PREPARING FOR PERFORMANCE:

ENHANCING CLASSROOM / WORKPLACE READINESS

AMONG UNDERGRADUATE POPULATIONS

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PREPARING FOR PERFORMANCE

PRESENTATION OUTLINE

I. Purpose: Why

    A. Changing workplace / life: Demands more
    B. Ford challenge

II. What do we know?

    A. Readiness of college seniors
        RAND
        MSU Employer survey
        Student self-report

    B. An assessment: Preliminary results
        Approach & specifics about assessment
        Video showing
        Results
        Effective use of this type of assessment (3r's)

III. How do we respond?

    A. Ernie's summer institute

    B. Modular units
        Freshman
        Sophomore
        Junior

    C. Tailoring the delivery
        Portfolio's reflection
        Career development
        Breakout sessions

IV. Monitoring development: Assessment's evaluation

V. "In Over Our Heads"

Preparing for Performance: Enhancing Workplace Readiness Among Undergraduate Populations
Summary

Preparing for Performance in the 21st century workplace engages undergraduate students in applied learning situations where they obtain assistance with their intellectual, professional, and personal development for competencies being required by employers. The three-year program targets appropriate experiences from freshman to juniors. Freshman, for example, will identify and practice skills and competencies that (1) will promote an intensified academic experience by aiding them in becoming better students and (2) will facilitate their success after college in both their employment and community activities. The project's three learning modules allow faculty and student support staff to work with students in building and applying important skills and competencies in both the classroom and the world of work. Our presentation will focus on the program being developed for multicultural students.

Research on the transition experience of college seniors have revealed concern among both employers and graduates themselves about their preparedness to handle the dramatically changing work environment of the 21st century. Graduates, self-report, struggles to apply their theoretical learning in the ambiguous business environment; to work in teams; to effectively communication; and to understand when to take initiative when not in a leadership position. Employers echoed similar concerns, adding criticism for graduates' personal work habits, including time management, setting priorities, and self-management. These concerns prompted the test of a workplace readiness assessment which focused on non-academic content competencies (applied problem solving, interpersonal communication, and personal accountability) across a large group of undergraduates to identify weaknesses and opportunities to intervene to strengthen lagging competency areas. From this effort has emerged the programmatic ideas for linking classroom learning with the world of work through learning modules.
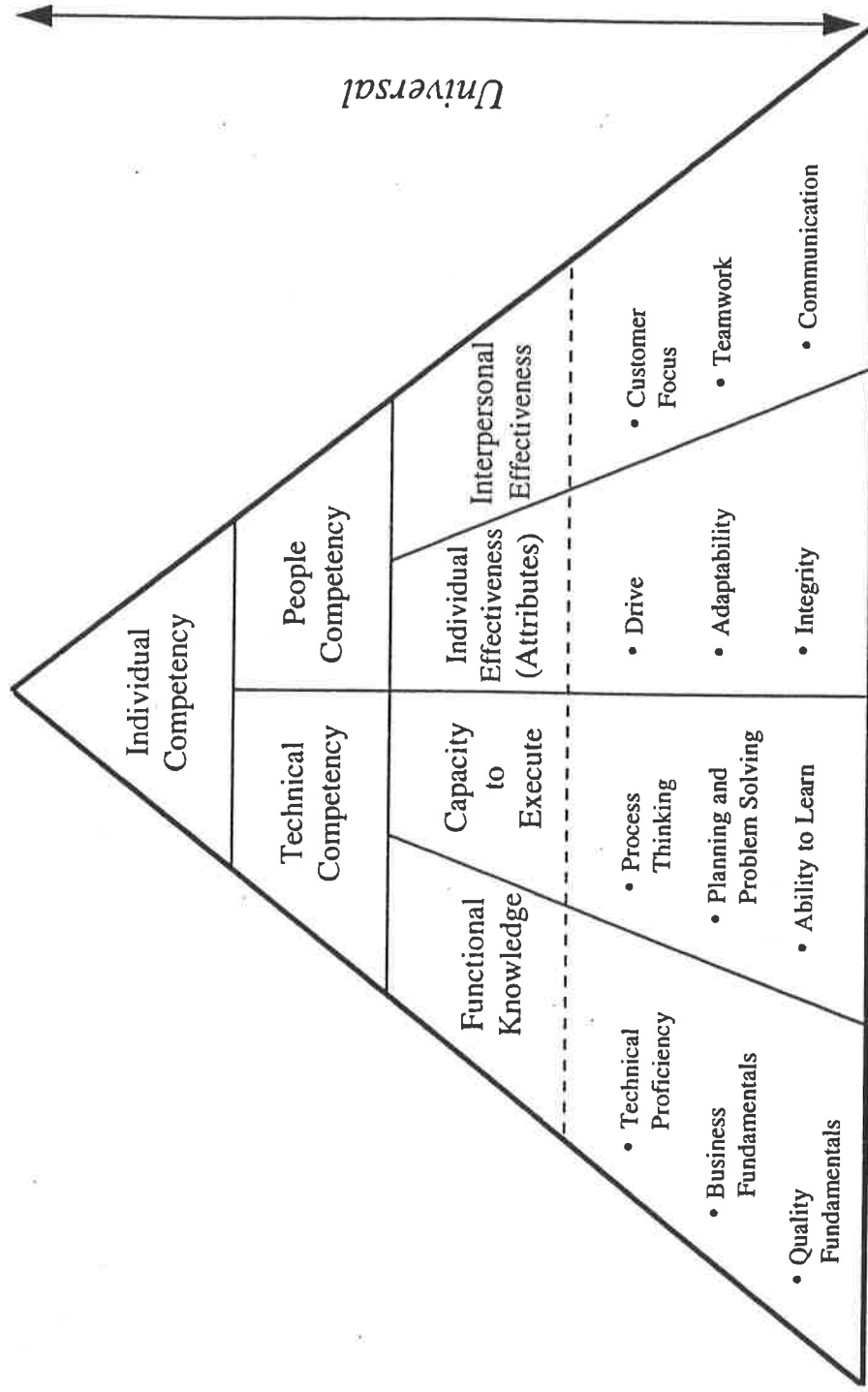
In the fall of 1997 the freshman module will be introduced to students through seminars in the dormitories or adapted to special classroom situations. The module is constructed around three central themes, intellectual, professional, and personal development, which can be tailored to the needs of specific groups (women, minorities, academic no preference). (An optional fourth theme, career development, will be incorporated at the discretion of the instructors after monitoring the needs of the students.) The intellectual segment will introduce students to (1) their learning style with strategies for adjustment in different learning environments and (2) concepts of critical thinking. The professional segment will offer practice in interpersonal communication (listening, justification, and persuasion), teamwork (elements of effective teams), ethics , and leadership. The third segment on personal development focuses on time management, handling stress, setting priorities, and evaluation strategies. The program will be offered in seven week blocks or a fifteen week semester depending how the module will be conducted by the instructors. Looking ahead to the sophomore and junior modules, the students focus will shift from the classroom toward work and community contexts; students will also receive opportunities to assess their competencies in simulated exercises. A professional portfolio that documents the development and practice of the skills and competencies addressed in the program will serve to unify the three modules.

The program is expected to have a two significant impacts. First participants will become better students. By understanding their learning styles and developing professional and personal skills, students will enrich and intensify their academic experience. Second the transition into the workplace will be smoother as graduates will have balanced sets of academic and non-academic skills and a better understanding of the application in the workplace.

Two assessment approaches will be utilized to measure the impact of the program. First the students will take selected assessments, such as Watson Glazer critical thinking and a career maturity inventory, pre and post program participation. The second approach will track students into the workplace, comparing their early adjustment and performance with a similar group that did not participate in the program. Some secondary measures that can also be used include retention rates, academic performance, and level of involvement in non-academic activities.

Strategy to Address Challenge
Definition of Common - Competencies

Universal

Individual Competency

- **Technical Competency** — Functional Knowledge
  - Technical Proficiency
  - Business Fundamentals
  - Quality Fundamentals
- **Technical Competency** — Capacity to Execute
  - Process Thinking
  - Planning and Problem Solving
  - Ability to Learn
- **People Competency** — Individual Effectiveness (Attributes)
  - Drive
  - Adaptability
  - Integrity
- **People Competency** — Interpersonal Effectiveness
  - Customer Focus
  - Teamwork
  - Communication

Functional Applications:

- Breakthrough Objectives
- Performance Management
- Leadership Development
- Other
- Recruiting/Selection
- Training/ISO 9000
- Compensation

Ford 2000 People Breakthrough Initiative -- Competency

Competency Statement

	INDIVIDUAL COMPETENCY		PEOPLE COMPETENCY	
TECHNICAL COMPETENCY				
FUNCTIONAL KNOWLEDGE	**CAPACITY TO EXECUTE**	**INDIVIDUAL EFFECTIVENESS**	**INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS**	

□ **Technical Proficiency**
(Exhibits technical excellence)

- Possesses needed technical knowledge, education and experience

□ **Business Fundamentals**
(Understands the essential requirements of our business)

- Knows the basic principles driving a quality, customer, and profit driven business

□ **Quality Fundamentals**
(Understands what it takes to do quality work)

- Understands customer-defined quality and what it takes to deliver products and services that meet customer needs at costs that represent value

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□ **Process Thinking**
(Improves the process)

- Thinks systemically - understands importance of interdependencies
- Focuses on the process to get results
- Identifies process improvement opportunities
- Leads and manages change efforts

□ **Planning & Problem Solving**
(Prepares for action; gets the job done)

- Manages information/data and identifies strategies for addressing problems
- Participates in the development of objectives
- Participates in developing metrics
- Uses resources efficiently
- Identifies and accepts responsibility for accomplishment of objectives within agreed upon boundaries
- Is creative and involves others as required when making timely decisions
- Implements decisions to achieve optimal solutions to problems

□ **Ability to Learn**
(Personal continuous improvement)

- Learns from successes as well as mistakes
- Seeks out performance feedback and accepts responsibility for making appropriate changes
- Accepts responsibility for ongoing skill development
- Provides timely feedback on results and participates in the assessment of performance

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□ **Drive**
(Puts forth the effort)

- Takes the initiative
- Takes reasoned, calculated risks
- Takes action

□ **Adaptability**
(Handles change effectively)

- Views change as opportunity
- Manages complex and ambiguous situations
- Demonstrates self-confidence and poise, even under stress

□ **Integrity**
(Adheres to Company principles)

- Exemplifies honesty
- Maintains trustworthiness
- Demonstrates dependability

□ **Customer Focus**
(Seeks to satisfy the customer)

- Views the customer as the focus of everything we do
- Responsive to customers
- Strives to "surprise and delight"

□ **Teamwork**
(Maximizes the benefits of involvement)

- Commits to team-oriented behavior and accepts responsibility for such behavior
- Seeks out and values different perspectives
- Demonstrates sensitivity to workforce diversity and supports efforts of others to increase knowledge regarding diversity .
- Shares recognition with others
- Maintains a global perspective

□ **Communication**
(Exchanges information and ideas that impact others)

- Provides clear, concise, consistent and convincing communications and information
- Demonstrates openness and candor
- Networks with others
- Listens

TABLE 1.   Skills   and   Factor   Clusters   Contributing   to   Successful   Work
Performance: RAND Study   (Scale 1 "not very important" to 5 "very important")

Skill/Factor	Corporate Respondents (mean)	Academic Respondents (mean)
General Cognitive Skills	4.7	4.8
Social Skills	4.7	4.7
Personal Traits	4.3	4.3
On-Job Training	4.1	4.2
Knowledge in Academic Major	3.9	4.1
Prior Work Experience	3.6	4.0
Firm's Recruiting Practices	3.7	3.6
Cross-Cultural Experience	3.2	3.8
Foreign Language Competency	3.0	3.9
Attributes of Educational Inst	3.2	3.7

Source: Bikson, T.K. and Law, S.A.   *Global Preparedness and Human Resources:
College and Corporate Perspectives.*   Santa Monica: RAND.   Institute on Education
and Training,1994, p.10.

TABLE 2.   Level of Skills/Competencies Required for Entry-Level College
Educated Positions and Level of Educational Preparedness (mean score)

Major Competency Areas	Technical Performance Preparedness	Non-Technical Performance Preparedness
Reading	4.13 3.26	3.70 3.29
Writing	3.50 2.88	3.43 3.04
Speaking/Listening	3.91 2.98	4.01 3.29
Mathematics	4.16 3.72	3.44 3.02
Thinking Skills	4.34 3.11	4.25 3.15
Organizational Skills	3.95 2.95	4.26 3.23
Information Systems	4.33 3.59	3.76 3.28
Job Skills	4.06 3.16	4.21 3.12
Personal Skills	3.99 3.16	4.08 3.16

TABLE 3. Self-Evaluation of Their College Education: Strengths and Weaknesses

TECHNICAL GRADUATES STRENGTHS	TECHNICAL GRADUATES WEAKNESSES
Problem solving skills	Oral communication skills
Technical (theoretical) skills	Written communication skills
Computer knowledge	Applying learning to real work situations
Report writing	Interpersonal/teamwork skills
Discipline/work ethic	Leadership/management skills
LIBERAL ARTS GRADUATES STRENGTHS	LIBERAL ARTS GRADUATES WEAKNESSES
Think independently/problem solving	Understanding world of work
Communicate: verbal & written	Application of theory to practice and hands-on experiences
Learning to learn	Specific content knowledge
General knowledge	Understanding of office politics, ethics, and business viewpoint
Interpersonal skills	Computer skills
	Flexibility

Taken from: Gardner and Motschenbacher.
             Lunney, Gardner, and Williams.

Percentile (average) for Minority Students: Workforce Readiness Assessment

	All	First Year	Sophomore	Junior	Senior
Total	19	16	19	21	18
Problem Solving	33	32	28	37	34
Communication	24	22	29	24	21
Accountability	25	20	25	27	26
	(232)	(72)	(33)	(72)	(53)

Effectiveness in Utilizing Specific Skills in Work Context

Highly Effective (3.5 - 5.0)	Effective (2.5 - 3.5)	Not Effective (1 - 2.5)
Understanding Interrelated	Gathering Information	Evaluating Information
	Choosing Strategies	Info. When Selecting Strat
Comm Accept/Agreement	Persuading/Convincing	Helping Team Members
Justifying Position	Sensitive to Others	
	Asking Others for Help	Contributing to Success of Team
	Relating Positive to Others	
	Accomp. Little Guidance	Using Systems-Quality
	Handling Risky Tasks	Adapting Plans
	Voluntary Perform. Tasks	Working at Pace-Stress

Effectiveness in Utilizing Specific Skills in Work Context: By Class Year
(Sophomore, Junior, Senior Reflect Differences from First Year Students)

FIRST YEAR

Highly Effective (3.5 - 5.0)	Effective (2.5 - 3.5)	Not Effective (1 - 2.5)
Understanding Interrelated	Gathering Info.	Evaluating Info.
	Choosing Strategies	Considering Info/Strategies
Common Accept/Agree	Persuading/Convincing	Helping Team Members
Justifying		Being Sensitive
Asking for Help		Contributing to Success Team
		Relating Positively to Others
	Accomp. Little Guidance	Sense of Quality
	Handling Risky Tasks	Adapting Plans
	Voluntarily Perform Tasks	Work Pace/Stress

SOPHOMORE

	Understanding Inter-relationship	Choosing Strategies
	Helping Team Members	Relating Positively to Others
	Adapting Plans	

JUNIOR

Voluntary Perform Tasks	Asking Others for Help	

SENIOR

Gathering Information	Helping Team Members	Contributing to Success Team
	Asking Others for Help	
Handling Risky Tasks		
Voluntary Perform Tasks		Understand Quality/Systems

CHART 1. Development Areas with Skill/Competencies Across the Three Years

UNITS	FRESHMEN YEAR	SOPHOMORE YEAR	JUNIOR YEAR
INTELLECTUAL			
Learning Styles	Learning style identification Learning strategies in classroom	Learning interdependently	Learning and thinking in context
Critical Thinking	Elements of critical thinking The practice of critical thinking	Problem-solving	Problem sensing
PROFESSIONAL			
Interpersonal Communication	Anatomy of listening Building rapport/sensitivity	Justification/persuasion	Writing: the demanding art
Teamwork	Teams in today's society Establishing teams: ground rules	Resolving conflicts: Resolution, negotiation, compromise	Evaluating peers
Leadership	The art of leadership	Vision/risk-taking	Motivating/caring of others
Ethics	Academic ethics	Campus ethics	Ethics in practice
PERSONAL			
Stress/Anxiety	Dealing with stress Coping with anxiety (test)	Coping with campus environment	Stress in workplace
Time management/goal setting			
Personal Mastery	Personal vision	Self-evaluation	Understanding quality
Motivation	Taking initiative	Adaptability	
CAREER DEVELOPMENT	Career interests Values	Selecting an academic major	Careers in my major
PORTFOLIO			
LINKAGES			
ASSESSMENTS	Kolbs learning style Glazier-Watson critical thinking SDS - Holland Career self-efficacy MSLQ (motivated strategies for learning questionnaire)	Workskills 2000 Glazier-Watson critical thinking Career self-efficacy MSLQ (motivated strategies for learning questionnaire)	Workskills 2000 Glazier-Watson critical thinking Career self-efficacy MSLQ (motivated strategies for learning questionnaire)

TABLE 1. Proposed Schedule for Fall 1997

Week 1 (Aug. 27)   Welcome and introduction
Making the University Connection
    Faculty: Dr. Barbara Steidle, Asst. Provost Undergraduate Education
    Staff: Cindy Helman, Area Director, Residence Life
        Mary Austin, Specialist, UUD

Week 2 (Sept 3)   Expectations: Realistic
    Faculty: Dr. Don Straney, Professor, Zoology
    Staff: Karin Peterson, Student

Week 3 (Sept 10)   Learning styles: Understanding your approach to learning
    Faculty: Dr. Rudy Villaruel, Asst. Professor, Family Child Ecology
    Staff: Dr. Phil Gardner, Collegiate Employment Research Institute

Week 4 (Sept 17)   Time management: Juggling all those balls
    Faculty: Dr. Alison Barber, Assoc. Professor, Management
    Staff: Student panel
        Pat Lowry, Director, Women's Resource Center

Week 5 (Sept 24)   Stress and anxiety: Dealing with the pressures of college
    Faculty: Dr. Joel Aronoff, Professor, Psychology
    Staff: Carmen Geer, Asst. Director, Counseling Center

Week 6 (Oct 1)   Interpersonal communication: Classroom participation
    Faculty: Dr. William Donahue, Professor, Communication
    Staff: George Athanas, Complex Director, Wilson Hall

Week 7 (Oct 8)   Midterm break: no class

Week 8 (Oct 15)   Midterm break: Pizza and "MSU Road Rules"

Week 9 (Oct 22)   Teamwork: Making the most of study and project teams
    Faculty: Karl Smith, Professor, Education
    Staff: Phil Gardner

Week 10 (Oct 29)   Ethics: Protecting the integrity of your work
    Faculty: Joy Curtis, Ombudsman, Professor of Nursing
    Staff: Greg Merritt

Week 11 (Nov 5)   Personal mastery
    Faculty: Dr. Steve Kozlowski, Professor, Psychology
    Staff: Pat Cavanagh, Learning Resource Center

Week 12 (Nov 12)   Leadership
    Faculty: Dr. Mike Sciarini, Asst. Professor, Hospitality Business
    Staff: Pat Enos, Asst. Vice President, Student Affairs

Week 13 (Nov 19)   Critical thinking
    Faculty: Dr. Marie Swanson, Director, Cancer Center
    Staff: Phil Gardner

Week 14 (Nov 26)   Thanksgiving recess

Week 15 (Dec 3)   Making sense of the semester
    Faculty: Dr. Nancy Pogel, Executive Asst. to the President
    Staff: Phil Gardner