# 21st Century Skills - Employability Skills

## Contact(s)

Sandra Dop  
515-281-0127  
sandra.dop@iowa.gov

## Documents

- Iowa Core 21st Century Skills (.pdf)  
- Iowa Core 21st Century Skills (doc)

The vision statement developed by the Iowa Core Curriculum 21st Century Skills Committee states: **Each Iowa student will have the academic and social skills as well as the personal characteristics that empower them to be productive, caring, and competent citizens.** This is consistent with the view that good employees may not be good citizens but good citizens always make good employees.

The employability essential concepts and skill sets represent universal content. They (1) contribute to outcomes that are valued for individuals and for society; (2) bring benefits in a wide variety of contexts and apply to multiple areas of life; and (3) are of use to all individuals, deemphasizing competencies of use only in a specific trade, occupation or walk of life. (OECD, 2005*).

Employers are demanding that employees demonstrate the skills to work productively in teams, communicate effectively, think innovatively and solve problems creatively. An overwhelming number of students leave their educational experience unprepared for the world of work. The employability concepts connect content and those dispositions required for success in life beyond school.

According to the Partnership for 21st Century Skills, “…academic and cognitive skills, as essential as they are, are not all that is necessary for a successful life. In our global technological age, young people also need to work with and learn from diverse groups, be flexible in a variety of work and social settings, and be adaptable to changing times. They need to demonstrate leadership and take responsibility for results, show initiative and resourcefulness, and be productive and accountable for their actions.”

Integration of these critical skills across curricular areas will allow students to make the transition from the classroom to their roles as citizens and workers in an increasingly complex and unknown global market. The availability of a knowledgeable and skilled citizenry will enhance the quality of life and result in a profitable economy for Iowa, our nation, and our world.

*The Definition and Selection of Key Competencies, or the DeSeCo, Project. Overview. Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2005*
Kindergarten-Grade 2

Essential Concepts and/or Skills

Communicate and work appropriately with others to complete tasks
Work appropriately and productively with others.

- Set goals.
- Demonstrate good listening skills.
- Share thoughts and ideas with others.
- Work positively and effectively with others.
- Exhibit appropriate behavior in various situations.
- Identify behaviors that cause conflict.
- Exhibit positive self-concept.
- Describe the concept of community.
- Respect others.
- Cooperate with others.
- Acknowledge own and other’s good efforts.

Use different perspectives to increase innovation and the quality of work.

- Generate ideas with assistance.
- Are aware of others’ feelings and opinions.
- Appropriately accept constructive feedback.

Use all the appropriate principles of communication effectively.

- Listen to others.
- Ask appropriate questions.
- Read, understand and create information in a variety of forms.
- Follow directions.
- Use technology to communicate.
- Use various channels of communication.
- Express ideas.

Recognizes different roles and responsibilities and is open to change

Adapt to varied roles, responsibilities, and expectations.

- Work independently.
- Work with others.
- Understand mistakes are not wrong/bad.
- Complete tasks and activities.
- Follow predetermined stages/steps needed to complete an activity or task.
- With teacher guidance, collaboratively generate strategies to improve an activity or task.
- Listen attentively.
• Respect others ideas.
• Accept and respect others.

Work effectively in a climate of ambiguity and changing priorities.

• Become aware that change occurs.
• Adapt to change with minimal guidance.
• Adjust to changes in structured environment.
• Understand pressure exists.
• Work toward conflict resolution.

Demonstrate appropriate risk-taking.

• Are open to consider new ideas or alternative ways to complete tasks.
• Work to achieve goals.
• Understand the purpose of “what if” questions.
• Share ideas with an open mind.
• Support others’ suggestions.

Learn leadership skills and demonstrate integrity, ethical behavior, and social responsibility

Use interpersonal skills to influence and guide others toward a goal.

• Compliment others’ work.
• Initiate positive interactions with classmates.
• Identify the concept of goal.
• Use appropriate group communication skills.
• Listen to others.
• Accept constructive suggestions in a positive way.

Leverage the strengths of others to accomplish a common goal.

• Communicate ideas and thoughts.
• Share tasks necessary to complete a group task.
• Understand others may have different ideas and opinions.
• Understand the concept of compromise.

Demonstrate integrity and ethical behavior.

• Understand taking responsibility for own actions.
• Understand the importance of telling the truth.
• Understand the concepts of character and core values.

Demonstrate mental, physical, and emotional preparedness to accomplish the task.

• Understand the concept of being organized.
• Stay on task until the task is completed.

Develop initiative and demonstrate self-direction in activities

Perform work without oversight.
• Ask questions to clarify and accomplish a task.
• Understand how to follow sequential steps to complete a task.
• Learn that incomplete work is not acceptable.
• Understand the importance of self-confidence.
• Identify resources and how to access them.
• Learn to formulate solutions.
• Understand the importance of commitment to self and group.

Use time efficiently to manage workload.

• Follow logical steps.
• Follow a provided timeline.
• With guidance, prioritize steps in proper order.

Assess mastery of skills.

• Identifies the task
• Becomes aware of skills needed to complete the task
• Shares knowledge

Set and achieve high standards and goals.

• Understand what a goal is.
• Articulate a personal goal.
• Engage in guided activities to improve skills that are relative to goals.
• Are aware of the concept of core values.
• Determine rate of progress toward goals.

Engage in effective problem solving process.

• Become aware of the connections between the classroom and the world around them.
• Become aware of resources and partners that may be useful in solving problems.
• Practice problem solving techniques.
• Generate potential solutions to the problem.
• Implement solution.

**Work productively and are accountable for their actions**

Deliver quality job performance on time.

• Recognize quality work.
• Demonstrate a sense of timeliness.
• Stay on task until work is completed.
• Understand concept of ethical behavior in producing work.

Demonstrate accountability for individual performance.

• Are punctual in daily activities.
• Seek help only when appropriate.
• Stay on task when completing work.
• Correct errors when directed.
• Learn from mistakes.
• Understand concept of individual and group roles.

Grades 3-5

Essential Concepts and/or Skills

Communicate and work productively with others emphasizing collaboration and cultural awareness to produce quality work

Work appropriately and productively with others.

• Set appropriate goals.
• Articulate thoughts and ideas clearly in writing and speaking.
• Demonstrate respectful behavior to group members.
• Exhibit appropriate behavior when faced with conflict.
• Identify strengths and weaknesses.
• Interact positively as a team member.
• Respect other’s ideas.
• Cooperate with others in a group setting.
• Acknowledge quality efforts of self and others.

Use different perspectives to increase innovation and the quality of work.

• Generate ideas with group members.
• Recognize the opinions and feelings of others.
• Appropriately accept constructive feedback.

Use appropriate principles of communication effectively.

• Are active listeners.
• Use information to make decisions.
• Ask appropriate questions.
• Read, understand and create information in a variety of forms.
• Follow directions.
• Use technology to communicate.
• Use various channels of communication.
• Express ideas.

Adjust to various roles and responsibilities and understand the need to be flexible to change

Adapt to varied roles, responsibilities, and expectations.

• Work well independently and with others.
• Understand and accept mistakes as a natural part of learning.
• Complete tasks and projects.
• Identify the stages needed to complete a project or task.
• Develop an awareness of effective strategies to improve project or task completion.
• Listen with an open mind.
• Accept and appreciate diversity.
Works effectively in a climate of ambiguity and changing priorities.

• Understand that change occurs frequently.
• Demonstrate flexibility in adapting to change.
• Recognize different levels of structure.
• Work under pressure.
• Understand the need to adapt to changing requirements and information.
• Are open to change.
• Understand how to approach handling conflict using a win-win perspective.

Demonstrate appropriate risk-taking.

• Consider alternative or new ways to complete tasks.
• Identify alternative ways to achieve goals.
• Understand when to ask ‘What if?’
• Approach brainstorming with an open mind.
• Determine pros and cons of others’ suggestions.

Practice leadership skills, and demonstrate integrity, ethical behavior, and social responsibility in all activities
Use interpersonal skills to influence and guide others toward a goal.

• Provide positive encouragement to others on their work.
• Relate positively to others.
• Understand methods to influence others towards goals.
• Understand how to listen to others and to share own ideas.
• Accept and offer constructive comments.

Leverage the strengths of others to accomplish a common goal.

• Demonstrate listening, speaking and questioning skills.
• Work as a member of a team to complete tasks.
• Acknowledge views and ideas of others.
• Understand the value of compromise.

Demonstrate integrity and ethical behavior.

• Take responsibility for own actions.
• Demonstrate trustworthiness and honesty.
• Identify important core values.
Demonstrate mental, physical, and emotional preparedness to accomplish the task.

- Identify and organizes materials required for the task.
- Show willingness to prepare and stays focused on task.

**Demonstrate initiative, creativity, self-direction, and entrepreneurial thinking to produce successful outcomes**

Perform work without oversight.

- Assess the task and identify actions that must be taken.
- Understand cause-effect relationship in completing sequential steps.
- Understand that incomplete work is not acceptable.
- Understand the importance of self-confidence.
- Know how to access resources.
- Formulate solutions.
- Demonstrate commitment to self/group/society.

Use time efficiently to manage workload.

- Segment task into steps.
- With guidance, create timelines to facilitate completion of tasks.
- With guidance, prioritize steps in proper order.

Assess mastery of skills.

- Understand the task.
- Identify skills needed to be successful at the task.
- Know when to share knowledge appropriately.

Set and achieve high standards and goals.

- Understand and write incremental steps toward accomplishing goals.
- Set short-term goals.
- Engage in activities to improve skills that are relative to goals.
- Explore core values of personal importance.
- Evaluate progress toward accomplishing goals.

Engage in effective problem solving process.

- With assistance, transfer and make connections learning from one content area to another.
- Understand the importance of key partners and resources in solving problems.
- Evaluate the resources in context of the problem.
- Apply problem solving techniques to various situations.
- Identify a course of action in order to solve the problem.
- Implement solution with follow-up.

**Demonstrate productivity and accountability by producing quality work**

Deliver quality job performance on time.
• Produce quality work in a timely manner.
• Make revisions in work based on self-analysis and/or recommendations.
• Work with commitment to produce a quality product.
• Demonstrate ethical behavior and responsibility.
Demonstrate accountability for individual performance.

• Come to activities/work consistently and on time.
• Are prepared for all activities/work.
• Stay actively engaged when completing work.
• Are able to edit their work.
• Learn from mistakes.
• Are reliable co-workers in a group setting.

Grades 6-8

Essential Concepts and/or Skills

Communicate and work productively with others, considering different perspectives, and cultural views to increase the quality of work
Work appropriately and productively with others.

• Set and evaluate goals.
• Effectively communicate with group.
• Demonstrate respectful behavior to group member ideas and opinions.
• Manage and resolve conflict as appropriate.
• Understand roles in group interaction.
• Identify their own strengths and determines how their strengths will work toward the group goal.
• Contribute to a team by expressing ideas.
• Respect other’s ideas in a group dynamic.
• Collaborate with others toward a common goal.
• Acknowledge own and other’s good efforts.

Use different perspectives to increase innovation and the quality of work.

• Gather input from all group members.
• Understand the opinions and feelings of others.
• Accept and provide feedback in a constructive and considerate manner.

Use appropriate principles of communication effectively.

• Listen to understand and appreciate the points of view of others.
- Listen to understand the ideas of others
- Process information in order to make an informed decision.
- Ask appropriate questions in seeking clarification.
- Read, understand and create information in a variety of forms.
- Follow directions.
- Contribute by expressing ideas.
- Use appropriate technology to communicate.
- Use appropriate channels of communication.

**Adapt and adjust to various roles and responsibilities in an environment of change**

Adapt to varied roles, responsibilities, and expectations.

- Work well independently and with a team.
- Accept and own mistakes as a part of learning.
- Carry out tasks and projects to completion.
- Understand that projects or tasks can be broken down into stages and assessed throughout.
- Identify effective strategies to improve project or task.
- Listen to other points of view.
- Accept and appreciate diversity.

Work effectively in a climate of ambiguity and changing priorities.

- Accept that change occurs frequently.
- Understand focus may need to change as circumstances in the situation change.
- Recognize the need for different levels of structure.
- Identify appropriate responses to stress.
- Adapt to changing requirements and information.
- Demonstrate openness and respond constructively to change.
- Understand conflict resolution from win-win perspective.

Demonstrate appropriate risk-taking.

- Embrace innovation.
- Identify and suggest alternative ways to achieve goals.
- Asks ‘What if?’
- Understand brainstorming as a free exchange of ideas.
- Weigh pros and cons of others’ suggestions.

**Demonstrate leadership, integrity, ethical behavior, and social responsibility in all environments**

Use interpersonal skills to influence and guide others toward a goal.

- Positively support the work of others.
- Build relationships.
- Understand roles and responsibilities needed to accomplish goals.
- Use active listening and speaking skills.
• Understand the benefits of constructive feedback vs. criticism. Leverage the strengths of others to accomplish a common goal.

• Communicate clearly.
• Collaborate on structured tasks.
• Show sensitivity to others’ views and ideas.
• Understand how to create consensus.
Demonstrate integrity and ethical behavior.

• Take ownership for actions.
• Demonstrate trustworthiness and honesty in all environments.
• Demonstrate the use of core values.
Demonstrate mental, physical, and emotional preparedness to accomplish the task.

• Keep own materials organized and gathers materials needed for the task.
• Prepare for and focuses on the task with enthusiastic anticipation.
Demonstrate initiative, self-direction, creativity, and entrepreneurial thinking while exploring individual talents and skills necessary to be successful
Perform work without oversight.

• Assess the task and identify the priority/necessary actions to be taken.
• Understand the task’s relationship to greater goal.
• Understand that incomplete work-- even if excellent--is not acceptable.
• Understand the importance of self-confidence.
• Find appropriate resources.
• Implement solutions.
• Demonstrate commitment to self/group/society.
Use time efficiently to manage workload.

• Segment task into logical steps.
• Build a timeline to facilitate completion of the task.
• Prioritize steps in proper order.
Assess mastery of skills.

• Analyze the task.
• Identify the breadth of knowledge to be successful at a task.
• Effectively share knowledge at appropriate times.
Set and achieve high standards and goals.

• Identify incremental steps for acquiring goals.
• Set short-term and long-term goals.
• Create a written plan toward accomplishing goals.
• Choose to engage in activities to improve skills that are relative to goals.
• Demonstrate core values.
• Evaluate progress and seek assistance to take corrective action when necessary when working toward accomplishing goals.

Engage in effective problem solving process.

• Transfer learning from one content area to another.
• Identify key partners and resources relevant to the situation/problem.
• Evaluate and select the resources in context of the problem.
• Implement the problem solving process, including identifying potential causes of problem.
• Identify a course of action in writing with sequence of steps involved in order to solve the problem.
• Implement solution.

**Demonstrate productivity and accountability while aspiring to meet high expectations**

Deliver quality job performance on time.

• Know that quality means meeting high expectations, including timeliness.
• Make revisions based on self-analysis.
• Work with commitment until the expectations are met.
• Make needed adjustments to prevent problems.
• Do not compromise ethical behavior and responsibility.

Demonstrate accountability for individual performance.

• Demonstrate individual responsibility to be present and on time for all activities.
• Stay productive when completing work.
• Are willing to help others when own work is completed.
• Accept responsibility for and correct their errors.
• Learn from mistakes and creates solutions.
• Follow through with assigned work within a group.

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**Grades 9-12**

**Essential Concepts and/or Skills**

**Communicate and work productively with others, incorporating different perspectives and cross cultural understanding, to increase innovation and the quality of work**

Work appropriately and productively with others

• Set goals
• Effectively communicate with group and stakeholders
• Demonstrate respectful behavior to group member ideas and opinions
- Manage and resolve conflict when appropriate
- Lead or support when appropriate
- Determine people's strengths and assign roles accordingly
- Contribute to a team by sharing information and expertise
- Agree to disagree in a respectful manner in a group dynamic
- Collaborate effectively with other teams/team members toward a common goal
- Recognize own and other's good efforts

Use different perspectives to increase innovation and the quality of work

- Gather input from all group members
- Capitalize on the diversity of group members
- Accept and provide feedback in a constructive and considerate manner

Use all the appropriate principles of communication effectively

- Listen to understand and appreciate the points of view of others
- Listen for comprehension
- Listen for decision making
- Process information in order to make an informed decision
- Ask appropriate questions in seeking clarification
- Read, understand and create information presented in a variety of forms (e.g. words, charts, graphs, diagrams)
- Follow directions
- Express thoughts and ideas clearly and succinctly
- Use appropriate technology to communicate
- Use appropriate channels of communication (written, verbal, technical, visual)

**Adapt to various roles and responsibilities and work flexibly in climates of ambiguity and changing priorities**

Adapt to varied roles, responsibilities, and expectations

- Work independently or as a part of a team
- Learn from mistakes and accept feedback
- Carry out multiple tasks or projects
- Continuously monitor the success of a project or task
- Identify ways to improve project or task
- Consider multiple perspectives and represents a problem in more than one way
- Accept others; tolerant of differences

**Work effectively in a climate of ambiguity and changing priorities**

- Cope with uncertainty; quickly and calmly change focus and goals as the situation requires
- Demonstrate a sense of comfort with lack of structure
- Remain composed and focused, even under stress
- Adapt to changing requirements and information
• Respond openly and constructively to change
• Approach conflict from win-win perspective

**Demonstrate appropriate risk-taking**
• Provides innovative and resourceful engagement
• Identifies and suggests alternative ways to achieve goals
• Asks "what if"
• Brainstorms effectively
• Questions assumptions in a non-confrontational manner

**Demonstrate leadership skills, integrity, ethical behavior, and social responsibility while collaborating to achieve common goals**

Use interpersonal skills to influence and guide others toward a goal

• Positively support the work of others
• Facilitate and delegate responsibilities to best accomplish goal(s)
• Build relationships
• Engage in the tasks to accomplish goal
• Know when to listen and when to speak-up
• Maintain an open mind
• Provide constructive feedback

Leverage the strengths of others to accomplish a common goal

• Communicate effectively
• Collaborate effectively
• Appreciate ideas of others
• Facilitate compromise that can lead to group consensus

**Demonstrate integrity and ethical behavior**

• Accept ownership for actions
• Demonstrate trustworthiness and honesty
• Make decisions based on important core values
• Demonstrate mental, physical, and emotional preparedness to accomplish the task
  o Organize required materials in a readily accessible format.
  o Focus and become energized on the task objectives

**Demonstrate initiative and self-direction through high achievement and lifelong learning while exploring the ways individual talents and skills can be used for productive outcomes in personal and professional life**

Perform work without oversight

• Assesses the situation and identify the priority/necessary actions to be taken
• Understand the value of the task in relationship to greater goal
• Understand that incomplete work-- even if excellent--is a failure
• Model self-confidence
• Know how to find and evaluate appropriate resources
• Implement solutions
• Demonstrate commitment to self/group/society

Use time efficiently to manage workload

• Segment task into logical steps with appropriate estimates of time
• Build a timeline to facilitate completion of the task
• Prioritize steps in proper order

Assess one's own mastery of skills

• Understand the task
• Identify the depth and breadth of knowledge to be successful at a task
• Identify and utilize appropriate measure of knowledge

Set and achieve high standards and goals

• Understand incremental steps for acquiring goals
• Create a written plan
• Set realistic goals that match aptitudes
• Engage in activities to improve skills that are relative to goals
• Demonstrate core values
• Constructively evaluate progress and takes corrective action when necessary

Engage in effective problem solving process

• Transfer learning from one domain to another
• Identify partners and resources germane to the situation
• Evaluate and select the best resources in context of the problem, and allocates them appropriately
• Identify root cause of problem
• Detail a course of action in writing with sequence of steps involved
• Implement a solution and makes adjustments when there is need/opportunity for improvement

**Demonstrate productivity and accountability by meeting high expectations**

Deliver quality job performance on time

• Recognize and understand required standards needed for successful completion
• Set goals and establish timelines to reach required standards
• Establish assessment checkpoints throughout work processes
• Identify quality control issues and makes needed adjustments to correct problems
• Take initiative to see job completed without compromising quality
• Reassess process on a regular basis to identify any opportunities for improvement
• Demonstrate ethical behavior and works responsibly, reliably, and collaboratively with others

Demonstrate accountability for individual performance
- Come to work regularly and is on time all of the time
- Stay productive when on the job
- Take initiative to help others when own work is completed
- Accept responsibility for errors and corrects errors
- Learn from mistakes
- Follow through with work assignments
- Demonstrate willingness to work overtime
- Demonstrate flexibility to cross train