

2014  
COLLEGE CHANGES EVERYTHING  
CONFERENCE

Dr. Kristine M. Condon  
Professor and Program  
Coordinator  
Kankakee Community  
College

The Implementation of  
WorkKeys® as a Career  
Readiness Tool in a  
Career and Technical  
Education Program

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The Agenda

■ Why WorkKeys®?

■ Efforts at remediation/compliance with ABA Guidelines

■ Curriculum analysis procedure and in-person profiling

■ Profile results: Skill level requirements

■ Implementing profile results

■ Funding, approval, and next steps

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Intro to Paralegal/Legal Assistant  
Studies Course Description

This course is designed to give students seeking a career in the paralegal/legal assistant field a basic understanding of the various functions of a paralegal in the American legal system. This includes the roles and ethical responsibilities of the paralegal and outlines the fields and specializations within the practice of law. A practical approach is used to explain a paralegal's roles, skills, and responsibilities. The course emphasizes mastering legal terms, reviewing techniques of legal research and writing, and ethics for paralegals.

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### Intro Course Framework

Institution	Location in Curriculum
	AAS and post-associate's certificate
	AAS and post-associate's certificate
	AAS and post-baccalaureate certificate
ABA-approved legal specialty course at all three institutions	

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### KCC Remediation Efforts

- LEX Alumni Mentoring Network partnership with first-semester students
- Individualized tutoring sessions with program coordinator if first exam score fell below 70%
- COMPASS e-Write as course exit requirement
- CoreGrammar for Lawyers® homework and course exit requirements
- Weekly practical drafting assignments
- Guest visits from legal community illustrating significance of composition/writing skills

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### ABA Guidelines

(abanet.org, 2014)

- Guidelines map to job analysis and examination of tasks paralegals should be able to competently perform
- Guideline G-201: "The program must have clearly defined, publicly stated, and measurable goals and explicit objectives. . . . A recognition that the program should qualify the graduates to contribute to the advancement of the profession. . . ."

 AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION

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ABA Guidelines

(abanet.org, 2014)

- Guidelines hold program advisory committee accountable for analysis and examination of tasks paralegals should be able to competently perform
- Guideline G-203: "Members of the [program's] advisory committee must be knowledgeable about trends, developments and issues in the paralegal profession. . . . The advisory committee should advise regarding admissions standards for the selection of qualified students for the program. . . . [and a]ssess the effectiveness of the total program in terms of its curriculum and objectives."



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ABA Guidelines

(abanet.org, 2014)

- Curriculum must map to legal skills competencies, with special emphasis on writing
- Guideline G-501: "Students admitted to the program must . . . demonstrate that they have the capability of performing work at the college level. . . . A number of admission criteria, both objective and subjective, should be used to reflect a rational process for selecting students so that success as paralegals can be reasonably predicted."



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About WorkKeys®

ACT WorkKeys® is a job skills assessment system that helps employers select, hire, train, develop, and retain a high-performance workforce. This series of tests measures foundational and soft skills and offers specialized assessments in specific career areas, such as paralegal studies. Successful completion of ACT WorkKeys® assessments in Applied Mathematics, Locating Information, and Reading for Information can lead to earning ACT's National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC), a portable credential earned by more than 1 million people across the U.S. as of 2013 (ACT, 2013).

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### About WorkKeys® (ACT, 2009)

- US DOL's O\*NET website ([www.onetonline.org](http://www.onetonline.org))
  - Offers detailed descriptions of job title responsibilities categorized by occupational code
  - NCRC scores mapped to these job titles as indicator of skills and competencies prospective employers require
- Paralegal code 23-2011:
  - Reading for Information, Suggested Score 6
  - Locating Information, Suggested Score 4
  - Annual openings: 54,729
  - US median wage: \$44,990



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### WorkKeys® Curriculum Analysis Procedure

- Profilers trained and authorized by ACT industrial and organizational psychologists
- Curriculum analysis procedure: Two components
  - Curriculum review of learning objectives associated with Intro course across all three institutions
  - Skill analysis to link learning objectives
    - To WorkKeys® skills
    - To skill levels required for course entry and completion



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### Profiler's Process

- Gathered background information on Intro course from each program director/coordinator
  - ABA Guidelines
  - Course syllabi with learning objectives
  - Interviews of program directors, adjunct faculty, alumni
  - Documentation from each college's intro course
    - Textbooks
    - Course outlines
    - Course descriptions
    - Handouts
    - Articles for review
    - Course activities
    - Case brief rubrics
    - Unit and final examinations

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### In-person Profiling Activity

- Met with seven subject matter experts (SMEs)
- Determined three WorkKeys® skills utilized by students in completing course objectives
  - Reading for Information (PRIORITY 1)
  - Business Writing (PRIORITY 2)
  - Locating Information (PRIORITY 3)
- Based upon rankings, the SME aggregate prioritized the skills needed in the above order

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### SME Composition (N=7)

Average Years of PL Experience	Average Years of Teaching Experience	Attorneys vs. Nonattorneys
6	18	4 vs. 3



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### WorkKeys® Skills: Reading for Information

Written texts include memos, letters, directions, notices, bulletins, policies, and regulations. It is often the case that these workplace communications are not necessarily well-written or targeted to the appropriate audience. Reading for Information materials do not include information that is presented graphically, such as in charts, forms, or blueprints. This skill is used in performing 100% of the course objectives.

*--From the profiling report*

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**Reading for Information:  
Sample Course Objectives**

- Demonstrate an understanding of the role of the paralegals and the legal and ethical responsibilities of paralegals and attorneys
- Discuss the foundations of the American legal system
- Demonstrate the use of digests, legal encyclopedias, reporter systems, practice manuals, and computer-assisted legal research
- Describe the roles paralegals can play in the following contexts: litigation, torts or personal injury, criminal law, business organizations, family law, estates, or contracts

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**WorkKeys® Skills:  
Business Writing**

Business writing is the skill people use when they write an original response to a work-related situation. Components include sentence structure, mechanics, grammar, word usage, tone and word choice, organization and focus, and development of ideas. The main requirement is clarity. This skill requires standard business English, defined as writing that is direct, courteous, grammatically correct, and not overly casual. This skill is used in performing 100% of the course objectives.

*--From the profiling report*

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**Business Writing:  
Sample Course Objectives**

- Understand basic elements of legal research and writing, particularly with respect to how to read cases and where the law may be found
- Identify components of a well-run law office and describe how a paralegal might assist in the running of that office
- Explain the purpose of case reporters and statute books, as well as to explain the various types of legal research and writing
- Research and write persuasive documents discussing the implications of paralegal regulations and ethics

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**WorkKeys® Skills:**  
**Locating Information**

Locating information is the skill people use when they work with workplace graphics such as charts, graphs, tables, forms, flowcharts, diagrams, floor plans, maps, and instrument gauges. Employees use this skill when they find information in a graphic or insert information into a graphic, and they use it when they compare, summarize, and analyze information found in related graphics. This skill is used in performing 100% of the course objectives.

--From the profiling report

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**Locating Information:**  
**Associated Course Objectives**

- Demonstrate an understanding of the function and organization of the law library
- Demonstrate, at a basic level, how to locate relevant statutory and case law and explain and diagram the federal, state, and local court systems
- Participate in some of the basic roles of client interviewing and information gathering
- Understand and be able to apply the IRAC (Issue, Rule, Application/Analysis, Conclusion) approach to briefing a case in order to construct an analytical paragraph

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**Skill Level Requirements**

WorkKeys® Skill	Skill Level Range	Entry Level Required Score	Exit Level Target Score
Reading for Information	3-7	5	6
Business Writing	1-5	3-4	4
Locating Information	3-6	4	5

\*College of Lake County adopted a Business Writing Level 3 Entry due to placement of English I in existing curriculum.  
South Suburban College adopted a Level 4 Entry, as did KCC, due to placement of English I in the first semester of college study.

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**Reading for Information:  
Rationale (Level 5 Entry)**

- Texts, reference books, policies, procedures, and announcements have many details
- Jargon, technical terms, and acronyms or words that have multiple meanings are part of legal vernacular
- Incoming students should be able to
  - Interpret the meaning of a word based upon its use;
  - Identify the correct meaning of an acronym in a document; and
  - Identify the meaning of a technical term or jargon in a document and apply term or jargon to stated situations

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**Reading for Information:  
Rationale (Level 6 Exit)**

- Upon completion of Intro, legal-specific reading for information skills would include
  - Properly using vocabulary specific to legal specialties;
  - Proofreading and editing documents at a high level of competency;
  - Resolving cases using various methods of statutory interpretation; using statutes and court rules to explain how peremptory challenges and challenges for cause are applied during *voir dire*; and
  - Resolving legal issues using hypothetical cases and scenarios

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**Business Writing:  
Rationale (KCC Level 4 Entry)\***

- Students would write clear responses, with complete sentences varied in length and complexity
- Few errors should not interfere with communication, and word usage is precise and varied
- Style, tone, and language are consistent with standard business English
- Writing is organized and maintains consistent focus
- Transitions are effective, and composition of ideas is well-developed with relevant examples and details

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**Business Writing:  
Rationale (Level 4 Exit)**

- Upon completion of Intro, legal-specific business writing skills would include
  - Drafting a case brief by summarizing, identifying, and citing court opinions using IRAC method;
  - Touring a courthouse and writing an informative report using specific criteria;
  - Proofreading and editing complex documents at a high level of competency; and
  - Drafting client interview questions or memoranda involving negligence claims and how to work up a case

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**Locating Information:  
Rationale (Level 4 Entry)**

- Must often find several pieces of information in one or more graphics
- Must understand how graphics are related to each other and summarize information from one or more graphics
- Must identify trends shown in one or more graphics or compare information and trends across graphics

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**Locating Information:  
Rationale (Level 5 Exit)**

- Upon completion of Intro, locating information skills would include
  - Locating more than two information references or pieces to find an answer and then summarizing or synthesizing them;
  - Finding and summarizing information on ethics rules;
  - Locating statutes and retrieving information relevant to a case, sifting through distracting information not relevant to the assignment; and
  - Locating cases and providing parallel citations to these sources using multiple sources of validation

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### Implementing WorkKeys®

- Joint, collaborative effort with Student Services
- Promotion:
  - Brochures (online and print)
  - Web site
  - Program Facebook page
  - Program open houses/information sessions
- Four-hour testing blocks
  - Students leave with Reading for and Locating Information scores
  - Small percentage of Business Writing samples go to ACT for hand-scoring (48 hour turnaround)

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### Implementing WorkKeys®

- Variety of test dates and times; NO CHARGE
- Students routed to alternate locations if dates and times are inconvenient
- Students each receive Free KeyTrain® account
- KCC accepts high school WorkKeys® scores if taken as part of 11<sup>th</sup> grade testing
- No restriction on enrolling in gen eds if cut scores are not met; students can retake WorkKeys® each semester

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### Funding, Approval, and Next Steps

- KCC Foundation Mini-Grant for Excellence
- Approval from adjunct faculty, program advisory committee, and college Curriculum & Academic Standards Committee
- Low-level implementation in Internship course, which began Spring 2014, to continue
- KeyTrain activities to track progress in Intro course, Fall 2014
- Quantitative analysis to track correlation between preparation and performance
- Continuation of existing remedial activities

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Works Cited

ACT. (2009). WorkKeys occupational opportunities: A listing of the most common occupations across the country. Retrieved from Oklahoma Career Tech website: [www.okcareertech.org/cac/workkeys/OccupationalOpportunitiesBrochure.pdf](http://www.okcareertech.org/cac/workkeys/OccupationalOpportunitiesBrochure.pdf)

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