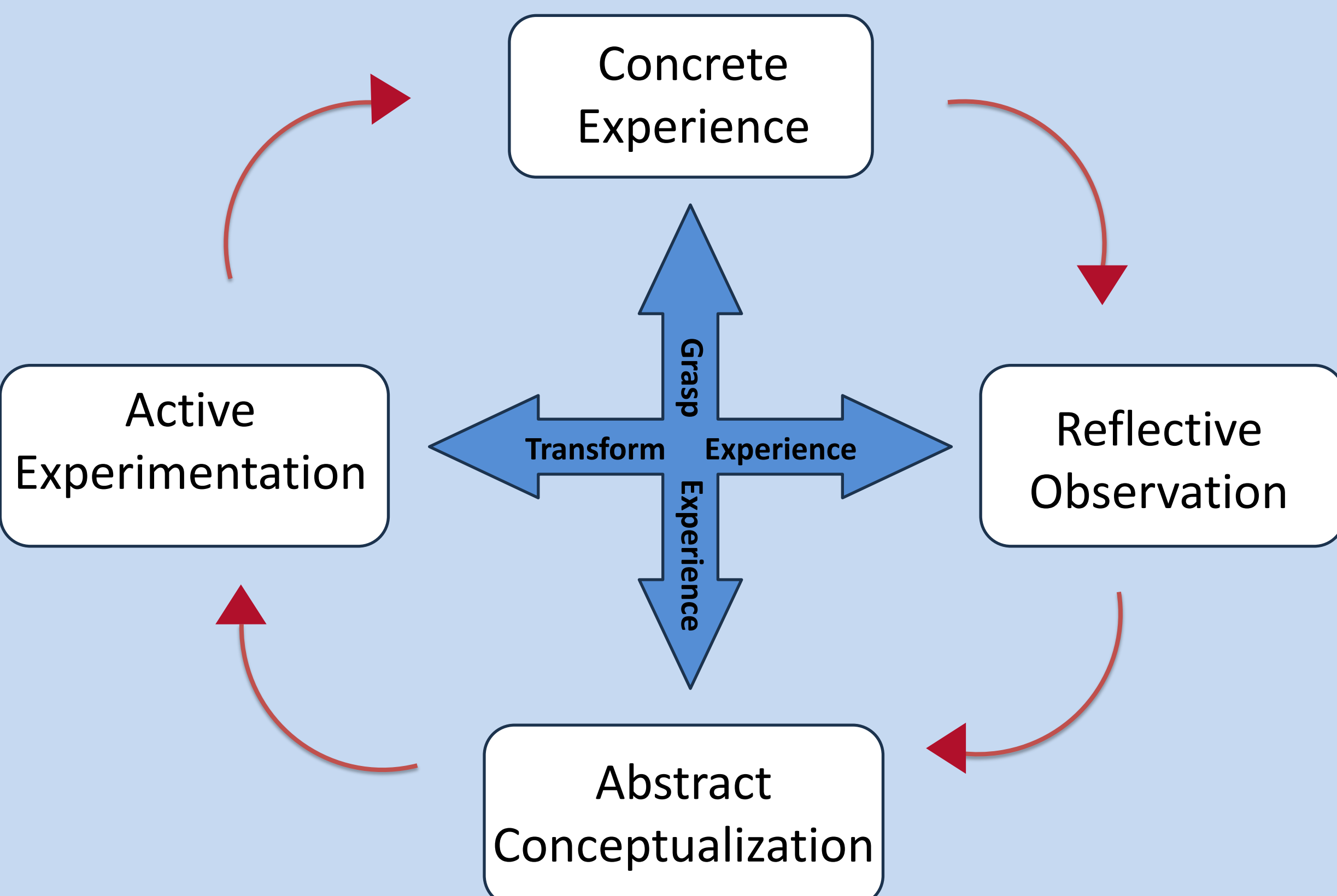


Development of Soft Skills Curriculum for High School Students Participating in the Agricultural Career Readiness Skills for the 21st Century Certificate Pathway



How It Works

- Two Agriculture Education graduate students created the ACRS21 Soft Skills Curriculum, which consists of nine units of instruction.
- These units of instruction focus on student's improvement in time management, social competence, intellectual flexibility, task leadership, emotional control, achievement motivation, active initiative, and self-confidence, which align with the constructs of the Life Effectiveness Questionnaire-H (LEQ-H) (Neill,2003).
- The curriculum outline was formulated using preselected CTE Career Readiness Standards and the ACRS21 Certificate Pathway requirements.
- Twenty-seven lessons were designed to be taught in a 30-minute time period that focuses on improving career readiness soft skills and specifically constructed to maintain students' interaction and engagement.
- Shared Google Drive folders were created to make lesson plans easily accessible by teachers.
- Nine of these lessons were selected to be independently taught in a high school agricultural classroom.
- A consent form, assent form, pre-test, post-test, and teacher's script are available online in AET.

Introduction

The overarching goal of the Agricultural Career Readiness Certificate Pathway of the 21st Century (ACRS21) curriculum is to improve upon and retain students' employability skills through a sequence of secondary soft skills and career readiness curriculum. The ACRS21 Soft Skills Curriculum is based on experiential learning activities aligned with Career Technical Education Standards.

ACRS21 allows students to meet the requirements for an ACRS21 Completer Certificate that recognizes their achievement of soft skills and career readiness standards. The ACRS21 curriculum specifically aids the instructors in implementing lessons that support the ACRS21 pathway. It is the goal of this project and the researchers to provide soft skills curriculum that will enhance the students' improvement of soft skills and career readiness practices.

ACRS21 Certificate Requirements		Aligned Soft-Skills Curriculum
	Meetings and Committees	Time Management through Meeting and Committee Participation
	Leadership Activities/Positions	The Value of Intellectual Flexibility through Leadership Activities
	Team Participation	Social Competence and Team Participation
	Community Service	Community Service Role in Achievement, Motivation, and Active Initiative
	Public Speaking (Minimum of three events)	Teaching Emotional Control through Public Speaking
	SAE Projects	The Benefits of Project Based Learning
	Job Shadowing and Career Exploration	How Job Shadowing Builds Students Confidence
	Agriscience Research Activities	The Value of Intellectual Flexibility through Agriscience Projects
	Career Counseling	Gaining Self Confidence through Career Counseling
Total Units of High School In-Class Instruction		9

Costs

Funding for the ACRS21 Curriculum Project was derived from an ARI grant funded by a USDA/HSI Education Grant. The grant covered the expenses for two graduate students' salaries and the use of technology, totaling \$51,000. Collaboration with AET has made it possible for all curriculum resources to be housed on the AET website at <https://theaet.com/ACRS21>. Teachers and students will have to access the curriculum by logging on to the AET, selecting "AET in the Classroom", and opening the ACRS21 resource page.

Results/Future Plans

- In the fall of 2023, identified agriculture teachers will provide the instruction for the nine soft skills lessons. Following instruction, researchers will evaluate student scores using a paired sample t-test, as recorded in AET, to determine if a significant difference occurred in the development of soft skills.
- The target audience will include students participating in the ACRS21 Certificate Pathway throughout California.
- All curriculum related documents developed for this project will be shared through AET and accessible to teachers. Instructors are encouraged to implement the ACRS21 Soft Skills Curriculum in freshman courses to promote ACRS21 Certificate Completers.
- Students will be evaluated utilizing a pre/post survey using the LEQ-H instrument (Neill,2003).

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