WE'RE GLAD YOU'RE HERE!

We will begin promptly at 4pm

HOUSEKEEPING & LOGISTICS

- **The link to the recording will be posted on the [ASCEND 307 web page](#):**
  - This session will be recorded.
  - Handouts and the slides are available on the ASCEND 307 webpage
- Closed Captioning: needs to be set up individually by clicking on the "closed caption" on the bottom row of icons on your session screen
- Links posted in Chat: throughout the session, pertinent links will be posted in the Chat
- Q&A: To ask questions, please use the Q & A box

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ASCEND 307

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Essential Readiness Skills Webinar Series

Focus on Interpersonal Relationships

[Welcome by State Superintendent Megan Degenfelder](#)

ESSENTIAL READINESS SKILLS

WHY - Superintendent Degenfelder 2025 Priority

- **Pursuing Academic Excellence.**
  - Expand career & technical education opportunities.

WY Community College Commission.

- Social Capital Skills.

Office of Career, Technical & Adult Education.

- Employability skills.

WHO - All students with and without disabilities need to function in society.

- Executive Functioning skills form the core foundation of employability skills
  - Pre-K-12
    - Develop executive function skills.
  - Transition
    - Employability skills.

WHAT & WHEN- Skills employers consistently rank as essential for new hires.

- Applied Knowledge
  - Problem Solving
  - Making Decisions
- Effective Relationships
  - Team Member
  - Flexibility
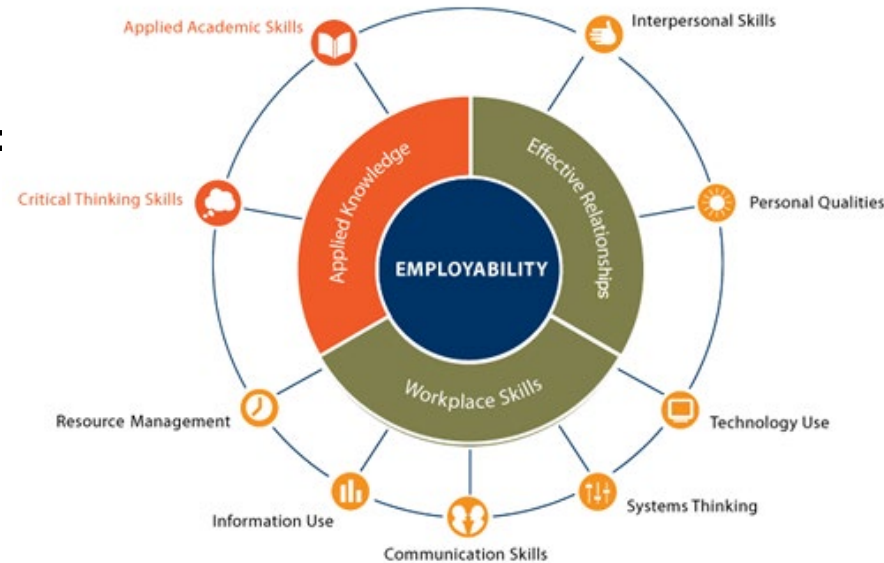- Workplace Skills
  - Manage Time
  - Communicate

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS FRAMEWORK FOR WYOMING-READY WORKFORCE

Applied Knowledge:
- Applied academic skills: reading, writing, mathematics
- Critical thinking skills: problem solving, make decisions

Effective Relationships:
- Interpersonal skills: teamwork, positive contributions
- Personal qualities: personal responsibility, professionalism, flexibility

Workplace Skills:
- Resource management: managing time & other resources
- Information use: using a variety of information to perform tasks
- Communication skills: communicating effectively with others to perform tasks
- Systems thinking: contributes to workplace teamwork
- Technology use: applying technology appropriately to perform tasks

EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS: INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

Donna Sacco, Ph.D., is a senior technical assistance consultant at American Institutes for Research with over 20 years of experience at the national, state, and local levels in special education and English as a Second Language (ESL). Dr. Sacco was project director for the Wyoming Special Education Learning Modules Project, where she led the development of 25 interactive, self-paced learning modules within the State's Canvas platform. At AIR, she has developed products for three OSEP-funded national centers related to special education, intensive intervention, and teacher preparation: the PROGRESS Center, National Center on Intensive Intervention (NCII), and CEEDAR Center. She is an editor/author of the textbook *Exceptionality in Schools and Society: A Guide for Future Educators* (4th ed.; O'Brien & Sacco, 2023).

WHAT ARE INTERPERSONAL SKILLS?

Reflect In The Chat

What interpersonal skills do you believe are necessary for post-school employment and success?

WHY ARE THESE SOMETIMES REFERRED TO AS SOFT SKILLS?

- **Origin:** The term began in the 1960s (U.S. military) to distinguish people-focused skills from technical or "hard" skills.
- **Human-Centered:** Soft skills involve communication, collaboration, adaptability, and empathy—skills rooted in human interaction rather than technical tasks.
- **Harder to Measure:** They're called "soft" because they are intangible and difficult to quantify, unlike hard skills that can be tested or certified.
- **Misleading Name:** Despite the label, soft skills are often the hardest to teach and the most critical for success in school, work, and life.

EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS: INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

Teamwork

Positive Contributions

Photos by Peter J. Tomlinson

EXAMPLES OF INTERPERSONAL SKILLS FOR EMPLOYABILITY

- Communication
- Empathy
- Collaboration
- Conflict resolution
- Active listening
- Respect for diversity
- Emotional intelligence
- Assertiveness
- Leadership

Photos by Peter J. Tomlinson

WHY DO INTERPERSONAL SKILLS MATTER FOR EMPLOYMENT?

Strong interpersonal skills:
- are critical for getting hired
- lead to workplace success
- drive career advancement
- transfer across jobs, roles, and industries

Examples:
- Understands teamwork and works with others.
- Responds to customer needs.
- Exercises leadership.
- Negotiates to resolve conflict.
- Respects individual differences.

TEAMWORK!

- Making positive contributions
- Respecting individual differences
- Using strategies to prevent conflict
- Responding supportively to others' ideas

WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE IN SCHOOL?

- Students participate in cooperative groups or with a partner, contribute fairly to the task, and show respect to others.
- Students help fellow students understand tasks, find resources, and fulfill assigned roles (think of fellow students as customers).
- Students participate as team leaders or effective team members in project assignments and organize work to meet project goals and team roles.
- Students keep team members on track, suggest alternatives, and discuss options (can be as much about agreement as conflict).

KINDNESS 101

HOW CAN EDUCATORS DEVELOP STUDENTS' INTERPERSONAL SKILLS?

INTEGRATE INTO DAILY LEARNING ROUTINES

Strategies:
- **Model the behavior:** Demonstrate the importance of positive contributions and teamwork in your actions and think alouds.
- **Set clear expectations:** Make qualities like collaboration, active listening, and empathy part of classroom norms.
- **Design practice opportunities:** Create group work with roles and norms set for groups.
- **Use reflective check-ins:** Have students identify which skills they used during an activity or project.

Example: Teach students to reflect on their behavior. After group work, ask students to rate themselves on how well they demonstrated the qualities of being a team player.
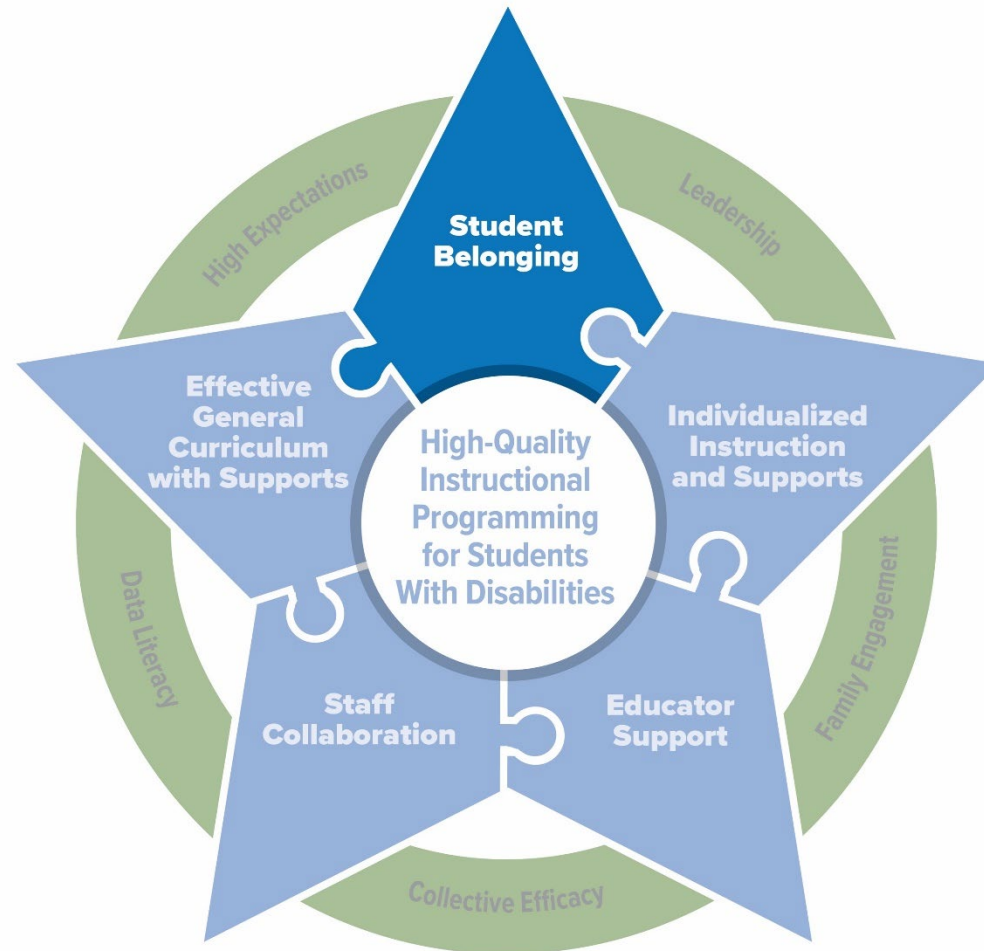
What have you tried? Share in the chat.

ELEMENTS OF BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL SYSTEM

ELEMENT 1: STUDENT BELONGING

PROJECT-BASED LEARNING

- Design with students' strengths and developmental needs in mind.
- Include multiple skills in in the design such as community building, reading, writing, math, research, etc.
- Define roles with the students
- Have students help determine strategies for attaining a goal
- Build in frequent reflection points

Example:
- With a general education teacher design an ice cream café. Include students with more significant support needs. Students need to determine cost of ice cream, survey for student flavor preferences, interview for jobs, maintain tasks.
- All students can participate in collaborative writing by writing a request for donations of supplies from ice cream store and/or grocery store with authentic consequences.

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS FOR IMPULSE CONTROL

Teach students strategies to:
- Use cognitive and metacognitive strategies
- Control impulses
- Stay focused despite distractions
- Ignore irrelevant or distracting information
- Self-monitor

Benefits for students:
- Improved relationship
- Better academic performance
- Improved employment outcomes
- More fulfilled life

EXPLICITLY TEACH IMPULSE CONTROL

Strategies:

- **Establish routines:** Pre-teach and prime for student regularly
- **Provide role-play opportunities:** Use social stories to reflect critically about choices and authentic consequences
- **Provide visual aids and self-regulation techniques:** Teach calming strategies, voicing feelings, deep breathing, taking a break
- **Provide opportunities to self-monitor behavior:** Positively reinforce progress and discuss alternative choices student experiences a set back.

Example:

- Samuel wants to always be first in line and cries when he is not the leader. Use a social story about this scenario to provide modeling for accepting his place in line. Also, establish classroom policy for rotating positions in line.

What have you tried? Share in the chat.

WHAT MAKES LIFE MEANINGFUL?

- Employment (financial livelihood, self-worth)
- Engagement in community and friends
- A happy home, a sanctuary
- Health
- Choices/options
- Freedom
- Being valued

IDEA (2004)

"Disability is a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminishes the right of individuals to participate in or contribute to society. Improving educational results for children with disabilities is an essential element of our national policy of ensuring equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities."

Subchapter I (Part A) Section 1400 (c) (1)

- **Does this quote align with your understanding of IDEA's purpose?**
- **How does it align with the employability skills?**

PREDICTORS OF POST-SCHOOL SUCCESS

A *predictor* is defined as an in-school experience, typically a program (e.g., a work-based learning experience) correlated with improved post-school outcomes.

Predictors are evidence-based, research-based, and promising services, supports, and/or acquired skills that have been identified through correlational research to be associated with improved post-school outcomes for students with disabilities.

Predictors/Outcomes	Education	Employment	Independent Living
• Career Awareness	Promising	Promising	
• Career Technical Education (was Vocational Education)	Research-based	Evidence-based	
• Community Experiences		Promising	
• Exit Exam Requirements/High School Diploma Status		Promising	
• Goal-Setting	Research-based	Research-based	Research-based
• Inclusion in General Education	Research-based	Research-based	Research-based
• Interagency Collaboration	Promising	Promising	
• Occupational Courses	Promising	Promising	
• Paid Employment/Work Experience	Research-based	Research-based	Promising
• Parent Expectations	Promising	Research-based	
• Parental Involvement		Promising	
• Program of Study	Research-based	Research-based	
• Psychological Empowerment (new)	Promising	Promising	Promising
• Self-Advocacy/Self-Determination	Research-based	Research-based	Promising
• Self-Care/Independent Living	Promising	Promising	Research-based
• Self-Realization (new)		Promising	Promising
• Social Skills	Promising	Promising	
• Student Support	Promising	Research-based	Promising
• Technology Skills (new)		Promising	
• Transition Program	Research-based	Promising	
• Travel Skills		Promising	
• Work Study		Research-based	
• Youth Autonomy/Decision-Making	Research-based	Research-based	Promising

(Mazzotti et al., 2021)

QUESTIONS, CLOSING AND RESOURCES

CANVAS COURSE

RESOURCES

Cognitive And Metacognitive Strategies

- PROGRESS Center instructional practice brief on Cognitive and Metacognitive Strategies
- PROGRESS Center self-paced course on Teaching Cognitive and Metacognitive Strategies
- CEEDAR Center practice-based learning module on Cognitive and Metacognitive Strategies
- IRIS Center self-paced modules on Executive Functions (two parts)

Belonging

- PROGRESS Center Building a Successful System - Student Belonging
- PROGRESS Center Webinar: Ten Ways Schools Can Foster Belonging Among Students With and Without Disabilities
- PROGRESS Center Belonging reflection tool
- TIES Center Peer Engagement Practice Guides

LEARN MORE

- Belonging handout; Cognitive and Metacognitive Strategies; Teaching Social Behaviors; Instructional Technology Promotingprogress.org/home
- Self-Management tip sheet https://intensiveintervention.org/
- PK-5k SEL Competencies with Assessment; 1-3 SEL Competencies with Assessment; 4-5 SEL Competencies with Assessment; 6-8 SEL Competencies with Assessment; 9-10 SEL Competencies with Assessment; 11-Adult SEL Competencies with Assessment https://dpi.wi.gov/sspw/mental-health/social-emotional-learning/competencies
- Integrated Supports Star - overview; Integrated Supports Star - tip sheet; Respite Supports Star; Safety and Security Supports Star; Support and Decision Making Supports Star; Advocacy and Engagement Supports Star; Social and Spirituality Supports Star; Healthy Living Supports Star; Community Living Supports Star; Daily Life and Employment Supports Star https://www.lifecoursetools.com/lifecourse-library/integrated-supports-star/
- Employability Skills Workbook https://www.air.org/resource/guidetoolkit/integrating-employability-skills-framework-all-educators
- Employability Skills Framework Assessment Selection Tool https://lincs.ed.gov/sites/default/files/employability-skills-framework-assessment-selection.pdf
- Employability Skills Framework Interviewing for Employability Skills https://lincs.ed.gov/sites/default/files/employability-skills-framework-interview-guide.pdf
- Matrix of comparisons of employability skills assessments https://lincs.ed.gov/sites/default/files/employability-skills-framework-source-matrix.pdf
- Social and Emotional Competencies and Career and Technical Education Employability Standards Crosswalk https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sspw/pdf/FINAL_SEL_CTE_Crosswalk_1.pdf
- Wisconsin's Employability Skills Certificate Implementation Guide https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/cte/pdf/esimpleguide.pdf

LEARN MORE

- Social Capital Skills: communitycolleges.wy.edu/adult-education-standards-success
- Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education: https://cte.ed.gov/
- Employability Skills Framework; Employability skills Planning Checklist both pdf and docx https://cte.ed.gov/initiatives/employability-skills-framework
- Integrating Employability Skills: A Framework for All Educators: https://air.org/resource/guidetoolkit/integrating-employability-skills-framework-all-educators
- ASCEND 307 web page: https://edu.wyoming.gov/parents/special-education/ascend-307/
- Employability skills framework instruction planning tool https://lincs.ed.gov/sites/default/files/employability-skills-framework-instruction-planning-tool.pdf
- Understanding the IDEA and FAPE in relation to functional skills https://www.nj.gov/education/specialed/policy/documents/IDEA_FAPE_FunctionalSkillsGuide.pdf
- Employability skills handout air.org/resource/guidetoolkit/integrating-employability-skills-framework-all-educators

PLEASE COMPLETE THE EVALUATION

https://winweb.ddehome.com/Evaluation.aspx?WorkshopID=1924

ASCEND 307 WEBINAR SERIES - WHAT'S NEXT

Employability Skills Webinar Series are (generally):
Second Wednesday of the month, 4-5pm

- December 10: Communication Skills
- January 15: Critical Thinking Skills
- February 11: Technology Use
- March 11: Resource Management and Information Use
- April 8: Systems Thinking
- May 6 (NOTE: first week in May): Wrap up, review/circle back as applicable

Please see the ASCEND 307 website to register:

QUESTIONS AND CONTACTS

Trina Kilty

307-241-9155

trina.kilty@wyo.gov

ASCEND 307 is a multi-year initiative developed through a federal grant awarded to the Wyoming Department of Education. The overarching goal of the Wyoming State Personnel Development Grant is to improve outcomes for students with disabilities by enhancing personnel preparation and professional development in education and transition services.