



A Success Story  
from ACT

Envision's Career  
Navigation System:  
Preparing Students  
to Thrive in  
21st-Century  
Careers

**ACT**<sup>®</sup> Engage<sup>®</sup>



## **FACT:** Students Are Inheriting a Global Workplace

Competition for fulfilling careers is more intense in the digital age. Meanwhile, educators are realizing that assessing and building key academic behaviors is as important as classroom learning to help students meet 21st-century workplace challenges.

## **FACT:** ACT Engage® Can Help

This self-assessment of crucial academic behaviors (such as motivation, social engagement, and self-regulation) measures the skills that, according to research, greatly affect student success. This is why Envision turned to ACT Engage to help its students prepare for future careers.

## **RESULTS:** A Road Map to Readiness

ACT Engage assessments were administered to middle schoolers in the program. While taking part in Envision's innovative career exploration program, students received through ACT Engage a complete checkup of the real-world skills they need to succeed in the job market while preparing them to thrive as productive members of society—and at a point in their education before thousands of dollars of college tuition money were at stake.

In fact, the program was so successful, the organization plans to add other ACT products and services to its offerings.



## One Organization's Success Story

“The shortest distance between two points is a straight line,” the saying goes. Likewise, the clearest path to students’ futures is helping them set goals at critical early stages in their education and then giving those students the skills and vision to achieve them.

That’s the operating philosophy behind Envision, a global experiential education company that offers career and leadership programs for high-aspiring students from elementary school to college. The company serves thousands of students each year and has helped more than 800,000 of them in its three decades.

Envision’s mission: giving students the opportunity to turn their career and life aspirations into reality by helping them:

- Discover their passion—“We believe career planning is not about the destination but about the direction, and the direction starts with the student,” said Andrew Potter, chief academic officer at Envision. That’s why a subset of Envision’s programming is helping students analyze their interests and turn them into career trajectories.
- Explore their futures—Envision offers hands-on, project-based programs that focus on specific career experiences. One example is the Intensive Law and Trial program, where students take part in an immersive 10-day mock trial. There are similar programs for medicine and engineering careers, among many others.
- Impact their world—Students are encouraged to develop a sense of civic responsibility—a value that runs deep in all Envision programs. One example is Envision’s Global Young Innovator Initiative, in which students work on real-world projects to help people in impoverished locations.

“In an era where institutions often perform ‘random acts’ of career readiness, the research-based, comprehensive, and multi-dimensional structure of career readiness assessments offered by ACT enables Envision to achieve our mission to help students realize their career aspirations. There are few institutions that are truly serious about career readiness, and I think ACT is one of them.”

—Andrew Potter, chief academic officer, Envision

Envision takes a holistic approach to helping students prepare for their futures. Why use a holistic approach? It puts a career skills focus on “college and career readiness” and better defines what career readiness really means. ACT Engage has become part of that integrated methodology.

ACT Engage supports Envision’s student-centered Career Navigation System, a pathway planning curriculum for middle schoolers, grades 6–8. Students take the assessments prior to starting their Envision program, then spend time learning how to use those results to structure their career goals and determine skill needs, step by step. Students draft their personal mission and vision statements and set a development plan using the personalized insights provided by ACT Engage data. Using ACT Engage empowers students to take ownership of their own success by identifying the skills they need to survive in the job market.

## Learning by Doing

Envision programs focus on producing innovators—using critical thinking as the focus of education. “Many schools are preparing students with a knowledge base that can be largely acquired by using your phone, versus whether they have the skills to survive in the job market,” said Jan Sikorsky, vice president of program development at Envision. “The system isn’t preparing students for their end goal—preparing them to thrive as productive members of society.”

Envision’s program of experiential learning is key to developing that innovative thinking, with hands-on programs that concentrate on 21st-century skills. Envision also places a major emphasis on social and emotional skills, which recent studies indicate are important drivers of college completion rates.

That’s where ACT Engage comes in: It helps students understand the social and emotional skills needed for college and career success—skills that are proven to affect persistence and completion in high school and college. The result: a road map to success focused on academic behavioral skills that act as a “personal GPS.”

Envision has administered thousands of ACT Engage assessments to students, with plans to expand to the company’s entire middle school portfolio and potentially the high school and college programs, as well.

Students liked the personalized nature of the assessments, while parents instantly understood their value.

“Your typical parent is far more savvy than many education leaders give them credit for. What they’re largely receiving at home is a report card that says they have an A in math, a B in science, but little insight into their students’ skills as they relate to being prepared for college and the 21st-century workforce,” Potter said. “Parents immediately recognize the value in getting practical next steps on what to do. It puts the parent and student more in control of the student’s destiny.”

Envision is widening the use of ACT tools in its programs. A pilot program will use the ACT National Career Readiness Certificate™ (ACT NCRC®) and ACT WorkKeys®, which both focus on workforce skills, within Envision’s Gaming and Technology curriculum in 2016. “We’re using the ACT NCRC in a prescriptive way, not a reactive way, to help students develop a base of career readiness when they can truly do something about it, before there are significant tuition dollars at stake,” said Sikorsky.

### What Will Your Story Be?

Start your success story by scheduling a consultation with an ACT Engage specialist. Complete the form at [www.act.org/engage/contact](http://www.act.org/engage/contact).

Learn more at [www.act.org/engage](http://www.act.org/engage).

“Our students are not just getting a score report. They are using those scores to inform their thinking and ultimately find their future.”

—Andrew Potter,  
chief academic officer,  
Envision