

SECTION III: WHAT SKILLS DO STUDENTS NEED TO SUCCEED?

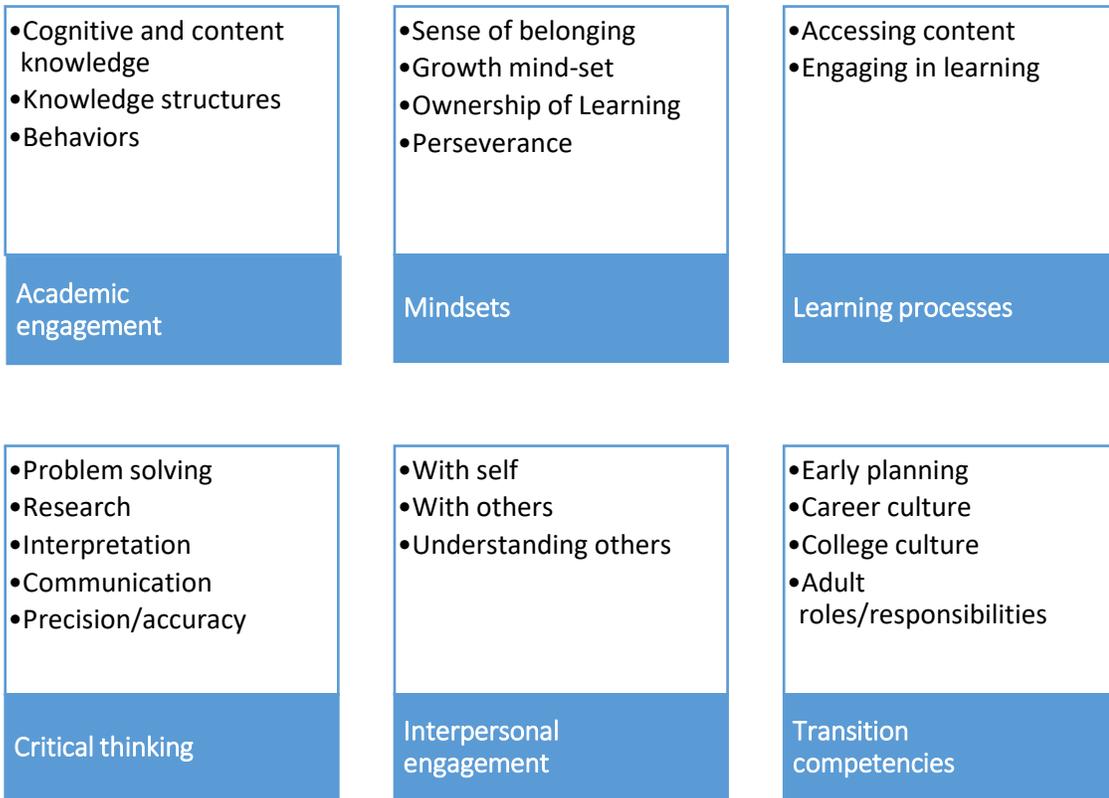
What academic skills are important for student success in college or training after high school?

Students need to be fluent readers with proficient comprehension skills, have a mastery of written language, and be able to apply math content knowledge to a variety of scenarios to be academically successful in college. Data from the 2017 Condition of College and Career Readiness National Report published by ACT indicated only 27% of all students tested met all four college and career readiness standards (i.e., English, Math, Reading, and Science). Other skills, named by Morningstar and colleagues (2015) as “academic engagement” include ability to link factual knowledge and organize concepts across content areas, as well as behaviors such as attendance, productivity, and class participation. Additionally, these authors also named “critical thinking” skills such as hypothesizing solutions and collecting, analyzing, and synthesizing various kinds of data as important academic skills for success in college and careers.

Basic, and certainly coordinated and comprehensive disability services, typically address these skills once students are on campus. However, it is still important that high school special education teachers and IEP teams also ensure the development and mastery of these academic skills for students planning to attend postsecondary education or training beyond high school. Effective practices to teach academic skills to students with disabilities have been identified by NTACTION and [Practice Descriptions and Lesson Plans](#) to guide instruction are available.

What “non-academic” skills are important for college readiness and success?

Morningstar et al. (2015) also identified skills deemed non-academic – or certainly not explicitly academic. These skills include processes for learning content and application such as organization, test- and note-taking, and technology skills. Additionally, authors identified “mindsets” such as a sense of belonging, a growth mindset, ownership of learning, and perseverance. Additionally, interpersonal engagement, as well as transition competencies, including an understanding of college culture and adult responsibilities are each associated with college readiness. An adaptation of this framework is depicted below.



Adaptation from Morningstar, Lombardi, Fowler, & Test, 2015.

Measuring and identifying students' strengths and needs in these academic and non-academic skill areas should be part of PSET preparation. Collecting these data should be documented as part of the [transition assessment](#) process. Transition services for specific instruction to address specific skill deficits would be appropriate. Additionally, the student's SOP could denote strengths and needs in these areas, which could assist a young person in communicating to VR, disability services, or even a tutor about the supports that might benefit their performance in college.