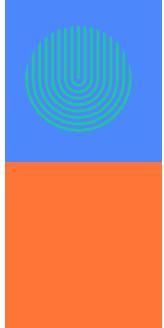


# Digital Learning Quarterly Newsletter Spotlight



## Willamette ESD Oregon Employability Skills

What began as a conversation between educators and industry partners has turned into a deep commitment on part of the Willamette ESD to support students in getting the technical skills needed to be workforce ready. This foundation has been adopted with the eventual goal that employability skills will be embedded in every student's path towards graduation, and be widely adopted by industry as critical credentials towards future employment. When talking with industry partners, [Cherie Clark](#), Career and College Readiness Manager for Willamette ESD, learned that many partners felt that students were graduating high school without the skills needed in the workplace. Realizing that this presented a beautiful opportunity, Cherie worked with teachers and industry partners to create a bridge between students' high school and the workforce; a bridge that would support students in getting technical skills and employability skills while in the classroom that they could apply after graduation. The work, which began as a grassroots effort to build this bridge, began in 2018 with local partners revamping the New World of Work curriculum and has grown to create the Oregon Employability Skills curriculum which has been endorsed by the Workforce and Talent Development Board and is being used by a variety of partners including Oregon's STEM Hubs, the Oregon Department of Education, Oregon Community Colleges, the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, Youth Transition Specialists, Community Partners such as K-12. You can view an entire list of partners [here](#).

While there are many benefits to this work, including that education and industry partners have common language to support youth in building their skills and thinking intentionally about their future, one unique aspect is that as it was developed by Oregonians and is being used in Oregon, there is a constant communication and feedback loop between educators and industry partners about what is working and what would benefit from revision. This allows for the curriculum to change as needed to meet the needs and demands of the workforce.

The [Oregon Employability Skills](#) curriculum, which is available in English and Spanish, currently focuses on work readiness for high school students and beyond with the goal to develop a toolkit that will provide CTE resources aligned to all 10 employability skills: self awareness, entrepreneurial mindset, resilience, analysis/solution mindset, digital literacy, empathy, communication, and social diversity/awareness. One important aspect of the curriculum is the focus on not only learning these 10 skills but also being able to speak intentionally and explicitly about those skills on a resume or during interviews.



While this work has already come a long way, this is just the beginning. Willamette ESD in partnership with the Oregon Department of Education and industry professionals is planning to develop a middle school curriculum, working to embed [Oregon's Career Journeys](#) videos within the curriculum, and broadening partnerships with educators, industry partners, and non-profit organizations across the state. In addition, they are developing an Oregon Employability Skills website and starting a new group called "Using Oregon Employability Skills" to support schools and organizations interested in using the curriculum.



## **Henley High School YouScience: Next Level Career Exploration**

[Henley High School](#), located in Klamath Falls School District, has worked tirelessly over the past three years to build a CTE program that provides all students with career connected learning experiences based on their aptitudes and interests. Using [YouScience: Career Guidance for Students Using Aptitudes](#), Henley high school has created a systemic and supported approach to leveraging students' aptitudes to –

- Support students in understanding their aptitudes in order to identify elective courses;
- Create pathways for high school electives with new CTE Career Pathways and Programs of Study developed on the basis of students' aptitudes;
- Develop strong partnerships with local colleges and universities, including Klamath Community College, Southern Oregon University, and Oregon Tech, to provide dual credit and online course enrollment; and
- Expand partnerships with local industry in an effort to provide work-based learning opportunities for all students.

With a focus on recruitment and retention, Adam Randall, Henley High School's CTE Coordinator, and his team of CTE teachers have developed an approach to ensure equitable access to career connected learning opportunities for students beginning in 8th grade. To ensure students have ample time and opportunities to engage in learning experiences while in high school, students take their YouScience Aptitudes test in the fall of their 8th grade year. After taking their test, students engage in deep conversations with trusted adults (including content area teachers and CTE teachers) to discuss career interests aligned with their results and how those careers align with CTE pathways and Programs of Study at the high school. This creates opportunities for classroom teachers to become "experts" in supporting students through talking about future careers. Students then identify which electives course they want to take in high school with Adam and his team, using the motto "for now" vs "forever" as a way to encourage students to explore and not feel like the decision they are making now is going to be where they need to stay - in high school or beyond.

Currently, Henley High School has eight CTE pathways and Programs of Study including: Agriculture Mechanics, Agriculture Science, Business-Marketing, Digital Media Design, Engineering, Education/Pre-Teaching, Medical Science/Health Occupations, and Pre-Apprenticeship: Carpentry. During 8th grade, and again throughout high school, students and families review pathway maps which outline the courses available at Henley aligned with that pathway in addition to dual credit opportunities and online coursework through Klamath Community College.

Along with their YouScience Aptitudes assessment and elective identification, 8th grade students also participate in CTE Day which offers them hands-on learning opportunities tied to Henley's CTE pathways and Programs of Study. On CTE Day, students participate in activities such as building circuits to learn about engineering (Engineering), practicing digital design using industry aligned software (Digital Media Design), and learning how to accurately measure blood pressure (Medical Science/Health Occupations). Additionally, 8th grade students are enrolled in a Career Exploration Class which covers lessons such as how to write a resume and cover letter and how to respond to interview questions. As part of this class, students also participate in a mock job fair and write a career research paper on the basis of their YouScience aptitudes and career interests. The school is also piloting a program called E-Dynamic, which is an online CTE platform connected with YouScience, wherein students are able to take online courses aligned to their aptitudes. For example, if a student shows an aptitude for occupational therapy and has identified this as a future career choice, they will be able to take a course learning about occupational therapy online with the support of their teacher who provides guidance, feedback, and adjustments to their courses as needed.

When students enter high school, they continue to engage with YouScience with increasing opportunities for career connected learning experiences. In their junior year, students engage in a seven week junior professionalism unit which deepens students' understanding and application of their YouScience results. Some activities include developing resumes and cover letters tailored to different jobs, participating in a mock job fair (both as an Interviewee and as an interviewer serving on a hiring panel), and writing a career research paper. Finally, during their senior year, students are enrolled in a senior seminar. As part of this course, students engage in 20 hours of job shadowing, and also interview four people to learn more about their future careers. This information is compiled to develop their Senior Project which is a culmination of their career connected learning experiences.

Along with these embedded courses, students also have opportunities to engage in career fairs, college tours, and industry visits to learn more about their future career interests from those engaging in the work each day. Henley High School has leveraged technology both through the E-Dynamic pilot for eighth graders and the online course options through the partnership with Klamath Community College in order to provide equitable opportunities for all students to explore future careers while in high school. As a result of their commitment and their ingenuity, they have created a robust and embedded program where students can graduate high school with industry certificates, associate degrees, and a strong understanding of their aptitudes and future career interests. You can read more about the program in Klamath County School District's "[Preparing for the Future](#)" write-up or by contacting Adam Randall at [randalla@kcsd.k12.or.us](mailto:randalla@kcsd.k12.or.us).