

*Preparing for Work*  
*An EFF Work Readiness*  
*Curriculum*

Teacher Guide



Equipped  
for the future

The development of *Preparing for Work* was a collaborative project of:

Equipped for the Future  
The University of Tennessee Center for Literacy Studies

The National Youth Employment Coalition

The Martha O'Bryan Center

And

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Dedicated to the learners – our partners and our guides

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# Introduction to Preparing for Work: An EFF Work Readiness Curriculum

The development of *Preparing for Work* for Youth was a collaborative effort of Equipped for the Future (EFF) at the Center for Literacy Studies, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, the National Youth Employment Coalition (NYEC), and the Martha O'Bryan Center in Nashville, Tennessee through funding provided by the Dollar General Literacy Foundation. The modules that comprise this curriculum, which have been adapted from the earlier version for youth, are based on EFF's business-identified standards for entry-level work readiness and have been designed to align with the skills identified in the National Work Readiness Credential profile. (For more information on the EFF Standards go to [http://eff.cls.utk.edu/work\\_readiness/eff\\_work\\_gap.htm](http://eff.cls.utk.edu/work_readiness/eff_work_gap.htm); for more information on the National Work Readiness Credential go to <http://www.workreadiness.com>.)

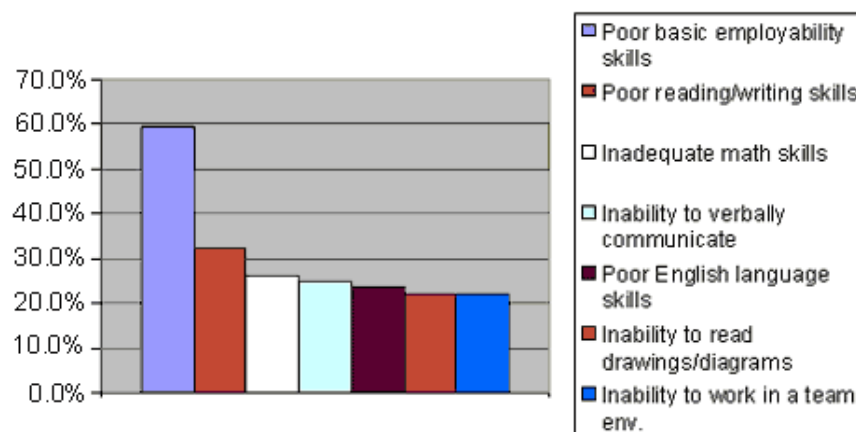
## Need for a Work-Readiness Curriculum and Guide

A 2001 American Management Association report found that "38% of job applicants tested for basic reading and math skills in 1999 were deficient in those skills, up from 22% in 1997 as the level of skills necessary to do work in the digital age continue to increase." [American Management Associate (2001) Workplace testing: basic skills, job skills, and psychological management. (New York: AMA).] Sixty-percent of respondents of the AMA survey are now testing applicant's job skills in order to find applicants with the necessary skills. [National Association of Manufacturers (2002). The skills gap 2001.]

When the National Association of Manufacturers surveyed its membership in 2001, employers identified the following skill deficiencies in current hourly production employees:

- 32% poor reading/writing skills;
- 26% inadequate math skills;
- 25.0% an inability to communicate;
- 24% poor English language skills;
- 22.0% an inability to work in a team environment; and
- 59% inadequate basic employability skills (attendance, timeliness, work ethic, etc.)

**Most Serious Skill Deficiencies in Current Employees**



Nationally, there is growing concern that young adults are not receiving adequate preparation for the world of work or do not have the knowledge and skills necessary to be effective



employees. *The Skills Gap*, a 2005 survey and report from the National Association of Manufacturers, reported that 84 percent of responding members said K-12 schools were not doing a good job in preparing students for the workplace. Nearly half indicated their current employees had inadequate basic employability skills, such as attendance, timeliness, and work ethic. Forty-six percent reported inadequate problem-solving skills, and 36 percent pointed to insufficient reading, writing, and communication skills. Employers are recognizing that academic preparation is necessary but may not be sufficient, and that there is a need for stronger preparation in problem-solving and interpersonal skills if young people are to be successful in the workplace.

*Preparing for Work* has been developed to address these concerns.

## Preparing for Work

The interactive learning activities that constitute *Preparing for Work* provide opportunities for learners to explore the skill concepts and to build the knowledge and apply the skills needed to succeed in work. The knowledge and skills are used in tasks such as those detailed in the National Work Readiness Credential profile. The tasks in the profile, which are based on the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS ) categories and nine of the EFF Content Standards, have been identified as the skills necessary for entry level work.

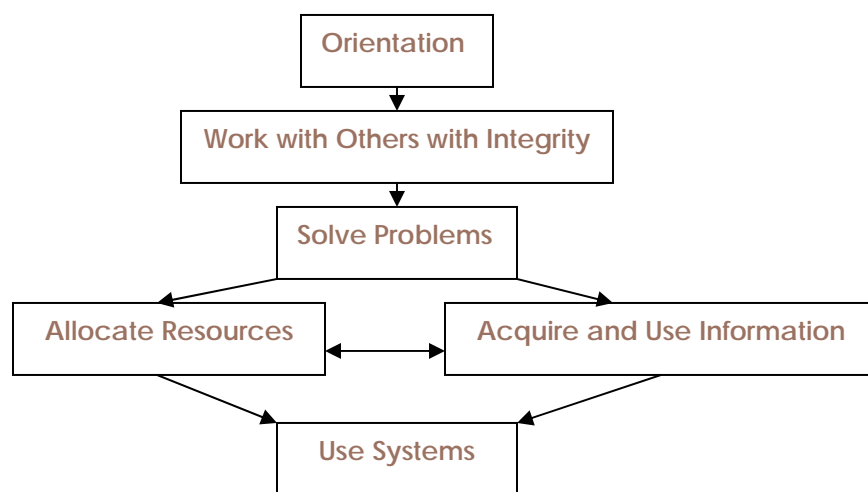
The curriculum consists of six modules that integrate a variety of EFF Skills and SCANS Tasks.

Module	EFF Skills Primary [Secondary]	SCANS Cluster
Orientation	Take Responsibility for Learning Plan Cooperate With Others [Speak So Others Can Understand, Listen Actively]	Work with Others Know How to Learn Responsibility Self Management
Work With Others With Integrity	Cooperate with Others Resolve Conflict and Negotiate [Speak So Others Can Understand, Listen Actively]	Use Systems Work with Others Responsibility Self Management Integrity
Solve Problems	Solve Problems and Make Decisions Resolve Conflict and Negotiate [Listen Actively, Speak So Others Can Understand, Take Responsibility for Learning]	Solve Problems
Allocate Resources	Use Math to Solve Problems and Communicate Speak So Others Can Understand [Plan, Observe Critically]	Use Systems Allocate Resources Solve Problems
Acquire and Use Information	Read with Understanding Observe Critically [Speak So Others Can Understand, Listen Actively]	Acquire and Use Information Use Technology Use Systems Know How to Learn
Use Systems	Solve Problems and Make Decisions Use Math to Solve Problems and Communicate [Speak So Others Can Understand, Listen Actively, Take Responsibility for Learning]	Acquire and Use Information Use Systems Work with Others Know How to Learn Solve Problems

While each module is a stand-alone with a series of development activities to help learners apply critical workplace skills in context, it is important to begin the series of modules with the



Orientation Module, which provides a broad overview of the World of Work and the skills necessary to successfully navigate it. Based on pilot test feedback, below is one example of how to approach the series of modules.



The approach embraced by EFF in the development of this curriculum is unique. First, it integrates the “soft” skills, which business and industry have identified as needed by today’s workers, with the academic skills. In an article titled *Skills Matter in the Types of Jobs Young Dropout Will First Hold* (Volume 7, Issue A, June 2004 of Focus on Basics), John Tyler concludes from his research that the acquisition of basic cognitive skills is vitally important for young dropouts with low levels of education and little to no work experience and plays a major role in determining their economic future. He reports that programs that prepare students for an assessment, such as the GED, sacrificing skill formation at the expense of test taking skills, do not equip students to enter the labor market. Each of the instructional modules that comprise the *Preparing for Work* takes a blended approach, focusing on a specific SCANS task, while highlighting the EFF Standards, reinforcing the acquisition of basic skills.

Secondly, *Preparing for Work* is constructed using a developmental approach. The activities build on the EFF Worker Role Map, which was developed through the EFF field research and describes what it means to “do work,” and integrate the EFF Content Standards, which provide a direct link between curriculum and instruction and achievement of real-world outcomes. The activities not only address the skills and knowledge necessary for entry-level work but also prepare the learners for advancing beyond entry-level jobs, focusing on how skills transfer from one situation or context to another as individuals prepare for careers across a life span.

EFF’s learner-centered, contextualized approach to teaching and learning is integrated throughout the curriculum.

## Goals of the Curriculum

The curriculum is designed to achieve several goals. Participants who successfully complete the activities should be well prepared:

- to transfer work readiness skills beyond preparation for entry level jobs;
- to learn new skills and to take responsibility for their own learning on the job;
- to apply skills in a variety of contexts, including work, home, and community; and,
- for entry level positions in many jobs that do not require advanced training or education.



# PREPARING FOR WORK: AN EFF WORK READINESS CURRICULUM

## *Orientation Module*

### EFF Standards Focus:

- ◆ EFF Standards - primary: Cooperate with Others, Resolve Conflict
- ◆ EFF Standards - secondary: Speak so Others Can Understand, Listen Actively

### SCANS tasks addressed through this module:

#### Diversity

- ◆ Work as part of a team to develop and achieve mutual goals and objectives. [cooperate, resolve conflict]
- ◆ Develop and maintain good working relations with coworkers, supervisors, and others throughout the organization, regardless of background or position.
- ◆ Be respectful and open to the thoughts, opinions, and contributions of others. [listen, resolve conflict] Avoid use of language or comments that stereotype others. [speak, listen, observe]

#### Negotiate

- ◆ Work through conflict constructively. [resolve conflict]

#### Serve Clients

- ◆ Address customer comments, questions, concerns and objections with direct, accurate, and timely responses.
- ◆ Verify customer or client identification to validate forms, provide services, or carry out procedures.

#### Integrity

- ◆ Demonstrate integrity.
- ◆ Maintain confidentiality, as appropriate, about matters encountered in the work setting.





# PREPARING FOR WORK: AN EFF WORK READINESS CURRICULUM

## *Work with Others with Integrity Module*

### EFF Standards Focus:

- ◆ EFF Standards - primary: Cooperate with Others, Resolve Conflict
- ◆ EFF Standards - secondary: Speak so Others Can Understand, Listen Actively

### SCANS tasks addressed through this module:

#### Diversity

- ◆ Work as part of a team to develop and achieve mutual goals and objectives. [cooperate, resolve conflict]
- ◆ Develop and maintain good working relations with coworkers, supervisors, and others throughout the organization, regardless of background or position:
- ◆ Be respectful and open to the thoughts, opinions, and contributions of others. [listen, resolve conflict] Avoid use of language or comments that stereotype others. [speak, listen, observe]

#### Negotiate

- ◆ Work through conflict constructively. [resolve conflict]

#### Serve Clients

- ◆ Address customer comments, questions, concerns and objections with direct, accurate, and timely responses.
- ◆ Verify customer or client identification to validate forms, provide services, or carry out procedures.

#### Integrity

- ◆ Demonstrate integrity.
- ◆ Maintain confidentiality, as appropriate, about matters encountered in the work setting.



# PREPARING FOR WORK: AN EFF WORK READINESS CURRICULUM

## *Solve Problems Module*

### EFF Standards addressed through this module:

- ◆ **EFF Standards - primary:** *Solve Problems and Make Decisions, Resolve Conflict and Negotiate*
- ◆ **EFF Standards – secondary:** *Listen Actively, Speak So Others Can Understand, Take Responsibility for Learning*

### SCANS tasks addressed through this module:

#### Solve Problems

- ◆ Cope with a work situation or tasks that change frequently.
- ◆ Demonstrate flexibility. [*how to deal with change, solve problems*]
- ◆ Accept new or changed work responsibilities with a positive attitude. [*speak, listen, take responsibility, solve problems*]
- ◆ Adjust to unexpected problems and situations by seeking advice from a supervisor or appropriate others. [*speak, listen, solve problems*]
- ◆ Identify actual or potential problems related to one's own work. [*resolve conflict*]
- ◆ Report them in a timely manner, according to company policy. [*solve problems*]
- ◆ Help to fix them. [*solve problems*]

#### Serve Clients

- ◆ Address customer comments, questions, concerns, and objections with direct, accurate, and timely responses. [*resolve conflict*]

#### Responsibility

- ◆ Take responsibility for completing one's own work assignments.
- ◆ As efficiently as possible, to minimize costs, rework, and production time. [*solve problems*]

#### Self Management

- ◆ Display responsible behaviors at work.
- ◆ Do not attend to personal business when on the job, except in emergencies. [*take responsibility*]



# PREPARING FOR WORK: AN EFF WORK READINESS CURRICULUM

## *Allocate Resources Module*

### EFF Standards addressed through this module:

- ◆ **EFF Standards - primary:** *Use Math to Solve Problems and Communicate, Speak So Others Can Understand*
- ◆ **EFF Standards – secondary:** *Observe Critically, Plan*

### SCANS tasks addressed through this module:

1. Use basic math well enough to get the job done.
2. Manage time effectively to:
  - ◆ Get the work done on schedule.
  - ◆ Prioritize tasks.
  - ◆ Make sure that urgent tasks are completed on time.
3. Make sure that materials, tools, and equipment are available to do the job effectively.



# PREPARING FOR WORK: AN EFF WORK READINESS CURRICULUM

## *Acquire and Use Information Module*

### EFF Standards Focus:

- ◆ **EFF Standards - primary:** *Read With Understanding, Observe Critically*
- ◆ **EFF Standards - secondary:** *Speak So Others Can Understand, Listen Actively*

### SCANS tasks addressed through this module:

1. Acquire, use, and share information accurately and in a timely manner in order to:
  - ◆ Get work done.
  - ◆ Identify appropriate procedures.
  - ◆ Respond to requests from internal and external customers.
2. Read and understand information presented in written form well enough to get the job done.
3. Communicate in spoken English well enough to get the job done.
4. Ask for clarification or help from supervisor or appropriate others when needed.



# PREPARING FOR WORK: AN EFF WORK READINESS CURRICULUM

## *Use Systems Module*

### EFF Standards Focus:

- ◆ **Standards - primary:** Solve Problems and Make Decisions, Use Math to Solve Problems and Communicate
- ◆ **Standards - secondary:** Speak So Others Can Understand, Listen Actively, Take Responsibility for Learning

### SCANS tasks addressed through this module:

1. Understand how one's own performance can impact the success of the organization
2. Comply with organizational policies and procedures in a consistent manner
3. Pay attention to company guidelines regarding:
  - ◆ Personal and professional interactions
  - ◆ Appropriate dress
  - ◆ Health and safety
4. Follow established procedures for handling urgent situations or emergencies
5. Keep informed about quality and health standards set by external sources, including unions, OSHA, and other national and international organizations
6. Go to the appropriate person/source when approval is needed for work-related activities
7. Monitor quality of own work
8. Accept and use constructive criticism for continuous improvement of own job performance
9. Keep track of changes within the organization and adapt to them
10. Display responsible behaviors at work:
  - ◆ Avoid absenteeism
  - ◆ Demonstrate promptness
  - ◆ Maintain appropriate grooming and hygiene
  - ◆ Do not attend to personal business when on the job, except in emergencies.
  - ◆ Manage stressful situations effectively

