MEASURING SOFT SKILLS: THE WHAT AND THE HOW?

JANE EGÜEZ (JEGUEZ@CASAS.ORG)
NAWDP 2012
CASAS WORKFORCE SKILLS CERTIFICATION SYSTEM (WSCS)

• **Goal:** To promote transition of participants into the workforce

• **Objective:** Participants will use the work readiness skills identified and valued by employers to help get and keep a job
WORKPLACE BEHAVIORS (SOFT SKILLS)

- Personal Qualities (PQ)*
  - Integrity
  - Responsibility
  - Self-Esteem
  - Self-Management
  - Sociability

- Customer Care (CC)*
  - Commitment to Quality
  - Customer Relations
  - Decision Making

*LRI’s Workforce Readiness Skills assessment

To see samples go to: www.learning-resources.com
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Check if required</th>
<th>Personal Qualities</th>
<th>Skill</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Recognizes a situation of right and wrong and acts accordingly.</td>
<td>Integrity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Recognizes the ethical limits of a situation; confronts those who push those limits. Will refer to higher authority if needed.</td>
<td>Integrity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tries to keep private life from affecting work.</td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Takes responsibility when an unusual situation demands special attention.</td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Recognizes when more information is needed; is willing to ask for help if necessary.</td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Recognizes quality work; ready to go the extra mile to make sure that the job gets done properly.</td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Responds by helping out when needed, even if it means giving up some personal time.</td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Makes sure the job is done before leaving; does not leave extra work for next shift.</td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Stands up for self where appropriate; doesn’t get defensive when criticized; accepts and learns from critical feedback.</td>
<td>Self-Esteem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Willing to try new things, learn new skills and ask for help when needed.</td>
<td>Self-Esteem</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>When things get slow, finds something to do rather than wait to be told what to do.</td>
<td>Self-Management</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Asks for help when he/she can’t do something, whether it’s because of a lack of training or information, or things are just too busy to get everything done.</td>
<td>Self-Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Is open and honest with coworkers because he/she knows it’s easier to work with people when everyone gets along.</td>
<td>Sociability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Spends some time chatting with coworkers, but not too much. Knows the difference between “down time”, when it’s okay to socialize, and when it’s time to concentrate on work and to let others concentrate on their work.</td>
<td>Sociability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check if required</td>
<td>Customer Care Skills</td>
<td>Customer Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Remains polite and professional when interacting with customers who make unreasonable demands.</td>
<td>Customer Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Faced with a hostile customer, maintains positive demeanor and earnestly attempts to help the customer.</td>
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<td>Increases customer loyalty by immediately addressing concerns and following up.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Handles competing customer needs in a calm and helpful manner, follows through on commitments.</td>
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<td>Recognizes when it is best to personally handle customer needs versus when to direct the customer elsewhere</td>
<td>Decision Making</td>
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<td>Recognizes priorities, then implements solutions based on an understanding of business need.</td>
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<td>Decides when to vary from routine operating policies/guidelines and when to adhere to them.</td>
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<td>Recognizes when more information is needed for making a decision.</td>
<td>Decision Making</td>
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<td>Recognizes the limits of own authority, correctly decides when to use those limits in order to keep the customer satisfied.</td>
<td>Decision Making</td>
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<td>Evaluates alternatives strategies for customer satisfaction, then chooses one that minimizes harm and makes the customer feel supported.</td>
<td>Commitment to Quality</td>
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<td>Proactively assists peers for the purpose of increasing overall quality of company operations.</td>
<td>Commitment to Quality</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Voice and body language communicate to the customer that satisfying the customer’s need is of highest importance.</td>
<td>Commitment to Quality</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Balances own work schedule against customer needs; willingly makes adjustments.</td>
<td>Commitment to Quality</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Determines customer need and improves customer relations by “listening” to customer comments and requests.</td>
<td>Commitment to Quality</td>
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</table>
WSCS IS A THREE STEP PROCESS:

- **Step 1** – Profile Skills
- **Step 2** – Develop Skills
- **Step 3** – Certify Skills
STEP 1 – PROFILE SKILLS

work-related academic skills with CASAS’ Reading & Math assessments

work behaviors (soft skills) with LRI’s Personal Quality & Customer Care assessments
STEP 1 – PROFILE SKILLS

• Administer assessments:
  • CASAS Reading and Math via CASAS eTests
  • LRI Workforce Readiness (soft skills) via the web
    • Personal Qualities – 40 minutes
    • Customer Service – 37 minutes

• Create a Workforce Skills Profile (using TOPSpro)
  • Combines results from CASAS and LRI
Workforce Skills Profile

Awarded to: Damon Lozano
By Agency: Rolling Hills Adult School
Date Issued: January 12, 2011

Work-related Academic Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic</th>
<th>Advanced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Work-related Academic Skills typically demonstrated at this level:

Reading
- Interprets common written material related to everyday needs and to job. Understands the overall structure of most written materials in everyday and work contexts.
- Interprets text in standard organizational formats, including tables and checklists.
- Finds information in directories and simple reference materials.
- Interprets illustrations and simple diagrams.
- Has sufficient reading skills necessary for using a computer for common purposes such as reading routine e-mail and understanding web page content.

Math
- Uses mental math to solve simple problems.
- Converts and calculates with units of time.
- Calculates linear measurement in inches, feet and miles. Uses common measurement instruments.
- Interprets data in tables and charts. Records data in simple formats.

Soft Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic</th>
<th>Advanced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Personal Quality Skills demonstrated:

Integrity
- Has the opportunity to break a rule and probably get away with it, but decides to follow the rule.
- Tries to stop others who are about to break a rule, reminds them if the rules and what could happen if they get caught. Will go to a manager or supervisor if necessary.

Responsibility
- Tries to keep private life from affecting work.
- Rather than asking for help, more information or clearer instructions.
- Responds by helping out when needed, even if it means giving up some personal time.

Self-Esteem
- Willing to try new things, learn new skills and ask for help when needed.

Socially
- Is open and honest with coworkers because he/she knows it's easier to work with people when everyone gets along.

Customer Care Skills demonstrated:

Commitment to Quality
- Appropriately uses voice and body language communicate to the customer that satisfying the customers need is of highest importance.
- Balances own work schedule against customer needs; willingness makes adjustments.
- Determines customer need and improves customer relations by "listening" to customer comments and requests.

Customer Relations
- Remains polite and professional when interacting with customers who make unreasonable demands.
- Faced with a hostile customer, maintains positive demeanor and sincerely attempts to help the customer.
- Increases customer loyalty by immediately addressing concerns and following up.

Decision Making
- Recognizes when it is best to personally handle customer needs versus when to direct the customer elsewhere.
- Recognizes the limits of own authority, correctly decides when to use those limits in order to keep the customer satisfied.
## Relating Skill Levels to the WSCS Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>ABE</th>
<th>ESL</th>
<th>DOL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>High Adult Secondary</td>
<td></td>
<td>Not Basic Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Low Adult Secondary</td>
<td></td>
<td>Skills Deficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>High Intermediate Basic</td>
<td>Advanced ESL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Low Intermediate Basic</td>
<td>High Intermediate ESL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Beginning Basic</td>
<td>Low Intermediate ESL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Beginning ABE Literacy</td>
<td>High Beginning ESL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Low Beginning ESL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Beginning ESL Literacy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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WHY A WORKFORCE SKILLS PROFILE?

Benefit for participants
- Documents their current academic and soft skills:
  - What the learner knows
  - What soft skills and academic skills need to be developed

Benefit for employers
- Profiles job candidate’s work readiness skills
  - Informs employer if prospective employee meets job skill requirements
STEP 2 - DEVELOP SKILLS

work-related academic skills
(refer to ECS Reading and Math competency report)

work behaviors (soft skills)
(refer to LRI’s Feedback and Development reports)

NOTE: Reassess periodically to determine when candidate is ready for certification
STEP 2 - DEVELOP SKILLS

- Plan and provide work readiness skill curriculum and instruction:
  - Use WSCS competencies and QuickSearch* to plan curriculum
  - Use diagnostic reports to target instruction
    - TOPSpro competency reports on learner’s reading and math skills
    - LRI Feedback and Development reports on learner’s soft skills
- Reassess periodically to measure progress
  - Report EFLs to NRS
  - Create updated WSCS profile

*find at www.casas.org
FEEDBACK REPORT

SOCIALITY:

• You are understanding, friendly, flexible, and polite; when you are around coworkers, you participate in whatever is going on, instead of trying to be “invisible”; you get along well with others; you take an interest in what others say and do.

• Situation In Which Your Performance Was Acceptable

  • Is open and honest with coworkers because he/she knows it’s easier to work with people when you get along with them.

• Situation In Which Your Performance Needs Development

  • Spends some time chatting with coworkers, but not too much. Knows the difference between “down time”, when it’s okay to socialize, and when it’s time to concentrate on work and to let others concentrate on their work.
• SKILL: Integrity – You know right from wrong and try to do the right thing.

• QUESTION: Assume you are at work and one of your coworkers decides that he wants to leave work 15 minutes early, but does not want the manager to whom you both report to know that he is leaving early. As your co-worker is leaving he explains to you that he is leaving early and asks you to “cover for him” in case your manager comes by and asks where he is. What would you do in this situation?

• (Possible probes/additional comments: Assume the Manager comes by and asks you directly where your co-worker is. What would you say? What would you say to the coworker before he leaves?)
SAMPLE EFFECTIVE BEHAVIORS:
1. Indicating disagreement with the co-worker’s deceitful actions.
2. Informing the co-worker he/she will not lie to the manager.
3. Indicating that he/she will tell the manager the true story.

SAMPLE INEFFECTIVE BEHAVIORS:
1. Seeing nothing wrong with the co-workers behavior (e.g., it’s not my business).
2. Agreeing to “cover” for the co-worker or play dumb if questioned by the manager.
3. Indicating disagreement with the co-worker’s actions, but a reluctance to state views to the co-worker.
STEP 3 – CERTIFY SKILLS

work-related academic skills and
work behaviors (soft skills):

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WSCS CERTIFICATION

• **Assesses academic skills** - measured in the application to job-related tasks/situations
  - Reading at an adult secondary level
  - Math at an adult secondary level
  - Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

• **Assesses work behaviors (soft skills)**
  - Personal Qualities
  - Customer Care
National
Workforce Skills Certificate

Presented to

Damon Lozano

for demonstrating mastery of

Work-related Academic Skills and Soft Skills

on April 27, 2011

Rolling Hills

Workforce Skills Certification System
a program of CASAS and LRI
Workforce Skills Certification System

The following workforce skills have been identified by the individual’s responses to employer-validated and nationally normed assessments.

More detailed information can be found at www.casas.org (academic) and at www.learning-resources.com (soft skills).

Work-related Academic Skills

Work-related Academic Skills typically demonstrated at this level

Reading
- Reads a variety of specialized or technical materials related to job needs, such as operating instructions, manuals, and technical information
- Interprets detailed policies and procedures
- Interprets complex diagrams and graphs
- Interprets materials and communications related to job without significant difficulty
- Uses print and internet-based references and interpret complex web sites

Math
- Interprets data in more complex sorts of graphs and representation
- Summarizes and reports data for a particular purpose
- Presents data in various representations and interpretations
- Applies ratio and proportion:
  - Creates and interprets graphs of more complex equations
  - Works with three-dimensional representations and coordinate systems
- Applies and calculates a variety of rates

Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Answers analytical questions that involve critical thinking skills such as making observations, inferences, and deductions, drawing conclusions and making decisions.
- Answers questions that reflects a six-step problem-solving model based on a work-related situation.

Soft Skills

Personal Quality Skills demonstrated

Integrity
- Has the opportunity to break a rule and probably get away with it, but decides to follow the rule.
- Tries to stop others who are about to break a rule. Reminds them of the rules and what could happen if they get caught. Will go to a manager or supervisor if necessary.

Responsibility
- Tries to keep private life from affecting work.
- Doesn’t say “That’s not my job.” when something unusual or unexpected comes up that needs to be done.
- Willing to ask for help, more information or clearer instructions.
- Recognizes quality work, ready to go the extra mile to make sure that the job gets done right.
- Responds by helping out when needed, even if it means giving up some personal time.
- Makes sure the job is done before leaving, does not leave extra work for next shift.

Self-Esteem
- Stands up for self where appropriate; on the other hand, doesn’t take it personally when a manager points out incomplete or poorly done work; accepts suggestions for ways to do the job better.
- Willing to try new things, learn new skills and ask for help when needed.

Self-Management
- When things get slow, finds something to do rather than wait to be told what to do.
- Asks for help when he/she can’t do something, whether it’s because of a lack of training or information, or things are just too busy to get everything done.

Sociability
- Is open and honest with coworkers because he/she knows it’s easier to work with people when everyone gets along.
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- Decides when to vary from routine operating policies/guidelines and when to adhere to them.
- Recognizes when more information is needed for making a decision.
- Recognizes the limits of own authority, correctly decides when to use those limits in order to keep the customer satisfied.
CASAS AS PART OF OTHER SYSTEMS

• National External Diploma Program (NEDP)
  • The Workforce Skills Certification provides a ‘Diploma Plus’ option for the adult high school graduate
• Singapore’s Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ)
  • Workplace Literacy and Numeracy (WPLN) credentials accepted by 2,500+ employers
• Maine’s WorkReady™
• Washington’s I-BEST