

**Barton Community College**  
**Workforce Training & Community Education Division**  
**Essential Skills 2017-2018**

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**1. Describe the instruction and/or activities you included in your program to address the Essential Skills?**

**Agriculture-** I have included more hypothetical situations to class lectures where students discuss effects and consequences along with asking students to provide situations for discussions. I have also implemented 5pt. quizzes for my 8am courses that has encouraged students to be at class on time and ready to participate. I also started calling on students to read portions of class material if they were on their phones.

**Agriculture-** Various exercises and problems from online tests and individual worksheets to group exercises. Role playing. All included class discussion. Also had HR people and people in the industry come in and speak to what they are looking for regarding Essential Skills in potential employees. Several speakers throughout the year from various aspects of the industry about careers and what they look for in employees which emphasized Essential Skills.

**Automotive-** Writing is covered in the program by tasks that are outlined by NATEF, learning to write service tickets and estimates are examples as well as Chapter Questions and Quizzes. Time management is of constant emphasis during class and lab activities. Arriving on time to class is a point of constant reminder. Math skills are used in measurement activities throughout the program. Communications and personal relationships in the professional arena are emphasized during lecture and lab activities. The use of and sharpening of personal skills for finding information is used in all areas of the program.

**Early Childhood**

- Classroom Presentations to peers and prospective students
- Field Trips
- Interviewing Industry Professionals
- Students attend and present at Advisory Board Meetings
- Student man tables at career fairs and recruiting events
- Students prepare lesson plans and present activities to preschool children

**Natural Gas-** The importance of being on time...not walking in with breakfast to start class. Clean and appropriate clothes.

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**Business-** Several were implemented in my courses including time management, job search projects and communication in all areas focusing on professionalism versus social wording, etc. This semester I also implemented a second time management tracking activity and a new time management assessment. This allowed students to compare their time management later in the semester after we had discussed their initial time management at the beginning of the semester. Many improved their time management or at least, were more aware of the time they were spending doing “non-essential” activities and identified where they could focus their time instead.

**Computer Business Management: Plagiarism Training-** I added a new training to all of my on campus and online courses this Spring 2018 semester. As part of my orientation module, each student will complete a lecture regarding plagiarism and academic integrity as well as completing a test and acknowledging understanding of the information presented. I tried a different approach to this essential skill due plagiarism issues in the past. I found that I need to make this worth more points to promote completion, but otherwise, I believe it was successful in providing information. I do believe that reminder quizzes and discussions may need to be added to the class throughout the semester for further effectiveness.

**Computer Concepts and Applications-**

- Social Media Module – I have added to this module to assist with the development of student’s awareness of technology, social media and how this can affect the bigger picture in their lives. We discuss current events regarding social media and as well as provide information about privacy and protecting your identity.
  
- Group Projects – We have 3 group projects that are completed by the students to help develop several essential skills. These include team work, communication, training others on technology, meeting deadlines, and completing subjective projects that may be found in the workforce.

Essentials skills we use in the classroom all semester include time management, meeting due dates and not accepting late assignments, communication for absences in class, etc.

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**Introduction to Business/Marketing-** We continue to have the students work with each module and chapter by applying what they know in a business plan or marketing plan. This provides opportunities to write and present in a professional manner. This works on essential skills including professionalism, decision making, problem solving, critical thinking and planning and organizing. This is a semester long project.

**Spreadsheet Applications-** During the semester, we have many workplace, start from scratch, projects that allow the students to utilize and critically think about their spreadsheet. This includes how to structure the spreadsheet based on its purpose and data, what kind of content will need to be used in the spreadsheet as well as calculations that will be found using the data. All of these things will change where the data is placed and how it's the function or formula. This is very subjective material and there is no one right answer which allows the students to have their own touch and creativity to each assignment.

**Criminal Justice-** CRIM 1600 Introduction to Criminal Justice completes a semester long project entitled, Vocational Plan. They must contact a field professional, interview them, submit research on the individual and organization, outline the hiring process (generally multiple stages), submit a transfer guide and generally outline the procedure to gaining employment within that agency. They must also follow-up with a Thank You card. This teaches planning and organization, integrity, initiative and problem solving. Also, this project teaches professional courtesy.

**Information Technology-** We watched and discussed a video (<https://vimeo.com/239050403>) of a millennial job interview.

**Medical Support Programs-** As part of the internship program both the internship site and student complete an evaluation of each other to show if the student has the essential skills to be able to successfully find employment in their selected fields. Sometimes these evaluations show shortcomings with the students that can be addressed prior to applying for a job. For instance hygiene issues that may be keeping them from getting a job.

**Nursing and Healthcare Education-** ADN program

- Accountability – Each clinical experience, students are accountable for being on time, adhering to HIPAA, functioning within the RN scope of practice, and following legal/professional guidelines. Students complete

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clinical self-evaluations. Review the guidelines for clinical attendance and required clinical assignments. In RN Leadership & Management, legal/ethical standards are discussed as they relate to the profession.

- Communication – Each clinical day, students are involved with professional communication with the patients, interdisciplinary team, peers, and instructors. Students receive instruction on therapeutic communication. Students complete and present an interaction study with a peer in Mental Health II. In Med-Surg IV, students develop a teaching plan with one of their clients which involves effective and purposeful communication. The students also orally present their teaching plan to their peers in Med-Surg IV and Maternal Child II.
- Critical Thinking – Each patient care day, students care for multiple patients which requires critical thinking to prioritize care. In Med-Surg III, students complete a critical thinking day which involves completing an in-depth worksheet on two patients, identifying and prioritizing nursing care needs. Critical thinking is incorporated by utilizing simulation to role play clinical scenarios. Each simulation is followed with debriefing the scenario. Through debriefing, students utilize critical thinking to make safe and evidence-based clinical judgements.
- Customer Service – Students are expected to exhibit caring behaviors when interacting with clients/families during clinical experiences. Caring behaviors include respect, confidentiality, and advocacy.
- Professionalism – Students are expected to adhere to the clinical dress code and to work with the multidisciplinary team at clinical sites. As a representative of BCC in the community, students are expected to exhibit professional behavior. Students complete a Resume in the RN Leadership & Management course.
- Self-Management – Students care for at least 2-3 patients/clinical day in the Med-Surg courses, which requires the students to be organized and have effective time management skills. In the RN Leadership & Management course, students were taught through discussion team leading, delegation, prioritization and time management at the RN level. A calendar and assignment sheet with due dates are given to the students at the beginning of each course.

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- All MLT courses, including phlebotomy, incorporate the soft employment skills to include attendance, communication, honesty and deadlines. “First Year” courses have more emphasis on soft skills than later second year courses. All courses have concluding competencies that include the same soft skill evaluations. Students are held to assignment deadlines, exam completions, timelog submissions and communication with the instructors and cooperative lab sites. The courses are built from memory work to conclude with critical thinking and application of all learned in the course. Customer Service and professionalism are stressed with instruction and real live examples. Role Play, student teaching projects with proof of learning, soft skill assessments by students and instructors. Threaded discussions on professionalism, soft skills to include case studies.
- I have incorporated the “A” series in the weekly discussion. Each week we talk about one of the “A” such as accountability and we discuss the parameters of the skill. In my campus labs, I stress being on time, dressing for success, and we talk about soft skills that are valued in the industry.
- Students were engaged in Essential Skills activities through threaded discussions, case studies, projects and journal entries.
- Self-Management Skills-Being on time to clinical and lab is emphasized and is included as part of their clinical grade. Students are provided information about counseling services that are available to assist with study skills, organization and stress management. Students are provided rubrics to assist with managing and organizing individual assignments. Student self-evaluations are done after each clinical or lab. Students are asked to come in for counseling with the instructors when they are not staying on task with completing requirements.
- Interpersonal skills /Communication- Students are coached in how to introduce themselves, express interest and empathy for clients they interact with in a clinical setting. Students are required to introduce themselves to the staff they will be working with and to provide patient reports when necessary and when they leave for lunch or for the day. In class students are expected to be respectful of each other. They set

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classroom rules for student behavior. Students are also required to work together on class projects. At the end of lab days, the students debrief about the lab experience and evaluate themselves and also are asked to provide feedback to other students about their performance in a professional and appropriate manner.

- Accountability/ applied skills- Some of the knowledge they learn in class is applied to clinical or sim labs. Students are expected to provide evidence supporting the appropriateness and accuracy of interventions and interactions with clients and students. Critical thinking skills are incorporated into labs, and classes. Case studies are used. The steps of critical thinking are reviewed in the clinical setting.
- Workforce skills/ Professionalism- Students are given, in writing, information about acceptable attire for clinical, in area health care settings and during on campus simulation labs. They also have picture name tags to wear. They are expected to present a professional attitude and appearance and behavior at all clinical sites. Lateness is not acceptable and the students will be counseled about the importance of being on time. Learning agreements are used with the students to address issues about workforce skills. Lab hours at the college give students opportunities to feel comfortable and knowledgeable about skills they will need in clinical.
- Students are to go out into the community to communicate with a pharmacist to interview them about the job and skills needed in this career field. This skill is used to strengthen communication. In our capstone course, students complete an internship which requires them to report to a "job site". They must be on time, work in the workplace setting with others. At this point, all essential skills must be put into practice in workplace.
- Students are asked to respond via essay response to contrived work place incident. They are asked to respond to a series of questions designed to provoke ethical/moral decision making.

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**2. Share any challenges you had while integrating the Essential Skills into your program and/or classes.**

**Agriculture-** With the “situation discussions”, students were reluctant to participate in the beginning; however, as the semester continued on and they became more familiar with their class the students responded more openly. The 5 pt. quizzes provided enough of an incentive for the majority to get to class on time and to bring papers and a pencil!

As far as asking them to read class material instead of their phones, that worked at least momentarily and eventually the students learned they would not get called on as much if they just put their phones away.

**Agriculture-** Finding ways to help students to understand the importance and value of these skills in their work life/career and of purposefully working on them to develop and nurture them. The importance of appropriate use of social media for work and in their personal lives.

**Automotive-** These Essential skills are engrained in nearly all course activities, Phone fascination seems to be fading at this time, however learning to arrive to class consistently and on time is probably one of the hardest skills to instill into students. Completing what is asked of you is a challenge also, example; Completing homework and then in a timely fashion seems to be the hardest to accomplish. This item has cost some students a failing grade in a class.

**Early Childhood-** I have found that “professional” means different things to different people. I tell my students that each time they walk into class is like a mini job interview. So they need to be positive, punctual, prepared, polite and professional, plus have a polished public personality.

**Natural Gas-** Next year I want to make it perfectly clear that hoodies will not be on head during class. Text books will be purchased in advance and brought first day of class or reduction in grade.

**Business-** None. Students are open to activities and understand the importance due to my first day “Mrs. B” rules/guidelines to classroom and employment. I typically may have some “groaning” but nothing major.

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**Business Computer Management-** Plagiarism training - I found that I need to make this worth more points to promote completion, but otherwise, I believe it was successful in providing information. I do believe that reminder quizzes and discussions may need to be added to the class throughout the semester for further effectiveness. Toward the end of the semester, students start to panic, and bad decisions are made. Finding ways of engaging the students in Computer Concepts to talk in class and discuss issues pertaining to the subject at hand. This includes the social media discussion as well as students discussing the assignments in their group projects. Many times the student split up the work and don't actually work together at all. I have not found a way around this yet.

**Criminal Justice-** Students periodically will skip a step and skip straight to a finished project without following the process.

**Information Technology-** None

**Medical Support Programs-** Nothing specific was challenging in this regard.

**Nursing and Healthcare Education-** Critical Thinking/Clinical Judgement is less concrete and difficult to "teach". Bridging the gap between theory and application is a continued challenge in nursing.

The challenges remain the same with the students not taking Essential Skills seriously until they are reprimanded in the work place. Our clinical practica sites are still expressing the same disgruntlement as 5 years ago. We need to find a way to help these students understand that what is applied in the "classroom/course work" is to be applied in the "real world".

Obviously being an "online" program does preclude me from having a physical presence in my student's world. It is more challenging almost to the point of impossible to "see" how effective my lectures and discussion about the importance of using these soft skills have on my students. My only indication is their performance in the course and feedback from their cooperating labs. Unfortunately, we only receive that in the form of a competency at the end of the course, often too late to address the problem.

I am challenged by making it as "real world" as possible with real life applications. Having the field experience class really helps. I currently have



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students journal about their field experience and I may start having them speak with their preceptors more about these essential skills and what their workplace most values.

Essential skills are easy to incorporate into labs and while talking about case studies in class.

**3. Please share input you received from students specific to their exposure to Essential Skills.**

**Agriculture-** The situation discussions proved beneficial for everyone to explore options and to also create an open learning culture in the classroom. The students that made it to class on time for the 5 pt. quizzes didn't complain about them. I also used the quizzes as an opportunity to assess the students learning from the previous class' material.

The students never quite figured out the correlation between putting their phones away and learning more material. Interestingly, discussing this with the students showed that they knew the cell phone was a distraction and that they should be paying attention in class.

**Agriculture-** They were unaware of the importance of these skills in the workplace and where their skill set was. They didn't realize where they were vs. where they needed to be in their development of these skills. They don't understand how what they do does not correlate with the Essential Skills they need to succeed.

**Automotive-** Students don't come back with an argument when put on the spot concerning infractions. Class discussions of the same go well it just seems that the actual application of these skills passes by them very easily. In short taking ownership for their actions is a skill that I need to concentrate on now.

**Early Childhood-** Character, self-discipline, self-motivation, mind-set, personal responsibility

**Natural Gas-** One student took an online questionnaire for a job. Numerous question dealt with being on time, sick days, wanting to leave early etc. Students did good in treating class like a job. Had a student call from hospital prior to class start.

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**Business-** Many students indicated that their time management improved but there were still those that thing “Fort Night” time is more important than active studying.

**Business Computer Management-** During the Plagiarism training, the students realize that plagiarism and cheating are wrong however, they do not yet see the big picture and consequences that can affect their grade, education, sports, and scholarships because of a single error in judgement. Many students also do not realize that when using content from an online source, you must have it cited in your paper or it is plagiarism. Even if it is paraphrased.

During the social media project many students hear about social media and news stories, but they don’t apply it to what they do every day. They also don’t realize the mark they are leave behind every time they are uploading something online. Their digital footprint will be available for everyone to see and can effect opportunities for the future. This has been eye-opening for some students who had not thought of it in the whole-world scenario. They just know they are sending the information to their friends. This is where knowing, understanding and maintaining all privacy settings in all social media applications is very important.

**Criminal Justice-** Students often receive positive feedback from their mentors they interview for being prepared and professional.

**Information Technology-** Students recognized the main criticism that were stereotyped in the interview. We looked at some comments on the video and discussed whether it was appropriate to embellish on your resume or in the interview.

**Medical Support Programs-** Most students appreciated being able to get real time feedback from the internship site as well as being able to give feedback to them.

**Nursing and Healthcare Education-** Students complete a self-evaluation in all clinical courses. The self-evaluation tool incorporates each of the essential skills. Generally, students evaluate themselves as performing satisfactorily.

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Role playing seems to help the students retain or at least remember to apply some of their essential skills.

I have noticed the MLT instructors have become more likely to give zeros for violation of soft skills (missed deadlines, no communication) in the latter half of their courses, after the students have received instruction. In micro and at clinicals the exchange of work and trying to read another's handwriting as well as understanding their train of thought.

My only response that I can judge is the campus lab students who appear shocked when I share stories of "soft skills gone bad", yet I know that perhaps they do not see themselves in this light. The harsh reality of industry may be their only mirror for change. I always wonder if when something happens do they think, well, Ms. Weber warned us about this consequence.

Several students are currently in management roles so they definitely see the need for these skills. There are always comments from students about how networking through a threaded discussion on professionalism, customer service, or accountability has helped improve their skills or an awareness of the need for these skills. Students also comment on how having to do a journal entry makes them reflect on their emotional intelligence when they otherwise would not.

Students have given themselves "need improvement" on evaluations when they fell short on the dress code or interactions with staff at clinical sites

I did have a couple of students who expressed interest in mock interviews. Some of the students reported they were questioned as if they were in an interview when conversing with the pharmacist. I will put together an activity surrounding this activity.

Students for the most part are thoughtful and reflective with their responses and demonstrates a high level of ethical/moral awareness in the pre-hospital setting

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**4. Please list any changes you intend to make in response to student feedback.**

**Agriculture-** I will continue to implement the situation discussions into the classroom material. I found it very beneficial.

The 5pt quizzes will also become more standard for my class and I will further develop them to assess the student's abilities to grasp the course outcomes. The cell phones will forever be an issue; however, I am always trying to develop new ways for students to learn essential skills.

**Agriculture-** More speakers from industry to stress the importance of these skills to their careers. More opportunities in a classroom setting to understand the consequences.

**Automotive-** Working on ownership and follow-up will be a new point of interest.

**Early Childhood-** I will bring in more information about social media: the do's and don'ts; cellphone usage and etiquette

**Natural Gas-** A handout with items not listed in student handbook. Like hoodies on head.

**Business-** These skills are vital to our students' success and I am going to continue to include more and more activities in the classroom including doing the time management activity twice in the semester.

**Business Computer Management-** I plan on making updates to the plagiarism training and providing a couple of CAT opportunities / quizzes that will happen throughout the semester based on the increase of the student's AI forms that are completed starting about half way through the semester and then spiking again at the end of the semester. I think the students just need the information / consequences of these choices placed in front of them more often so they realize and recognize their actions can have effects on their grade, course, GPA and transcript.

**Criminal Justice-** I'd prefer to find a way to have the mentors comment to the student and I both regarding the interview and follow-up.

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**Information Technology-** Plan to continue to use the video as a spring board for discussion

**Medical Support Programs-** Considering practicing interview skills with Medical Assistant students in Medical Professional class, an online format where they would write resumes and do an interview with me over the phone or through Zoom. K. Brennan Medical Support Programs, specifically Medical Assisting and Medical Coding.

**Nursing and Healthcare Education-** The changes we anticipate incorporating are not directly in response to student feedback but from information we received from attendance at a national nurse educator's conference. One area for improvement would be to invest more time in purposeful debriefing following simulation and clinical experiences. Nurse educator experts support using reflection and discussion to develop and strengthen critical thinking and clinical judgements.

We have increased the discussions on critical thinking with use of social media as professionals. Feedback from our advisory board and industry fuel some changes, after 8 years essential skills is the major complaint. When questioned, the industry doesn't have specifics. The MLT instructors take on students individually if that is what it takes for specific essential skill instruction when the whole class "gets it". We have referred students to counseling.

I think I am doing an effective job now considering my online limitations

I have considered extending the emotional intelligence, stress and time management journaling assignment to all field experience courses. Since most students work full time this is a critical skill that they must learn to apply. The challenge will be in determining a balance between busy work and skill developing activities. I also want to have more tasks of students discussing these skills in the workplace with their preceptor.

We do and will continue to provide positive feedback and guidance to students when they identify areas of improvement in workforce skills. We will continue to counsel students as needed when they do not realize improvement is needed in their workforce skills.

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Emphasis on the importance of professional behavior and expectations needs to be reinforced throughout the year.

I am planning to implement a workforce essential skills video and discussion series in each of the pharmacy technician courses. The video defines and gives examples of how essential skills in the workplace are necessary and that students need to be aware of such skills to be successful in the workplace.