A Common Language for Higher Education and Workforce: State Certification Systems
A Story (might actually be true!)

- The President declares he needs to hire 20 computer scientists
- He calls his friend, the President of X University and says so
- The presidents pass the responsibility to the HR director and the computer science faculty, respectively
- When they begin to talk, they find themselves in a dilemma...
The Moral of the Story

- Language is critical
- Knowing what you don’t know is important (especially in education and business partnerships where the language is so different between the two sectors)
- Knowledge, skills and abilities can only be discussed with a common frame of reference
- Measurement often offers that common frame of reference
- Both can benefit from measurement
What is the story of our data?

The Lake Wobegon effect

The characterization of the fictional location, where "all the women are strong, all the men are good looking, and all the children are above average," has been used to describe a real and pervasive human tendency to overestimate one’s achievements and capabilities in relation to others.

The Lake Wobegon effect, where everybody claims to be above average, has been observed among drivers, CEOs, stock market analysts, college students, and state education officials, among others.

From Wikipedia
Authors:
Dennis Jones and
Patrick Kelly,

Update to 2004 Report with data on all 50 States

The Emerging Policy Triangle

Education
Economic Development
Workforce Development

NCHEMS
Movements in Human Capital

State Workforce and Economy

Who’s Entering the State’s Workforce?
- Characteristics of In-Migrants
- Entrants into the Workforce

The State Workforce and Economy
- Characteristics of the Workforce
- Economic Conditions

Who’s Leaving the State Workforce?
- Characteristics of Out-Migrants
- Retirees Leaving the Workforce

Net Gain/Loss

Net Gains/Losses - Retirement - Migration
Percent of Civilian Population Age 25-64 Participating in the Workforce, 2005

Sources of Future Workforce

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
Net Migration of Residents Age 22-29 with an Associate Degree or Higher, 2004-05

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 ACS PUMS File
Migration of Older Workforce

Net Migration of Residents Age 30-64 with an Associate Degree or Higher, 2004-05

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 ACS PUMS File
Emerging Policy Triangle

- ED, WD and Education policies on separate tracks in many states
- Some states are getting their arms around the critical links among the policy arenas
- But there are differences, and a need for different solutions, by state:
  - Retention of workforce
  - Growing your own
  - Improve a poor education and build an economy that rewards grads

No state with a low proportion of Bachelor’s degrees has a high per capita income.

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Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 2004
Knowledge, skills and abilities can only be discussed with a common frame of reference.

Measurement often offers that common frame of reference.

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How have states found this common frame of reference and bridged the language gap?
Enter State Workforce Certification

- State Workforce Certification Systems
- State Workforce Credentialing Systems
- Almost all are based on ACT, Inc.’s WorkKeys® series of assessments
- Involve multiple partners in states
- Bridge the education-business language barrier AND barriers to significant partnerships
- Provide students with evidence of job readiness
What are WorkKeys®?

- A job skills assessment system measuring “real world” skills that employers believe are critical to job success. These skills are valuable for any occupation – skilled or professional – and at any level of education.
- What this means: ANY level of education...including four-year colleges and universities can add value to the degreed credentials of their exiting students with the completion of WorkKeys assessments in states with certification systems especially.
WorkKeys® Assessments

- Communication – Business writing, listening, reading for information, writing
- Problem Solving – Applied mathematics, applied technology, locating information, observation
- Interpersonal skills – Teamwork
- Personal Skills – Talent, Fit

Any one assessment can be completed in less than an hour
Easily scored, easily understood

- Scale is from 1-7, with scores less than a 3 indicative of someone not ready for entry-level work
- Scores of 6 and 7 are for professional or highly technical jobs
- 3, 4 and 5 are common for most jobs across assessments and form the basis for career readiness certificates
- But the number of jobs requiring 5 and above are higher than the number of people qualified to fill them. (Education implications)
No need to reinvent job profiles...

- Unless a business or industry has a specific reason for doing so, as ACT’s Job bank has more than 11,000 jobs already profiled by professional profilers nationwide.
- The assessments, profiles and the criteria by which each job is profiled are in compliance with all federal laws.
- Businesses can also use the assessments to target training on-the-job only where it’s needed, saving millions annually for participating employers.
The **Louisiana Interagency Collaborative** includes representatives from:

- Board of Regents
- Department of Correction
- Department of Education
- Department of Social Services
- Department of State Civil Service
- Louisiana Community and Technical College System
- Louisiana Department of Labor
- Louisiana Workforce Commission – Gov.’s Office
Applicant must score at or above the minimum score listed in each core area to receive the particular LWR! Certificate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill Area</th>
<th>Gold</th>
<th>Silver</th>
<th>Bronze</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applied Mathematics</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading for Information</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locating Information</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
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Statewide Partnerships in College and Work Readiness 2007

EXPLORE 8th- and 9th-grade students
PLAN 10th-grade students
ACT 11th- and 12th-grade students
Affiliated with ACT’s National Career Readiness Certificate
WorkKeys 10th-, 11th-, and 12th-grade students
State career readiness certificate based on WorkKeys®
State Example: Louisiana Work Ready!

One of many states using WorkKeys and affiliated with ACT’s National Career Readiness Certificate

The Story of Louisiana: Career Readiness After Hurricanes Katrina and Rita
For more information

- [www.wiche.edu](http://www.wiche.edu) for electronic copies of the Emerging Policy Triangle report and other policy studies of interest
- [dmize@wiche.edu](mailto:dmize@wiche.edu) to reach Dolores Mize for further information or to help link you with representatives from ACT.
- [www.act.org](http://www.act.org) Provides information on the National Career Readiness Certification process, as well as information on college and career preparation. Select the “Workforce” button on the first page to learn more on WorkKeys