Improving Career Readiness in Louisiana: A New Educator-Developed Course

Louisiana Educator Voice Fellowship
Career Readiness

• When you hear the term *career readiness*, what are some of the terms, considerations, and contexts that come to mind?
• When you hear the term *employability skills*, what are some of the terms, considerations, and contexts that come to mind?
• How were your responses the same or different across the two terms--*career readiness* and *employability skills*?
Economic Trends

The last few centuries have seen dramatic shifts from agrarian to industrial and to information and technology ages. But today, because of technology and globalization, the world and workplace are changing faster than ever before.

Technology and Automation
- Routine tasks increasingly automated
- About 1.4 million US jobs expected to be lost over the next 8 years due to advances in technology
- +40% of those previously employed in these jobs will have a difficult time securing new work if they do not possess the in-demand and necessary new skills

Globalization
- Changes in political cultures, communication, transportation, etc. mean goods, services, money, information, and people flowing across national borders faster than ever before
- “Production” increasingly the result of work across multiple sites, by very diverse groups
Workforce Trends

• Growing mismatch between jobs and skills
  – 4.4 million jobs in the US remained open due to gaps in skills in 2017
  – 30% of jobs in 2020 will be in middle-skills
  – More vacancies in health care, IT, etc.

• Many of the degrees and credentials that used to matter most, aren’t enough today
  – In 1973, 28% of jobs required postsec. education, by 2020 at least 65% of jobs will require education past high school
  – On average, 4-year college grads earn more than high school grads, but not all good jobs require a 4-year degree (vs. certificate/credential, 2-year degree)
  – nearly one-third of those with two-year degrees earn more than the average four-year-degree holder

• Work demands new skills--academic, technical, and cross-sector (e.g., communications, collaboration, critical thinking)
Current and Future Economic Shifts

Rapid advances in technology are creating, and will continue to create, significant economic changes. It is predicted that in the US alone, 1.4 million people in the US will lose their jobs due to advances in technology within a decade. 70% of these jobs will no longer exist; the remaining ones will shift and require new skills. Over 40% of those previously employed in these jobs will have a difficult time securing new work if they do not possess the necessary new skills. These changes will also create many new good jobs that require deeper and more specific skills - meaning new requirements for education. (1 and 2)

Skilled workers are becoming increasingly needed - but there is a mismatch between jobs and skills: Leading industries, including healthcare, business, computers, and sales, reported difficulty in finding enough skilled workers to fill jobs. In 2017, 4.4 million jobs in the US remained open due to a gap in skills. (3)

In order for people to have access to good jobs and achieve career and life success, they must possess the necessary and in-demand skills.
College AND Career Readiness in Louisiana

**Students are better prepared academically, and for college**
78.1% graduate High School,

From 2006 to 2016, Louisiana’s on-time, high school graduation rate grew from 65% to 77%. (71.4% for African-American; 71.2% for FRPL/low SES; and 45.1% for students with disabilities) - *Louisiana Believes*

43% of HS grads (2016) earned early college credit or a statewide industry based credential - *Louisiana Believes*

In 2013, 20.2% of all 20,237 counted students in Louisiana's public 4-year colleges graduated in four years. 44.7% graduated in six years. (The national averages are 33.3% and 57.6%, respectively.) - *Chronicle of Higher Education*

**More students are developing career-specific skills**
60,000 IBC’s earned
Industry Demands in Louisiana

Some sectors are growing faster than others and have different demands

As of March 2018, the unemployment rate in Louisiana was 4.4%, compared to 4.1% nationally - Bureau of Labor Statistics

Between 2014 and 2024, Computer and Mathematical, Personal Care and Service, Healthcare Support, Healthcare Practitioners and Technical, Food Preparation and Serving Related, and Community and Social Service industries are projected to have the highest growth rates in LA - Louisiana Works
Louisiana’s Forgotten Middle

Middle-skill jobs, which require education beyond high school but not a four-year degree, make up the largest part of America’s and Louisiana’s labor market. Key industries in Louisiana are unable to find enough sufficiently trained workers to fill these jobs.

Demand for Middle-Skill Jobs is Strong
Fifty-seven percent of all jobs in 2015 were middle-skill.

Job Openings by Skill Level, Louisiana, 2014-2024
Between 2014-2024, 54 percent of job openings will be middle-skill.

Source: NSC analysis of long-term occupational projections from state labor/employment agency.
A Middle-Skill Gap

Middle-skill jobs account for 57 percent of Louisiana’s labor market, but only 46 percent of the state’s workers are trained to the middle-skill level.

Economic Shifts Create New Workforce Demands

By 2030, 75 million to 375 million workers around the world will be forced to change jobs because of automation. **However, the advances in technology and automation in the workplace will make room for new occupations that require deeper skills. With these new jobs come new educational requirements.** (3)

With adequate reskilling, 95% of the most immediately at-risk workers would find good-quality, higher-wage work in growing job families. Without reskilling, only 2% of workers would have an optimal opportunity to transition to new jobs – while 16% would have none at all. (4)

Top skills required by jobs that are considered high-growth and high-demand include **communications, teamwork, active listening, critical thinking, and speaking.** (5)
Career Readiness: Background

- Across most of US history, high schoolers sorted as either “college-bound” or “career-bound”
- Research on relationship between education level and earnings led to increased pressure for more “college ready” students
- Employers report skill gaps for technical jobs with family sustaining wages due to lack of career skills/career readiness (even among college grads)
- A perfect storm –
  - “College for all” directing most students toward a 4-year/bachelors degree w/ a significant number not completing a degree
  - Lack of understanding that there are multiple paths for individual career success
  - Out-dated views of career education and CTE programming
A Need for Change, Beginning w/ Clarifying a Vision

• Status quo isn’t an option and the benefits of change outweigh the challenges (Meeder, 2017: 29)

• “There are lots of definitions and discussions around ‘readiness,’ which results in confusion for students, teachers, education and workforce leaders, and policymakers” (ACT, 2018)
Career Readiness

Students who are college and career ready demonstrate

1. **Core academic content knowledge** (i.e., math, writing, and reading) and skills required to enroll and succeed in credit-bearing, first-year courses at postsecondary institutions (i.e., 2- or 4-year colleges, trade schools, or technical schools)

2. **Job-/sector-specific, technical skills** required for successful employment (often detailed in specific career pathways, IBCs, etc.)

3. **Cross-sector, employability skills** (e.g., critical thinking, oral and written communication, collaboration, responsibility, professionalism, etc.)
Foundational Career Essentials

To help Louisiana respond to these shifts, rethink “college and career readiness,” and help educators and students imagine and prepare for a changing world and career and life success in it ... and create a new career development course...
LA Educator Voice Fellowship

• Partnership w/ LDOE to elevate the voices of Louisiana’s leading educators to advance the State’s top priorities in student career readiness
• Educator Fellows:
  – Deepen knowledge and understanding of 21st century economy and implications for K-12 education
  – Be able to support a comprehensive approach to improving career readiness for all students, including a new career development course
  – Become champions for effective implementation of Jump Start initiatives and other best practices
  – Establish a statewide, PLC of educators committed to improving students’ college and career readiness
LA Educator Voice Fellowship

- Face-to-face, 2.5 day convenings--including site visits, guest speakers and expert panels, workshops
  - New Orleans (w/ Lucid and Ochsner Health), Baton Rouge (w/ P-Tech and Placid), Lafayette (w/ CGI), Shreveport (w/ CSRA and Bossier Parish CTC tour and student panel)
  - Competency, topics, and course sequence
  - Unit development

- Webinars (UbD and Peer Feedback, Performance tasks/PBL)

- Individual tasks and virtual teamwork
  - Unit development, peer review, feedback

- Feedback from experts in the field
  - Unit review and feedback from industry representatives
  - LA teacher volunteers field-testing and providing feedback on draft course units
Where we are headed? How did we get here?

Course Development:

1. **LDOE partners w/ America Achieves to engage the best educators from across disciplines, roles, and districts (January-June 2017)**
2. **LA Educator Voice Fellowship launch**
   - Review and define vision and goals for the course (Skills and Competencies aligned to industry needs)
   - Draft course topics, scope and sequence, course units, etc.
   - Peer review, feedback, and revision (June 2017-March 2018)
3. **Collect stakeholder feedback**
   - Industry representatives review and provide feedback
   - LA teachers field test, review, and provide feedback
   - LDOE reviews and provides feedback
   - Revisions made (March-May 2018)
4. **Statewide Course Pilot**
   - ### LA teachers volunteer, trained, and teach new course
   - Data collected to assess course implementation and quality
   - Course revision, as needed (June 2018-June 2019)
5. **Full-scale New Course Implementation**
   - JTC course is sunset across the State
   - Statewide teacher training and resource sharing
   - New course taught in all schools and district
Innovative New High School Level Course

As part of the Educator Voice Fellowship, educators from across Louisiana drafted a new curriculum to help all students to:

• Develop essential 21st century workforce skills - the ability to communicate, collaborate, and lead
• Explore new and exciting careers and industry sectors
• Learn about themselves and their interests to successfully navigate high school, postsecondary education, and career pathways
Our Vision for the Course

- Attend explicitly to regional employment landscape
  - 21st century economic shifts
  - Key industry sectors and careers
- **Focus on 21st century employability/success skills** (understand/apply)
  - 7 domains w/ special focus on 3-4
  - Special attention to planning/navigating HS and careers (find and pursue pathways)
- Start w/ the end in mind; driven by “Gold Standard,” industry-aligned performance tasks (tied to careers)
- Build on best practices and evidence base
- Foster integrated, engaging approach
- Be different and more engaging and effective than *Journey to Careers*
- Be able to be implemented at scale, w/ fidelity
Course Competencies: Career Success Requires New Knowledge and Skills

1. **Applied Knowledge** (academic, critical thinking, and career related tech skills)
2. **Relational Skills and Personal Attributes** (e.g., interpersonal skills like teamwork, customer service, exercising leadership, respecting differences, resolving conflict and personal qualities like integrity, self-discipline, personal responsibility)
3. **Executive and Communication Skills** (e.g., technology, systems thinking, information use, resource management)
4. **Career Navigation Skills**
5. **Postsecondary Transitions Knowledge and Skills**
6. **Financial Literacy**
7. **Civic Engagement**
Course Overview

Unit 1: How I Learn and Lead
Unit 2: Teamwork: A Team is only as Strong as its Weakest Link
Unit 3: Project Management
Unit 4: Innovation and Entrepreneurship
Unit 5: Digital Citizenship
Unit 6: Leadership and Public Service
Unit 7: Financial Literacy
Unit 8: Navigating Career Sectors and Pathways
Unit 9: Looking Forward
Gold Standard PBL: Essential Project Design Elements (Buck Institute)

Begins w/ setting clear learning goals, of two types

- Key knowledge and understanding (application)
- Key success skills (competencies)

Includes

- Challenging problem or question (driving/essential question)
- Sustained inquiry
- Authenticity (e.g., to community, career)
- Student voice, choice, and reflection
- Critique and Revision

“If you want students to become problem solvers, then you have to give them problems to practice solving!” (Larmer, Mergendoller, & Boss, 2015:36)
# High Quality Performance Tasks (Draft Rubric)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essential Project Design Element</th>
<th>Brief Overview</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Key Knowledge, Understanding &amp; Success Skills</strong></td>
<td>The project is focused on teaching students specific and important knowledge, understanding, and skills derived from standards and central to academic subject areas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. 21st Century Economic Trends</td>
<td>a. Understanding of the 21st economic trends and related workforce demands are explicitly targeted to be taught and assessed</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Career Exploration</td>
<td>b. Knowledge and understanding of or interest in specific industry sectors, related careers and pathways, and corresponding knowledge and skill requisites are targeted</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Career and Life Success Skills</td>
<td>c. Targeted 21st Century Employability/Success Skills (competencies) are taught and assessed in the context of real-world problem-solving, not in isolation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. Information Technology (technology standards)</td>
<td>d. The project is focused on teaching students specific and important knowledge, understanding, and skills derived from the ISTE standards, which are applied authentically and leverage new and emerging technologies</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2. Challenging Problem or Question</strong></td>
<td>The project is focused on a central problem or question, at the appropriate level of challenge, and reflects a complex, real-world problem aligned to demands of work and careers in the 21st century</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>3. Sustained Inquiry</strong></td>
<td>Student inquiry is sustained over time and is academically rigorous</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>4. Authenticity</strong></td>
<td>The project features real-world context, tasks and tools, quality standards, or impact—or speaks to students’ personal concerns, interests, and issues in their lives</td>
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<td><strong>5. Student Voice &amp; Choice</strong></td>
<td>Students make some decisions about the project, including how they work and what they create</td>
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<td><strong>6. Reflection</strong></td>
<td>Students and teachers engage in thoughtful, comprehensive reflection both during the task/project and after its culmination</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>7. Critique and Revision</strong></td>
<td>Students are provided with regular, structured opportunities to give and receive feedback about the quality of their products and work-in-progress from peers, teachers, and if appropriate from others beyond the classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8. Public Product</strong></td>
<td>Product requires students to apply new skills and knowledge toward realistic, complex problems.</td>
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Piloting the New Course

- Leading educators from across the state trained as facilitators to teach the course, practicing use of key resources (May-June 2018)
- Middle and high school teachers from across the state participated in summer training to learn about the course need, design, implementation, and resources (June-July 2018)
- Hundreds of Louisiana middle and high school classrooms pilot new course (August 2018-June 2019)
  - Have free access to all course materials
  - Participate in an ongoing, virtual community LDOE
  - Share implementation challenges and solutions, best practices, and feedback
  - Become role models for other teachers, statewide
- LDOE and its partners continue to collect feedback, assess quality, and make improvements
- New course replaces Journey to Careers statewide (July 2019-ongoing)
New Course is Just a Start

Course development process showed us that:

• Global, national, and local economies are shifting faster than ever before, and creating very new demands for workforce
  – High school diploma isn’t enough
  – Degree is not destiny
  – Skills matter--academic, career technical and cross-sector competencies

• We need to do more to improve not just college, but also career readiness
  – define skills that matter, and teach them--innovatively, in context
  – introduce students, parents and families, teachers, etc. to new and changing careers
  – develop and ensure broader access to high-quality, industry aligned career pathways

• One course isn’t enough
Community-wide commitment to Career Readiness

- What can we do to ensure that all of our students are career ready?
- What commitments are we willing to make?