



Teacher Guide

College and Career Competency: *Assertiveness*

Definition:

Assertiveness may be defined as the ability to express one’s beliefs, wants, or feelings in a self-assured and direct manner. Assertiveness is a marker of **self-efficacy** and a key component of self-advocacy (Test, Fowler, Wood, Brewer, & Eddy, 2005). Researchers and educators consider assertiveness to be an essential skill for adolescents, as it can help them engage in effective interpersonal behaviors that contribute to their academic success and social development (Buell & Snyder, 1981; Lane, Wehby, & Cooley, 2006).

Essential Components for Students:

1. Establish and adhere to personal boundaries.
2. Express personal wants, needs, and opinions.
3. Respect the rights of others.

Research:

- Assertiveness is part of a complex set of social skills that allow children to engage in effective interpersonal **communication**. When those skills are lacking, children can become withdrawn, resulting in school maladjustment and high unemployment as adults (Buell & Snyder, 1981).
- Researchers have found that elementary and middle school teachers, as well as teachers at high-risk high schools, view assertiveness as important for school success because this skill helps students seek assistance or look for educational opportunities (Lane et al., 2006). Programs oriented toward social and emotional learning (SEL) help students develop assertiveness and other competencies that are found to be important for success in the workplace. SEL programs with school-based curriculum have proven most effective when they are comprehensive and span multiple years (Opengart, 2007).
- Assertiveness is an important and sought-after personal attribute for an array of professions, including nursing, education, and law enforcement. Grove, Hussey, and Jetter (2011) demonstrate that assertiveness, particularly in the context of a business environment, often has a direct bearing on an individual’s professional achievements and rate of pay.
- Paglia and Room’s (1999) review of literature on adolescent substance abuse programs and interventions shows that protective assertiveness—an individual’s ability to say no—is one of the most important tools for avoiding drug abuse and addiction. Assertiveness training videos have been shown to help high school students resist peer pressure to use drugs and respond to provocation using assertive, as opposed to aggressive, behaviors (Brenner, Head, Helms, Williams, & Williams, 2003; Hecht, Corman, & Miller-Rassulo, 1993; Polansky, Buki, Horan, Ceperich, & Burows, 1999). In recent years, videos such as “Standing Tall: Learning Assertiveness Skills” (Human Relations Media, 2006) and “Play It out: How to Be Assertive” (Mazzarella, 2010) have proven helpful in providing assertiveness training.



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- When adolescents lack **self-efficacy** (i.e., belief in one’s capabilities), the ability to establish appropriate boundaries, and the willingness to act in a resolute fashion, they run an increased risk of engaging in unhealthy sexual behavior. Numerous studies demonstrate that assertiveness matters when it comes to issues like condom use and the prevention of unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases among adolescents (Tschann, Flores, de Groat, Deardorff, & Wibbelsman, 2010; Schmid, Leonard, Ritchie, & Gwadz, 2015).
- Research indicates that assertiveness training and related problem-based learning can reduce instances of bullying and feelings of anxiety and anger among those adolescents who have been targeted by bullies (Buell & Snyder, 1981; Hall, 2006). Assertiveness training can also reduce the likelihood of sexual coercion or assault. For example, *My Voice, My Choice*, a 90-minute virtual reality training that teaches assertive resistance, has proven effective in building participants’ capacity to resist sexual and psychological victimization (Rowe, Jouriles, & McDonald, 2015). According to Thompson, Bundy, and Wolfe (1996), the most effective assertiveness training programs include both instruction and practice in applying assertiveness in the context of specific social situations that students may encounter.
- Research shows that improving high school students’ understanding of assertiveness through guided practice helps them seek assistance and supports, as well as future educational and career opportunities (Wolfe, Crooks, Chiodo, Hughes, & Ellis, 2012; Buell & Snyder, 1981; Lane et al., 2006).
- Teaching students to be assertive prepares them to advocate for themselves and their dreams, resist peer pressure, and work to resolve interpersonal conflicts (Paglia & Room, 1999; Wolfe et al., 2012).

Assessments:

- The Rathus Assertiveness Schedule (RAS), one of the most widely used assessments, is a 30-item instrument that uses a six-point Likert scale to measure characteristics associated with aggressiveness and assertiveness (Rathus, 1973). The RAS measures both the impression that the respondent makes on other people and behaviors in specific situations where assertiveness and outgoing behavior are necessary (Rathus, 1973). Individuals completing the survey are asked to what degree they agree with statements such as “Most people seem to be more aggressive and assertive than I am” or “I am open and frank about my feelings.” See: http://www.cengage.com/resource_uploads/downloads/0495092746_63633.pdf.
- A quick self-report test on assertiveness is available at *Psychology Today* (2015): http://psychologytoday.tests.psychtests.com/take_test.php?idRegTest=3195. Note that follow-up reports are offered for a fee.
- The Assertiveness Scale for Adolescents (ASA) is a 33-item instrument designed for students in grades 6 to 12 (Lee, Hallberg, Slemon, & Haase, 1985). The 33 items are interpersonal situations where the student chooses one of three provided options, which are classified as assertive, unassertive, and aggressive/passive aggressive. Each answer that is classified as “assertive” is scored as one point, so that a student’s “assertiveness score” can range from 0 to 33 (with higher scores reflecting greater assertiveness). A copy of the instrument is included in *Measures for Clinical Practice and Research: A sourcebook (2013), 5th edition, Volume 1 Couples, Families and Children*. Kevin Corcoran & Joel Fischer editors. Oxford University Press.



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- The Adaptive and Aggressive Assertiveness Scales (AAA-S) is an instrument that has been used successfully with college students (Thompson & Berenbaum, 2011). It is made up of 19 scenarios that represent everyday situations, and measures adaptive assertiveness and aggressive assertiveness. The student is asked to indicate how they would react in the situation, from 1 (never) to 5 (always). An example of a scenario is included below.
 - “9. If someone I know well says something that hurts my feelings, I... (a) would tell him/her off; (b) provide evidence why the comment was incorrect” (Thompson & Berenbaum, 2011, p. 332).

Instructional Practices:

- The Arizona Department of Education (ADE) website provides a lesson for teaching assertiveness as part of their *Mini Merging Two Worlds* (2005) curriculum. The curriculum is part of ADE’s transition and career planning resources. Other lessons include “The Power of Goals.” The lesson “Be Connected/Be Assertive” can be accessed from <http://www.azed.gov/special-education/files/2012/02/mini-m2w-chapter-3-lesson-7.pdf>.
- The Resiliency Resource Centre is an Australian website for teachers and parents that provides information on resiliency and how to cultivate it in children. The resources include a table (below) that summarizes four types of **communication** styles, which can be used in role-playing activities with students to develop assertiveness. More information can be found at http://www.embracethefuture.org.au/resiliency/index.htm?http://www.embracethefuture.org.au/resiliency/social_skills.htm (Mental Health Foundation of Australia, 2014).

	Body language	Voice	Words
Aggressive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physically standing over the other person • Puffed out chest • Shaking one’s fist or pointing one’s finger • Getting too close (being “in someone’s face.”) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shouting • Scornful, harsh • Bullying, haranguing tone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abuse (“You’re pathetic!”) • Generalisation (“You never...”) • Personalisation (“You’re just a selfish person.”) • Sarcasm (“Well, Mr. Perfect...”) • Put-downs (“What would you know about...”)
Passive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collapsed posture • No eye contact • Turned away from other person • Twisted, awkward limbs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inaudible • Quavering • Weak, squeaky tone • Uncertain intonation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capitulation (“OK, whatever you want.”) • Excessive apology • Self-recrimination (“I’m such an idiot.”)
Passive-Aggressive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Averted eyes • Sulking, hostile or bored expression • Crossed arms • Closed posture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Muttering • “Robotic”, insincere or hostile tone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feigned indifference (“Whatever!”) • Insincere agreement (“Fine!”) • Silence or grunts
Assertive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level, eye to eye contact • Upright, open posture • Feet solidly planted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Firm • Clear and audible • Reasonable tone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sticks to the point • Makes point rationally • “I” statements • Takes responsibility for self

- The 24-minute video “Standing Tall: Learning Assertiveness Skills” (Human Relations Media, 2006) targets grades 5-9. It provides practical tips for developing assertiveness and is available for \$129.95 from <http://www.hrmvideo.com/catalog/standing-tall-learning-assertiveness-skills>.
- The 20-minute video “Play It out: How to Be Assertive” (Mazzarella, 2010) is available for \$149 from <http://mazz.com/product/play-it-out-how-to-be-assertive-sticking-up-for-yourself>.



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- The Centre for Clinical Interventions has created a comprehensive series of modules related to learning assertive behaviors (Michel, 2008). Broken into 10 parts, the series contains modules designed for adults on “How to think more assertively” and “How to deal assertively with criticism,” among other topics. The series is available for free at http://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/resources/infopax.cfm?Info_ID=51.
- Fiedler and Danneker (2007) describe several curricula and instructional strategies for teaching self-advocacy skills, including assertiveness, designed for students with disabilities.
 - Next S.T.E.P.: Student Transition and Educational Planning (Halpern, Herr, Doren, & Wolf, 2000) consists of 16 lessons that are grouped into four units: 1-Getting Started, 2-Self-Exploration and Self-Evaluation, 3-Developing Goals and Activities, 4-Putting a Plan in Place. The lessons include materials for students and teachers as well as suggestions for family involvement. For more information, see <http://www.proedinc.com/customer/productView.aspx?ID=3485>.
 - TAKE CHARGE for the Future (Powers et al., 1996) uses skill facilitation, mentoring, peer support, and parent support to build adolescents’ self-determination and transition planning skills. The program includes biweekly 50-minute coaching sessions and monthly 2-hour community-based workshops for students, parents, and mentors over a four-month period (Test, Fowler, Brewer, & Wood, 2005).
 - The Self-Advocacy & Conflict Resolution Training (SACR) has been successfully applied as an intervention for African American high school students with disabilities (Walker & Test, 2011). The SACR training can be administered individually or in a group, and includes lessons on teaching students how to request accommodations in their courses that can be reinforced with role-play (Walker & Test, 2011).
- The Self-Advocacy Strategy (Van Reusen, Bos, Schumaker, & Deshler, 2007) helps students prepare for and participate in transition planning conferences. It is available from http://www.edgeenterprisesinc.com/products.php?category_id=10&subcategory_id=20.

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Assertiveness Questionnaire

Please **CHECK ONE** response that best describes you. Be honest, since the information will be used to help you in school and also help you become more prepared for college and careers. There are no right or wrong answers!

Student ID _____

Date _____

	Not very like me → Very like me				
	1	2	3	4	5
1. I stand up to my friends if they are doing something I don't feel comfortable doing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. To be honest, people often take advantage of me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I have personal boundaries like "no cheating off my homework" or "I won't let friends borrow money."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. If someone was upsetting me, I would keep my feelings to myself rather than politely remove myself from the situation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I often have a hard time saying "No."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I express my opinions, even if others disagree with me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. When an argument is over, I often wish I would have said what was really on my mind.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I tend to just go along with what everyone else wants, instead of stating my own thoughts.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. I sometimes avoid asking questions for fear of sounding stupid.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. I tend to bottle up my emotions rather than talk about my feelings.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. If I disagree with my teacher, I talk to him or her about it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. If a person has borrowed money (or a game, clothes, or something else of value) and is overdue in returning it, I talk to the person about it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. I generally express how I feel.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. If my food order is wrong, I will return it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. I tend to lose my temper and swear at people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. I tend to yell at people when I don't get my way.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. I am careful to avoid hurting other people's feelings, even when I feel that I have been wronged.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. I am very careful to avoid attacking someone's intelligence when I disagree with their ideas.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. I appreciate other people's opinions, even if I disagree with them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. In discussions, I restate what others said to make sure I understood them correctly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. In discussions, I communicate that I am listening through body language (nodding my head, eye contact).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22. Even in an argument, I don't interrupt the other person.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Assertiveness

What I WILL or WON'T do...
What others CAN or CAN'T do to me...

1

Know my boundaries!

I want...

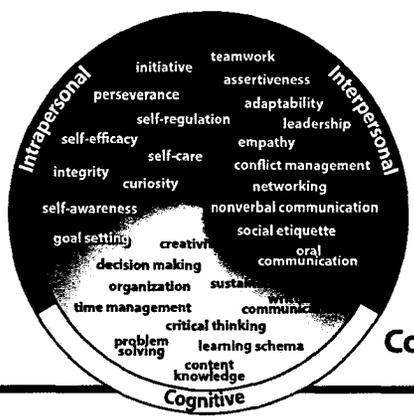
2

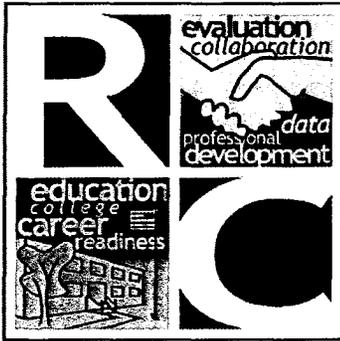
Express what I want, need, & think!

I think...

3

Respect what others want, need, & think!





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HOME

College and Career Competency Student Questionnaires

Welcome to the online portal for administering student questionnaires on a variety of college and career competencies. This portal was developed for teachers, counselors, administrators, and other staff who are helping students better understand how to develop and enhance a variety of competencies which, research has shown, can increase a student's achievement in college and in their future careers.

By creating a login, you will be directed to the *My Portfolio* page, where you will be able to name and launch questionnaires to groups of students so that they can better understand their development of these skills. Additionally, as the questionnaire administrator, you will receive summarized results by domain in real time so that you can customize instruction for college and career competencies.

After completing a survey, students will see their own results, helping them to reflect on how proficient they are at various components of a competency.

How to Administer the Questionnaires to Students

In *My Portfolio*, after you select a questionnaire and assign it a unique name you will be given a unique web link and short code. Have students click on the link and enter the code.

Some things to know:

- Students do not need an account to complete questionnaires, only a unique student ID and the link/code generated for each questionnaire you create.
- Emphasize to students that this questionnaire is for them to improve their understanding about the competency, and it will not be used for a grade.
- The questionnaires are each 22-28 items, and should take students approximately 5-8 minutes to complete.
- Students receive results immediately upon completion of the questionnaire, at which point they can print their scores

- or take a screen shot.
- You will have access in *My Portfolio* to summarized results as well as a table of individual student results.

The video below will guide you step-by-step through the process of creating, administering, and viewing results from your questionnaires.

How to Use: researchcollaborationsurveys.org



How to Begin Launching Questionnaires

- If you are a new user, **[CLICK HERE](#)**.
- If you already have an account, **[CLICK HERE](#)** to log in.

Once you are logged in, you will be redirected to *My Portfolio* where you will be able to add a survey or view surveys that you already created.

[Home](#) [Contact](#) [Login](#)



College and Career Competency Questionnaire: Student Version

Name: _____

Student ID#: _____

Directions: Consider these competencies that are critical for success in future work and college. Read each definition, and check the box that best describes your skill level. Be honest since the information will be used to help you become more prepared for college and careers.

Competency	What is it?	Great	Good	Okay	Need some work	Need a lot of work
Self-Awareness	Understanding your strengths, preferences, needs and interests, and having a clear idea of how others think of you	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Goal Setting	Setting, planning and keeping track of progress to reach your goals	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Perseverance	Continuing to work toward goals in the face of challenges; changing to best deal with changes around you	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Self-Efficacy	Believing in your ability to achieve your goals and accomplish challenging tasks	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Self-Regulation	Controlling your actions and thoughts, which includes things like organization, time management, and focusing on an activity for an extended period of time	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Initiative/Motivation	Doing something without being asked; seeking new challenges	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Assertiveness	Openly expressing and asking for what you want while respecting the rights of others; acting in a way that reflects your values	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Conflict Resolution	Resolving disagreements between yourself and other individuals	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Networking	Building relationships and using your connections to get information and help when needed	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Communication	Sharing feelings or ideas through writing, speech, and body language so others can understand	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Social Awareness	Interacting appropriately with others; understanding and respecting the feelings of others	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Teaming	Working with others to accomplish a task or goal; guiding or influencing others in achieving a common goal	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Creativity	Thinking outside the box and coming up with new ways of doing things	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Critical Thinking	Reflecting on an issue using evidence to develop an informed judgment or action	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Learning Schema	Thinking about how new information connects to prior knowledge and future goals	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Problem Solving	Following a series of actions in order to find a solution to a complex issue	<input type="checkbox"/>				

College and Career Competency Questionnaire: Parent Version

Child's Name: _____

Directions: Consider these competencies that are critical for success in future work and college. Read each definition, and check the box that best describes your child's skill level.

Competency	What is it?	Great	Good	Okay	Need some work	Need a lot of work
Self-Awareness	Understanding your strengths, preferences, needs and interests, and having a clear idea of how others think of you	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Goal Setting	Setting, planning and keeping track of progress to reach your goals	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Perseverance	Continuing to work toward goals in the face of challenges; changing to best deal with changes around you	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Self-Efficacy	Believing in your ability to achieve your goals and accomplish challenging tasks	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Self-Regulation	Controlling your actions and thoughts, which includes things like organization, time management, and focusing on an activity for an extended period of time	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Initiative/Motivation	Doing something without being asked; seeking new challenges	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Assertiveness	Openly expressing and asking for what you want while respecting the rights of others; acting in a way that reflects your values	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Conflict Resolution	Resolving disagreements between yourself and other individuals	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Networking	Building relationships and using your connections to get information and help when needed	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Communication	Sharing feelings or ideas through writing, speech, and body language so others can understand	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Social Awareness	Interacting appropriately with others; understanding and respecting the feelings of others	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Teaming	Working with others to accomplish a task or goal; guiding or influencing others in achieving a common goal	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Creativity	Thinking outside the box and coming up with new ways of doing things	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Critical Thinking	Reflecting on an issue using evidence to develop an informed judgment or action	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Learning Schema	Thinking about how new information connects to prior knowledge and future goals	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Problem Solving	Following a series of actions in order to find a solution to a complex issue	<input type="checkbox"/>				

College and Career Competencies Questionnaire: Teacher Version

Student's Name: _____

Directions: Consider these competencies that are critical for success in future work and college. Read each definition, and check the box that best describes your student's skill level.

Competency	What is it?	Great	Good	Okay	Need some work	Need a lot of work
Self-Awareness	Understanding your strengths, preferences, needs and interests, and having a clear idea of how others think of you	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Goal Setting	Setting, planning and keeping track of progress to reach your goals	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Perseverance	Continuing to work toward goals in the face of challenges; changing to best deal with changes around you	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Self-Efficacy	Believing in your ability to achieve your goals and accomplish challenging tasks	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Self-Regulation	Controlling your actions and thoughts, which includes things like organization, time management, and focusing on an activity for an extended period of time	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Initiative/Motivation	Doing something without being asked; seeking new challenges	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Assertiveness	Openly expressing and asking for what you want while respecting the rights of others; acting in a way that reflects your values	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Conflict Resolution	Resolving disagreements between yourself and other individuals	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Networking	Building relationships and using your connections to get information and help when needed	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Communication	Sharing feelings or ideas through writing, speech, and body language so others can understand	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Social Awareness	Interacting appropriately with others; understanding and respecting the feelings of others	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Teaming	Working with others to accomplish a task or goal; guiding or influencing others in achieving a common goal	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Creativity	Thinking outside the box and coming up with new ways of doing things	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Critical Thinking	Reflecting on an issue using evidence to develop an informed judgment or action	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Learning Schema	Thinking about how new information connects to prior knowledge and future goals	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Problem Solving	Following a series of actions in order to find a solution to a complex issue	<input type="checkbox"/>				

College and Career Readiness (CCR) Competencies Student Assessment - Comparison Tool

Student Name: _____
 Date Completed: _____

Directions: After the CCR Competencies Questionnaires have been completed by the student, parent, and teacher, use the table below to compare how each individual has assessed the student's proficiency for each competency. For students and parents, enter "Great", "Good", "Okay", "Need some work", or "Need a lot of work", depending on how either the student or parent rated the student's proficiency in each competency. For teachers, enter "Advanced", "Proficient", "Basic", "Below Basic", or "Far Below Basic". To see an example of a completed table, you can navigate to the third tab in this worksheet.

Note: Invalid text entries will appear in bright red in the table below.

		Competency	Student	Parent	Teacher
Intrapersonal		Self-Awareness			
		Goal Setting			
		Perseverance			
		Self-Efficacy			
		Self-Regulation			
		Initiative/Motivation			
Interpersonal		Assertiveness			
		Conflict Resolution			
		Networking			
		Communication			
		Social Awareness			
		Teaming			
Cognitive		Creativity			
		Critical Thinking			
		Learning Schema			
		Problem Solving			

