

# Workforce Development & the Work Keys System

THE ALIGNMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING WITH CURRENT AND FUTURE WORKFORCE REQUIREMENTS BEGINS WITH A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF THE SPECIFIC SKILLS AND SKILL LEVELS REQUIRED FOR WORKPLACE SUCCESS.

## CORE SKILLS

In the Work Keys system, jobs or occupations are analyzed across 8 core competencies, or basic skills: *Reading for Information, Applied Mathematics, Listening, Writing, Teamwork, Applied Technology, Locating Information, and Observation.*

These skill areas align with the nationally recognized workplace foundation skills known as the SCANS Skills (developed by the Secretary of Labor's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills).

## JOB ANALYSIS

The Work Keys analysis uses a focus-group model involving the participation of incumbent workers who actually do the job being profiled, and determines the skills, and quantifies the skill levels required for successful performance on a particular job, or within a particular occupation group.

The job analysis process takes from one to two days depending upon how many of the core competencies are being addressed.

## ASSESSMENT

Incumbent workers, job seekers, or trainees can be assessed to determine their skill levels as compared with the levels revealed in the job analysis.

When skill gaps are identified, training can focus on specific skill areas needing improvement.

## TRAINING & CURRICULUM

Once a job is analyzed, the data is provided to curriculum and training developers who can integrate the skills information into existing curriculum, or modify it to focus training on helping learners develop the skills necessary for job performance.

Work Keys provides a curriculum development tool for this process called *Targets for Instruction.*

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Work Keys is fast becoming an important workforce development tool that communicates workplace skill requirements using a common language understood by industry and education alike.

Work Keys gives employers and industry sectors a way to develop their future and current workforce by identifying and hiring qualified applicants, evaluating the preparedness of incumbent workers to move up the career ladder, and determining student ability to participate in internships and work-based learning activities.

The system also provides individuals the means to document and certify their workplace skills.

## WORK KEYS BENEFITS

- Establishes a standard skills metric for selection, performance, and advancement.
- Reduces costs from hiring mis-matches.
- Determines the training workers need for effective job performance, and for skills upgrades.
- Reduces training time and training cost.
- Documents an individual's skills.

WORKKEYS™

## LOCAL SERVICES

The Bay Area Industry Education Council is the East Bay's Work Keys Service Center and provides workforce development planning assistance, job and occupational analysis, skills assessment, and curriculum development support.

## MORE INFO

Contact Gerald Bartlett, Vice President Workforce Development at the Bay Area Industry Education Council.

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