

PBIS/SWIS QUESTION

Why are behavioral skills important? Why do we need to teach them with the same fidelity as academic skills?

The information provided below is acquired from: Weber, Chris. *Behavior: The Forgotten Curriculum*, Solution Tree Press, 2018, pages10-11.

Several research studies investigating readiness for college and career paths indicate that behavioral preparedness is as important as, if not more so than, academics. The Partnership for 21st Century Learning (2016) organizes next-generation skills into the following ten categories.

1. Creativity and innovation
2. Flexibility and adaptability
3. Critical thinking and problem-solving
4. Initiative and self-direction
5. Communication and collaboration
6. Social and cross-cultural skills
7. Information and media literacy
8. Productivity and accountability
9. Technology literacy
10. Leadership and responsibility

The skills within these categories are all more behavioral (or metacognitive) than academic. However, very few of these are explicitly taught by educators. It seems clear that these skills must be prioritized within the work of classrooms and schools.

David Conley's (2014) research analyzed the skills required by colleges and careers, as well as the skills that students leave high schools possessing. He discovered that the skills required for college and skilled careers are no longer distinctive, they require the same competencies. Success in life is about more than intellectual knowledge. Behavior matters both in college and in the workplace.

David Conley's Four Categories of College and Career-Readiness Skills

Skill Category	Definition
Think	<p>Beyond retaining and applying, students process, manipulate, assemble, reassemble, examine, question, look for patterns, organize, and present.</p> <p>Students develop and employ strategies for problem solving when encountering a challenge. Strategies include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Problem formation• Research• Interpretation• Communication• Precision and accuracy
Know	<p>Students possess foundational knowledge in core academic subjects and an understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Connections and structures between and within subjects• The necessity for, and implications of, effort and a growth mindset• The organization of content• Identification of key ideas• The inherent value of learning

Act	<p>Students employ skills and techniques to enable them to exercise agency and ownership as they successfully manage their learning.</p> <p>Students gain expertise through the regular and integrated application and practice of key learning skills and techniques. Agency rests on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal setting • Persistence • Self-awareness • Motivation • Self-advocacy • Progress monitoring • Self-efficacy <p>Students develop habits that allow them to succeed in demanding situations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time management • Study skills • Test taking and note taking • Memorization • Strategic reading • Collaborative learning • Technological proficiencies
Go	<p>Students preparing for a career or additional education develop skills to navigate potential challenges, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contextual – Motivations and options for educational programs after high school • Procedural – The logistics of admissions and application processes • Financial – The costs of further education and financial aid options • Cultural – Differences between cultural norms in school and the workplace or postsecondary settings • Interpersonal – Advocating for oneself in complex situations

Source: Adapted from Conley, D.T. (2014) Getting ready for college, careers, and the Common Core. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

Conclusion – “Non-cognitive skills matter during and after a student’s schooling and behavioral skills are as important as academic skills. Research confirms that behavioral skills are the product of interaction between students and educational contexts, rather than being predetermined characteristics of individual students.” (Deci, 1992; Ericsson & Pool, 2016; Farrington et al., 2012; Hattie, Biggs, & Purdie, 1996; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Stipek, 1988; Wang, Hartel, & Wahlberg, 1994; Yair, 2000).