The Skills that Matter: Teaching Students Assertiveness in Any Classroom or Setting

http://CCCFramework.org

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Who we are, our work, and our mission

The College and Career Competency Framework, developed by Drs. Gaumer Erickson and Noonan, supports educators in systematically embedding intrapersonal, interpersonal, and cognitive competencies into course content. In this way, educators support students to develop into career-equipped, lifelong learners who are socially and emotionally engaged. The College and Career Competency Wheel includes 26 specific competencies categorized in three domains. Each competency is integral to in-school and post-secondary success, as determined by current and emerging research.

This site includes free, research-based instructional resources for all 26 competencies, as well as professional development opportunities to systematically teach competencies and academic learning standards simultaneously, thereby improving academic achievement, engagement, and post-school outcomes.

To learn more about the College and Career Competency Framework and Wheel, please watch the introductory video or read the overview.

http://CCCFramework.org
Why learn about this today?

• Pre-K through 12 SEL curriculum that focuses not only on explicit instruction, but also embedded practice with feedback

• Incorporates measures to show growth in SEL knowledge (State Board goal)

• Schoolwide approach [interdepartmental/interdisciplinary effort]

• Promotes skill-building that is foundation for personalized learning

• Addresses Kansas SECD Standards; Considered a Kansas MTSS Tier 1 SEL curriculum

• Professional development and coaching available online and face-to-face in Kansas

• It is challenging/rigorous, but shows student impact/outcomes
Professional Learning Participants
(updated January 2019)

- District-Wide Implementation Focus
- School-Wide Implementation Focus
- Team Implementation Focus
- Individual Implementation Focus

Kansans Can Competency Framework
Foundational Competencies

Intrapersonal
- Self-Efficacy
- Self-Regulation
- Self-Awareness (integrated)

Interpersonal
- Assertiveness
- Conflict Management
- Empathy (integrated)

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Which competencies are most tied to student success in each School Redesign Principle?

### School Redesign Principles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Success Skills</th>
<th>Community Partnerships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is an integrated approach to develop student social-emotional growth</td>
<td>Partnerships are based on mutually beneficial relationships and collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personalized Learning</strong></td>
<td><strong>Real World Application</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers support students to have choice over their time, place, pace and path</td>
<td>Project-based learning, internships, and civic engagement makes learning relevant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Highest Need Competencies

Identified by Over 7,300 Kansas Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Rank by Highest Need</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>6th Grade</th>
<th>9th Grade</th>
<th>12th Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sustained Attention</td>
<td>Sustained Attention</td>
<td>Sustained Attention</td>
<td>Sustained Attention</td>
<td>Sustained Attention</td>
<td>Sustained Attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Regulation</td>
<td>Self-Regulation</td>
<td>Self-Regulation</td>
<td>Self-Regulation</td>
<td>Self-Regulation</td>
<td>Self-Regulation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Initiative</td>
<td>Initiative</td>
<td>Assertiveness</td>
<td>Initiative</td>
<td>Initiative</td>
<td>Assertiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assertiveness</td>
<td>Conflict Management</td>
<td>Initiative</td>
<td>Conflict Management</td>
<td>Assertiveness</td>
<td>Communication Networking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Efficacy Goal Setting</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Conflict Management</td>
<td>Assertiveness</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Conflict Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict Management</td>
<td>Assertiveness</td>
<td>Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>Goal Setting</td>
<td>Conflict Management</td>
<td>Self-Efficacy Goal Setting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Competency Student Needs Assessment (available free at [CCCFramework.org](http://CCCFramework.org))
Abilene Middle School - Student Video

ASSERTIVENESS

ACCORDING TO THE STUDENTS OF ABILENE MIDDLE SCHOOL
Can assertiveness be taught?

• Yes – competency development isn’t absorbed; it’s learned.
• When educators provide instruction and integration within content-area learning and experiences, students can learn and expand interpersonal competencies like assertiveness.
• Like learning anything else, it takes practice over time.
• While relatively simple to define, competencies are complex to teach and learn.
• Many competencies are addressed in school, but not typically in a systematic way for all students.

(Cantley, Little, & Martin, 2010; Cassidy, 2011; Ettington & Camp, 2002; Farrington et al., 2012; Grote, Trusty, Chae, & Bakley, 2014; Hulleman & Harackiewicz, 2009; Meiklejohn et al., 2012; Meyer & Turner, 2002; Mueller & Fleming, 2001; Oettingen & Gollwitzer, 2010).
Top 10 Student Outcomes and Research

In groups of 3, review the teacher-reported outcomes and research for assertiveness.

1. Which outcome(s) would you like to see in your classroom and why?

2. Would this help students become socially-emotionally engaged, career-equipped, lifelong learners?
Research on assertiveness

When adolescents lack assertiveness:
• Higher chance of becoming withdrawn and isolated, experiencing depression and anxiety
• More likely to be bullied OR bully, responding to both situations with anxiety and anger
• More likely to respond with aggression to difficult situations (especially males)

When adults lack assertiveness:
• It can lead to high unemployment or underemployment

When students learn assertiveness:
• Promotes the ability to manage conflicts with more productive solutions
• Reduces adolescent anxiety, and helps them avoid drug use and unhealthy sexual behavior
• Reduces the likelihood of sexual coercion or assault

Providing instruction & practice to teach assertiveness prepares students to:
• advocate for themselves
• resist peer pressure
• manage conflicts
• seek future educational and career opportunities

Top 10 Student Outcomes
Identified by teachers who taught assertiveness

1. Improved communication
2. Increased ability to express themselves
3. Increased self-reflection/self-awareness
4. Increased confidence in their own abilities
5. Increased ability to seek assistance and supports
6. Improved interactions among students
7. Improved conflict management skills
8. Improved ability to resist peer pressure
9. Improved behavior
10. Reduced incidents of bullying
Course-Specific Outcomes
Identified by teachers who taught **assertiveness**

- **Science**: Asking for help more often; less frustrated; sharing opinions and feelings about tough topics; speaking up more instead of following cliques; increased confidence reporting experimental results; seeing the teacher outside class time when struggling with content

- **Language Arts**: Improved attitudes, behavior, and conversations; better able to think through issues; improved discussions

- **Math**: Asking more questions and seeking help in class

- **Counseling**: Increased positive interactions, self-awareness, self-confidence, and empowerment; feeling in control of their actions; advocating for themselves more

- **Social Studies**: Increased engaged in course content; more confident and comfortable participating in class discussions; listening to others and debating respectfully; increased empathy and ability to articulate what is needed/wanted; creatively evaluating the statements of political figures

- **Physical Education**: Improved confidence and communication

- **Special Education**: Decreased behavior issues; respectfully asking for help without offending anyone; interacting more; effectively working in groups; understanding perspectives of others
Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports and Alignment

- Tier 1: 80%
- Tier 2: 15%
- Tier 3: 5%

Academic | Behavioral | Social
Moving from Skill to Competency
College & Career Competency Development

Acquisition of Skill | Fluency of Skill | Generalization of Skill | Competency
---|---|---|---
Instruction | Guided Practice | Facilitated Practice | Independent Practice with Feedback | Independent Life, College & Career Practice

1. Provide instruction that facilitates students’ understanding of the competency and components.

2. Guide students to determine how the competency applies to them personally. (e.g., in school, relationships, career, college)

3. Facilitate students’ reflection on their strengths and challenges related to the competency components.

4. Students practice the competency, including each component, over time.

5. Provide feedback to students throughout their practice of the competency components.

6. Facilitate students’ reflection on their development of competency components.
Competency Sequence: Development targets for Pre-K to 12

• Provides specific targets for what it looks like for students to demonstrate the competencies

• When working with older students (middle and high school), it shouldn’t automatically be assumed that they have already reached the targets outlined in the sequence for lower grade levels – it may be necessary to start with foundational skills for older students as well. This idea is incorporated in our lessons and resources.

• These skillsets are progressive and will take practice over time for students to develop
## Competency Sequence:
### Development targets in Assertiveness

These targets describe how students demonstrate progressive interpersonal skills at each grade cluster. It should not be assumed that students at higher grades have the prerequisite competence from lower grades.

By the end of each grade cluster, each student:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-K</th>
<th>K-2</th>
<th>3-5</th>
<th>6-8</th>
<th>9-12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Demonstrates how to ask for help.</td>
<td>• Communicates a need or a want to peers and adults in a respectful manner.</td>
<td>• Describes assertive, passive, and aggressive behaviors.</td>
<td>• Rephrases aggressive and passive statements into assertive statements (with prompts).</td>
<td>• Demonstrates verbal and written assertive statements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Expresses basic feelings and preferences.</td>
<td>• Asks for help from an adult for a challenging situation.</td>
<td>• Demonstrates verbal and non-verbal communication for assertiveness.</td>
<td>• Determines personal boundaries and generates assertive statements to apply if boundaries are compromised.</td>
<td>• Predicts how increased assertiveness would affect outcomes of various situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Demonstrates refusal skills and the ability to say, “No.”</td>
<td>• Demonstrates respectful refusal skills.</td>
<td>• Defines assertiveness (the ability to express wants, needs, and thoughts while respecting what others want, need, and think) and provides examples.</td>
<td>• Demonstrates the ability to respond to different points of view respectfully.</td>
<td>• Explains how assertiveness relates to conflict management and empathy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Makes assertive statements paired with body language and tone of voice that match the statement.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Demonstrates assertive statements during collaborative learning.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Demonstrates assertiveness in various situations (e.g., teaming, social interactions, seeking support).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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Assertiveness

Even when it’s difficult, express my wants, needs, and thoughts

Even when it’s difficult, respect what others want, need, and think

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passive Behaviors</th>
<th>Assertive Behaviors</th>
<th>Aggressive Behaviors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being afraid to speak up</td>
<td>Speaking openly, but without interrupting or disrespecting others</td>
<td>Interrupting and talking over others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking softly</td>
<td>Using a conversational tone</td>
<td>Speaking loudly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoiding looking at people</td>
<td>Making good eye contact</td>
<td>Glaring and staring at others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing little or no expression</td>
<td>Showing expressions that match the message (honest and direct, but still respectful and not intimidating)</td>
<td>Intimidating others through use of expressions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slouching and withdrawing</td>
<td>Relaxing and adopting an open stance and expressions; not invading others’ personal space, but demonstrating engagement rather than withdrawal from the interaction</td>
<td>Standing rigidly, crossing arms, invading the personal space of others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolating yourself from groups</td>
<td>Participating in groups</td>
<td>Controlling groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeing with others despite your personal feelings</td>
<td>Expressing your feelings honestly but respectfully, and considering the feelings of others; keeping to the point</td>
<td>Considering only your own feelings and/or making demands of others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valuing yourself less than others</td>
<td>Valuing yourself equal to others</td>
<td>Valuing yourself more than others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurting yourself to avoid hurting others</td>
<td>Trying to hurt no one (including yourself)</td>
<td>Hurting others to avoid being hurt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not reaching goals for fear of hurting/ inconveniencing others; perhaps not even having goals, and simply doing as others suggest</td>
<td>Having goals of your own, and generally reaching those goals without hurting others</td>
<td>Reaching goals, but hurting others in the process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Counselling Service in France (2012) [counsellingservice.eu/tell-the-difference-between-assertive-passive-and-aggressive-behaviour](counsellingservice.eu/tell-the-difference-between-assertive-passive-and-aggressive-behaviour)
Feeling Words Wheel

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Protective Assertion (Boundaries)

• People may not:______________ (e.g., gossip about others, call me names, touch me unless I say it’s okay, take my things)

• If I don’t want to, it’s okay for me to:______________ (e.g., leave the uncomfortable situation, skip a party, choose someone else to ride home with, not be friends with someone anymore, etc.)
Rules for Speakers &
Guidelines for Paraphrasing (Listener)

Speakers:
• Explain a real dilemma—possibly with a student or parent.
• Relate events, results, and feelings; do not blame others.
• Provide a couple sentences at a time and then pause for the listener to paraphrase.
• After the listener paraphrases, continue to explain and pause until the whole situation is described in detail.

Listeners:
• After the speaker says a couple sentences and pauses, paraphrase (restate) what you heard without providing additional thoughts or information. Use the Guidelines for Paraphrasing. Repeat this process until the speaker seems finished describing the situation.
• Ask, “Is there more?” The speaker has the opportunity to continue with the listener paraphrasing until he or she is done.
• Summarize the situation, using the following template: “So what I hear you saying is ______. And you’re feeling _______. And you’re thinking about doing ______. Did I understand correctly?” If the speaker indicates a misunderstanding in your paraphrasing, allow them to re-explain.
• As the listener, you should not at any time:
  • give advice,
  • offer solutions to a problem, or
  • tell the person what you would do
3-Part Assertive Statements

• **Part 1:** An empathy statement, or indication that you understand another person’s perspective and feelings.

• **Part 2:** The rationale behind your action/request. Provide some reasons and your feelings to support your opinion. Do not blame others (e.g., don’t say “you make me angry”), but do share feelings (e.g., do say “I feel frustrated”).

• **Part 3:** A coherent, direct statement of what you want to happen. Be clear and detailed.
### Anticipating Outcomes of Communication Styles

**Scenario:** Peter’s mother-in-law criticizes his parenting decision on Facebook. Peter responds asking what she knows about good parenting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Using the arrow, mark where Peter’s behavior falls on the spectrum of passive, assertive, and aggressive.</th>
<th>Passive</th>
<th>Assertive</th>
<th>Aggressive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predict what will happen next.</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What could Peter have done to be more assertive?</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| If he was more assertive, predict what would happen next. |  |
Activity: Hear from a Teacher

In groups of 3-5, review the teacher reflection video(s) specific to your competency (i.e., assertiveness, self-regulation, or self-efficacy) by going to http://cccframework.org, and clicking on Learn More from Educators Doing the Work.

[Direct link http://www.cccframework.org/videos.html]

Discuss for 3-minutes:

How did the teacher embed competency instruction and practice? What student impact(s) did the teacher observe?
Competency-Specific Resources

Teacher Guides

Lesson Plans

Knowledge Tests

Questionnaires

Videos

Posters

Padlets

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Contact us with any questions you have about the Kansans Can Competency Framework.

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