

McREL links technical and academic knowledge in Job Corps standards



The Challenge

Job Corps is the nation's largest federally funded job training and education program for economically disadvantaged youth. Job Corps' objective is to continue placing skilled workers in the workplace immediately upon graduation from high school. To do this, they needed a way for technical and academic instructors to break out of their "silos" and work together toward a common goal.

Strategic Solution

McREL provided a new way of looking at standards by finding "topics" within them from which career and academic educators could find common ground. As a sub-contractor to Coffey Consulting, **McREL analyzed and evaluated** Job Corps' standards documents to identify academic knowledge and skills in the areas of English, mathematics, science, and critical thinking. Tailoring the work to our client's needs, McREL experts focused on three outcomes: (1) identify the academic underpinnings of the technical tasks, (2) surface commonalities among professions, and (3) determine pre-requisites that students must meet to enter their respective professions.

Results

By successfully linking academic and technical standards, Job Corps Centers nationwide, which serve about 62,000 young adults annually, are better able to prepare their students for the workplace, advanced training programs, or higher education. Since beginning work, McREL has analyzed five industries; 55 specific training areas; 7,600 skills or tasks; 88 academic standards; and 643 applied academic standards.

Next Steps

Job Corps will have a tool to bridge technical tasks and academic standards and achieve the systemic change needed to ensure their students are ready for future success. McREL's standards experts will provide a database containing findings from an examination of 11 industries, such as hospitality, IT, finance and business, and renewable energy and resources. In addition, Job Corps instructors will have access to 110 newly created lesson plans on topics ranked by teacher focus groups as the "top ten."