



CASE STUDY

Expanding College Credit Pathways through the WorkKeys NCRC

In a collaborative effort to bridge workforce readiness and higher education, Lynette Livingston of Chippewa Valley Technical College (CVTC), and the College of Southern Nevada (CSN) have been instrumental in promoting the use of the ACT WorkKeys National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) as a tool for awarding college credit through the American Council on Education (ACE) Credit Recommendation Service.

The Vision: Recognizing Skills through Prior Learning Credit

The initiative is rooted in the philosophy of Prior Learning Credit (PLC), which evaluates non-traditional learning – such as workplace training and certifications – for academic credit. The WorkKeys NCRC, which certifies foundational workplace skills in Applied Math, Graphic Literacy, and Workplace Documents, has been validated as a predictor of both workplace and academic success.

Leadership and Implementation

Lynette Livingston – Chippewa Valley Technical College

As Executive Dean at CVTC, Lynette Livingston has championed the use of WorkKeys as a Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) tool. Her leadership was highlighted in presentations such as the 2023 ACT Workforce Summit, where she emphasized the statistically significant correlation between WorkKeys NCRC levels and first-year college GPA. Her work has helped position CVTC as a model for integrating the WorkKeys NCRC into academic credit frameworks.

College of Southern Nevada – Pathways in Action

CSN has implemented the WorkKeys NCRC within its Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs. Case studies, such as those of Jaqueline and Nestor, illustrate how adult learners – many of whom are immigrants or career changers – have utilized the WorkKeys NCRC to transition into healthcare and manufacturing careers.

These stories underscore the WorkKeys NCRC's role in validating prior knowledge and accelerating credential attainment.

Student Outcomes and Impact

National Data

- In 2023-2024, over 769,000 individuals completed all three WorkKeys NCRC assessments.
- ACE recommends awarding up to 9 semester hours for Platinum-level NCRC holders in areas such as Quantitative Reasoning, Information Literacy, and Professional Writing.
- Research shows a moderate to strong positive correlation between WorkKeys NCRC scores and first-year college GPA.

CASE STUDY CONTINUED

Institutional Benefits

- Two- and four-year colleges use the WorkKeys NCRC to recruit and retain students by recognizing real-world skills.
- Employers benefit from a credential that signals job readiness and foundational competencies.
- Students, particularly adult learners and underserved populations, gain faster and more affordable access to degrees and credentials.

Conclusion

Through the leadership of Lynette Livingston, and the institutional commitment of CSN, the WorkKeys NCRC has evolved into more than just a workplace credential – it is now a bridge to higher education. Their efforts exemplify how cross-sector collaboration can unlock new pathways for learners and strengthen the talent pipeline for the modern workforce.

“We’re not just validating skills — we’re validating potential. The NCRC gives us a reliable, research-backed way to recognize what students already know and can do.”
— Lynette Livingston