

# How the NFTE Program Helps Develop School-to-Career Competencies

Competency	Competency Definition	How NFTE Helps Develop the Competency
<p>I. Communicate and understand ideas and information</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Write and speak correctly and clearly</li> <li>2. Listen and read with understanding and persistence</li> <li>3. Relate ideas communicated in one medium (text) into another (speech)</li> <li>4. Shape messages for different audiences, and for different purposes</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Each NFTE student must write business letters, memos and content for posters and flyers, which shows the relevancy of clear concise writing, mastery of the language and how to formulate ideas. In addition, each student must execute an oral presentation of his or her business plan in front of the entire class. Students also prepare a sales pitch and sell products and services to the public.</li> <li>2. NFTE students absorb information through a variety of sources, including text, guest speakers, video, and internet. Students quickly learn the necessity to understand business terms and strategies to succeed in small business and the workforce in general.</li> <li>3. NFTE students apply lessons they have learned in the classroom to real business situations. Every student starts a small business, giving practical applications to classroom work.</li> <li>4. NFTE students create business cards and learn how to professionally represent themselves (handshake, eye contact, attire, posture, etc.). Each student also writes and presents a business plan to a review board of business people.</li> </ol>
<p>II. Collect, analyze, and organize information</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify need for data or information and the means to obtain it</li> <li>2. Organize, process, and file data into a useable format (paper or electronic)</li> <li>3. Research various topics or ideas and summarize findings</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Each student receives classroom instruction in entrepreneurship using the NFTE curriculum. The lessons teach economic and entrepreneurial literacy and expose students to many vocational options because of their exploration of all functional areas of an enterprise. Students identify wholesalers, obtain business licenses, etc. as part of the program.</li> <li>2. Students learn that organization is critical for business success. Students keep business records and receive electronic organizers that allow them to capture contact information and schedule their time.</li> <li>3. All NFTE students must do marketing research and create a marketing plan for their business. In addition, students learn to read the <i>Wall Street Journal</i>, which introduces the concept of information scanning and watching market trends.</li> </ol>
<p>III. Identify and solve problems</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explain how a given process (chemical reaction, workflow) works</li> <li>2. Identify problems in a process gone wrong and recognize the source</li> <li>3. Pose solutions or strategies capable of fixing the problem(s)</li> <li>4. Reflect on given strategy and evaluate its effectiveness</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All NFTE students are given a comprehensive overview of how to start and operate a small business. For each business concept, instructors teach students the process (e.g., how to set up a bank account, how to register a business).</li> <li>2. Each student does market research in their community to determine what products and services are currently unavailable or hard to obtain.</li> <li>3. Each student selects and develops a business plan, including budgets, based on an identified problem or need in their community. Students also learn the problem-solving skill of negotiation.</li> <li>4. Each business plan is reviewed for content with the opportunity to improve on its content. Each student actually puts the business into action, allowing for continuous information streams in determining effectiveness.</li> </ol>
<p>IV. Understand and work within complex systems</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explain the purpose of an organization or department</li> <li>2. Understand the hierarchy within an organization, the reaction of unions and other worker organizations, and the rights and responsibilities of each worker</li> <li>3. Work through and understand "all aspects" of a given work organization</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Each student learns through the experience of selling to the public the effects supply and demand have on price. They learn how human needs are met and how customer service affects repeat business, which in turn reduces marketing costs. They learn what the role of the entrepreneur is in the economy.</li> <li>2. Students learn about the product/distribution structure and each business department by touring existing companies. Students also learn about taxation and business registration. Students also learn how their business fits into the overall economic structure of a region</li> <li>3. Each NFTE student assumes responsibility over all roles of his or her business, from finance to sales. They learn that each part of a business can greatly affect all others.</li> </ol>

<p>V. Use mathematical ideas and techniques</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify and perform basic work calculations required by different work tasks</li> <li>2. Perform intermediate mathematics (percentages, fractions, etc.) accurately</li> <li>3. Apply concepts of algebra, geometry, and statistics to work where appropriate</li> <li>4. Communicate estimations, comparisons, and similar analytic judgements clearly and accurately</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. NFTE's curriculum is math-intensive. All students develop specific math skills in different business areas (e.g., balance sheets, ratios in <i>Wall Street Journal</i>/lesson).</li> <li>2. NFTE students learn mathematical concepts such as return on investment (fractions and percentages) and basic addition, subtraction, multiplication and division through creating an income statement. All work is checked for accuracy.</li> <li>3. All mathematical work is applied directly in the course. After purchasing wholesale product and selling it at a retail cost, students compute financial statements and apply this information to their business plans.</li> <li>4. NFTE students must develop yearly income statements that include estimations and comparisons. These skills are applied to each business the students create.</li> </ol>
<p>VI. Use technology</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use a wide range of technologies, including computers</li> <li>2. Adapt to different work situations by using different tools</li> <li>3. Train other workers on various technologies</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students can develop business plans using presentation graphics software, develop budgets using spreadsheet software, and business cards and flyers using publishing software. Additionally, students have access to NFTE's internet-based curriculum.</li> <li>2. The various software pieces NFTE employs are put into practice throughout a variety of entrepreneurial situations. In addition, an electronic organizer is used to keep contact information.</li> <li>3. Many NFTE students will have the opportunity to engage in information technology internships. They will then return to the classroom and be able to help others with their new base of knowledge.</li> </ol>
<p>VII. Initiate and complete entire activities</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Apply the skills in the first six competencies to the initiation through completion of a full, complex work task</li> <li>2. Identify work that needs to be done, suggest ways to accomplish the job, and take responsibility for implementing suggestions</li> <li>3. Develop a plan to complete a complex assignment or project</li> <li>4. Prioritize relative importance of tasks and allocate resources accordingly</li> <li>5. Ask questions to clarify assignments and seek help when needed</li> <li>6. Manage or allocate time to complete various work tasks</li> <li>7. Follow through and evaluate problems and successes to achieve high quality</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Each student learns about all phases of starting a small business, and then creates one based on the knowledge that he or she has acquired.</li> <li>2. Through trial and error, students identify what activities need to be accomplished in order to effectively run their business. Suggestions from teachers and peers are particularly important. Students learn that they are the only people who can ultimately develop their businesses, thus instilling the value and responsibility of ownership.</li> <li>3. All NFTE students develop a business plan that is then put into action.</li> <li>4. Students are taught prioritization and resource allocation as part of the class. Students are given a small business bank account and start-up capital, and they then must decide how to best create their businesses given their available resources.</li> <li>5. Because NFTE students want to excel in business, they develop an inquisitive mind. To be successful, students realize that there is information they will need to obtain. NFTE instructors teach students where to go for that information and how to conduct overall business research.</li> <li>6. NFTE works with students to develop time management skills. By creating a time/task chart, students learn that prioritization is critical to completing a variety of projects.</li> <li>7. Students and teachers have continuous feedback loops that help students consistently evaluate their personal performance. The goal is to instill the value of hard work, in that it will equal rewards.</li> </ol>
<p>VIII. Act professionally</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Demonstrate commitment to an employer and its clients by observing common rules of respect and decorum</li> <li>2. Show up to work regularly and on time</li> <li>3. Dress and behave in a manner appropriate to the specific workplace</li> <li>4. Develop a sense of professional ethics based on guidelines established by employer and act upon the principled values of right and wrong</li> <li>5. Observe safety rules and client confidentiality where appropriate</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students are trained in the proper etiquette for greeting utilizing a firm handshake, good eye contact, and proper posture. Students on internships and job shadowships also know that they must behave in an appropriate manner in the workplace.</li> <li>2. NFTE students learn that punctuality is critical to the success of the entrepreneur. Students learn that if they are not on time, a competitor will be.</li> <li>3. All NFTE students are taught how to dress for success, and what the proper attire is for different workplace situations.</li> <li>4. One critical NFTE lesson is based on business ethics. All of our students are taught the value of dealing with their marketplace in a highly ethical manner. Clearly, it generates repeat customers and new clientele. Students apply these lessons to employer relationships as well.</li> <li>5. All students are taught the value of respecting the rules of the workplace.</li> </ol>

IX. Interact with others	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Work professionally and respectfully with co-workers, supervisors, clients, students, and others</li> <li>2. Participate in teams and complete tasks within that team structure</li> <li>3. Learn about, accept, and work with people from diverse backgrounds</li> <li>4. Take direction from team leaders and provide constructive feedback on the team's work</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students engage in real sales to the marketplace, and also participate in group business projects and cooperative learning activities. Also, students take tours of businesses and guest speakers come to the classroom, allowing students to acclimate to others in the business world.</li> <li>2. Students develop group businesses as part of the NFTE course and participate in cooperative learning activities such as the negotiation game, double auction, etc.</li> <li>3. Students meet businesspeople from diverse backgrounds. They are additionally exposed to entrepreneurs throughout history who have a variety of sociodemographic profiles.</li> <li>4. All students need assistance to get their businesses started, and thus become comfortable with receiving direction. This translates into having the ability to accept constructive criticism, both in class and in the workplace.</li> </ol>
X. Learn and teach on an ongoing basis	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify and achieve a skill set appropriate to individual needs and desires</li> <li>2. Change that skill set over time as responsibilities and work settings change</li> <li>3. Train others in tasks or competencies learned</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Entrepreneurship is an essential life skill that will assist students in all walks of life. Even if a student does not desire to start and operate his or her own business, they will become much better employees as they will understand how all parts of a company work together.</li> <li>2. One key lesson NFTE teaches is adaptability. Students learn that flexibility is critical to their overall success throughout their lives. Entrepreneurs change their approach as the marketplace changes by developing new products or services, using new technology, etc.</li> <li>3. NFTE students have the unique opportunity to work with others in their community. All students are taught the value of "giving back," and social entrepreneurship is a component of NFTE's curriculum.</li> </ol>
XI. Take responsibility for career and life choices	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Manage time between work, school, and other commitments to allow satisfactory performance on all fronts</li> <li>2. Demonstrate direction and purpose in choices for education and career, as evidenced by a personally defined set of rules</li> <li>3. Develop a career plan that shows ambition, realism, and high self-worth</li> <li>4. Demonstrate a strong moral compass and self-respect in decisions and actions made</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students are taught the value of time management. Additionally, NFTE incorporates lessons on "life balance," teaching students the value of intellectual, family, financial wealth.</li> <li>2. Students create a business plan for their company, which includes projections for where that student will be in five to ten years. This not only relates to their businesses, but also to their education and family as well. Students are taught concept of risk management and the value of making positive life choices.</li> <li>3. NFTE students understand that to be successful in both business and life, they will need to develop a solid plan. A business plan must be completed in order to finish the course.</li> <li>4. Students learn the importance of ethical behavior while at the same time practice positive risk-taking. Self-respect and self-esteem are developed by each student as they recognize they have the ability to contribute something of value to their community. Becoming president of a company transforms students' perception of themselves from being an observer in our economic system to one who now owns a piece of that system. Ownership has the unique power to increase the incentive students have to work hard because they alone will reap the benefit or the cost from their actions.</li> </ol>