

# DEVELOPING EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS: HARVESTING IDEAS FROM THE FIELD

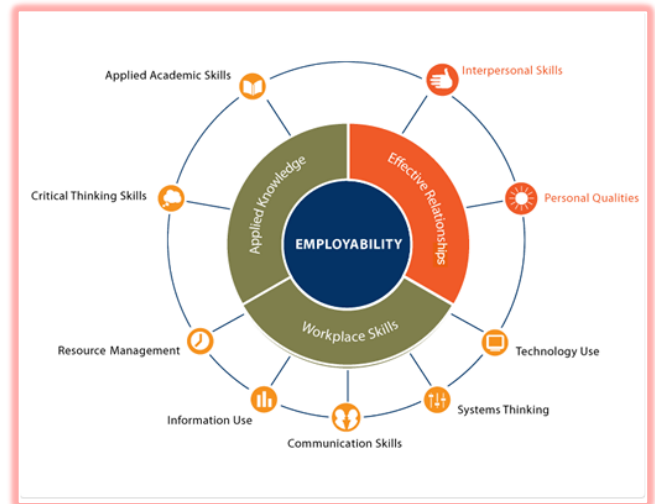
DISCUSSION WORKSHOP - OCTOBER 24, 2018

**This handout reports on findings based on interviews and a research review conducted during a 2-year targeted research project by SRI Education.**

## WHICH SKILLS MATTER IN STEM TECH?

### MOST MENTIONED:

- Interpersonal Skills and Personal Qualities that support Effective Relationships
- Communication Skills that support Workplace Skills



### DESIRED INTERPERSONAL SKILLS:

- Teamwork skills
- Meets organizational expectations

### DESIRED PERSONAL QUALITIES:

- Confidence
- Reliability
- Initiative

## WHAT TECHNIQUES BUILD THESE SKILLS?

### MOST MENTIONED BY EDUCATORS:

- IT: team projects + presentations
- Advanced Manufacturing (AM): skill practice + skill courses + team projects

### MOST MENTIONED BY EMPLOYERS:

- IT: 1-to-1 mentoring
- AM: management training, skill courses

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For more information, please contact: [louise.yarnall@sri.com](mailto:louise.yarnall@sri.com)

# WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES?

## MOST MENTIONED BY EDUCATORS:

- IT: Younger students interested in IT are not the most social
- AM: High-poverty students may lack basic employability skills & face problems with transportation and child care that compromise punctuality



## MOST MENTIONED BY EMPLOYERS:

- IT: Need to help younger employees connect with others, ask for help, & present ideas
- AM: Need to help younger employees present themselves and their ideas, & be open to working long hours when needed

# WHAT ARE SOME SOLUTIONS?

## TAILORING METHODS TO STUDENTS:

- Talk about the importance of these skills earlier in education
- Embed reflection and coaching on these skills into technical courses
- Offer access to courses and activities to practice these skills
- For underrepresented students, use role models and encouragement
- Encourage practice in communication in many ways

## USING MORE ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK:

- Offer a baseline test so students can see what they need to improve
- Encourage 360-degree feedback on teams
- Foster reflection at various points around these skills during internships

## DEVELOPING BETTER PROGRAM SUPPORTS:

- Consider a dedicated employer outreach coordinator and/or coach for job interviews and resumes
- Engage top-level administrator and management support from college and industry partners