



Figure 1

What are “Professional Skills?”

Professional skills are the *social* (teamwork, social perceptiveness, influence), *personal* (self regulation, self esteem, dependability, initiative, integrity), *cognitive* (active learning, problem-solving, creativity, critical thinking/reasoning, decision-making) competencies that enable an employee to be productive and resilient. (See Figure 1) These pillars, founded on core (or basic) academic skillsⁱ, drive an individual toward high performance and leadership (management of others, instruction of others, systems

analysis).

Name of Assessment	Description
Learning and Study Skills Inventory (LASSI) http://www.hhpublishing.com/_assessments/LASSI/	Diagnostic & Prescriptive tool that assesses for college preparedness including essential professional skills such as: attitude, concentration, motivations, information processing & time management
WorkKeys Assessment & Training http://www.act.org/workkeys/	A work product of ACT, this tool includes occupation-specific assessments to determine a candidate’s aptitude. Used in high school for specific high-demand occupations. The focus is on core knowledge skills, but also includes assessments for “personal skills.”
Learning Resources http://www.learning-resources.com/aprogram_9.cfm	Video-based assessment inventories competencies needed for primarily high-wage, high-skilled, pre-supervisory positions Includes: Interpersonal, Listening, Trainability, Problem-solving, Structuring Work Activities, Interpreting Charts & Graphs. ⁱⁱ
Collaboration for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) http://www.casel.org/assessment/needs.php	The student-based suite of assessments derives from partner organizations and primarily focuses on changes to school curriculum that foster stronger development in the social and emotional domains. Most of the assessments are geared toward children in elementary and middle schools and therefore will not directly apply to acquisition of “professional skills.”

Why teach “Professional Skills?”

Today’s workers – in Central Texas and around the nation – must possess a set of professional skills that allow them to succeed, and our P-16 education systems must include these requirements of our 21st century workforce.

Industry, the public and state standards now demand that our schools, colleges and universities- from early childhood through high school and beyond - prepare our youth for future jobs and skills that do not yet even exist.ⁱⁱⁱ The characteristics of the new global economy – high tech, international, rapidly-changing, information-driven – pose important challenges to our national and regional education systems trying to keep pace. **Here in Central Texas, the fastest-growing, highest paying jobs all require post secondary education.**^{iv}

What “Professional Skills” assessment & training options are available?

Currently, there are local short-term opportunities for assessment and training (See Figures 2 & 3) in some of these professional skills that will address the immediate needs of our students as we undertake the longer-term systemic changes needed.



Ready or Not? Integrating Professional Skills into 21st Century Education

Name of Training Program	Description
Social Emotional Learning	Widespread interest in the importance of emotional intelligence has lead to development of (1) educate people about the relevance of emotional intelligence in the workplace, (2) assess their relative strengths and weaknesses, and (3) provide a framework to develop and enhance their ability to interact with others with greater emotional intelligence which result in greater academic performance and better long-term life outcomes. K-12
40 Developmental Assets	Divided into External Assets featuring: support, empowerment, boundaries & limits, constructive use of time to reduce risky-behavior in our most vulnerable populations and provide an environment that can allow them to thrive. Internal Assets include: commitment to learning, positive values, social competency, positive identity. K-12
Partnership for 21st Century Skills	A collaboration of public and private businesses and education groups dedicated to developing a framework of skills and creating curriculum and professional development content to prepare children for the skills they will need for success K-12 education with a focal point on 9-12

Figure 3

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board’s College and Career Readiness Standard details the critical skills required by every high school graduate. In addition to attaining knowledge-based skills, several of these “professional skills” are represented in both the core subject areas of English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies and in an additional section entitled, “Cross-Disciplinary Skills.” The overlap to the definition of “professional skills” is detailed in Figure 4:

Basic (Core)	Social	Personal	Cognitive	Leadership
✓ Reading	✓ Teamwork	✓ Self Regulation	✓ Active Learning	≠ Manage Others
✓ Writing	≠ Social Perceptiveness	✓ Integrity (academic)	✓ Problem-Solving	≠ Instruct Others
✓ Mathematics	≠ Influence	≠ Self Esteem	✓ Reasoning	≠ Analyze Systems
✓ Listening (in English Language Arts)		≠ Initiative	≠ Decision Making	
✓ Communication (in English Language Arts)		≠ Dependability	≠ Creativity	

Figure 4

About the E³ Alliance – www.e3alliance.org

The E³ Alliance is a regional collaborative to create a research-based “blueprint” that will allow us to align our education systems to better fulfill the potential of every citizen and in turn, increase economic outcomes for a stronger economic future for our region. Founded by partners the Austin Area Research Organization, The University of Texas at Austin, and Austin Community College District; the E³ Alliance acts as a catalyst for change, and is the P-16 Council for the Central Texas region.

The Blueprint for Educational Change™ – www.theblueprintforeducationalchange.org

The Blueprint for Educational Change™ is a first of its kind plan of action that addresses the regional education needs across the entire continuum, from pre-kindergarten through post-secondary and on to lifelong success. The Blueprint is the Central Texas community’s effort to build the most successful educational pipeline in the country and to ensure our competitiveness and quality of life as a region.

ⁱ Core Academic Skills refer to English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, Science and Social Studies.

ⁱⁱ Learning Resources, Inc. http://www.learning-resources.com/aprogram_9.cfm retrieved February 16, 2009.

ⁱⁱⁱ Murnane, Richard. J. and Frank Levy (1996) *Teaching the New Basic Skills: Principles for Educating Children in a Changing Economy*. The Free Press: New York: p vii.

^{iv} E3 Alliance (2006) *College Readiness Considerations*. Austin, TX: Author.