice organizing their thoughts and communicating what they have learned in a professional manner. Students "role-switch" so each has a chance to ask and answer the questions.

Please avoid pulling activities out of sequence. They are designed to build on one-another.

Timing issues are most effectively handled with both solid pre-planning and thoughtful in-session alterations. Please consider the following questions when planning to find the approach that best meets your needs.

Consider these questions to help make thoughtful choices about a module:

1. Does your population need more time to complete work or benefit from additional processing time?
2. Is the grouping appropriate for the activity?
3. What types of activities are best for this group (partner, group, reflection, role plays, kinesthetic)?
4. What elements are essential for your students?
5. Is the reading level and word count of any included story or case study appropriate?

Above all, we hope students enjoy the activities while they develop work-readiness skills. As they work through the various activities and have a chance to learn, practice and reflect, they will develop the confidence to successfully navigate the future.