



7: Empowered Reentry and Essential Skills with Guest Tina Manus

Guest Tina Manus took her experience as an educator and researcher to apply experiential problem-solving and interactive community building to build work readiness skills for individuals facing reentry from corrections.

The research, now referred to as the “Empowered Reentry Project,” was a 10-day program organized as a participatory action research project for nine returning citizens. The pilot program used essential skills assessment and its detailed score report, ACT® Tessera® Workforce, and the ACT® Tessera® Workforce Playbook respectively, as a pre- and post-test to measure skills identified by employers as necessary work ready skills.

Tina was inspired to conduct the initiative because she felt there was a gap in the strategy for the skill-building process for individuals facing reentry. The research question Tina worked to answer is “How would adding experiential problem solving and interactive community building activities increase access to workforce readiness skill building activities?” To ensure successful participation, Tina built credibility around the assessment, addressed academic barriers such as stamina and language, and leveraged existing relationships to motivate the individuals. ACT Tessera Workforce, a comprehensive and reliable essential skills assessment, turned out to be the missing link between social and emotional learning and workforce development for this population.

**“How could I make social emotional learning come off the page and make it come to life for returning citizens?”
-Tina Manus**

Listen to episode 7 to find out:

- What the participants learned about themselves
- How the assessment addressed essential skills, sometimes referred to as soft skills, objectively
- Implications for how to teach individuals to become better employees
- The outcomes and what's next for the research
- The research behind the assessment from ACT Expert Jason Way

Join the Conversation

Tina Manus: [Email](#)
Jasen Jones: [@JasenCJones](#)
ACT Twitter: [@act](#)
ACT LinkedIn: [ACT Workforce Solutions](#)

Resources

[\[Research\] Using Experiential Problem-Solving and Interactive Community Building to Increase Access to Workforce Readiness Skill-Building When Using ACT Tessera Workforce](#)

[\[Webinar\] Measure What Matters and Improve Your Workplace](#)

[\[Video\] ACT Tessera Workforce: Essential Skills Assessment](#)

[ACT® Tessera® Workforce](#)

[ACT State Organizations](#)

[ACT® Work Ready Communities](#)

[ACT® Workforce Solutions](#)

About Tina Manus

Dr. Tina M. Manus is the Chair-elect of the ACT CT Leadership Council and a National Board Certified Teacher with over 19 years of experience. She earned her PhD in Organizational Leadership from Northcentral University with research examining emotional intelligence. She serves as the Greater Bridgeport NAACP Education Committee Chairwoman, a Lead Teacher with Educators for Excellence, and is a member of the Central CT State University Teacher-Leader Fellowship Program. She proposed this pilot program to community leaders and ACT, after visiting a local probation and parole meeting where she recognized a need for social and emotional workforce readiness among participants there. Working cooperatively with ACT, she secured a free pilot of ACT Tessera Workforce exclusively for Bridgeport returning citizens. She then coordinated efforts with a coalition of community partners to bring this unique opportunity to life. The full report can be found at: <https://www.tinyurl.com/Reentry2019>

About Jason Way

Jason Way has a PhD in industrial/organizational psychology and works in the ACT Center for Social, Emotional, and Academic Learning. His research focuses on the social and emotional learning skills that contribute to academic and work success. At ACT, he is the content owner of the Behavioral Skills framework and the research lead for the ACT® Engage® family of assessments and the ACT® Tessera® Workforce assessment. Prior to ACT, Jason worked in management consulting conducting job analyses, interview training, and assessment center exercises, as well as conducting training research and development for the U.S. military. His research has been published in outlets such as *European Journal of Personality*, *Personality and Individual Differences*, and *Personnel Assessment and Decisions* and has been featured in over 50 presentations at academic and professional conferences.