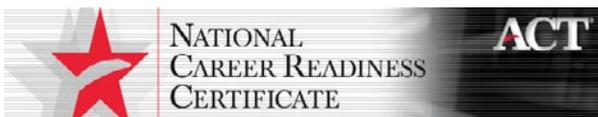# KeyTrain®

High School Implementation Guide

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NATIONAL CAREER READINESS CERTIFICATE

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Introduction: A New Focus on College- and Career-Readiness

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 challenged states to close the achievement gap and ensure that all students, including those disadvantaged, achieve academic proficiency. Yet, eight years later, in *Investing in Human Capital*, Marlene Selzer, President and CEO of Jobs for the Future, states that "nearly 1.2 million young Americans each year – almost one in three students – do not graduate from high school on time, and of those who do graduate, only 45 percent are actually prepared to succeed in college." For economically disadvantaged students, the statistics are more grim. Selzer further observes, "Nearly 40 percent of students in the lowest socioeconomic quintile drop out of high school before earning a diploma. And of those who do graduate, only 23 percent are prepared for college." The implications for both the economic viability of these students as they move into adulthood and the position of America in a competitive global economy are dire.

> "Because economic progress and educational achievement go hand in hand, *educating every American student to graduate prepared for college and success in a new work force is a national imperative.* Meeting this challenge requires that state standards reflect a level of teaching and learning needed for students to graduate ready for success in college and careers."
>
> (Emphasis added)
>
> White House Statement
> February 22, 2010

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1994 required states to set standards, but it did not require them to align standards with what students need to succeed in college and in the workplace. In fact, under No Child Left Behind, many states actually *lowered* their standards in reading and math to meet accountability goals. Meanwhile, our global competitors raised their own achievement standards. On international assessments, American students lag about a year behind international students from the top performing nations.

President Obama's 2011 budget proposes a number of new policies to move states towards a transition to the college and career-ready standards developed through a consortium of states. This Common Core Standards Initiative is a state-led project coordinated by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). This consortium of 48 states released a set of college- and career-readiness standards in September, 2009. A proposed re-design of ESEA will require states to adopt and certify that they have college- and career-ready standards in reading and math as a condition for qualifying for Title I funds. The transition to college- and career-ready standards will entail an upgrade or revision of state curricula and assessments in reading and math, one that includes the applied skills needed to learn and succeed in the workplace. The reauthorization of ESEA also seeks to support teacher preparation and development, upgrade classroom instruction, and support high-quality assessments of students' levels of college- and career-readiness.

While the federal focus on college- and career-readiness is new, many states have established career readiness systems in workforce development programs, secondary schools, and two year colleges using the WorkKeys® job skills assessment system and KeyTrain® workplace curriculum.

Overview: WorkKeys and the National Career Readiness Certificate

What Is WorkKeys?

You are probably familiar with the ACT Assessment™. The ACT was created by American College Testing (now known as ACT, Inc.) to measure a student's academic skills and predict their success in college-level courses. In the late 1980's, representatives from business and education approached ACT about developing an assessment to measure an individual's basic work readiness skills and predict success in the workplace in the same way that the ACT test predicts college success. The WorkKeys job skills assessment system grew out of those initial discussions for the need to effectively match people with jobs based on applied work skills.

The components of WorkKeys shown in the sidebar on this page form a system that allows educators, students, employers, and workforce development professionals to share a common language for discussing, identifying, measuring, and certifying work and career readiness skills.

WorkKeys assessments provide a valid method for measuring the skill levels of individuals in nine basic workplace skills:

- **Reading for Information:** Reading workplace documents such as memos, employee handbooks, reports, letters, safety procedures, instructions, etc.

- **Applied Mathematics:** The application of math concepts to solving practical workplace problems.

- **Locating Information:** Locating, comparing, or summarizing information found in workplace graphics such as forms, charts, drawings, instrument gauges, maps, tables, and other graphics.

- **Writing:** An individual's skill in conveying spoken work-related information, such as messages or instructions, to a third party in writing.

- **Business Writing:** The skill people use when they write an original response to a workplace prompt.

- **Listening:** An individual's skill in listening to and conveying work-related information such as phone messages, verbal instructions, and other spoken information.

- **Applied Technology:** An individual's skill in using basic concepts of mechanics, electricity, fluid dynamics and thermodynamics to troubleshoot and solve technical problems in the workplace.

The WorkKeys System Components

Assessments
The system includes assessments to measure a person's skill level in any of 9 generic work skills. Delivery mode is by paper/pencil and/or Internet-based testing.

Job Profiling
Job profiling, the job analysis component of the system, identifies which WorkKeys skills and skill levels are needed for a specific job at a company. An individual's assessment results can be compared to the job profile to determine if there is a skill match or if skill gap training is needed.

National Career Readiness Certificate™
The NCRC, issued by ACT, verifies a person's work readiness in core skills of WorkKeys Reading, Math and Locating Information – required skills found in over 16,000 jobs ACT has researched. Individuals can achieve four levels of certification based on their WorkKeys scores.

Training
The KeyTrain curriculum helps individuals whose skills do not meet those required for a job or NCRC improve their WorkKeys related skills through individualized, interactive instruction via classroom or Internet delivery.

- **Teamwork:** A person's skill in choosing behaviors and actions that both support relationships among co-workers and lead toward achieving goals and completing job tasks.

- **Workplace Observation:** Measures a person's skills in observing, following, understanding, and evaluating processes, demonstrations and other on-the-job procedures.

> A 2006 study by ACT, *Ready for College and Ready for Work: Same or Different?,* concluded that "whether planning to enter college or workforce training programs after graduation, *high school students need to be educated to a comparable level of readiness in reading and mathematics.*"

The National Career Readiness Certificate™

Three of these foundational skills, *Reading for Information*, *Applied Mathematics*, and *Locating Information* form the core work readiness skills that comprise the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC), a national credential awarded to individuals by ACT. ACT issues four levels of career readiness certification based on an individual's scores on the three WorkKeys assessments.

- ❑ **Bronze** – A score of at least level 3 on each assessment indicates an individual has the foundational skills for about 35% of jobs in ACT's database.
- ❑ **Silver** - A score of at least level 4 on each assessment indicates an individual has the foundational skills for about 65% of jobs in ACT's database.
- ❑ **Gold** - A score of at least level 5 on each assessment indicates an individual has the foundational skills for about 90% of jobs in ACT's database.
- ❑ **Platinum** - A score of at least level 6 on each assessment indicates an individual has the foundational skills for about 99% of jobs in ACT's database.

Employers use the NCRC system in as an additional tool for screening applicants, making hiring and promotion decisions, and as a way to target training and development efforts.

Educators use the NCRC system to help ensure their students and eventual graduates possess the core employability skills needed for success in a career or in post-secondary education. Schools can offer targeted, self-paced instruction with KeyTrain to help students achieve higher levels of WorkKeys skills and National Career Readiness Certificates.

Students and Career Seekers use the NCRC system as a complement to traditional credentials such as a high school diploma, GED, or community college or college degree. The Certificate proves the individual has the foundational skills needed to learn and succeed in a career.

The NCRC offers students and educators and job seekers and employers an easily understood and valid credential certifying workplace skills.

> **Did You Know...?**
>
> - ❑ **27 states** have established either statewide or regional programs to help individuals earn National Career Readiness Certificates.
> - ❑ As of November 2009, over **405,000** NCRCs have been awarded by ACT.
> - ❑ The NCRC has been adopted by the **National Association of Manufacturers** as part of its Manufacturing Skills Certification System.
> - ❑ The **American Association of Community Colleges** supports the NCRC.
> - ❑ The skills documented by the NCRC are **aligned with many**

What is KeyTrain?

KeyTrain is the complete interactive, Internet-based training system for career readiness skills based on ACT's WorkKeys assessment system and the National Career Readiness Certificate. With KeyTrain, students can estimate their potential WorkKeys score, master the skills WorkKeys measures and the NCRC certifies, and practice problems similar to those on an actual WorkKeys assessment.

The KeyTrain system includes:

- targeted, self-paced instruction
- a natural voice soundtrack
- pre- and post-assessments
- a robust learning management system
- extensive reporting on student, class, and school progress
- print workbooks for selected skills
- a searchable database of WorkKeys job profile information to help students match their skills to real job requirements.
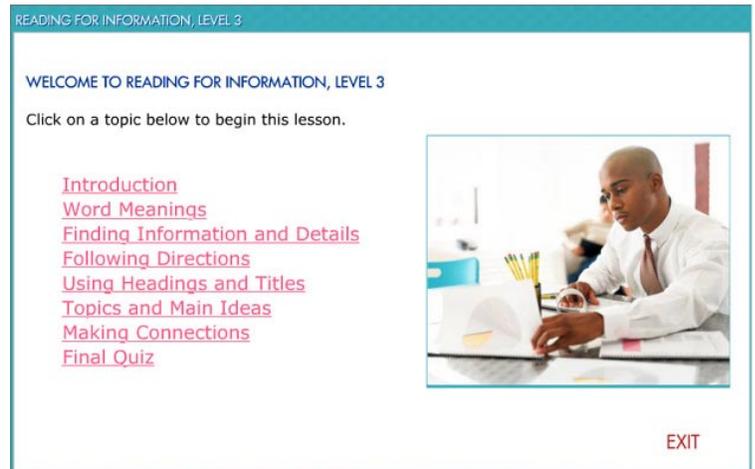
Instructors use each of these components to help students learn, practice and demonstrate the skills they need to succeed in the jobs and careers they choose. In addition to complete courses for each of the nine WorkKeys skills, KeyTrain features introductory lessons to the sixteen Department of Education Career Clusters with examples of typical job tasks for WorkKeys Reading for Information, Applied Mathematics and Locating Information skills. Another component, KeyTrain Career Skills, features 200 Internet-based lessons in readiness skills such as Work Habits, Communication, Workplace Effectiveness, Job Search, and Business Etiquette.

KeyTrain is the first computer-based training available which was specifically designed for WorkKeys and has been designated by ACT as a Level 1 Publisher for WorkKeys curricula. This means ACT has reviewed the KeyTrain system and found it to meet ACT's standards for a WorkKeys training curriculum.

Is Internet-based instruction an effective learning strategy?
The most substantiated conclusion in published research is that the use of computer-assisted instruction in combination with conventional, teacher-directed instruction produces achievement results significantly higher than the achievement level reached via conventional instruction alone. Computer-based instruction allows teachers to reinforce concepts utilizing a media that students are often more receptive to than conventional teacher-centered instruction.

Online high school programs now operate in at least twelve states and cyber Charter schools in approximately thirty states. The demand for such programs continues to accelerate as students and teachers gain more experience with the technology and as online teaching methods improve. Online instruction provides some students access to instruction that otherwise may not be available to them and permits individual schools and

districts to expand their offerings in advanced and specialty courses as well as technical, remedial, and credit-recovery courses. In short, online education can be an effective tool for school administrators in finding the balance between optimal learning environments offered by small high schools and the rich and varied course offerings often found only in larger schools.

How does the KeyTrain system work?

KeyTrain has three types of user accounts – administrators, instructors, and students. Each type of account has certain privileges and restrictions. For example, administrators can create user accounts for instructors and students. Instructors can create student accounts, but not other instructor accounts. Students may view their own progress reports, but not those of other students.

Users log in to their accounts on the KeyTrain website, www.keytrain.com, by entering a unique username and a password.

Administrators and instructors use the menu options in KeyTrain shown in this image to:

- create, edit, or delete student accounts
- create, edit, or delete classes
- assign lessons to a student, class, or the entire organization
- create and review reports on students, classes, a school, or district
- access and print KeyTrain workbooks
- use Answer Keys for KeyTrain pretests, topic quizzes, and final quizzes
- take KeyTrain lessons to review content
- export data
- import data (administrators only)
- browse information on WorkKeys job profiles.
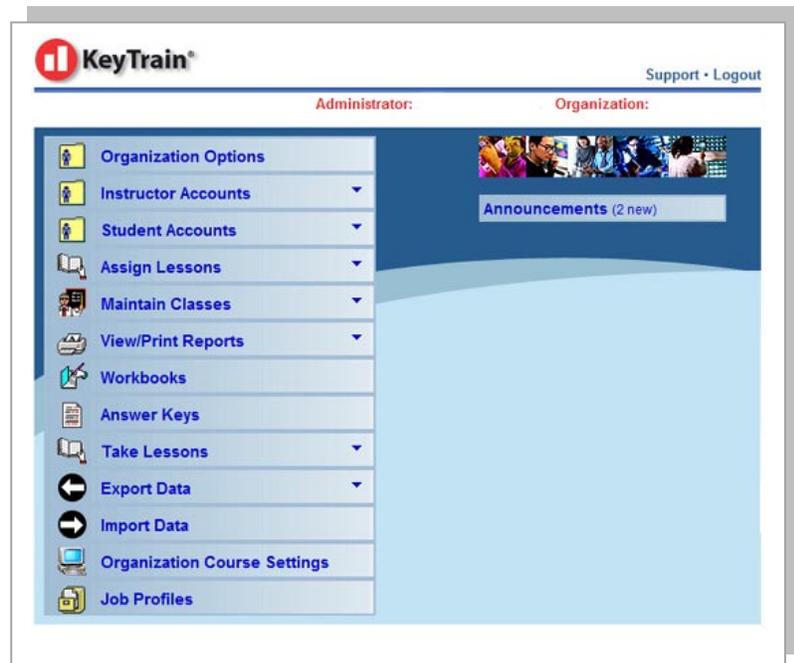
Beginning an Implementation

Prior to the implementation, **the purposes and goals for using KeyTrain must be defined**. Is there a target student group or demographic? Will it supplement instruction or be a stand-alone course?   Is the goal to help students improve academic skills, to impact AYP, improve graduation/exit test scores, prepare students the WorkKeys NCRC assessments, use KeyTrain as an instructional resource for credit recovery? Schools use KeyTrain in a number of different ways, for different purposes, and to achieve different outcomes. We will examine a number of them later in this Guide. In short, some initial planning and decisions are necessary.

Once initial purposes and goals are agreed on, **buy-in from top administrators, faculty, counselors, and other staff** is critical. If school leaders do not support the effort, a successful implementation will be difficult to achieve. *It's hard to get buy-in from the decision makers and influencers in a school if they haven't seen the program they are being asked to support!* KeyTrain has **weekly interactive webcasts** that provide viewers with a quick overview of the WorkKeys system and KeyTrain program. Webcasts are a convenient and effective way to introduce KeyTrain to a group of potential supporters. If needed, request a special webcast for your school administrators and selected faculty. Their buy-in is an essential element for a successful implementation.

One of the first implementation decisions is to **identify the person(s) who will act as KeyTrain administrator(s)**. There can be more than one administrator, but administrator accounts should be kept to a minimum. For a school, this could be an assistant principal, guidance counselor, teacher, or other staff person. For a multi-school district, a curriculum director, career and technical education director, assistant superintendent, or other staff person could serve as administrator. *One of the KeyTrain administrators should be a program champion, a resource and go-to person for the teachers and staff who will use KeyTrain.*

Typically, the next step for a school is to **import its student and/or faculty information directly into KeyTrain to create student and/or instructor accounts**. The Import tab on the KeyTrain menu includes directions for importing batches of student accounts. A school information officer or IT staff person would be able to perform the import.

Training for teachers and other staff on KeyTrain fundamentals is a key element of a successful implementation. KeyTrain can provide on-site or webcast training for school staff. In addition, the *Guide to KeyTrain*, a step-by-step, how-to guide for instructors is available for download in the Support page. The *Guide* includes setting up student accounts, creating classes, assigning lessons, viewing reports, and other tasks teachers typically perform in KeyTrain. To find the *Guide*, log in to KeyTrain and click on the *Support* link in the top right corner of the screen. The Support page also includes links to download the KeyTrain Administrator Manual, Student Manual, course outlines, and other documents.

Once trained, instructors can create classes, select students to add to each class, and assign KeyTrain lessons to their classes. Then, let the learning begin!

KeyTrain Components
KeyTrain Pretests
The easiest way to assign lessons is to let the KeyTrain pretests make assignments for students based on how the student performs on the pretest. For example, if a student scores level 4 on the KeyTrain Applied Mathematics pretest, the system will assign lessons for Level 4 and higher and exempt the student from Level 1, 2, and 3 lessons. With this feature, students take only the lessons they need to achieve higher skill levels.

FYI:
Scores on KeyTrain pretests and posttests **are not actual WorkKeys scores** and should not be used for selection, promotion or other high stakes decisions. KeyTrain test scores indicate a student's success in mastering lesson content related to the WorkKeys skills.

The Applied Mathematics and Reading for Information pretests, lessons, and posttests are the most applicable for schools and districts needing to improve scores on high stakes tests for AYP accountability purposes. Once the student accounts have been created and the appropriate pretests have been assigned, students should take the pretests in the assigned areas. For schools with limited computer resources or scheduling constraints, this can be a significant undertaking. *Students must have access to an Internet capable computer and complete each pretest in one sitting.* Typically, schools should allow about one hour of uninterrupted computer access for each pretest assigned, even though most students will finish in less time. Pretests are adaptive, so that when students encounter and miss more difficult questions, the pretest ends. This lessens student frustration in trying to answer questions beyond their current level of skill. Instructors and administrators should use the pretest results to identify students in need of more intensive remediation.

The KeyTrain Curriculum

Each KeyTrain course includes lessons tailored for each WorkKeys skill level and, for some courses, levels leading up to the lowest WorkKeys level. For example, the KeyTrain Applied Mathematics course has separate lessons for levels 1 – 7, but WorkKeys assesses Math levels 3 – 7, the levels needed in the workplace. The level 1 and 2 lessons in KeyTrain are designed to help students improve up to the WorkKeys level 3 skills. The goals of each level are explained in the course introduction.
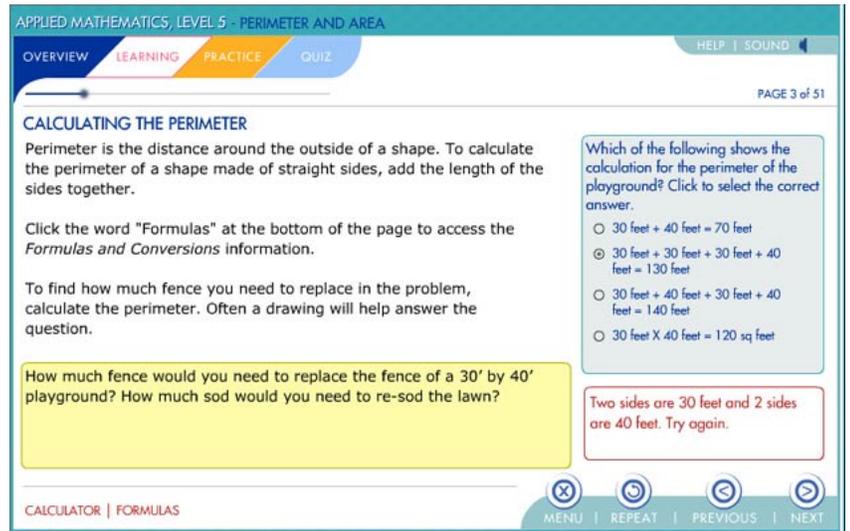
Lessons are comprised of several topics corresponding to the level of WorkKeys skill. Each topic is organized in *Overview*, *Learning*, *Practice*, and *Quiz* sections, as shown in the example above, to ensure a rigorous learning process. Topic lessons include a variety of interactive exercises to engage the student and have them practice each concept. Detailed solutions to the problems are explained, allowing the student to analyze and correct their mistakes, and immediate, targeted feedback (see the box outlined in red in the screen image above) aids comprehension and learning. A short Topic Quiz provides a quick gauge for measuring the student's comprehension of each topic skill objective. When a student completes all topics for a course level, such as Level 5 Reading for Information, they may take a Final Quiz which assesses student understanding of each topic for that course level. Final Quiz questions are pulled at random from a question bank, so questions will differ each time students take a Final Quiz. A passing score allows the student to advance to the next highest level.

KeyTrain includes a natural voice soundtrack that reads the content of each screen in a lesson (except pre- and post-tests). The soundtrack is particularly helpful for auditory learners, lower level readers, and ESOL students. Students may turn the soundtrack on or off as they need.

The KeyTrain curriculum can be included within the scope and sequence of traditional high school classes in the following areas:

- ❑ Reading for information – English/Language Arts classes
- ❑ Applied Mathematics – Math classes
- ❑ Locating Information – Science and Social Studies classes
- ❑ Applied Technology – Engineering, Technology, physical science, and physics classes
- ❑ Business Writing – Business and English classes
- ❑ Listening, Observation , Teamwork – CTE classes (foundation skills)
- ❑ Writing – English/Language Arts classes
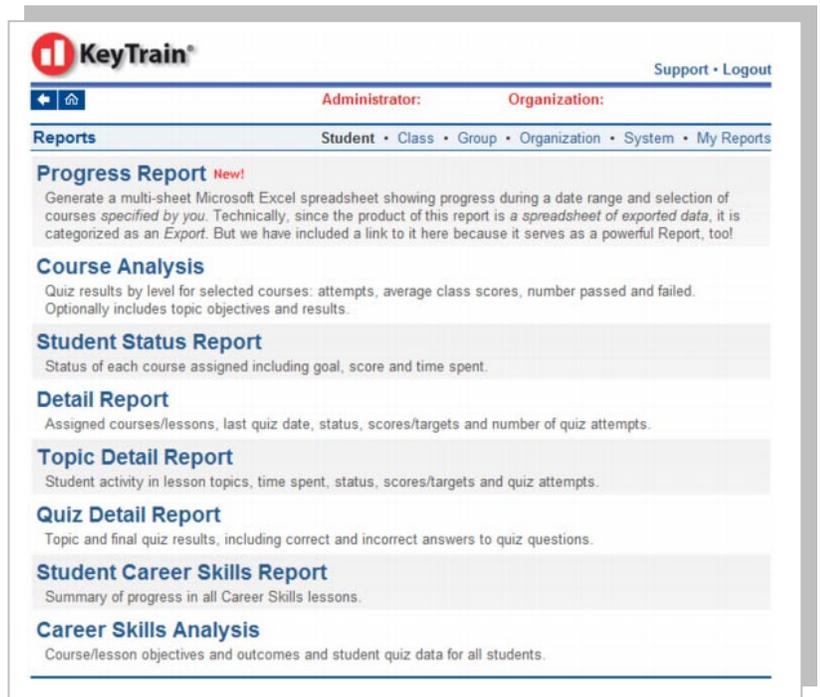- ❑ Career Skills – CTE classes.

Learning Management

Administrators and instructors can control how students move through the KeyTrain curriculum by requiring students to complete all problems in a topic tutorial, complete all topics before taking a final quiz, complete lessons in order and by limiting the number of quiz attempts allowed. Setting these options prevents students from simply clicking through or skipping topics, taking final quizzes without mastering content, skipping entire course levels, or trying to "test out" of a course without taking any lessons.

For example, a student whose goal is to pass the KeyTrain Applied Mathematics Level 6 lesson, but who pretests at Level 3, is prevented from skipping over lessons for Level 3, 4, and 5 or making repeated attempts at passing the Level 6 final quiz by guessing. These options help instructors to ensure students make some effort in grasping lesson content and improving their career readiness skills.

Reporting and Accountability

Administrators and instructors can easily generate a variety of reports to track students' progress, view usage statistics, find the quiz questions students answered incorrectly, analyze detailed data on a student or class by course, report on groups of students (e.g. all sophomores), etc.

KeyTrain reports provide accountability data administrators are often asked to produce. For example, the *Progress Report* is a powerful tool administrators can use to monitor how effectively KeyTrain is implemented in an individual teacher's class, a school, or the entire school district.

KeyTrain Workbooks

Access to computer labs can be a significant barrier to incorporating Internet and computer-based courseware into traditional instruction. In smaller schools, dedicated computer lab time can be hard to come by and limited Internet access and bandwidth may restrict the effective use of online curricula. KeyTrain workbooks allow schools to provide students instruction in the WorkKeys skills in a traditional classroom setting when computer-based instruction is restricted or infeasible. Workbooks mirror, as much as possible, the content of the Internet-based lessons in Applied Mathematics, Applied Technology, Reading for Information, Locating Information, Business Writing, and Writing. Workbooks are organized by course and lesson level. For example, the *Applied Mathematics Level 5* workbook contains content for each of the Level 5 topics – Fractions and Decimals, Percentages, Perimeter and Area, Measurement, Production Rates, and Best Deals. This workbook contains 180 pages of instruction and practice problems like the one in this example.

Instructors may download and print entire workbooks or print specific sections to use for a learning activity. Teachers typically use KeyTrain workbooks as supplement material for a lesson, as a homework or extra credit assignment, or class bell ringer activity to engage students' attention.

What is required to run KeyTrain lessons?
- An Internet connection is required, preferably a high-speed connection. KeyTrain lessons will run, but slowly, on dial-up connections. A direct, wired connection will be more stable than wireless.
- Computers with the following operating systems: Windows 98/NT 4.0/ME/2000/XP/Vista/7 or Macintosh OS X.
- Computers should have sound cards for KeyTrain's voice soundtrack. We recommend using headphones in a computer lab situation to prevent students from disturbing others.
- Internet browser software – Internet Explorer 7 or higher, the latest version of Firefox, or Google Chrome on Windows systems; the latest version of Firefox or Safari for Macintosh systems.
- KeyTrain will prompt users to download web players needed to run KeyTrain lessons on the Internet (e.g. Adobe Flash Player) if they are not already installed on the computer. For school labs, staff with administrative rights will need to download and install any web player software needed for KeyTrain.
- Microsoft Media Player version 8 (XP) or greater to display videos in the Observation course.
  (Detailed information on computer requirements, instructions for downloading software, and Internet connection recommendations can be found in the online KeyTrain Administrator manual.)

Can students take the online KeyTrain lessons at home?

Yes! Learners can sign into their KeyTrain accounts from any Internet-enabled computer whether at home, at school, in a public library, or elsewhere.

Is there a correlation between the KeyTrain curriculum and state educational standards?

Alignments between KeyTrain and several state standards in English/Language Arts, Mathematics, and other subjects have been developed. In general, there are strong alignments between KeyTrain Reading for Information, Business Writing, Listening, Writing, and Locating Information courses and many state standards in language arts. Likewise, KeyTrain Applied Mathematics aligns well with pre-Algebra I mathematics, some Geometry standards, and portions of Algebra I standards. KeyTrain Teamwork, Observation, and Applied Technology courses also have some correlation to some standards for science and social studies. For GED programs, KeyTrain has aligned its curriculum to the TABE.

Additionally, KeyTrain has created a preliminary alignment of its curriculum and the WorkKeys assessments with the standards being developed through the Common Core Standards Initiative of the National Governors Association and Council of Chief State School Officers mention earlier. Presumably, these Common Core Standards will be adopted by the 48 states involved in their development, closely tying WorkKeys and KeyTrain to student learning outcomes.

Career Ready 101 – A Comprehensive Career Readiness Curriculum

Career Ready 101 is an integrated approach to exploring careers and their skill requirements, building workplace skills using KeyTrain, and enhancing life-literacy in areas such as financial literacy, resume writing and job searching.

Building on the core KeyTrain curriculum, Career Ready 101 adds courses in career awareness and exploration, career preparation, job search, career success skills, and financial awareness. Career Ready 101 incorporates tools and activities for identifying career interests, developing a resume, creating and managing a personal budget and exploring careers through job shadowing and mentoring. The curriculum is organized in four broad units:

Introduction to Career Ready 101

Learners gain an overview of all the courses and lessons in Career Ready 101, an exploration of what it takes to become career-ready and an introduction to WorkKeys and the National Career Readiness Certificate.

Finding Your Career

This unit features lessons on career clusters, defining career interests using tools such as an embedded version of the O*NET Interest Profiler, researching occupational information and skill requirements, the job search process, job applications, resumes, interviewing skills, financial awareness and real world career experience.

KeyTrain Workplace Skills
The curriculum that helps students build and improve on the foundational skills measured by the WorkKeys job skills assessment system and certified by the National Career Readiness Certificate.

KeyTrain Career Skills
Career Skills incorporates 200 interactive lessons in Work Habits, Business Etiquette, Job Search, Communication Skills and Workplace Effectiveness. These are the personal skills individuals should master to succeed in the workplace.

Career Ready 101, like KeyTrain, is an Internet-based learning system. *In contrast to KeyTrain, Career Ready 101 includes a comprehensive set of resources that enable instructors to teach lessons in a traditional classroom or create a blended learning environment, using both online and classroom-based instruction.* PowerPoint presentations, instructional guides, exercises, handouts, and quizzes that mirror the online lessons can be downloaded and used by instructors in the classroom. The classroom-led instruction option is particularly useful for schools where student have limited access to computer labs.

Like KeyTrain, Career Ready 101 is menu-driven. The Home screen (shown to the right) links teachers to instructional tasks and resources. The **Teach** function incorporates instructional activities and resources such as creating and editing class agendas, selecting agenda courses and lessons, browsing through the curriculum, launching the interactive Internet-based lessons, acquiring PowerPoint presentations, handouts and exercises to teach an in-class lesson, and documenting grades and attendance.

Go to **Setup** to create and edit student accounts, create and manage classes, assign lessons, find print workbooks for KeyTrain, view answer keys, take lessons, or search WorkKeys job profiles.
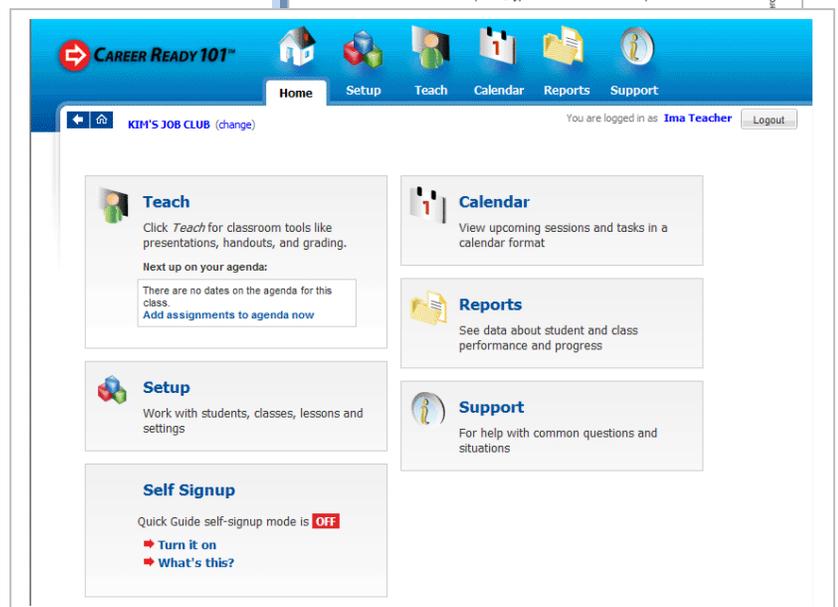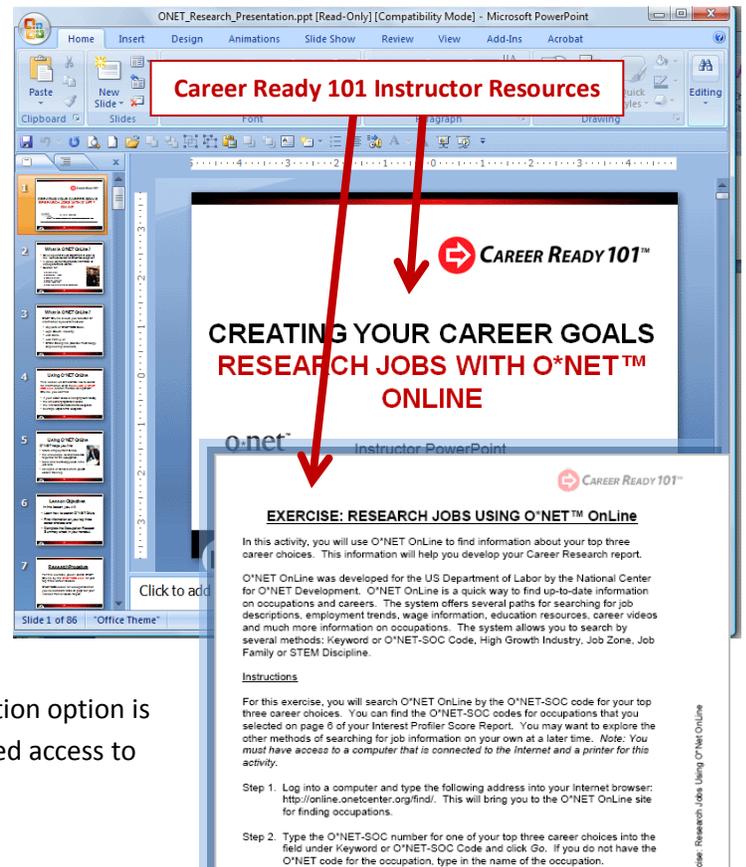
Use the **Calendar** to create and manage teaching schedules or to launch a teaching session. View and print **Reports** on individual learners, classes, groups, or the entire organization.

Go to **Support** to check a computer's setup, view or download manuals and other documents, find troubleshooting tips or contact our technical support team.

To learn more, sign up for a free Career Ready 101 webcast at www.keytrainnews.com/CR101Weekly.htm or contact your KeyTrain representative if you are interested in this curriculum for your school.

KeyTrain Implementation Strategies

Now that you know more about KeyTrain, we will examine some examples of how and why KeyTrain may be implemented in a secondary school setting. Some implementation options may apply to your school and others may not, but they each present ideas that can be transformed into action.

National Career Readiness Certification	
Target Group	High school juniors and/or seniors. Preparation for the NCRC assessments is most immediately relevant to CTE students and others who may enter the workforce soon after high school graduation. Since only about 25% of graduates go on to complete a four-year degree, however, *all students* benefit from having a nationally recognized work credential.
Purpose	Provide skill building curricula to help students achieve a National Career Readiness Certificate, giving graduates a work readiness credential to present to employers.
KeyTrain Components	KeyTrain Reading for Information, Applied Mathematics, and Locating Information courses
Method	Assign pretests for the three courses and use the Let Pretest Assign option to assign the lessons in each course students need to improve their skills. Use KeyTrain reports to document and evaluate student progress.
Instructional Options	❑ Students take the online KeyTrain lessons in school computer labs. One to three hours of dedicated computer time per week is recommended. Some schools have set aside 30 minutes per week in English (Reading for Information), math (Applied Mathematics), and social studies (Locating Information) classes for lab time. ❑ KeyTrain practice or remediation can be imbedded into teacher led English, Math, and Social Studies classes through the use of KeyTrain workbooks for the three courses. ❑ Independent study - Students work on KeyTrain lessons during study periods, at home, in after school programs, summer academics, etc.
Timeline	Ideally, preparation for the NCRC assessments should begin during the freshman year. This allows sufficient time for students to progress through KeyTrain lessons, especially if computer lab time is limited. Juniors and seniors just starting KeyTrain will need more concentrated preparation time (2 – 5 hours per week) to be ready to take the NCRC WorkKeys assessments prior to graduation.
Special Considerations	Arrange WorkKeys testing for the NCRC for students either on-site at the school or at a testing center. To locate a testing center near your school, go to http://www.act.org/certificate/locations.html. To administer WorkKeys assessments in-house, contact ACT at 1-800-WORKKEY (967-5539).

State Graduation/Exit Test Preparation	
Target Group	High school juniors and/or seniors preparing for state exit exams or graduation testing, especially academically at-risk students
Purpose	Certain demographic subgroups historically score below State averages and can be a significant factor contributing to a school's failure to meet AYP. It is imperative to identify successful strategies for remediation to increase academic performance on State exit exams used in AYP calculations. Increasing State exit exam scores will consequently increase the graduation rate and have a profound impact on the school's overall AYP status. The urgency for *needs improvement* schools to meet AYP grows increasingly prevalent with each passing year. Identifying academically at-risk students and developing individualized instruction that meets their specific needs is of utmost importance. KeyTrain is an effective and relatively inexpensive method of providing such individualized one-on-one instruction to: ❑ Improve the applied academic skills of students in English/Language Arts and Mathematics to achieve higher scores on state standardized testing. ❑ Improve school attainment of AYP goals related to standardized testing. Published research reveal that students who are most at-risk for failing high stakes accountability exams are the students who gained the most benefit from computer-based remediation. Achievement gains confirmed in these studies imply that the use of KeyTrain is the most effective for students who are most at-risk and have the most detrimental impact on the school's AYP status.
KeyTrain Components	KeyTrain Reading for Information, Writing or Business Writing, and Applied Mathematics courses. *(Note: some states administer WorkKeys Reading for Information, Applied Mathematics, **and** Locating Information as components of exit testing.)*
Method	Assign the pretests for the KeyTrain courses and use the Let Pretest Assign option to assign the lessons in each course students need to improve their skills. Use KeyTrain reports to document and evaluate student progress.
Instructional Options	❑ Students take the online KeyTrain lessons in school computer labs. One to three hours of dedicated computer time per week is recommended. Some schools have set aside 30 minutes per week in English (Reading for Information, Writing, Business Writing), math (Applied Mathematics), and social studies (Locating Information) classes for lab time. ❑ KeyTrain practice or remediation can be imbedded into teacher led English, Math, and Social Studies classes through the use of KeyTrain workbooks for Reading for Information, Applied Mathematics, Writing, Business Writing, and Locating Information. ❑ Independent study - Students work on KeyTrain lessons during study periods, at home, in after school programs, Title I school improvement programs, summer academic remediation, etc.
Timeline	Preparation for state exit exams should begin no later than the sophomore year to provide sufficient time for students to progress through KeyTrain lessons, especially if state exit testing will occur in the students' junior year. For juniors, increase hours to 2 – 5 per week.
Special Considerations	The use of KeyTrain as a test-prep strategy has been shown to improve graduation test scores in several states. Data reveal improvements in student achievement on math, English, science, social studies, and writing tests used for state graduation tests/exit exams. Test prep courses can be offered as classes for credit in many states. Check with your curriculum director or State Board of Education.

Use KeyTrain as a Stand-Alone Course	
Target Group	At-risk students; Alternative High School students; special needs and IEP students; students seeking a NCRC credential; students in Credit Recovery programs; students needing academic improvement for graduation/exit exams or preparation for standardized testing (e.g. GED, Compass, TABE, Accuplacer, etc.); applied skills for CTE students.
Purpose	In a climate of budget cuts and lack of funding for instructional positions, KeyTrain can be a cost-effective alternative to offer computer based instruction for course credit. Additionally, smaller school districts may not have the staff needed to teach all classes students need for graduation requirements. Online high school programs now operate in at least twelve states and cyber Charter schools in approximately thirty states. The demand for such programs continues to accelerate, as students and teachers gain more experience with the technology and as online teaching methods improve. Online instruction can also provide students' access to instruction that otherwise may not be available to them. Online education helps individual schools and districts expand offerings in advanced and specialty courses as well as technical, remedial, and credit-recovery courses.
KeyTrain Components	For improving academics in language and math, seek credit approval for KeyTrain Reading for Information, Writing or Business Writing, and Applied Mathematics courses. Business Writing, Listening, Observation, Teamwork, and Applied Technology courses are often incorporated in CTE programs. Combining two or more KeyTrain courses into one stand-alone course may make sense for some instructional purposes. For example, a stand-alone course for National Career Readiness Certification could include KeyTrain Applied Math, Reading, and Locating Information since assessment on those skills is required for certification.
Method	Assign the pretests for KeyTrain courses to be taught in the stand-alone course and use the Let Pretest Assign option to assign the lessons in each course students need to improve their skills. Select a teacher to act as an instructional manager, classroom/lab facilitator, and resource for students. Use KeyTrain reports to document and evaluate student progress.
Instructional Options	❑ Students take the online KeyTrain lessons in school computer labs as a regularly scheduled class for high school credit. ❑ Independent study - Students receive credit for work on KeyTrain lessons independently. The teacher tracks student progress and provides support as needed.
Timeline	Determined according to the instructional objectives and/or target student groups.
Special Considerations	Permissions and approval to offer KeyTrain for credit must be secured from state or local directors of instruction, curriculum committees, or other officials who have authority to approve awarding high school credit for online instruction. Identifying KeyTrain content that may be aligned with state educational standards can help justify the use of the online curriculum in meeting student educational outcomes. Check with your KeyTrain representative to determine if there is an alignment to your state standards. Teachers of KeyTrain as a stand-alone course should be comfortable with facilitating online instruction; familiar with KeyTrain lesson content, course options, and features; and competent in using KeyTrain to create student accounts, create classes, assign lessons, generate progress reports, and other typical instructional tasks.

Career and Technical Education	
Target Group	CTE students beginning their freshman year and continuing through the senior year as needed.
Purpose	❑ Selection of a career cluster or clusters. ❑ Use KeyTrain as an instructional resource in CTE classes ❑ Provide skill building curricula to help students achieve a National Career Readiness Certificate, giving graduates a work readiness credential to present to employers. ❑ Use KeyTrain Career Skills lessons to build the personal skills (e.g. communication) and job success skills (e.g. practicing good work habits) that students will need in a career.
KeyTrain Components	❑ Career cluster selection –KeyTrain Career Cluster lessons for each of the 16 Career Clusters. Students may select a cluster to contextualize a KeyTrain Reading, Math or Locating Information pretest. ❑ CTE instructional resource – Any of the KeyTrain courses applicable to a student's career field. For example, In addition to Reading, Math, and Locating, health science students would benefit from KeyTrain Listening, Writing, and Observation courses. ❑ NCRC prep – KeyTrain Reading for Information, Applied Math and Locating Information courses. ❑ KeyTrain Career Skills – lessons on Communication, Job Search, Work Habits, Workplace Effectiveness, and Business Etiquette.
Method	For freshmen, assign the KeyTrain introductory lessons in one or two career clusters the student declares interest in. Have students select a career cluster to contextualize KeyTrain pretests for the Reading, Math, and Locating Information. Use the Let Pretest Assign option to assign the lessons in Reading, Math, and Locating for which students need to improve their skills. Improvement in these three skills will prepare CTE students for the NCRC assessments they might take during their junior or senior year. For sophomores, assign pretests for other KeyTrain courses that complement the student's career goal. Conduct a job profile search in KeyTrain to find a WorkKeys profile that matches the student's career program (e.g. Registered Nurse or Engineering Technician) and use the Assign by Profile option to automatically assign KeyTrain courses for the profile skills. These might include Business Writing, Writing, Listening, Applied Technology, Observation, or Teamwork. Students could continue working in KeyTrain through their senior year if needed. Begin Career Skill lesson assignments in the students' sophomore year (for example, Work Habits or Communication). Junior and senior year assignments might focus on Job Search, Workplace Effectiveness, or Business Etiquette.
Instructional Options	❑ Students take the online KeyTrain lessons in school computer labs during CTE class time. One to three hours of dedicated computer time per week is recommended. ❑ KeyTrain practice or remediation can be imbedded into teacher led CTE classes through the use of KeyTrain workbooks for the three courses. ❑ Independent study - Students work on KeyTrain lessons during study periods, at home, in after school programs, summer academics, etc.
Timeline	Following the suggested method above should allow CTE students sufficient time to build WorkKeys skill competency, achieve a NCRC credential, and improve their career skills by the end of their senior year.
Special Considerations	Arrange WorkKeys testing for the NCRC for students either on-site at the school or at a testing center. To find a testing center near your school, go to http://www.act.org/certificate/locations.html. To administer WorkKeys assessments in-house, contact ACT at 1-800-WORKKEY (967-5539).

Credit Recovery	
Target Group	High school juniors and/or seniors who lack sufficient credits to graduate on time.
Purpose	Credit recovery, or credit retrieval, is usually defined as an in-school opportunity for students to earn academic credits that they have lost, or are about to lose, by failing a regular course. The goals are to prevent drop-outs, improve graduation rates, and enhance AYP outcomes.
KeyTrain Components	Focus on KeyTrain courses that align with state curriculum standards. Reading for Information, Applied Mathematics, Business Writing and Locating Information courses may provide the best alignment to state standards.
Method	Assign pretests for the selected KeyTrain courses and use the Let Pretest Assign option to assign the lessons in each course students need to improve their skills. Use KeyTrain reports to document and evaluate student progress. Use WorkKeys assessments as outcome measures for awarding credit.
Instructional Options	❑ Students take the online KeyTrain lessons in school computer labs as a component of math, English or social studies classes. Five or more hours per week is recommended, depending on the credit recovery program's specific timeline or the student's graduation date. ❑ KeyTrain practice or remediation can be imbedded into teacher led English, Math, and Social Studies classes through the use of KeyTrain workbooks for the three courses. ❑ Independent study - Students work on KeyTrain lessons during study periods, at home, in after-school or summer credit recovery programs, etc.
Timeline	The timeline will vary based on the student's scheduled graduation, the number of credits needed to graduate, availability of computer lab time for taking online lessons, and other factors.
Special Considerations	Local or state approval to use WorkKeys as an approved assessment may be needed if WorkKeys tests are used as a basis for awarding high school credit. Some schools have partnered with the local community college in delivering and managing a credit recovery program. Check with your KeyTrain representative to see if your state's standards have been aligned to KeyTrain and/or WorkKeys. Arrange WorkKeys testing for the NCRC for students either on-site at the school or at a testing center. To locate a testing center near your school, go to http://www.act.org/certificate/locations.html. To administer WorkKeys assessments in-house, contact ACT at 1-800-WORKKEY (967-5539).

Special Needs Students	
Target Group	Special education students; students with IEPs
Purpose	Special education students can have a significant impact on a school's AYP status based on the academic performance of this subgroup. Special education students can benefit from the test prep, gap skills training, NCRC prep, credit recovery, and remediation strategies previously mentioned. The purpose is to help special needs students to build foundational academic and work-readiness skills they will need in life, improve state graduation/exit test scores, and improve achievement of AYP goals that are impacted by this student group.
KeyTrain Components	Focus on KeyTrain foundational skill courses in Reading for Information, Applied Mathematics, and Locating Information.
Method	Assign pretests for the selected KeyTrain courses and use the Let Pretest Assign option to assign the lessons in each course students need to improve their skills. Use KeyTrain reports to document and evaluate student progress.
Instructional Options	❑ Students take the online KeyTrain lessons in school computer labs as a component of special education classes with teachers present to provide assistance as needed. Five or more hours per week is recommended. ❑ KeyTrain practice or remediation can be imbedded into teacher led classes through the use of KeyTrain workbooks.
Timeline	The timeline will vary based on the student's level of skill. Since KeyTrain is individualized instruction, learners work at their own pace on the skills they need to achieve learning outcomes.
Special Considerations	Results of a doctoral dissertation on the effectiveness of KeyTrain revealed that the use of computer-assisted instruction was most effective for special education students and low socioeconomic students in mathematics. In this study, special education students who used KeyTrain outperformed a control group of special education students by an average of 30 points on the Georgia High School Graduation Test. Students with learning disabilities require systematic instruction and continued practice in all facets of the curriculum. KeyTrain also includes curriculum in Beginning Skills Language and Math for foundational skills such as word recognition, alphabetical order, counting, and number sequence. These lessons have been successfully implemented in self contained mild and moderate intellectual disability classrooms with great success. These resources are also available in workbook form for classes with limited computer access. Studies have also shown that special education students who participate in a test prep course using KeyTrain prior to the state exit exams significantly out perform their peers who did not receive such remediation. Because KeyTrain provides individualized prescriptive instruction based on student pretest scores, the goals set by KeyTrain can be used as part of a student's IEP to monitor progress toward meeting goals.

English for Speakers of Other Languages	
Target Group	English Language Learners (ELL) - high school and/or adult students
Purpose	To build foundational skills in language, math, writing and other skills so students may progress in acquiring academic, work readiness, and applied skills.
KeyTrain Components	Reading for Information, Applied Mathematics, and Locating Information courses may be most appropriate for ELL students. The Level 1 and 2 lessons in these courses may be especially useful with ESOL students. Level 1 and 2 lessons in these skills include very basic skills such as recognizing sounds and words, following directions, money units, simple addition, basic graphs, or putting things in order. KeyTrain lessons include a natural voice soundtrack that reads the page text to students when they have the sound on.
Method	Assign pretests for the selected KeyTrain courses and use the Let Pretest Assign option to assign the lessons in each course students need to improve their skills. Ensure that the audio soundtrack in KeyTrain is enabled and supply students with headphones, especially in a computer lab. Use KeyTrain reports to document and evaluate student progress.
Instructional Options	❑ Students take the online KeyTrain lessons in school computer labs as a component of math, English, social studies, or classes. Five or more hours per week is recommended. ❑ KeyTrain practice or remediation can be imbedded into teacher led English, Math, and Social Studies classes through the use of KeyTrain workbooks for the three courses. ❑ Independent study - Students work on KeyTrain lessons during study periods, at home, in after-school, summer, or other special programs, etc.
Timeline	The timeline will vary based on the student's level of skill. Since KeyTrain is individualized instruction, learners work at their own pace on the skills they need to achieve learning outcomes.
Special Considerations	The use of online KeyTrain lessons is consistent with a number of ESOL teaching strategies including: ❑ providing individualized instruction ❑ providing immediate, directed feedback to enhance learning ❑ using pictorial forms in teaching concepts (e.g. maps, graphs, signs, flow charts) ❑ relating concepts to real-world application (e.g. making change, filling out a form) ❑ using multimedia to provide different stimuli ❑ speaking clearly and enunciating carefully, using natural speech ❑ using a slightly slower rate of speech ❑ using shorter, less complex sentences for students in earlier stages of learning ❑ repeating key concepts and directions (learners can replay the natural voice soundtrack as needed).

GED Preparation	
Target Group	Adult learners seeking high-school equivalency and/or skill development
Purpose	To build foundational skills in language, math, writing and other skills so students may successfully complete the GED assessments.
KeyTrain Components	Reading for Information, Applied Mathematics, Locating Information, and Business Writing courses are most useful for GED students. The Level 1 and 2 lessons in these courses may be especially useful with lower level learners. Level 1 and 2 lessons in these skills include very basic skills such as recognizing sounds and words, following directions, money units, simple addition, basic graphs, or putting things in order. KeyTrain lessons include a natural voice soundtrack that reads the page text to students when they have the sound on. Business Writing includes lessons on writing organization, persuasive writing, forming and defending an argument in writing and other topics helpful in preparing learners for the essay portion of the GED.
Method	Assign pretests for the selected KeyTrain courses and use the Let Pretest Assign option to assign the lessons in each course students need to improve their skills. Ensure that the audio soundtrack in KeyTrain is enabled for lower level learners or students who prefer to have the audio track on. Use KeyTrain reports to document and evaluate student progress.
Instructional Options	❑ Students take the online KeyTrain lessons in school computer labs during some portion of their GED classes. Five or more hours per week is recommended. ❑ KeyTrain practice or remediation can be imbedded into teacher led GED classes through the use of KeyTrain workbooks. ❑ Independent study - Students work on KeyTrain lessons during GED class, at home, at a library, or other learning center with Internet-enabled computers.
Timeline	The timeline will vary based on the student's level of skill. Since KeyTrain is individualized instruction, learners work at their own pace on the skills they need to achieve learning outcomes.
Special Considerations	KeyTrain has an alignment document for the GED. Contact your KeyTrain representative to obtain a copy. The use of online KeyTrain lessons is consistent with a number of GED teaching strategies including: ❑ providing individualized instruction ❑ providing immediate, directed feedback to enhance learning ❑ using real-world examples in teaching concepts (e.g. maps, graphs, signs, flow charts, forms) ❑ relating concepts to real-world application (e.g. reading work instructions, calculating the best deal, writing clear messages) ❑ using multimedia to provide different stimuli ❑ providing a natural voice soundtrack to support comprehension ❑ utilizing writing strategies e.g. pre-writing, outlining, revising, proof-reading, etc.

KeyTrain Integration in Core Curriculum	
Target Group	Students in regular high school classes
Purpose	Incorporate the use of KeyTrain curriculum into course syllabi and lesson plans as an integrated component of traditional high school classes. KeyTrain can serve as a resource for improving foundational skills in language, math, writing and other academic skills and applying those skills in a work context.
KeyTrain Components	The KeyTrain® curriculum can be integrated within the scope and sequence of traditional high school classes in the following areas: ▪ Reading for information – English/Language Arts classes ▪ Applied Mathematics – Math classes ▪ Locating Information – Science and Social Studies classes ▪ Applied Technology – Engineering, Technology, physical science, and physics classes ▪ Business Writing – Business and English classes ▪ Listening, Observation , Teamwork – CTE classes (foundation skills) ▪ Writing – English/Language Arts classes ▪ Career Skills and Finding Your Career – CTE classes While all nine KeyTrain courses have been used as components in traditional classes, those most frequently integrated are Reading for Information, Writing or Business Writing, Applied Mathematics, and Locating Information.
Method	Assign pretests for the selected KeyTrain courses and use the Let Pretest Assign option to assign the lessons in each course students need to improve their skills. Use KeyTrain reports to document and evaluate student progress. In some schools, a percentage of the student's grade (e.g. 10%) is based on progress and skill level improvement in KeyTrain.
Instructional Options	❑ Students take the online KeyTrain lessons in school computer labs. One to three hours of dedicated computer time per week is recommended. Some schools have set aside 30 minutes per week in English (Reading for Information), math (Applied Mathematics), and social studies (Locating Information) classes for lab time. ❑ KeyTrain practice or remediation can be imbedded into teacher led English, Math, Social Studies, Business Writing, or some CTE classes through the use of KeyTrain workbooks. ❑ Independent study - Students may work on KeyTrain lessons during study periods or at home.
Timeline	Since KeyTrain is individualized instruction, students in the same class will be at different skill levels in the KeyTrain courses. The timeline will vary based on instructional goals, student performance, availability of computer labs, and other factors.
Special Considerations	The alignment of KeyTrain to state standards aids in integrating the KeyTrain curriculum in traditional courses. Check with your KeyTrain representative to see if an alignment has been done for your state. Teachers using KeyTrain as an integrated component should complete user training; be familiar with KeyTrain lesson content, course options, and features; and competent in using KeyTrain to create student accounts, create classes, assign lessons, generate progress reports, and other typical instructional tasks.

Overcoming Obstacles to an Effective KeyTrain Implementation

Obtain Permissions and Buy-In

School wide improvement initiatives require substantial stakeholder buy in. *First, meet with administrators at the school and district level to obtain permission to implement KeyTrain.* The permissions required will depend on the application being implemented. Diagnostic testing, test preparation, remediation, imbedded curriculum, CTE integration, National Career Readiness Certification preparation, GED, and special education applications would probably require only local school level permissions. Implementing KeyTrain as stand-alone course or for credit recovery programs will also require local and state board of education approval. Permission to offer KeyTrain for course credit would require significant research into KeyTrain curriculum correlations to state approved curriculum for specific courses.

In addition, obtaining faculty buy-in will be critical for an effective implementation. Thoroughly explain the need for and use of KeyTrain. If possible, preview some of the KeyTrain Reading for Information, Applied Mathematics, or other course lessons with key faculty so they can have a better grasp of curriculum content and how it may complement classroom learning. If the faculty is not behind the process, it will not be successful. Teachers are more likely to implement KeyTrain in their classes if they are involved partners in the planning stages of the school improvement initiative. Collaboration creates a feeling of ownership and pride in the process as a whole and promotes continuity and buy-in among all stakeholders. Careful planning and execution ensure that all stakeholders clearly understand the educational goals and expected outcomes of KeyTrain® implementation.

Don't neglect seeking student buy-in. Explain and demonstrate how implementing KeyTrain can benefit students and is relevant to their eventual transition into a career. Show how KeyTrain can help students achieve a National Career Readiness Certificate and how the NCRC can be used as a work readiness credential they can present to potential employers. Or, use the Job Profile database in KeyTrain to point out the WorkKeys skills and skill levels that are needed for common occupations such as nurse, accountant, secretary, mechanic, salesperson, dental assistant, engineer, etc. If a local employer in your area uses WorkKeys in hiring or accepts the NCRC credential, ask a representative to talk with students about the importance of the work readiness skill the WorkKeys assessments measure. If students understand how KeyTrain can help, the implementation should be more easily achieved.

Integrate KeyTrain with State Standards

If an alignment with state standards does not exist, make the effort to correlate the KeyTrain learning objectives to the state standards for each subject area. Aligning KeyTrain to standards is a detailed and meticulous process that must be completed before implementing KeyTrain into a school's curriculum. Such an alignment would likely be a required component of any proposal presented to school and district administrators to obtain permissions, especially for credit recovery and stand-alone course implementations. Based on AYP accountability measures, Applied Mathematics, Reading for Information, Business Writing and/or Writing will have the most direct correlation for preparing students for state exit exams. However, the Locating Information

and Applied Technology curriculum are applicable for social studies, science, and technology course, so they might be included in the standards alignment. In addition, correlate KeyTrain to the objectives for the state exit exam or graduation test for your state. Examples of alignments between KeyTrain and state curriculum standards are available for some states. Check with your state KeyTrain representative to see if an alignment is available for your state.

Work through Scheduling Concerns

With recent budget cuts and lack of funding for instructional positions, KeyTrain can be an effective alternative for instruction for course credit. Smaller school districts may not have the staff needed to teach all the classes students need for graduation requirements. Flexibility in scheduling and seat time waivers can dramatically increase course offerings and provide schools with more options for credit recovery and stand-alone courses. Many states require a certified teacher to be the teacher of record for any course for which students will receive credit. This may cause scheduling constraints for credit recovery courses or stand alone courses that are built into the regular school day. Check with your state's board of education to determine the policies regarding awarding credit for courses and teacher certification in your state.

While workbooks are available for several KeyTrain courses, computer access is a major scheduling concern. For maximum effectiveness, students should have between two and six hours per week of computer access for KeyTrain use depending on the application. Credit recovery and stand-alone course implementations will require dedicated computer access, while the other integrated applications could use a hybrid workbook and online approach depending on the availability of and access to computers in the school. Credit recovery can be implemented as a class built into the regular school day, or offered as part of a school's extended day or after school programs. Students can also work on KeyTrain at home or at any Internet-connected computer to recover credits from a previously failed course.

Classroom time is often dedicated to teaching to state standards, and teachers have little, if any, flexibility in instructional schedules. Administrators and faculty must agree on a strategy for integrating the use of KeyTrain into traditional courses that supports instructional objectives and can be reasonably accomplished. If KeyTrain is to be incorporated into existing classes:

- ✓ decide which classes will integrate KeyTrain into lesson plans,
- ✓ determine the number of hours students will work on KeyTrain lessons,
- ✓ select the KeyTrain courses to assign to students, and
- ✓ schedule the dedicated computer lab time needed.

Training and Professional Development

An effective implementation of KeyTrain requires extensive professional development training. Provide the time and resources needed to train instructors and administrators involved in the implementation in the use of KeyTrain. Select a staff person to be the KeyTrain expert, someone who can train other faculty and be a local

resource when they have questions or problems. Use the *Guide to KeyTrain* as an instructional tool for local training. KeyTrain training programs for instructors should be designed to:

- ✓ introduce the WorkKeys system to teachers and how it relates to student career success,
- ✓ provide an overview of the local implementation strategy,
- ✓ share available information on alignments of KeyTrain to state standards,
- ✓ inform teachers about available KeyTrain courses and other instructional resources and how to best use them,
- ✓ instruct staff in setting up student accounts, creating and managing classes, and assigning lessons to classes or individual students,
- ✓ show how reports can be used to evaluate student/class progress and intervene as needed, and
- ✓ address scheduling concerns, computer resources, or other questions.

Be Creative, Innovate!

Explore creative uses of KeyTrain resources, such as providing longer and more varied blocks of instructional time or designing flexible teacher schedules and work definitions. Reforms in resource use can become an integral part of school-wide reform initiatives and collaborations. Research indicates that the best use of resources and financial resources dramatically changes given the size, demographic, socioeconomic, and geographic profile of the school or district. While there are fiscal and logistical issues involved in implementing creative KeyTrain resource schemes, research has shown that such restructuring can have dramatic impacts on student achievement through (1) creative reallocation of existing resources; (2) consideration of successful whole-school reform models; and (3) securing non-traditional revenues and new funding streams, especially in smaller and rural schools where there more considerable financial constraints exist.

Implementation Success Stories

NORWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND MECOSTA VALLEY SCHOOLS, COLORADO – Credit Recovery

Challenges:
- Help hard-working students gain credits and demonstrate that they have the skills to graduate
- Help students raise their career readiness skills
- Allow students to demonstrate that they have 21st Century work readiness skills

Actions:
- Create credit recovery programs that include WorkKeys® and KeyTrain®, among other components
- Create alternate paths to regular diplomas or performance diplomas

Results:
- Students with the credits to graduate
- Students who demonstrate career readiness skills and are certified in career readiness
- 100% return on investment for KeyTrain

If you ask Wendy Crank, School Counselor at Norwood Public Schools, why she likes their credit recovery program, she'll tell you that it provides a second chance for students who are short of credits for various reasons. She'll also let you know that if they don't work hard in the program, they won't get a third chance. "Our program provides a safety net for hard working students. If students don't put the effort into our program, we know it's their personal choice and not the school system letting them slip through the cracks" Crank says.

The program to which she refers is the Key Performance Academy at Norwood Public Schools R2-JT in Norwood, CO. Among other important components, the program uses KeyTrain and WorkKeys to help students earn a "performance diploma" – one that shows the students can perform at the levels of a high school graduate.

A similar, and similarly titled, program (the Key Performance program) is also at work in Colorado in Mecosta Valley School District 51. Cathy Haller, the Prevention Services Coordinator for the district explains that while they do use KeyTrain and WorkKeys as a way for high school students to get elective credits, their Key Performance program is a more robust course that provides an alternate pathway for a regular diploma – not a pathway for an alternate diploma.

The programs:
The programs at Mecosta Valley and Norwood each include a rigorous approach that requires portfolio work as well as fairly high scores on nine WorkKeys assessments. In each case, students must demonstrate that they are ready to graduate by presenting portfolios and showing skills, such as job interviewing, to the school board, board of education, community members, or a combination thereof.

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Multiple Benefits of KeyTrain

In both programs, KeyTrain is used to help students prepare for the fairly stringent required scores in WorkKeys. Requirements are: Reading for Information: 5, Applied Mathematics: 5, Locating Information: 4, Applied Technology: 4, Teamwork: 3, Observation: 4, Listening: 3, Writing: 3, and Business Writing: 3.

According to Ms. Crank, KeyTrain is a very effective tool in helping the students achieve these levels. In addition, it is useful in monitoring whether or not students are working. "We had one student who would simply sit at the computer, log in to KeyTrain, and then do other things. Luckily KeyTrain can tell whether students are working or not – and it only records their time if they are. We were able to identify that this student was not working and address the issue."

Though not a formal study, she also noted anecdotally that all students who used KeyTrain in their program raised their scores on the ACT college entrance exam by at least two points. In one case, a student raised his ACT Science score by five points.

Ms. Haller notes that KeyTrain helps her students as well. "The students like to use KeyTrain and after using it, they invariably pass the WorkKeys assessments requirements for the program."

Success

The Mecosta Valley School District Key Performance program helped 22 students gain high school diplomas in 2009. "Our success is definitely part of the school's scorecard and helps with AYP" says Haller.

Ms. Crank at Norwood sites several success stories that demonstrate what the program can do…one of which resulted in funding that completely paid for the KeyTrain software!

One student, who had transferred from a much larger school in Colorado, came to Norwood with F's and worked hard enough to raise his grades to B's and C's. Even with the student's diligence, it became obvious that he would not have enough credits to graduate – and given his demonstrated dedication, he became a good candidate for the Key Performance Academy. He was able to demonstrate to the school board that he was learning 21st Century skills. By using KeyTrain he passed all the WorkKeys requirements. He was able to raise his overall ACT score by two points and he created an impressive portfolio (another program requirement) in "The Arts" by learning the guitar, creating a lesson plan, and beginning to teach the instrument to others.

Return on Investment

Ms. Crank explains, "We receive state funding based on enrollment – approximately $10,000 per student. By saving this single student, our school received enough funding to completely pay for the KeyTrain software. And the great part is that we can use KeyTrain for as many students as we wish."

BALDWIN COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL, GA – State Graduation Testing

A study was conducted at Baldwin County High School to evaluate how using KeyTrain impacted the performance of at-risk students on the Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHST). The results revealed that the KeyTrain remediation course had a dramatic effect in improving the academic performance of students who used KeyTrain for test preparation on the mathematics and English/language arts sections of the GHST. The most significant gains were seen for special education, low socio-economic, and African-American student groups on the mathematics section of the graduation test as summarized below:

GHSGT Math

Population	% KeyTrain Users Passing	% Non-KeyTrain Users Passing
At-Risk	94%	57%
African American	93%	59%
Special Education	90%	27%
Low Socio-Economic	93%	36%

GHSGT English/Language Arts

Population	% KeyTrain Users Passing	% Non-KeyTrain Users Passing
At-Risk	96%	76%
African American	93%	77%
Special Education	94%	50%
Low Socio-Economic	97%	65%

Source: Dockery, J. (2006). The Effectiveness of Computer-Assisted Instruction in Preparing Academically At-Risk Students for the Georgia High School Graduation Test.

DOWNERS GROVE, IL – Prairie State Achievement Exam Preparation

Challenges:
- Help students raise their Reading for Information scores on the PSAE
- To integrate the teaching of these skills into Downers Grove South (DGS) High School
- To help teachers and administrators understand the value of raising Reading for Information scores

Actions:
- Use KeyTrain as the basis for a larger instructional strategy
- Train all key departments about the impact of WorkKeys scores in the PSAE

Results:
- Increase in PSAE composite scores
- Increase in Reading for Information scores
- Increase in PSAE reading scores
- Increase in ACT reading component scores

The Prairie State Achievement Exam is given to all high school juniors in Illinois. Among other components, it includes WorkKeys Reading for Information, Applied Mathematics, and the ACT college entrance exam.

Downers Grove South High School, in Downers Grove, Illinois, took a very deliberate approach to using KeyTrain for improving PSAE scores in their school. Obtaining KeyTrain and making it available to all students was just the first step in a program designed to drive PSAE scores up. Their process for an implementation that was focused on producing real results was in three steps:

1. **Training**
2. **Implementation**
3. **Effectiveness** (measurement)

Training and the importance of increasing WorkKeys scores

First, they felt it vital to train all key personnel about the KeyTrain program and the importance of improving PSAE scores. In an all-inclusive approach, the school trained their personnel from English & Communications, Mathematics, Special Services, Applied Arts and Technology, and ACT Preparation departments. While instruction about how to use KeyTrain was provided, a key component of the training was simply about the importance of increasing WorkKeys scores on the PSAE. Chris Mazur, Reading Specialist at Downers Grove South, notes the impact that an increase in WorkKeys score can have. "An increase in one level can have a profound effect – it can very quickly move a student's PSAE score from the *below standard* category to the *meets standard* category" says Mazur.

For example, according calculations presented by Mazur and others, a student with a score of 11 on the ACT Reading section and a score of 5 on WorkKeys Reading for Information would move from *below standard* to *meets standard* by increasing the WorkKeys score by one level. In comparison, the same student would have to increase the ACT score by 6 points – to a 17 in order to achieve the same category jump (see table below).

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ACT	WorkKeys 5	WorkKeys 6
11	145-151	153-159
12	147-153	155-161
13	149-154	157-162
14	150-156	158-164
15	152-157	160-165
16	153-158	161-166
17	154-159	162-167

**One level increase on WorkKeys
Six point increase on ACT**

PSAE Score
Below Standard

PSAE Score
Meets Standard

Further, **highly skilled academic students are encouraged to prepare for WorkKeys.** Mazur points out that a student with an ACT score of 25 and a WorkKeys score of 6 in Reading for Information is *meets standards* – but by raising the WorkKeys score to a 7 can achieve a PSAE score that *exceeds standards.*

Implementation

With a focus on using the system appropriately, KeyTrain was integrated into an instructional sequence designed to drive learning and mastery of the WorkKeys skills. The first skill to be integrated was Reading for Information which is taught in all English courses, all Reading Support courses, Test Preparation, and Applied Arts & Technology. The departments share time in teaching the WorkKeys skill Reading for Information in Freshman, Sophomore, and Junior class periods. According to Mazur, "KeyTrain is a valuable tool, but some people may misuse it by introducing it too soon in an instructional sequence or by not supporting it with other efforts." He presents the instructional sequence (at right) for teaching Reading for Information in Downers Grove South High School.

Within this structure, students are taken through a learning path that begins in their freshman year. For Reading for Information, the flow is shown in this graphic.

KeyTrain Instructional Sequence
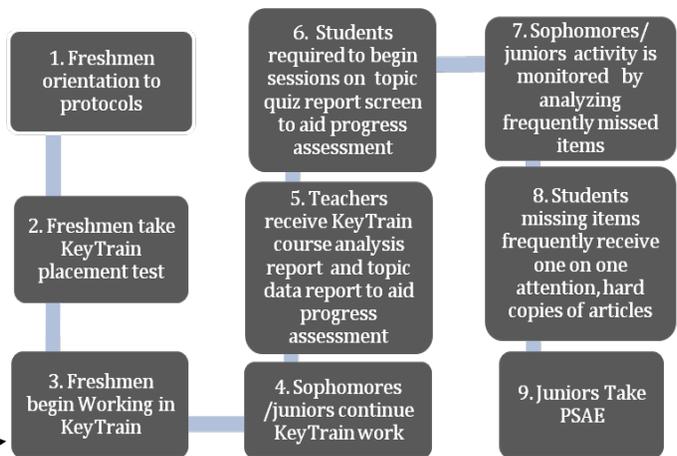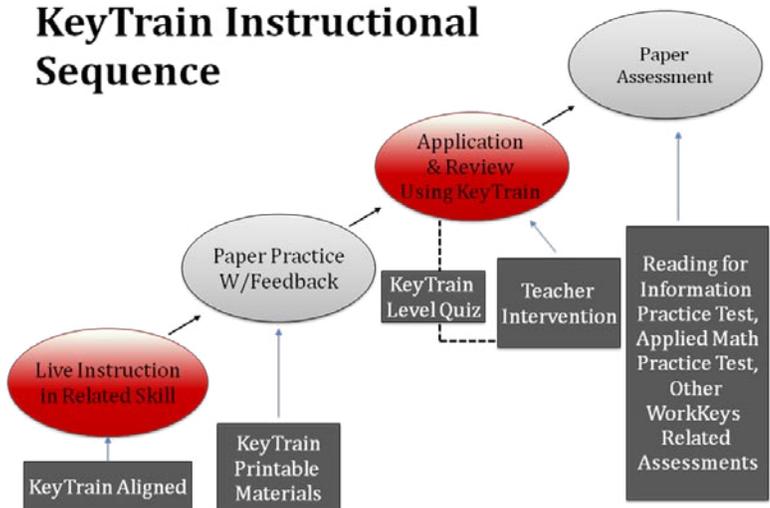
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Effectiveness

After the first year of the implementation, DGS has seen positive results. The school saw an increase in:

1. Their composite PSAE score

2. Their average PSAE reading score (other than WorkKeys)

3. Their ACT test reading scores

4. Their WorkKeys Reading for Information scores

SCORE INCREASES	2007-2008	2008-2009
PSAE PSAE Reading	68.5% 63.1%	69.1% 70.1%
ACT Reading Scores	21.49	22.0
WorkKeys Reading for Information	5.08	(all improvement in sub-groups)

In a situation where incremental increases can mean the difference between meeting goals and missing them, such results are significant. The school plans to integrate the teaching of WorkKeys Applied Mathematics in a similar fashion.