

College to Career on the Spectrum

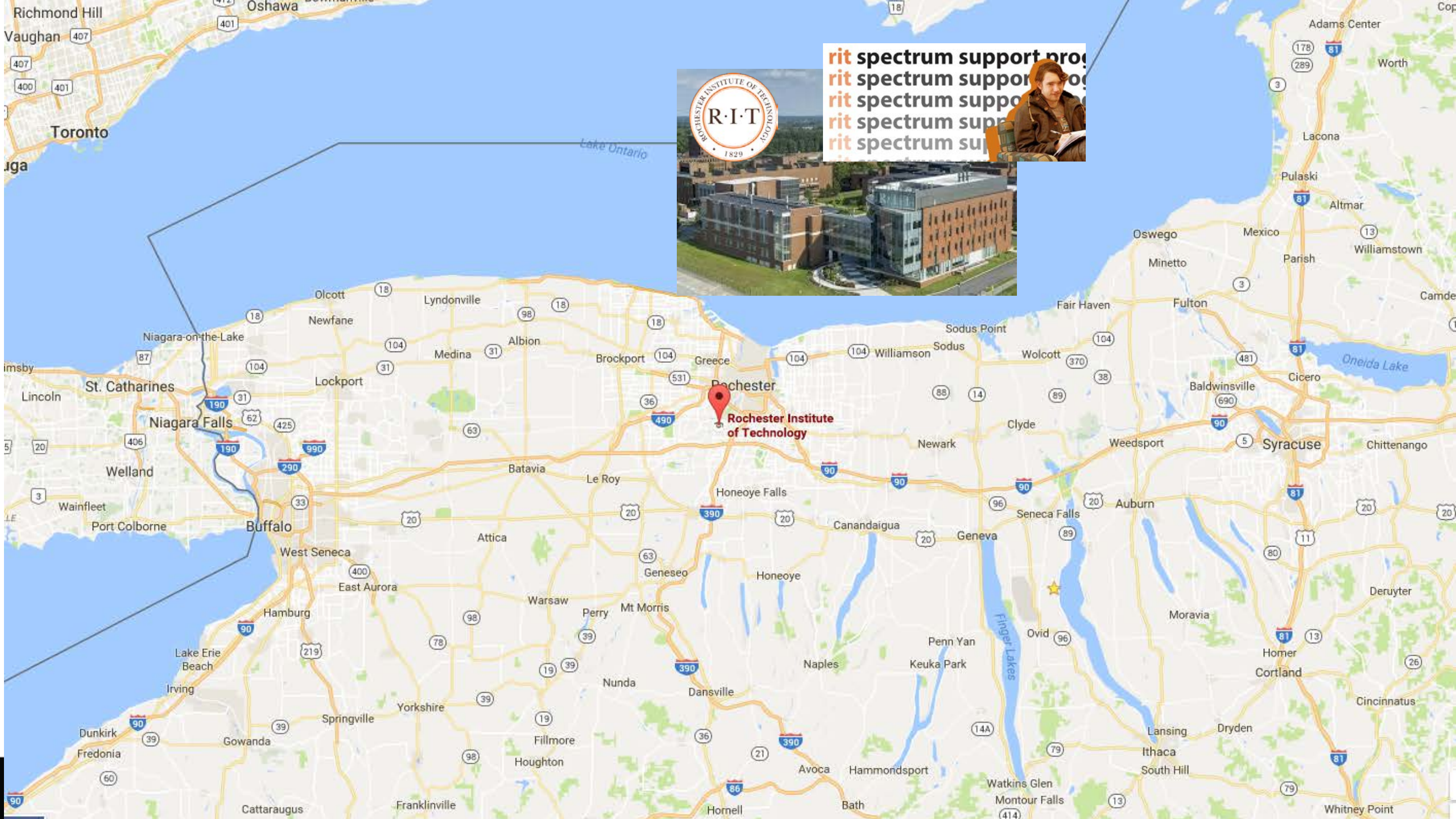
Presenter: Laurie Ackles, LMSW
Spectrum Support Program
Rochester Institute of Technology

We will cover:

- Connection between college and career readiness
- Complexities of the job search and career preparation process
- Competencies for the transition to career
- Collaborative approach to preparing students
- Autism hiring initiatives

Nick





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Spectrum Support Program

The Spectrum Support Program strives to provide innovative supports that **positively impact** the college experience for RIT students, particularly those with autism spectrum disorders.

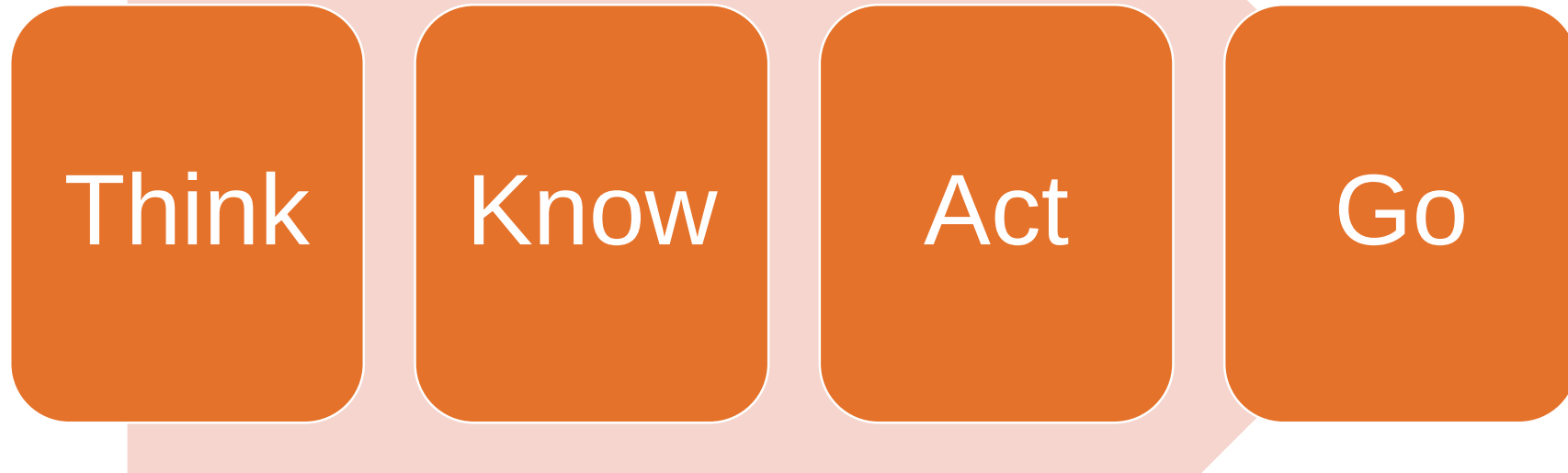
We are committed to assisting students in **building the confidence and connections** necessary for academic, social and career success.

The program seeks to **create a culture of acceptance and understanding** at RIT through collaboration, consultation and training.

SSP Domains of Support



Redefining Readiness



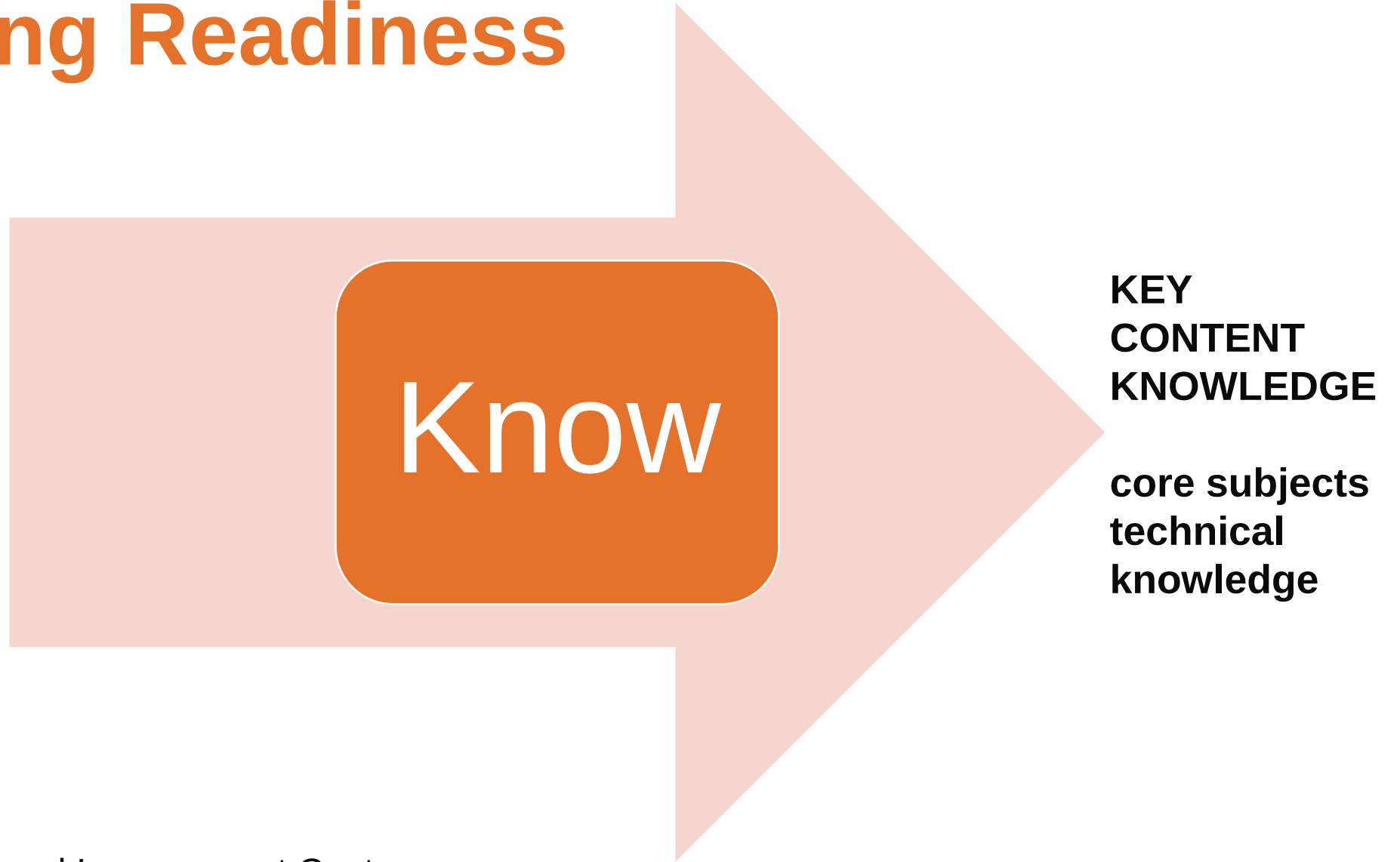
EPIC Educational Policy and Improvement Center
<http://evergreen.edu/washingtoncenter/docs/conleycollegereadiness.pdf>

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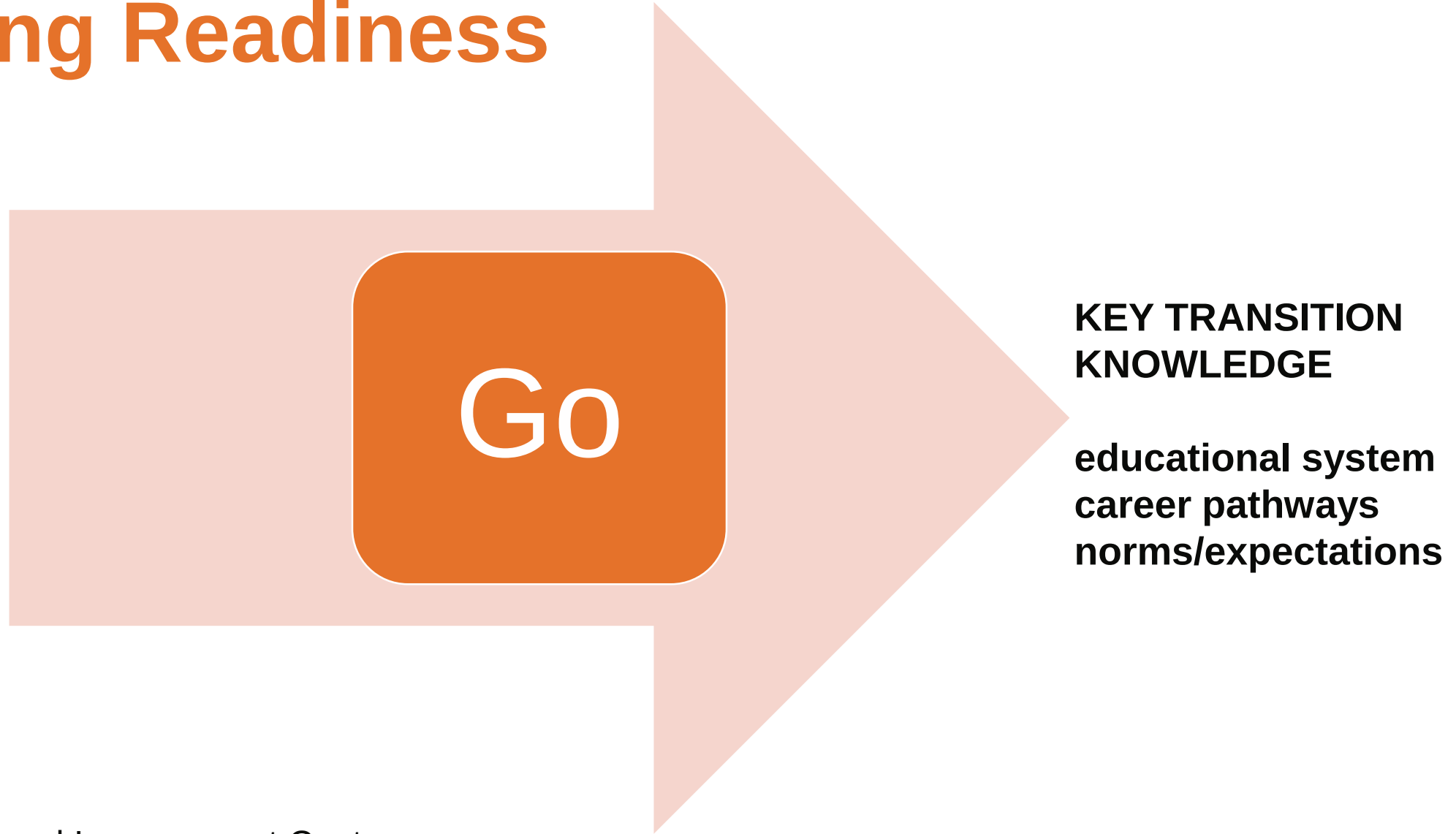
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National Association of Colleges and Employers

Career readiness is the attainment and demonstration of requisite competencies that broadly prepare college graduates for a successful transition into the workplace.

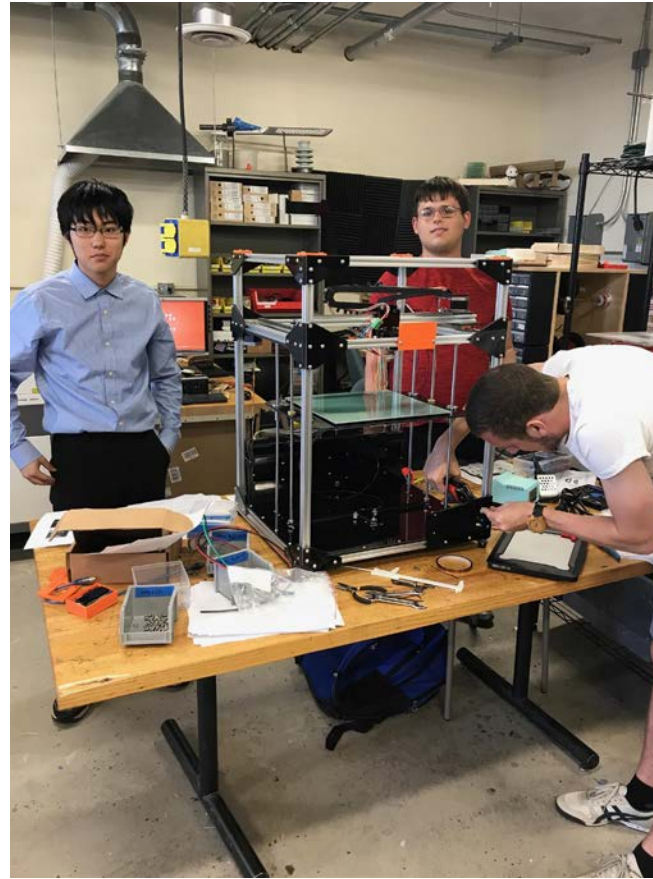


National Association of Colleges and Employers

- Critical Thinking
- Problem Solving
- Oral/Written Communication
- Teamwork/Collaboration
- Professionalism/Work Ethic
- Leadership



Career Ready Boot Camp



Competencies for College and Career

➤ Self-Care

- Stress/Anxiety/Self-regulation
- Medication compliance/management
- Hygiene
- Sleep/Wake

Competencies for College and Career

- Self-Management and Executive Functioning
 - Focus and Initiation
 - Persistence
 - Manage time
 - Prioritize and Plan
 - Adjusting to new environments
 - Reflection and Correction

Competencies for College and Career

- Self-Advocacy
 - Help Seeking Skills
 - Understanding of Self
 - Self-Accommodate

Transition to Career: Career Awareness and Fit

- Interests, Aptitudes, Skills
- Degree requirements
- Job prospects
- Career Path

Transition to Career: Ideal work environment

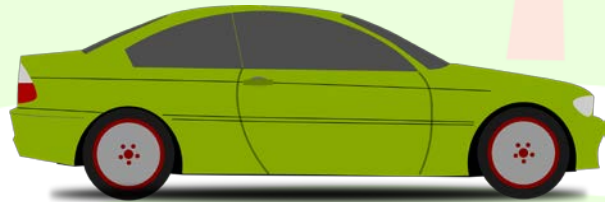
Difficult jobs/work environments :

- Require multi-tasking or responding to frequent interruptions
- Involve quick decision-making
- Are high pressure
- Are unstructured and rapidly changing
- Require lots of social interaction
- Involve managing other people
- Demand high rates of speed

Optimal jobs/work environments:

- Allow concentration on one task at a time
- Require accuracy and quality versus speed
- Offer structure and clear performance expectations
- Have at least some element of routine
- Require minimal social interaction
- Do not involve the management of others

College is not an end in itself, but a
vehicle towards the goal of
employment and career development



- ✓ Students with ASD should begin preparing for the world of work much earlier
- ✓ There are real advantages to testing out job readiness skills in the college setting
- ✓ Encourage students to become clients of state division of vocational rehabilitation
- ✓ Partner with Career Services

Strengths in the Workplace

Adherence to rules

Loyal, trustworthy

Reliable

Avoids office politics

Enjoys routine work

Direct communication style

Attention to detail

Vocational success frequently depends not only on meeting the technical requirements of the job, but upon one's ability to

“fit in”

Disconnect

Traditional recruitment efforts may not work well for job-seekers on the Autism Spectrum

Focus on social skills

Need Neurotypical
"translation"

Ambiguous process

Require additional supports

Employment Obstacles

Acclimating to new routines

Corporate Culture

Social expectations

Communication

Mastering job search process

JOB SEACH PROCESS



Mixed Messages

When discussing an assignment:

“whenever you get to it is fine”

“Let’s schedule a meeting”

“Come back later”

When discussing resume edits:

“are you good with the
changes?”

Counselor notices a meeting has
gone 5 minutes past scheduled
time and glances at watch
several times

Preparing Students

- Ideal Work Environment
- Strengths
- Dream Job vs. First Job
- Decoding Interview Questions
- Follow-Up
- Resources
- Accommodations (self-accommodation)
- Disclosure

Coaching Disclosure

WHEN	Ideally: During interview Before or after offer
WHO TO TELL	HR Supervisor Co-workers
DO	Discuss functional limitations Emphasize skills and abilities Request accommodation
DON'T	Describe ASD as a weakness Wait until a problem arises on the job Use overly technical or clinical terms

“I have (*preferred term for disability*). I have (*key skills/abilities*), but sometimes (*functional limitations*) might interfere with my ability to (*duties that may be difficult*). It’s helpful if I have (*accommodation*).”

Student programming

Confidence



Practice



Feedback



Plan



Preparing Students

- Personal projects
- Informational Interviewing
- Networking
- Job Shadows
- Mock interviews
- Portfolios
- Internships/On-campus Employment
- Volunteer Experiences



Preparing Employers

- Recruitment
- Interviewing
- Onboarding
- Managing



Autism Hiring Initiatives



Nick



Takeaways

- Use every interaction as an opportunity
- Collaborate across campus
- Connect students with community resources
- Stay informed

Resources

rit.edu/ssp: Resources>Employers/Job Seekers

SourceAble program

Autism at Work Job Marketplace

Spectrum Careers

Specialisterne

**The Complete Guide to Getting a Job for People with
Asperger's Syndrome: Find the Right Career and Get Hired**
by Barbara Bissonnette