

MaxKnowledge Performance Blog

Classroom to Employer: What Our Faculty Should Know

by Jay Hollowell - March 31, 2009

The mission of the career training sector of higher education has always been, and will always be, to teach adult learners the applicable skills needed for employment and promotion in careers that are in demand. As we develop and implement ongoing training for our faculty on ways to enhance student success in school and in the workplace, one key factor is to focus on a specific bridge between the classroom and the workplace. This bridge is crucial to graduate workplace survival and is based on the four skill sets that employers want - skills that go beyond the technical, job-specific training we provide:

Critical-Thinking Skills: These skills include evaluating, prioritizing and utilizing information; solving problems, recognizing cause and effect and making sound decisions; and effectively managing resources such as time, money, equipment and ideas.

Interpersonal Skills: Interpersonal skills focus on communicating effectively, proactively listening to what others have to say, working with conflict and consensus, and constructively participating in a team environment.

Performance Skills: This set of skills emphasizes taking initiative, finishing what has been started and on time, and managing multiple workplace tasks and priorities.

Professional Skills: These "skills" can also be regarded as traits or characteristics and include professional demeanor, self confidence, leadership qualities, strong work ethic and personal accountability.

These four skill sets are more difficult to "teach" than technical, subject-matter skills. Therefore, as we provide faculty development training to our instructors, we should include suggestions and techniques they can use in the traditional classroom, lab, or online learning environment that create opportunities for students to develop and practice those skills. This helps to ensure that our adult learners have a bridge to employment that is supported by what employers want and what employers regard as workplace success.

Jay Hollowell is the Training Manager for MaxKnowledge and has over 28 years of experience in adult education, corporate training and workforce development. He has designed and facilitated adult education/training programs throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. In the career college sector, Jay has worked in numerous positions with an emphasis on faculty development, student retention and placement. His academic work is in business and education.