

STARs for STAR Students: Promoting Career Connected Competencies in Introductory Coursework

Skills Gap

Numerous sources have highlighted the common perception among employers that college graduates may be lacking essential skills needed to be successful in the workforce.



<https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/publications-other-work/publications/bridging-skills-gap-growth-and-job-creation> Employers' Group of the European Economic and Social Committee together with the Association of the Organizations of the Bulgarian Employers

STARs

STAR format for interviewing and feedback explicitly taught, modeled, and practiced in class. Students write a STAR for teamwork (AAC&U rubric) and other career-relevant skills in conjunction with a personality and career assessment so that students are "hired" into their project teams.



<https://www.ddiworld.com/blog/what-is-the-star-format> Development Dimensions International

Course and Students

Introductory course in Urban Planning minor. Most students in CAPP or Social Work majors. Frequently first exposure to Urban Planning as a potential career path. Many students employed outside of UTA; we leverage those experiences to discuss transferrable skills and personal qualities.

Skills Articulation!

Students connect course content to career-relevant skills across disciplines and build confidence in providing evidence of their competencies based on specific examples of success. Feedback focuses on facts and documents participation.

Assessment

Students self-evaluate teamwork (AAC&U rubric + STAR/AR) and have two team assessments, one after the first team assignment and again after the final team presentations, utilized for QEP insights.

Course Evaluations

Students encouraged to take an active role in learning and directly connect course student learning outcomes to future career aspirations, thus increasing relevance.

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Personality

International Personality Item Pool Representation of the NEO PI-R

<https://www.personal.psu.edu/~j5j/IPIP/>

"Big 5" Personality Factors: Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Emotional Stability

PERSONALITY

People interested in this work like activities that include **ideas**, **thinking**, and figuring things out.

They do well at jobs that need:

- Integrity
- Cooperation
- Dependability
- Analytical Thinking
- Self Control
- Attention to Detail

Career Exploration and Skills Audit

U.S. Department Labor Occupational Network <https://www.onetonline.org/>

Interest Inventory

Career connections to market demand, education/training, and wages.

My Next Move tool provides overview of over 900 career options.

Detailed report with work values, work styles, knowledge, skills, abilities, and technology tools.

Students encouraged to explore new methodologies and tools with low-stakes assignments, building new competencies directly aligned with their chosen profession.

Urban & Regional Planners
Also called: Community Development Planner, Planner, Planning Consultant, Planning Technician

[Watch Career Video](#)

What they do:
Develop comprehensive plans and programs for use of land and physical facilities of jurisdictions, such as towns, cities, counties, and metropolitan areas.

On the job, you would:

- Design, promote, or administer government plans or policies affecting land use, zoning, public utilities, community facilities, housing, or transportation.
- Advise planning officials on project feasibility, cost-effectiveness, regulatory conformance, or possible alternatives.
- Create, prepare, or requisition graphic or narrative reports on land use data, including land area maps overlaid with geographic variables, such as population density.

<h3>KNOWLEDGE</h3> <p>Safety and Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • law and government <p>Arts and Humanities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English language <p>Math and Science</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • geography • sociology and anthropology <p>Transportation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • movement of people or goods by air, rail, sea, or road 	<h3>SKILLS</h3> <p>Basic Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • listening to others, not interrupting, and asking good questions • talking to others <p>People and Technology Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • thinking about the pros and cons of different options and picking the best one • figuring out how a system should work and how changes in the future will affect it <p>Problem Solving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • noticing a problem and figuring out the best way to solve it 	<h3>ABILITIES</h3> <p>Verbal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communicate by speaking • listen and understand what people say <p>Ideas and Logic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • notice when problems happen • make general rules or come up with answers from lots of detailed information <p>Math</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • add, subtract, multiply, or divide • choose the right type of math to solve a problem
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