

SKILL TREE™

13–16 Skill Lessons: Scope & Sequence

Designed for adult students in college and workforce development settings, all lessons in this track focus on the individual skill being taught as it relates to their personal competitive advantage. Building a personal competitive advantage can be a powerful motivator for students because it will allow them to create the kind of life they want to enjoy.

Every adult learner has a personal reason for being in your learning environment. They believe that learning what you have to teach will give them an advantage to succeed in work and life. You can help them supersize that advantage by mastering the **21 Skills** in the Skill Tree framework—skills that never expire and will always be valuable in the workforce.

We highly recommend that the first five lessons be introduced first. After that, you may proceed through the rest of the lessons in our provided sequence, or choose to introduce lessons in whatever order you need based on your unique environment.

These skill lessons are designed to be flexible in a wide range of learning environments. They may be used as a bellringer exercise, as material for a full period, as a weekly check-in, or in any other way that best serves your students.



CAREER TREE®

AUTHORED BY markcperna

The Education with Purpose® Career Tree® and Skill Tree™ name, image, philosophy, and strategies are the intellectual property of Mark C. Perna.
Any use of these materials, in whole or in part, without an active Career Tree license is strictly prohibited by law.

©Mark C. Perna® - All Rights Reserved V1 I markcperna.com

1. The Power of Consistency:

A Lesson on Momentum, Personal Growth, and Building Your Competitive Advantage One Step at a Time

This foundational lesson helps learners understand that consistency is one of the most powerful forces in adult success. Talent and ambition only take us so far. The real breakthrough comes from showing up steadily and doing the work—especially when it's inconvenient, uncomfortable, or imperfect.

The lesson includes:

- A relatable Scenario to introduce the concept of consistency as a skill
- 8 guided Group Discussion Questions with follow-up questions
- 8 Journal Prompts to reflect on what they're learning
- 8 personal Skill-Building Strategies
- A printable Action Planner for student reflection and application

2. The Power of Human Connection:

A Lesson on Belonging, Relationships, and Building a Competitive Advantage Through People Skills

This lesson helps learners recognize that their ability to connect with others is a personal competitive advantage. Human connection opens doors, strengthens collaboration, and boosts emotional resilience. It's not about being outgoing; it's about being intentional, consistent, and respectful in how we relate to others.

Students can practice connecting meaningfully with others using these tools:

- A relatable Scenario to show why human connection is vital
- 8 guided Group Discussion Questions with follow-up questions
- 8 Journal Prompts to reflect on how real connections make a difference
- 8 personal Skill-Building Strategies
- A printable Action Planner for reflection and application

3. The Power of Self-Management:

A Lesson on Managing Responses, Daily Disciplines, and Building a Personal Competitive Advantage

This lesson shows teaches the skill of self-management, which means directing time, energy, and emotions toward what matters most. Whether a learner is enrolled in college, working through a trade program, pursuing a certification, or holding down a full-time job, how they manage themselves in daily life directly impacts their momentum, well-being, and long-term success.

This lesson includes:

- A relatable Scenario to show why self-management is part of their competitive advantage
- 8 guided Group Discussion Questions with follow-up questions
- 8 Journal Prompts to reflect on why self-management matters to their goals
- 8 personal Skill-Building Strategies
- A printable Action Planner for reflection and application

(cont.)

©Mark C. Perna® - All Rights Reserved V1 I markcperna.com

4. The Power of Emotional Intelligence:

A Lesson on Self-Awareness, Empathy, and Using Emotions to Build a Competitive Advantage

This lesson helps learners explore EQ as a professional skill that gives them a real-world advantage. Those with high emotional intelligence tend to collaborate better, lead more effectively, recover from setbacks faster, and make stronger personal and professional impressions. EQ is a foundational part of their personal competitive advantage, helping them reach their goals in a way that feels sustainable and authentic.

Learners practice this skill through:

- A relatable Scenario introducing the idea of emotional intelligence
- 8 guided Group Discussion Questions with follow-up questions
- 8 Journal Prompts to reflect on what emotional intelligence means
- 8 personal Skill-Building Strategies
- A printable Action Planner for reflection and application

5. The Power of Coping:

A Lesson on Stress Skills, Resilience, and Using Challenges to Build a Competitive Advantage

In this lesson, we help learners understand that coping doesn't mean pretending everything is fine or avoiding difficulty. It means managing their response to hard things mentally, emotionally, and behaviorally so they can keep moving toward their goals. Coping is not just personal wellness; it's a professional skill that increases emotional strength, builds trust, and boosts long-term performance.

This lesson includes:

- A relatable Scenario to introduce coping as a skill set
- 8 guided Group Discussion Questions with follow-up questions
- 8 Journal Prompts to reflect on why coping matters
- 8 personal Skill-Building Strategies
- A printable Action Planner for reflection and application

6. The Power of Communication:

A Lesson on Clear Expression, Listening, and Building a Competitive Advantage Through Communication

This lesson shows young adults that purposeful communication isn't about being the loudest voice—it's about being clear and respectful both in how we speak and how we listen. From sending emails to resolving conflict to expressing needs, clear communication is one of the most important professional skills a learner can build.

This lesson includes:

- A relatable Scenario to frame communication as a professional skill
- 8 guided Group Discussion Questions with follow-up questions
- 8 Journal Prompts to deepen understanding of effective communication
- 8 personal Skill-Building Strategies
- A printable Action Planner for reflection and application

(cont.)

©Mark C. Perna® - All Rights Reserved V1 I markcperna.com

7. The Power of Active Listening:

A Lesson on Attention, Understanding, and Building a Competitive Advantage Through Focused Communication

This lesson teaches active listening as more than hearing words; it's the habit of giving others full attention, understanding their message, and responding with purpose. In school, at work, and in personal relationships, active listening is often the difference between missteps and momentum.

The lesson includes:

- A relatable Scenario to introduce the concept
- 8 guided Group Discussion Questions with follow-up questions
- 8 Journal Prompts to dive deeper into why active listening matters
- 8 personal Skill-Building Strategies
- A printable Action Planner for reflection and application

8. The Power of Empathy:

A Lesson on Understanding Others, Emotional Insight, and Building a Competitive Advantage Through Human Awareness

This lesson introduces students to empathy, which is the ability to understand and respect what someone else is feeling, even when their experience is different from our own. In today's classrooms, job sites, internships, and training programs, empathy is a high-demand professional skill that makes people better teammates, leaders, and communicators.

Students explore empathy through:

- A relatable Scenario to introduce empathy as a professional skill
- 8 guided Group Discussion Questions with follow-up questions
- 8 Journal Prompts to grow in awareness of others' feelings
- 8 personal Skill-Building Strategies
- A printable Action Planner for reflection and application

9. The Power of Leadership:

A Lesson on Influence, Initiative, and Building a Competitive Advantage Through Purposeful Leadership

This lesson helps learners redefine leadership as a practice, not a position. It's about action, responsibility, and how someone shows up for others and themselves. Whether learners are pursuing a degree, working through an apprenticeship, completing a certification, or building a career, leadership is a professional skill they can develop in any role.

Leadership skills are practiced through:

- A relatable Scenario to showcase the value of leadership
- 8 guided Group Discussion Questions with follow-up questions
- 8 Journal Prompts to deepen understanding of what leadership means
- 8 personal Skill-Building Strategies
- A printable Action Planner for reflection and application

(cont.)

©Mark C. Perna® - All Rights Reserved V1 I markcperna.com

10. The Power of Teamwork:

A Lesson on Collaboration, Contribution, and Building a Competitive Advantage with Others

This lesson reframes teamwork as a source of personal competitive advantage, not just a group obligation. Learners explore how to contribute with confidence, communicate clearly, navigate conflict, and play their role...while also supporting the bigger picture. Good teamwork isn't about agreeing all the time. It's about aligning effort with shared purpose and mutual respect.

This lesson includes:

- A relatable Scenario to highlight teamwork in a real-life situation
- 8 guided Group Discussion Questions with follow-up questions
- 8 Journal Prompts to reflect on what makes teamwork important
- 8 personal Skill-Building Strategies
- A printable Action Planner for reflection and application

11. The Power of Adaptability:

A Lesson on Flexibility, Growth, and Building a Competitive Advantage in a Changing World

This lesson helps learners recognize adaptability as a vital professional skill that fuels their personal competitive advantage. In our fast-changing world, learners will face evolving expectations, new technologies, shifting roles, and unpredictable life events. Adaptability is not just about surviving these changes; it's about using them as a platform to grow.

Students will explore this skill through:

- A relatable Scenario to show the value of being flexible
- 8 guided Group Discussion Questions with follow-up questions
- 8 Journal Prompts to consider what adaptability looks like in real life
- 8 personal Skill-Building Strategies
- A printable Action Planner for reflection and application

12. The Power of Problem-Solving:

A Lesson on Solutions, Initiative, and Building a Competitive Advantage by Navigating Challenges

This lesson helps students and workforce learners build their personal competitive advantage through practical, resilient problem-solving habits. It teaches that being a strong problem solver isn't about having all the answers; it's about staying calm, curious, and committed to finding a next step.

Students will hone their problem-solving skills through:

- A relatable Scenario to illustrate real-world problem-solving
- 8 guided Group Discussion Questions with follow-up questions
- 8 Journal Prompts to reflect on why problem-solving is vital
- 8 personal Skill-Building Strategies
- A printable Action Planner for reflection and application

(cont.)

©Mark C. Perna® - All Rights Reserved V1 I markcperna.com



13. The Power of Critical Thinking:

A Lesson on Curiosity, Judgment, and Building a Competitive Advantage Through Thoughtful Decisions

This lesson helps college students and workforce learners understand that critical thinking is not about being skeptical or argumentative. It's about asking better questions, testing assumptions, and using logic and curiosity to move forward with clarity, especially in jobs, teams, and industries that value problem-solving and innovation.

To promote growth in critical thinking, students can take part in:

- A relatable Scenario to show critical thinking in action
- 8 guided Group Discussion Questions with follow-up questions
- 8 Journal Prompts to consider why critical thinking is needed
- 8 personal Skill-Building Strategies
- A printable Action Planner for reflection and application



14. The Power of Time Management:

A Lesson on Focus, Prioritization, and Building a Competitive Advantage Through Intentional Planning

This lesson helps students and workforce learners view time management as a professional skill that fuels their personal competitive advantage. It emphasizes planning, prioritization, and intentional routines...not just being "busy," but being on purpose. Effective time management helps learners reduce stress, increase follow-through, and show up with consistency.

Students will learn to manage their time effectively through:

- A relatable Scenario to underscore the need for good time management
- 8 guided Group Discussion Questions with follow-up questions
- 8 Journal Prompts to enhance understanding of this skill
- 8 personal Skill-Building Strategies
- A printable Action Planner for reflection and application



15. The Power of Work-Life Balance:

A Lesson on Boundaries, Well-Being, and Building a Competitive Advantage Through Sustainable Habits

This lesson helps college students, adult learners, and workforce participants see work-life balance as more than just a nice idea. It's a professional skill that enhances performance, clarity, and well-being. It also strengthens their personal competitive advantage by showing they can manage priorities without sacrificing their health, goals, or relationships.

This lesson includes:

- A relatable Scenario to introduce work-life balance as a professional skill
- 8 guided Group Discussion Questions with follow-up questions
- 8 Journal Prompts to help learners reflect on what a balanced life looks like
- 8 personal Skill-Building Strategies
- A printable Action Planner for reflection and application

(cont.)

©Mark C. Perna® - All Rights Reserved V1 I markcperna.com



16. The Power of Networking:

A Lesson on Relationships, Opportunity, and Building a Competitive Advantage Through Connection

This lesson redefines networking not as awkward self-promotion, but as a learnable professional skill that supports both career and personal growth. Networking is the ability to build genuine relationships that open doors, share knowledge, and support progress.

Students can practice their networking skills through:

- A relatable Scenario to show how networking matters
- 8 guided Group Discussion Questions with follow-up questions
- 8 Journal Prompts to reflect on networking strategies
- 8 personal Skill-Building Strategies
- A printable Action Planner for reflection and application



17. The Power of Creativity:

A Lesson on Innovation, Expression, and Building a Competitive Advantage Through Creative Thinking

This lesson helps learners see that creativity isn't just for artists, designers, or entrepreneurs; it's for everyone. In today's world, creative thinkers are problem-solvers, innovators, and team members who bring fresh ideas and flexible thinking to the table.

This lesson includes:

- A relatable Scenario to show the need for creativity every day
- 8 guided Group Discussion Questions with follow-up questions
- 8 Journal Prompts to consider how creativity isn't just about being artistic
- 8 personal Skill-Building Strategies
- A printable Action Planner for reflection and application



18. The Power of Punctuality:

A Lesson on Reliability, Respect, and Building a Competitive Advantage Through Showing Up on Time

This lesson reframes punctuality as more than just a habit. It's a message. Punctuality communicates respect, responsibility, and readiness. And in the professional world, it's noticed more than many realize. Being the person others can count on starts with honoring time.

Students practice being punctual through:

- A relatable Scenario to introduce punctuality as a professional skill
- 8 guided Group Discussion Questions with follow-up questions
- 8 Journal Prompts to reflect on how being punctual adds to their advantage
- 8 personal Skill-Building Strategies
- A printable Action Planner for reflection and application

(cont.)

©Mark C. Perna® - All Rights Reserved V1 I markcperna.com

19. The Power of Negotiation:

A Lesson on Communication, Confidence, and Building a Competitive Advantage by Advocating for Yourself and Others

This lesson helps learners see that negotiation isn't just for high-powered deals or job offers. It's a skill that shows up in everyday moments: discussing schedules, requesting resources, resolving conflict, or setting boundaries. For students, trainees, and adult learners, negotiation is about clear, respectful communication that gets results.

This lesson includes:

- A relatable Scenario to illustrate negotiation skills in everyday life
- 8 guided Group Discussion Questions with follow-up questions
- 8 Journal Prompts to expand personal insights on negotiating effectively
- 8 personal Skill-Building Strategies
- A printable Action Planner for reflection and application

20. The Power of Conflict Resolution:

A Lesson on Communication, Calm, and Building a Competitive Advantage by Navigating Tension Effectively

This lesson helps college students and workforce learners view conflict not as something to fear or avoid, but as a growth moment. With clarity, empathy, and strategy, learners can transform conflict into connection, learning, and leadership. Conflict resolution strengthens a learner's personal competitive advantage by proving they can manage difficult situations, preserve relationships, and maintain professionalism under pressure.

This lesson includes:

- A relatable Scenario to show why conflict resolution is essential
- 8 guided Group Discussion Questions with follow-up questions
- 8 Journal Prompts to deepen understanding of how to navigate conflict constructively
- 8 personal Skill-Building Strategies
- A printable Action Planner for reflection and application

21. The Power of Being Bully-Proof:

A Lesson on Boundaries, Self-Worth, and Building a Competitive Advantage by Standing Strong and Staying Respectful

This lesson equips learners with strategies to become bully-proof: to protect their energy, identity, and momentum in the face of mistreatment. It's not about fighting back with force, but responding with boundaries, clarity, and confidence. Being bully-proof builds a learner's personal competitive advantage by strengthening self-respect, emotional intelligence, and the ability to lead with calm authority.

This lesson includes:

- A relatable Scenario to show that being bully-proof is possible for anyone
- 8 guided Group Discussion Questions with follow-up questions
- 8 Journal Prompts to strategize productive responses to bullying
- 8 personal Skill-Building Strategies
- A printable Action Planner for reflection and application

To learn more about the Skill Tree, visit TFSresults.com/career-tree/skill-tree

©Mark C. Perna® - All Rights Reserved V1 I markcperna.com