

WORKING

Assessing Skills, Habits, and Style

User's Guide for College Applications

**H&H Publishing Company, Inc.
1231 Kapp Drive
Clearwater, FL 33765-2116
800-366-4079
Fax: 727-442-2195**

**Web: www.hhpublishing.com
Email: hhservice@hhpublishing.com**

Suggestions for using *WORKING* in a college environment

The nature of *WORKING*

This manual contains suggestions and sample activities for using the student assessment instrument entitled *WORKING: assessing skills, habits, and style* in a college environment. The instrument assesses nine competencies which are important for job/career success; most of them are also important for success in college. Those competencies are:

-
- Taking responsibility
 - Exhibiting a sense of quality
 - Solving problems
 - Working in teams
 - Being interested in learning
 - Processing information
 - Persisting
 - Adapting to change
 - Thinking in terms of systems
-

The applications of *WORKING*

WORKING is specifically designed to be useful in a variety of contexts associated with helping students prepare for their careers and/or strengthen their success in college. The main contents of this disk are suggestions on how to use *WORKING* in 12 different situations typically found in college. Each use is contained in a different sub-directory, so that all you have to do is print out the sub-directory for the use you have in mind. Those sub-directories are as follow:

1. **New student orientation program (ORIENT).** Helps students understand what your college requires of them in terms of their personal behavior, attitudes, and skills.
2. **A college success course (SUCCESS).** Supports and enriches the various academic college success courses which are becoming common in higher education.
3. **A specific content course (COURSE).** Provides a way to help students assess and improve their performance in several areas important to success in a particular academic course.
4. **An overall curriculum or program of study (CURRIC).** Provides a way to help students assess and improve their success in an entire technical or academic program of study.
5. **Work-study student training (WORKSTDY).** Helps students understand what you expect of them, and how to be stronger performers, in a work-study assignment.
6. **Field experience/clinical site placements (FIELDEXP).** Provides a way to alert students to, and strengthen their preparedness for, various field placement assignments.
7. **Career counseling (CCOUNSEL).** Provides a tool for personalizing and directing student understanding and participation in career counseling activities.

- 8. Academic counseling (ACOUNSEL).** Offers a tool for uncovering and directing student attention toward certain problems which are causing academic trouble.
- 9. Faculty/staff development programs (FAC-STFF).** Provides a powerful tool for focusing faculty/staff attention on underlying student behaviors which may affect their academic and/or career prospects.
- 10. Job seeking activities (JOBSEEK).** Establishes a personal, relevant foundation for helping students create effective career search, resume preparation, and interviewing strategies.
- 11. Preparation for the workplace courses (WORKPREP).** Provides a tool for helping students come to grips with the realities of the 21st Century workplace in special academic workplace preparation courses.
- 12. Student seminar series (SEMINARS).** Can be the basis for student seminars focusing on various aspects of academic success and/or career preparation.

Suggestions for use of *WORKING*

as a tool for academic counseling

Many students try to negotiate their way through college with habits, attitudes, and behaviors that aren't exactly designed to help them move through their college experience successfully. Counselors draw on a variety of tools to help such students confront, understand, and deal with such behaviors. *WORKING* can become yet another tool in your toolkit. It may be particularly important in certain situations because it focuses on some traits which most self-assessment instruments do not.

There are obviously many ways in which a self-assessment instrument like *WORKING* might be helpful. The worksheet on the facing page is only one possibility. Hopefully you will create your own repertoire of alternative worksheets. You might keep in mind that most students give great (perhaps undue?) weight to instruments and worksheets. This tendency can give you an important edge in helping students focus on underlying academic issues and problems.

Here are some suggestions for use of this worksheet.

- (1) Have the student respond to Items 1 and 2, using their results from *WORKING*.
- (2) Use Item 3 flexibly. If you are already talking to the student about a particular thing (such as a large number of absences from class), then you could focus that question on this behavior pattern. If you are exploring a more generalized or ambiguous pattern, you might play off on their responses to Items 1 and 2 to start clarifying the nature of the underlying problem (or at least its general vicinity).

You might ignore Item 3, and ask the student questions like "You seem to be stronger/weaker in (Traits in 1 or 2). How does that fit with your behavior/actions in school, at home, at work, etc.?" Use 1 and 2 to tease out clues.

- (3) Once you've been able to focus on a particular characteristic, you can transition to discussions of what actions might be possible, required, etc.

AGAIN, the results of student completion of *WORKING*, combined with their general respect for instruments and their results, can give you an entree into several key behaviors, habits, and styles that might relate to students' performance in school, at work, and in their home life. You can use this instrument as a lever to open up some things that might otherwise remain closed.

[*Examples* of behaviors associated with each trait are included under *EXAMPLES* on the disk.]

WORKING

on taking a look at yourself

- 1. On which of the nine *Working* traits did you have the highest percentiles?**
- 2. On which of the nine *Working* traits did you have the lowest percentiles?**
- 3. Do these higher points and lower points seem to relate to particular academic goals, needs, problems, or concerns you have? If so, how do they relate?**
- 4. If there seems to be some kind of relationship, what kinds of actions (if any) might make sense?**

Suggestions for use of *WORKING*

as a tool for career counseling

Many students know little about the capabilities they will need to succeed at a particular job. Many also assume that preparation in particular skills, or a broad general education, are all that they will need to get and keep the job of their choice. Both sets of assumptions are obviously important topics for career counseling.

But there's another, equally important, topic. That topic is the importance of the person's individual style, habits, and general skills. What employers used to call 'work ethic' has rapidly expanded to include a much greater variety of capabilities that employers need, seek, and hire.

WORKING can help focus students on that reality. As one of many instruments and tools in your kit, it can be particularly useful by illuminating a group of behaviors that are increasingly vital on the job, but which typical career instruments do not even explore.

The results of *WORKING* can obviously be used in many different ways, depending on the students and your situation and methods. The worksheet on the opposite page is thus only one way to help your students explore the implications of their results on *WORKING*.

Here is a suggested use for that worksheet.

- (1) Have the student complete Item 1. Urge the student to be as specific as possible.
- (2) For Item 2, you might either have the student complete the responses and *then* discuss them, or discuss each item with the student *before* completion. The first method will tend to reveal more of the student's thinking (or naivete), but may lead to a "you knew the right answers all along" response when you start probing their understanding of each job. The latter will give you more opportunity to examine the nature of each job up front. The real purpose here is educational: to see those jobs in a new light.
- (3) Have students pick their 2-3 traits for their chosen job/career. Depending on the situation, you can have them list their improvement activities and then discuss them, or discuss them (and make suggestions) up front.

[*Examples* of ways to strengthen each trait are included under *EXAMPLES* on the disk.]

WORKING

on a job or career decision

1. List one or a few specific jobs or types of careers you are interested in:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.

2. Think and talk about the chances that each of the **Working** traits will be *particularly important* to success in each of the areas you listed above. Fill in the blanks.
 - o **Taking responsibility** may be particularly important with jobs/careers _____.
 - o **Working in teams** may be particularly important with jobs/careers _____.
 - o **Persisting** may be particularly important with jobs/careers _____.
 - o **Having a sense of quality** may be particularly important with jobs/careers _____.
 - o **Interest in life-long learning** may be particularly important with jobs/careers _____.
 - o **Adapting to change** may be particularly important with jobs/careers _____.
 - o **Solving problems may be particularly important with jobs/careers** _____.
 - o **Processing information may be particularly important with jobs/careers** _____.
 - o **Thinking in terms of systems may be particularly important with jobs/careers** _____.

3. **Which of the jobs/careers listed in Part 1 are you most interested in? Based on your scores on Working, and your conclusions in Part 2, list the 2-3 traits that you might need to strengthen the most to increase the chances that you will be very successful in that job or career. Then, on the back, list at least three things you could do to strengthen each of those traits.**

Suggestions for use of *WORKING*

in a college success/introduction to college course

Many students have at best a weak understanding of the behaviors they will need to adopt or develop if they are going to succeed in college. Many of them will have never reflected on their own habits, skills, and styles.

WORKING gives you a valuable tool for helping them confront some of those realities. All of the nine competencies measured by *WORKING* (except perhaps for systems thinking) are strongly related to college-success behaviors. Since students tend to give a lot of credibility to “tests,” their scores in combination with the worksheet on the following page can stimulate a lot of serious attention and learning on their parts.

Suggested approach:

- (1) Have each student individually complete the rating in Item 1.
- (2) Have them (as a whole class, or in smaller groups leading to a whole-class sharing) share and debate their responses. Deter any suggestions that you should give them “the right answer,” since part of what you’re teaching is that often there isn’t a clear right answer. You may need to facilitate to get them to agreement in Item 2.
- (3) Congratulate them on their insights. Suggest any points that they might not have considered. *But* don’t impose your preferences. They’re learning to see things a different way, not to prioritize a few out of the nine items.
- (4) If time permits, have smaller groups do Item 3, then share with the whole class. You may need to ‘prime the pump’ on their answers. Good starter suggestions would include things like “find out how those who got an A studied” (for ‘Processing information’), “Practice listening to instructions the first time” (for ‘Taking responsibility’), or “Double-check your spelling and grammar” (for ‘Having a sense of quality’).

A follow-up activity would be to assign the students, for homework, to write a personal plan of action for improving whichever were their weakest relevant competencies, based on their *WORKING* results.

WORKING

on your success in college

1. How important is each trait in *Working* for your success in college? Circle your ratings.

	Not Important	2	Fairly Important	4	Vital 5
Taking Responsibility	1	2	3	4	5
Working in Teams	1	2	3	4	5
Persisting	1	2	3	4	5
Having a sense of quality	1	2	3	4	5
Interest in Life-Long Learning	1	2	3	4	5
Adapting to Change	1	2	3	4	5
Solving Problems	1	2	3	4	5
Processing Information	1	2	3	4	5
Thinking in Terms of Systems	1	2	3	4	5

2. As a group, compare and discuss your ratings. Try to agree on which of these nine traits should be rated 4 and 5, as most important for your success in college.

3. Below and on the back, list each trait you agree should be a 4 or 5. Then, for each trait, identify *at least three* things you could do to strengthen your competence in that area, to increase your chances of success in college.

Suggestions for use of *WORKING*

as a tool for improving student performance in a curriculum

A curriculum — a coherent program of study — offers an ideal environment for improving students' broad competencies while strengthening their skills and content knowledge. The students are in similar courses for a year or two. They are interested in similar types of jobs and careers. You want to insure that they leave you with the knowledge/skills they need *as well as* the general behaviors required for success in those jobs and careers.

WORKING can help with this. Students will have scores in nine key areas which show them something of their current capabilities, compared to other students. The act of completing the instrument will also make many of them aware in a different way that these are some of the behaviors that will improve their chances for success. *Finally*, almost all of these nine traits contribute strongly to success both in school and in the workplace. Your efforts to improve these traits should pay off not in some distant career, but in your classrooms.

There are many ways to use *WORKING* to help promote these possibilities. The worksheet on the opposite page is designed to approach each competency one-at-a-time. Over the period of a term, you can explore the implications of almost all of those nine competencies.

There are three focal questions. One way to use them is as follows.

- (1) Have each student individually write out why the target competency is important. **NOTE:** the question does not specify *success in college* or *success on the job*. Pick the emphasis you wish, or ask students to address both. Try to get them to be as specific as possible, especially when sharing and strengthening their statements as a large group or class.
- (2) Have each student fill in this part individually. Most students already know these behaviors, but they may not have reflected on them. Ask them the following question: “You know people who are (that target competency), and some who are not. What do they *do* differently? List those behaviors so that someone else could spot those people.” Have students share their responses.
- (3) Item 3 can best be done either in groups or as a class. Work with students to go beyond vague answers. For example, ‘I can learn it from my parents’ or ‘by working at it’ are vague: by *listening* (to whom, about what?), by *watching* (who, do what?), by *doing* (what, when, how?). This gives you a perfect opening to discuss what you expect of students in your class and curriculum, and what behaviors you are looking for. Practicing those behaviors in school will almost certainly transfer to the job.

Suggestions for use of *WORKING*

as the basis of a professional development activity

Too often, faculty and staff view student weaknesses in many of the areas measured by *WORKING* as barriers to learning rather than as possible goals of learning. Once seen as “learning objectives,” their mindset about how to deal with these weaknesses can change dramatically. The result can be a very provocative professional development experience, often one which leads to much longer exploration of questions of educational purpose and mission.

WORKING can help to bring about this result. There are many ways to use it for this purpose. The following strategy (and associated worksheet on the opposite page) is only one of many approaches.

Suggestions for use of the worksheet:

- (1) Have participants individually complete Item 1. Some participants may object that there is really no “typical” student. True. However, almost all of us have some sense of what the mainstream of students are like.
- (2) Item 2 can often be best done in smaller groups, then having spokespersons share the small groups and serve as leaders in coming to agreement on the two key competencies to focus on. You may end up doing some sort of tally, affinity diagram, etc. to reach consensus. If this proves difficult, remind the participants that they can always go back and work on others of the nine competencies; the purpose here is to learn a *process*.

OPTION. A strong catalyst would be to share with the participants sometime during Item 2 the statistical results of all or a sample of your students’ actual responses. This could reinforce their conclusions or could lead to a discussion of where and why their ratings are different from those of the students.

- (3) Item 3 might be started with whole-group brainstorming, until they get the idea of how many things might be done to promote particular competencies. They could then shift to smaller-group brainstorming, followed by sharing with the whole group. Suggestions of ‘that’s not realistic’ should be deflected. As with any true brainstorming, practicality only comes in later, after visioning. You might also point out that, if you do what you’ve always done, you’re going to get what you’re now getting in terms of student behavior.

NOTE: This activity is much stronger if it combines faculty, staff, and administration. Many of the best ways to help students ‘learn’ these behaviors occur through other institutional processes.

Suggestions for use of *WORKING*

in preparation for field placement/clinical/internship assignments

In field placement, clinical, internship, and similar assignments, it is important that students:

- (a) behave appropriately, so that they bring credit to themselves and to your college; and
- (b) know what to look for so that they learn as much as possible about work expectations and behaviors.

WORKING gives you a way to promote both outcomes. The suggested student activity on the opposite page is designed to help that process alone.

First, draw student attention to their strengths and weaknesses in the nine work-related traits, based on their *WORKING* results. This helps you begin building their insight and (hopefully) molding their behavior.

Second, work with them to complete the worksheet. This will help them understand what employers expect and need, and what they will be looking for in the students' behavior. It will also help them be more alert in noticing how the employees around them model these behaviors. Three suggestions might be helpful:

- 1) It will be very useful if you and the students identify more *than one behavior* associated with particular traits (think of how many aspects there are to 'responsibility', for example).
- 2) You can vary the emphasis among these nine traits to emphasize those areas where you judge the student to be particularly weak (e.g. a student who is sloppy, never proof-reads, or forgets things might beg for considerable emphasis on 'having a sense of quality').
- 3) You can build on the worksheet's emphasis when you meet with the student and/or the supervisor during the field placement. Talk with each about behaviors associated with these traits.

[*Examples* of behaviors associated with each trait are included under *EXAMPLES* on the disk.]

WORKING

on performing well on a work site

On your work site they will expect you to show that you are competent in most of the nine traits in *Working*. What will they be looking for in your actions and behavior? For each of the *Working* traits, *list a behavior* that they will probably be looking for. There's an example to start you off.

When I **take responsibility** I will:

Be on time, all the time.

When I **work well in teams** I will:

When I **persist** I will:

When I **show a sense of quality** I will:

When I am interested in learning I will:

When I adapt to change I will:

When I solve problems I will:

When I learn well I will:

When I think in terms of systems I will:

Suggestions for use of *WORKING*

in a resume/interviewing course or seminar

Jobs are tough to get. Interesting, challenging, and rewarding jobs are even tougher to get. For many college students, a major part of the problem is that they are competing with a number of people who have related work experience, and they don't.

How do they get over that barrier? There's no easy way, but part of the answer is to compete on *their* territory rather than on *someone else's* territory. Simply put, if you can't beat the competition on experience, then try to beat them on broad competence (among other things).

WORKING can help your students do that. Increasingly, employers are seeking employees who can bring their minds to work. Each of the nine traits measured by *WORKING* represents one aspect of the ability to be a 'mindful worker.'

The worksheet on the facing page is a way to *start* your students on the road to selling their competence in their cover letters, resumes and interviews. Here's how you might use it.

- (1) Have each student individually complete Item 1, using their own results from *WORKING* and their own sense of the jobs they would like to obtain.
- (2) As a class, discuss their responses. See if they can agree on three of the competencies to start with. (If necessary, resort to a vote). Remind the students that they can or will (see below) follow this process later with any other competencies they rated highly.
- (3) It's helpful to start Item 3 off with an example. [There are some suggestions under the heading of *EXAMPLES* on the disk.]

Then have the students (in groups, preferably; or the whole class when that works best) suggest other examples of acceptable evidence. **KEY POINT:** the strongest 'evidence' often comes from students' personal and school lives, not from work. For example, a female student could well cite 'work part-time, care for children and husband, and go to school full-time' as solid evidence of her competence at 'taking responsibility.'

A follow-up assignment would be to have each student complete this exercise for each of the three competencies top-rated in Item 1, for homework.

A further activity could be to discuss how to build such evidence of competence into their cover letters, resumes, and interviews.

WORKING

on getting the job you want

1. You need to sell yourself *as a very competent worker* to interviewers. You need to decide *what competencies* you're going to sell. You can only sell two or three, so pick the ones that are (a) most important to the job and (b) where you are strongest. Put a check in front of the two or three you're going to focus on.

- I'm really good at **taking responsibility**.
- I'm really good at **working in teams**.
- I'm really good at **persisting**.
- I'm really good at having a sense of quality.
- I'm really good at wanting to learn.
- I'm really good at adapting to change.
- I'm really good at solving problems.
- I'm really good at knowing how to learn.
- I'm really good at thinking in terms of systems.

2. For each of the competencies you've chosen, list two pieces of evidence which show an interviewer that you are in fact strong in that area.

Competency:

o

o

Competency:

o

o

Competency:

o

o

Suggestions for use of *WORKING*

with a workplace-preparations course

Increasingly, colleges are offering courses which focuses specifically on preparing students for the 21st Century workplace: employer needs, changes in the workplace, competencies expected of employees, ways to find and thrive in a job, and the like.

WORKING can be an important tool in such a course, since it helps students see how they fit with nine of these key competencies. That offers an opportunity both to explore *why* each competence is particularly important and *how* students can improve and prove their competence.

WORKING can be used in such a course in many ways. The worksheet on the opposite page is one such method, approaching each competence one at a time. You might want to use it as follows.

- (1) Have the students complete the worksheet for a particular competence for homework. You should emphasize in advance that there are no specific ‘right answers’ (though some answers will be stronger than others). You might want to give explanations or examples (see items below) to make sure they know what they’re to do.
- (2) Go over the items one-by-one, either as a whole class or first in small groups.
- (3) As you go over these items, here a few things you might want to keep in mind.

Item 2 - many students already understand intuitively what makes one person much stronger than another in an area. They need to reflect on and verbalize it.

Item 3 - help the students get beyond vague answers. For example “I can learn it at home” or “by working at it” are vague: by *listening* (to whom, about what?), by *watching* (who, doing what?), by *doing* (what, when, how?), by *thinking* (about what, how?). Help them get to the observable/measurable level with these.

Item 4 - in applying for jobs, many students will be competing with applicants who have much more experience (and, often, specialized training). One way to compete is by proving that they are strongly competent in these general traits valued in the workplace. Help students draw on their personal and social lives, as well as their college and work lives, to prove their competence.

[*Examples* of how to prove particular competencies are included under *EXAMPLES* on the disk.]

WORKING

on learning about workplace competence

TARGET COMPETENCY:

- 1. Why is this competency particularly important in the workplace?**
- 2. What do people do or not do when they are particularly strong in this area?**
- 3. How could you strengthen your competence in this area? Be specific.**
- 4. How could you *prove* your competence in this area if an interviewer asked you to?**

Suggestions for use of *WORKING*

to strengthen student behavior in a specific course

Most of the nine competencies measured by *WORKING* apply to school as well as to the workplace. Many of those competencies are part of what we call “a good student.” Helping students become stronger with one or several of those competencies should pay off handsomely in terms of performance and success in your particular course.

Consider the implications if each of the students in your class were good at assuming responsibility, knew how to learn, and strongly valued the quality of the work they turned in . . .

There are many ways to use *WORKING* to help promote these possibilities. The worksheet on the opposite page is designed to approach the particular competencies you choose to stress one-at-a-time. Over the period of a few weeks, you can explore the implications of almost all of those nine competencies.

You might have your students fill in one of these worksheets on the “competency of the week” for homework. You could then explore that competency in class in 15 minutes or so: a small price to pay if the payoff is a stronger-performing student. In class, you might do the following.

- (1) Discuss student answers. Try to get them to be as specific as possible when sharing and strengthening their statements as a small group or class.
- (2) Most students already know these behaviors, but they may not have reflected on them. When assigning the first homework assignment, ask them the following question: “You know people who are (that target competency) , and some who are not. What do they *do* differently? List those behaviors so that someone else could spot those people.” Have students share their homework responses in class.
- (3) As students share their responses, work with them to go beyond vague answers. For example, ‘I can learn it from my parents’ or ‘by working at it’ are vague: by *listening* (to whom, about what?), by *watching* (who, do what?), by *doing* (what, when, how?), by *thinking about* (what, how?).

Used in this way *WORKING* gives you a perfect opening to discuss what you expect of students in your class and what behaviors you are looking for. You can also reassure the students that strengthening these behaviors in your class can be transferred successfully to other classes and will almost certainly transfer to their jobs and careers. Employers are looking for people with these specific capabilities: they will seek, hire, and promote such people.

Suggestions for use of *WORKING*

as a tool during orientation to college sessions

Most students don't fully understand how different college is from high school. Too often, they don't figure out the differences — and adjust to them — in time to avoid failing out, dropping out, or digging themselves so deeply into an academic hole that they can't see out.

College orientation sessions are designed at least partly to overcome that reality. Unfortunately, too many students don't take cautions, lectures, and suggestions very seriously.

Let *WORKING* help. Each of the nine traits (except perhaps for 'systems thinking') represents a crucial dimension for working your way through college. Since students tend to take the results of 'tests' seriously (perhaps too seriously), *WORKING* can give you a particularly powerful lever to use in helping students understand what kinds of behaviors they need to adopt in order to be most successful while they're with you.

There are many possible ways to take advantage of *WORKING*. The worksheet on the opposite page is only one of them. Here's how you might use it.

- (1) Have students complete Item 1 individually. Ask them to think a bit while answering.
- (2) Preferably in small groups (but in a whole group setting if necessary, or if your orientation group is small), have students discuss and debate which of these traits will be most important. Encourage them to share their assumptions, visions, knowledge, etc. with each other (not necessarily with you, though you can learn much by overhearing them). You may need to facilitate them in settling on the top three.
- (3) Item 3 gives you your chance to sell them on what it's going to take to succeed at your college. Have them brainstorm in groups if there is an appropriate opportunity. Then offer your perspectives on what behavior is important *and why* (e.g. when discussing 'acting responsibly,' you might discuss the consequences of not reading the assignment ahead, or getting your homework in. You might discuss the difference in assumptions about student responsibility made by high school teachers and by your faculty).

As a variation, you might have different faculty/staff prepared to address each trait.

[*Examples* of behaviors associated with each trait are included under *EXAMPLES* on the disk.]

WORKING

on getting oriented to college

1. **How important is each of the nine traits in *Working* to your becoming settled in and successful in college? Give each of the traits a grade, with *A* meaning it's vital, *C* meaning it's fairly important, and *F* meaning it's not important.**

*I give **taking responsibility** a grade of ____.*

*I give **working in teams** a grade of ____.*

*I give **persisting** a grade of ____.*

*I give **having a sense of quality** a grade of ____.*

*I give **interest in life-long learning** a grade of ____.*

*I give **adapting to change** a grade of ____.*

*I give **solving problems** a grade of ____.*

*I give **processing information** a grade of ____.*

*I give **thinking in terms of systems** a grade of ____.*

2. *In groups, compare and discuss your rankings. See if you can settle on a top three among these traits. Which three are going to be most crucial in your orientation to college?*
3. *List your top three below. Then, for each of them, brainstorm the behaviors which are associated with a top performer with that trait. What will such a person do and not do in college if they have that trait in full measure?*

Suggestions for use of *WORKING*

as a tool in a competency-improvement seminar session

Increasingly, college students have the opportunity (or requirement) to attend special-topic seminars. *WORKING* provides a powerful entree to such seminars when they focus on strengthening students' personal capabilities. These seminars can emphasize ways to strengthen student performance in college or in getting and excelling in the workplace. Almost all of the competencies assessed in *WORKING* are important in both areas.

There are many ways to use *WORKING* to support such seminars, once the students have taken the instrument. The worksheet on the opposite page is only one approach. You might want to use it somewhat as follows.

- (1) Have the students fill in the particular target competency in Item 1.
- (2) Have the students spend about ten minutes filling in answers to Items 2-4. You might want to give some explanations or examples (see the items below), to be sure they understand what they are to do. Emphasize that there are no 'right answers.' They will then discuss their answers (with the whole group, or with smaller groups and *then* the whole group).
- (3) For item 3, you should tell students what kind of 'importance' you mean: success in college, in the workplace, or both?
- (4) Most students already understand intuitively that one person is strong in this competence while another is not. Their task in Item 3: to figure out *how* they know. What does one person do or not do that makes her or him particularly competent.
- (5) Work with students to get them beyond vague answers. For example, "I can learn it at home" or "by working at it" are vague: by *listening* (to whom, about what?), by *watching* (whom, doing what?), by *doing* (what, when, how?), by *thinking* (about what, how?).
- (6) If time permits, you can follow this with a sharing, a speaker, and activity, or whatever.

Used in this way *WORKING* gives you a perfect opening to discuss what faculty and/or employers expect in their classes and workplaces. You can reassure them that getting better at those traits in college will strongly transfer to jobs and careers: employers seek, hire, and promote people with the traits measured by *WORKING*.

WORKING

on a particular competency

- 1. Which of the nine *WORKING* competencies are you focusing on?**
- 2. Why is that competency particularly important for success?**
- 3. How do people behave when they are especially strong in that area? What do they do or not do? See if you can list 6-7 related behaviors.**
- 4. Suppose you wanted to strengthen your competence in this area. List several things that you could do.**

Suggestions for use of *WORKING*

as a tool for strengthening work-study students

Some work-study students view their assignment simply as a way to get a check, a way to kill time, or a way to add something to their resume. Too few approach their assignment with the diligence they would expect to give to a “real” job. Even fewer consciously use the opportunity to learn some important things about working, and to strengthen some capacities which will help them get and succeed in a job.

WORKING can help with this, by helping students begin to see some of their key traits in the context of their work-study assignment. There are many ways to take advantage of *WORKING*. The worksheet on the opposite page is only one of them. Here’s how you might use it.

- (1) Have students complete Item 1 individually. If time permits, they might discuss (with you individually or with other students) their assumptions behind their ratings. Emphasize that there are no ‘right’ answers.
- (2) For Item 2, be sure they understand what you’re looking for. Ask them to describe the behaviors they would expect to see in answering this question: “What does a person who is one competency do or not do?” They might share results if time permits.
- (3) Item 3 is probably best done with your participation (since many of the students will not yet know much about their work-study experience). Help them realize that they can learn and improve in many ways: by watching those around them (“how does their supervisor make sure that the message is correct?”), by asking questions, by trying hard to improve a particular behavior (“find something else to do when you’ve finished one task” or “write down what you’re supposed to do, so you’ll remember and know you’ve done it well”).

[NOTE: H&H Publishing Company, the publisher of *WORKING*, has an entire student training booklet designed to prepare quality work-study students: *Studying Work In College*. Call 1-800-366-4079 for further information.]

WORKING

on being an excellent work-study student

1. Put a *checkmark* in front of those *WORKING* traits that will be important in your work-study job. Then put a *double checkmark* in front of the three most important competencies.

<input type="checkbox"/> Taking responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/> Having a sense of quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Solving problems
<input type="checkbox"/> Working in teams	<input type="checkbox"/> Wanting to learn	<input type="checkbox"/> Knowing how to learn
<input type="checkbox"/> Persisting	<input type="checkbox"/> Adapting to change	<input type="checkbox"/> Systems thinking

2. For the three double-checked competencies, list two things that you should do or not do to prove that you are competent in that area. (for example, a *responsible* work-study student would be on time, every time).

1 competency:

o

o

2 competency:

o

o

3 competency:

o

o

3. On the back, for each of the three double-checked competencies list at least two ways that you can improve on that competency while serving as a work-study student.

EXAMPLES OF EACH COMPETENCY

Following are examples which may clarify some elements of this User's Guide. For each of the nine competencies there are examples of:

Relevant Behaviors — what people might do and not do if they were particularly strong models of the competency.

Relevant Evidence — what people might do to demonstrate to others that they were particularly strong with that competency.

Suggested Improvement Actions — what people might do if they set out to deliberately strengthen that competency.

Bear in mind that these are only examples. You and your students will undoubtedly come up with far stronger and more varied examples over time. These are just to get you started.

ACTS RESPONSIBLY

Relevant Behavior - People who act responsibly will tend to:

- o Show up on time and stay the entire time.
- o Not make excuses when they mess up, or *should* know something.
- o Acknowledge any errors they make and confusion they create.
- o Learn from their mistakes.
- o See things that need to be done, and do them without being asked or told.
- o Keep track of their commitments.
- o Keep and use a to-do list.

Relevant Evidence - Examples of people who are responsible might include:

- o Effectively managing a family, job, and school at the same time.
- o Having a high attendance record at school and/or work.
- o Being promoted to positions of responsibility (school, work, or socially).
- o Using a calendar to record appointments, tasks, and commitments.

Improvement Actions - People who wish to become more responsible could:

- o Clarify what others expect of them in work, school, or personal situations.
- o Thoughtfully and deliberately think through and balance priorities.
- o Know what the minimum expectations are — and regularly exceed them.
- o Look for things to do when finished with the task at hand.
- o Arrive a little early, and stay a little late.
- o Start using a to-do list and/or calendar.
- o Check with those who depend on them before changing schedules, tasks, etc.

WORKS WELL IN TEAMS

Relevant Behavior - People who work well in teams will tend to:

- o Listens to others suggestions.
- o Trust the group's decisions much of the time.
- o Learn from other people.
- o Don't believe they have all the answers.
- o Play different roles in teams at various times.
- o Support others when they try out new roles in the group.
- o Encourage others to speak up.

Relevant Evidence - Examples of people who work well in teams might include:

- o Describing different team roles — and explaining their value.
- o Describing and explaining their favorite roles in a team.
- o Giving examples of situations in which they have worked well with a team.
- o Listing several times when team action and decision-making is, and isn't, effective.
- o Explaining the strengths and weaknesses of team actions and decision-making.
- o Describing a situation in which a team chose them as its leader or representative.

Improvement Actions - People who wished to work better in teams might:

- o Practice suspending judgment and listening to what others have to say.
- o Observe who plays what roles in team or group decisions.
- o Pick a role that 's not easy, and stick to it in a group problem-solving situation.
- o Set out to learn important things from others — in an area they know well.
- o Ask other's opinions — and weigh them seriously — before offering their own opinion.

SOLVES PROBLEMS

Relevant Behavior - People skilled at solving problems will tend to:

- o Spot problems and bring them to others' attention.
- o Have suggested solutions when they mention a problem.
- o Consider many alternatives before selecting a solution.
- o Look beneath the surface to try to identify the underlying cause of a problem.
- o Look for permanent solutions rather than treating symptoms.
- o Use one or more specific systems for solving problems.
- o Doublecheck their conclusions and results at every stage.

Relevant Evidence - Examples of people who solve problems well might include:

- o Have effectively balanced the demands of work, school, and family.
- o Can describe 1-2 good examples (from work, school, or home) of difficult problems they have solved.
- o Can describe their problem solving systems.
- o Can explain how to find permanent, rather than temporary, solutions to problems.
- o Can state 3-4 questions they usually ask when tackling a problem.
- o Can mention recognition, promotions, assignments, or awards received for being a good problem solver.

Improvement Actions - People seeking to be better problem solvers might:

- o Ask others how they solved problems.
- o Ask others how they spotted problems that needed solving.
- o Notice when a problem reoccurs after it has been 'solved.'
- o Notice when a solution to one problem creates other problems.
- o Describe the problem-solving system they use.
- o Ask others how to deal with problems that don't seem to have good solutions.

EXHIBITS A SENSE OF QUALITY

Relevant Behavior - People who have a strong sense of quality will tend to:

- o Do ‘a little bit extra’ to be sure they have done the job well.
- o Triple-check the instructions or requirements before tackling the job.
- o Proofread everything carefully.
- o Go back and correct ‘minor’ flaws rather than letting them go.
- o Ask ‘what could go wrong with this solution or action’ - then check on it.
- o Recall what’s gone wrong before, and make sure it’s okay this time.
- o Work extra time, if necessary, until the job is done perfectly.
- o Be dissatisfied with anything less than a perfect job.
- o Suggest ways to improve things to other people.

Relevant Evidence - Examples of people with a strong sense of quality might include:

- o Describing how they make sure the job has been done with high quality.
- o Describing the steps they take to triple-check a result or product.
- o Citing the number of tasks/assignments (e.g. papers, reports) completed without error.
- o Giving examples of when they caught errors in a task — and *how* they found them.
- o Quoting comments from teachers, supervisors, and co-workers.
- o Giving examples of improvements they have suggested to others.

Improvement Actions - People wanting to improve their sense of quality might:

- o Be clear on the minimum expected, and then set out to exceed it greatly.
- o Focus completely on a given task until certain it’s done perfectly.
- o Double- and triple-check selected tasks.
- o Develop — and use — a set of questions to be sure they’ve done things right.
- o Ask others how they notice errors in a product or result.
- o Identify all of the things that could go wrong, and check on them.
- o Figure out why they fell short of perfection and decide how to avoid that next time.

PROCESSES INFORMATION EFFECTIVELY

Relevant Behavior - People who process information (learn) effectively will tend to:

- o Listen carefully to instructions and information.
- o Be aware when they understand and don't understand something.
- o Relate new information to what they already know.
- o See how to apply information to practical tasks and situations.
- o Use methods other than memorization when learning something.
- o Be aware when they have lost concentration.
- o Plan ahead when trying to learn something.
- o Ask questions: of other people and of themselves.
- o Visualize the information and its possibilities.
- o Explore possible interpretations of new information before deciding on its meaning.
- o Extract all possible information from a situation.

Relevant Evidence - Examples of people who process information well might include:

- o Describing several methods they use when learning something.
- o Giving examples of situations when they learned something quickly and well.
- o Listing questions they ask themselves, to be sure they understand something.
- o Describing their preferred learning style — and how that helps them learn things well.
- o Explaining what they do when having trouble learning something.
- o Mentioning their GPA — and what learning skills contributed to those grades.

Improvement Actions - People seeking to process information more effectively could:

- o Ask others what they do when trying to learn something — then try those techniques.
- o Consciously think about, and write down, what they do when learning something.
- o Consciously try to visualize new information and its implications and uses.
- o Try to figure out how some new information fits with what they already know.
- o Deliberately break new information or ideas into parts.
- o Develop and use a set of questions to ask themselves to check their understanding.
- o Pay attention to when they are concentrating and are losing concentration.
- o Develop methods for recovering their concentration.

THINKS IN TERMS OF SYSTEMS

Relevant Behavior - Those who think in terms of broad systems will tend to:

- o Understand how their actions and responsibilities affect other people.
- o Understand how others' actions and responsibilities affect them.
- o Demonstrate curiosity about other people's jobs and responsibilities.
- o Demonstrate curiosity about other parts of a company or college.
- o Do things now as a way to reach other goals in the future.
- o Suggest ways to improve things, even when not asked to do so.
- o Use mistakes as an opportunity to improve things for the future.

Relevant Evidence - Examples of people who think in terms of systems might include:

- o Describing how several of their tasks or responsibilities affected other people.
- o Describing how others' tasks and responsibilities affected them.
- o Explaining how something they did or changed improved things for other people or other parts of a process or system.
- o Listing several questions they ask to help see 'the big picture.'
- o Demonstrate that they understand the functions and features of other parts of a system beyond their own area of responsibility.
- o Explaining how they expect that things they are doing now will lead to other desirable things in their future.
- o List and explain some suggestions they've made for improving things.

Improvement Actions - People who want to become stronger systems thinkers could:

- o Ask themselves how each of their tasks or responsibilities affects others.
- o Ask themselves how their performance is affected by specific things that others do or don't do.
- o Ask themselves what would happen, to whom, if they messed up.
- o Identify people or processes that affect them, and then go find out about those things.
- o Avoid finger-pointing when a problem occurs, but rather ask how things could change so that the problem did not occur again.
- o Find a specific problem that keeps coming up in their lives, and set out to change things so it won't occur again (or, at least, as often).

IS INTERESTED IN LEARNING

Relevant Behavior - People who are interested in learning will tend to:

- o Read a lot, and read a variety of publications (newspapers, books, magazines, etc.).
- o Be the first to volunteer to learn something new.
- o Seek to learn things not required of them.
- o Listen carefully and ask questions when others are talking about something new.
- o Do assignments fully, in class and in training rooms.
- o Are curious about people, things, information, and/or ideas.
- o Read anything available when they are waiting.

Relevant Evidence - Examples of people who are interested in learning might include:

- o The number/variety of magazine and newspapers they subscribe to.
- o The ability to list and discuss several books or other publications they have read recently.
- o Describing how their first instinct, when confronting some new decision, is to try to learn more about it.
- o Describing how they have tried to learn relevant things in a course or training session.
- o Displaying knowledge of a variety of current topics (e.g. computers, politics, community events, hobbies, etc.).
- o Demonstrating that they've gone out of their way to learn things about the company they are applying to.
- o Discussing areas where they are especially knowledgeable, how they gained that knowledge, and that they're interested in learning more.

Improvement Activities - People who want to become more interested in learning could:

- o Volunteer to learn things that go way beyond the minimum requirements of a course.
- o Practice asking "I want to learn more" questions about an unfamiliar topic.
- o Get and read one or more magazines regularly.
- o When waiting, practice picking up any available printed material and reading it.
- o Setting out to deliberately learn a lot about some new, useful area of knowledge.
- o If working, ask for the opportunity to learn other jobs.

ADAPTS TO CHANGE

Relevant Behavior - People who are good at adapting to change will tend to:

- o Be among the first to volunteer to try new procedures or tasks.
- o See and explain the positive advantages of a particular change.
- o Suggest significant changes which could or will affect them personally.
- o Respond with confidence and a positive attitude when required to change something.
- o Understand, but don't echo, the fears of other people who are asked to change.

Relevant Evidence - Examples of people who can adapt to change easily might include:

- o Citing specific changes that happened to them — and how they responded.
- o Giving examples of when they were among the first to try something new.
- o Explaining (and giving examples of) why adapting to change is an important skill for the 21st century.
- o Describing the benefits of changing things.
- o Giving examples of their preference for doing a variety of things, and seeking new assignments, rather than just doing 'the same old thing.'

Improvement Actions - People who want to adapt better to change could:

- o Identify 2-3 significant changes they could make in their life, and carry them out one step at a time.
- o Write down reasons for and benefits of a change which they hear about or which affects them.
- o Think of three changes which would affect them, but which might make things better for other people.
- o Suggest a change to their teacher, supervisor, etc., and volunteer to lead or help with it.
- o Develop an explanation of why many people fear change.
- o Develop a plan for dealing with their own fears when changes occur.

EXHIBITS PERSISTENCE

Relevant Behavior - People who are good at persisting will tend to:

- o Fight boredom and frustration and keep working on a task.
- o Keep returning to a task until it is done.
- o Lose track of time.
- o When at a dead end, step back and find another way to go.
- o Don't say "It can't be done" or "I've done enough" before the task is completed.
- o See a difficulty as a challenge.
- o Don't give up on something just because the people around them give up.

Relevant Evidence - Examples of people who persist might include:

- o Describing situations when they kept at something unexpectedly difficult until it was completed.
- o Talk about why it is important to them to stick with things until they're finished.
- o Quote relevant comments from teachers, employers, friends, and relatives.
- o Cite situations where they kept at some task when everyone else gave up.
- o Explain and give examples of times that they refused to accept "it can't be done" as a legitimate answer to some task.
- o Discuss a situation where they ran into a dead end, and the alternative routes they tried until they found one that worked.

Improvement Actions - People who want to improve their persistence could:

- o Select a specific, relatively-difficult task or problem, and not give up on it until they have solved it.
- o Develop and write down strategies for 'regrouping' and trying other routes when stumped.
- o List all the reasons they can think of to give up on a task — and then develop solid counter arguments to each of them.
- o Make — and live up to — a commitment to fully complete every single task and assignment in a given course.
- o Identify what they most often say to themselves when tempted to give up on something, and refuse to let themselves be swayed by that particular excuse.
- o Ask people to describe how they figure out ways around a difficulty or apparent dead end when trying to solve a problem.