



Focus 2003 Conference Report

The State of Wisconsin was host of the first national conference on industry skill standards and occupational certifications. Attending the conference were over 350 individuals representing 280 organizations. The focus of this event was to inspire educators, employers and governmental officials on the national system of voluntary skill standards.

National leadership was provided through the *Focus 2003* partnering organizations – The [National Skill Standards Board](#), [American Association of Community Colleges](#), [National Association of Workforce Boards](#), [Association for Career and Technical Education](#), [National Association of State Directors of Career and Technical Education](#), and the [National Workforce Excellence Network](#). Each organization is a respected national leader in education, training and workforce preparation and added greatly to the overall success of the conference. To access their websites click on their names or logos listed.



The following are descriptions of the sessions at the conference. Some of the presenters have provided additional web links to the topics discussed during their presentation. To access additional information simply click on the name of the presenter and identified link. To receive the conference reflections report highlighting the goals and accomplishments of this event click here: [Focus 2003 Conference Reflections Report](#).

Program At a Glance

Tuesday – May 6, 2003

Welcome Address

Presenter: Roberta Gassman, Secretary, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

Wisconsin is proud to host the *FOCUS 2003* conference. Our future is dependent upon building a foundation that connects education and training. Throughout this conference you will witness some of the Nations best examples of collaboration and partnerships. Growing our economy starts with investing in our citizens and workers. We hope you enjoyed the conference! www.dwd.state.wi.us

Keynote: Skill Standards and Occupational Certifications from the User Perspective

Presenter: Edie West

Presenter: Anthony Carnevale

The keynote session addressed the definition and differences between skill standards and occupational certifications. The need for standards and certifications, including meeting the demands of the new economy, the challenges of the existing skills gap and the requirements of competency-based education and training was key topics of discussion. Consideration of returns on investment and related benefits to employers and individuals, education, and training providers and regulatory agencies will shape the presentation.

Employer Demand for Skill Standards and Occupational Certifications

Presenters: [Rhendi Berth](#), [Lutz Ziob](#), Doug Nickels

A panel of leading employers from different industry sectors discussed contemporary and projected uses of skill standards and occupational certifications. Related business/industry and labor momentum, along with the scope and status of requirements for hiring, retention, and promotion will serve as the platform for this discussion.

The New Economy - Linking Education and Training

Presenters: Elizabeth Burmaster, Anthony Swoope, Hans Meeder

Nothing is more important to building our nation's economy than unprecedented cooperation in linking education and training. New skills and job expectations require innovative strategies for preparing our citizens for opportunities in a world class workforce. The first luncheon session brought together three national leaders in education and economic development to share their perspectives.

www.dpi.state.wi.us; www.ed.gov/; www.dol.gov/

Policies and Procedures Driving the Use of Skill Standards and Occupational Certifications

Breakout Sessions

Workforce Delivery Systems

Presenters: Jack Heesch, Dave Novak, Chris Weaver

Three leading state representatives shared various governance approaches for skill standards and occupational certifications under the WIA, including foundation policies and procedures, credential rate, youth skill attainment rate, eligible training providers, one-stop usage, and certification attainment report card.

Secondary Delivery Systems

Presenters: Robert Almond, [Roger McCloughan](#), Rob Fieldman, and Helen Mehrkens

State leaders will focused on the utilization of skill standards and occupational certifications as curriculum drivers, program and instructor certifications, state accreditation requirements and performance/accountability measures.

Postsecondary Delivery Systems

Presenters: Larry Rabalais, Fred Kiehle, Fred Esposito, Roger Foelske

During this session, participants explored the role of skill standards and occupational certifications in industry accreditation of degree/non-degree courses of study, credentialing, articulation, and evaluation of effectiveness. Selected state models were presented as the basis for discussion.

Apprenticeship Training Systems

Presenters: Mike Schallock, Mary Harrington, [Karen Morgan](#)

This presentation discussed the efforts, policies and innovative practices that Apprenticeship Training Systems have embraced around the application of skill standards and occupational certifications. State and national demonstration projects were described as well as future directions for apprenticeship training.

Louisiana's Unified Statewide Vision toward the Use of Occupational Certifications

Presenter: [Chris Weaver](#)

The state of Louisiana has been successful in embedding industry-based certifications into all workforce development, education and training reforms. Employers lead this wave of reform through a consortia of industry partners by helping to design and invest in certification training for their industry sectors. The Workforce Commission promotes industry-based certifications and all workforce-related agencies work through "interagency workgroups" to address key issues related to occupational certifications.

Innovative National Initiatives

Charting a Framework for Technology Certifications and Careers – The Tech Career Compass

Presenter: Gary Hannah

CompTIA's Tech Career Compass (TCC) is the industry's premier website for information about careers within the ICT industry. The website provides current information on career paths, job titles, job descriptions, skills and knowledge needed, and certifications linking to jobs. Links from this site will take you to assessment tools, job banks, career sites, conferences, and resume and interviewing tools. The TCC is a free tool for students seeking career information, job changers seeking tools to help them make the change, and current workers wanting to raise their skills. www.comptia.org/

Benefiting From Equipped for the Future Standards

Presenter: Sondra Stein

EFF is being used in workforce development and education to establish a common vision and common results in bridging the two systems; to create contextualized instruction relating to skills employers have said they need; to build training programs that prepare students and job seekers for career ladder jobs. Work Readiness Credential that will provide a common national standard for work readiness.

<http://novel.nifl.gov/>

Using WorkKeys – The Michigan Story

Presenters: Jack Reese, Barbara Bolin

Only in Michigan is the common language of the WorkKeys program used across a variety of programs. A description of WorkKeys and the method of standards development within the program, its application in venues across the state (from training and skill certification to job placement) will be discussed. www.michigan.gov/mdcd

Applying Career Cluster Initiative Pathways

Presenter: Charlie Losh

Led by the efforts of the National Association of State Directors of Career and Technical Education, the Career Clusters Initiative is intended to establish a national framework for curriculum related to 16 recognized career clusters. Participants received detailed information about the career clusters as well as the national effort to create pathways and connections between career development and occupation preparation. www.careerclusters.org/

Measuring Computer and Internet Literacy

Presenter: [Jon Haber](#)

SkillCheck, Inc., is a world technology leader in skills assessment for the staffing, human resources, training, education and certification industries. In partnership with Certiport, Inc., SkillCheck has introduced the new Internet and Computing Core Certification (IC³) for basic computing and internet skills. This session was designed to demonstrate the value of basic computer, digital and internet literacy certification, with an emphasis in the impact of IC³ in education and workforce development.

www.skillcheck.com/site.pl/ic3/

Wednesday – May 7, 2003

Working Toward the Institution of Skill Standards and Occupational Certifications

Selecting and Implementing Skill Standards and Certifications

Presenters: Dave Osman, Rick Spill, Dave Wilcox, Joe Lualhati

The NSSB Occupational Certification Feasibility Review Document, formal qualitative criteria/characteristics and review/approval procedures and the NSSB Certification Recognition served as the basis for this session.

CompTIA IT Certifications

Presenter: Gary Hannah

CompTIA, the Computing Technology Industry Association, is the largest global trade association representing the ICT Industry. Its purpose is to bring the industry together for public policy issues, the setting of standards and workforce development. Best known for its certifications, CompTIA has a number of programs to help raise the skill level of new ICT workers. This workshop provided information about how CompTIA certifications can fit into the academic or retraining market to help prepare individuals for entry into the industry.

www.comptia.org/

Certified Internet Webmaster Certifications

Presenter: [Kerri Kuhlmann](#)

In a world connected by the Internet, the business market demands skilled webmaster professionals. The Internet Webmaster Certification is designed to credential the skills of workers in this highly competitive market. This session outlined what the Webmaster Certification includes, and how to get started implementing a program of your own.

Foundational Computing Certification

Presenter: [Trent Howell](#)

IC³ is an industry recognized, entry-level computer and internet literacy certification program that targets teachers, students, prospective employees and workforce development participants. This certification

offers a portable, globally recognized measure of skills and knowledge related to basic hardware, software and internet advancement in education. [IC³ Brochure](#), [IC³ College](#), [IC³ Exam](#)

National Institute for Metalworking Skills Certifications

Presenter: [David Horn](#)

This session was designed to enable participants to apply NIMS individual skill certifications and NIMS program accreditation to their respective programs. The session described the use of NIMS individual skill certifications and program accreditation by industry, education and training institutions and the workforce system. All NIMS assessments and products are industry designed and piloted under procedures accredited by the American National Standards Institute.

National Center for Construction Education and Research Certifications

Presenter: Kurt Morauer

The construction industry has created a national model, usable in any industry, for training standards processes that rely on industry and education partnerships. By using accreditation, standardized curriculum, instructor certification and student credentialing, you can create articulated achievements. <http://www.nccer.org/>

Electronic Technicians Association Certifications

Presenters: Teresa Maher, Richard Glass, Chris Owens

The Electronics Technicians Association, Intl., has developed more than 20 technical certifications to provide vendor-neutral industry benchmarks. Certified techs can be found in a variety of fields, including computer technology, fiber optics, telecommunications, wireless communications, data cabling, biomedical electronics, audio/video distribution and more. This session addressed the needs of educators, trainers and students in finding solutions for providing today's job market with qualified technicians. www.eta-sda.com/index.html

National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence Certifications

Presenter: [Dan Wooster](#)

ASE certification has become a mainstay of the automotive service industry. In this session, you will

learn how the ASE certification works, the occupations served, the value of certification, the relationship between certification and training and how ASE is integrated into all industry segments. Practical applications and program models were described.

Child Development Associate Certifications

Presenter: Deborah Jordan

The Child Development Associate National Credentialing Program focuses on the skills of early care and education professionals. The CDA Program provides performance-based training, assessment, and credentialing of child care staff in center-based, family child care, and home visitor settings. The unique characteristics of the CDA Program serve as a model of innovation in the field of early childhood education. The CDA Credential is recognized in child care licensing regulations in 48 states and the District of Columbia. This session will provide you with examples about how you can begin to improve your Child Development Programs through the use of national standards. www.nncc.org/homepage.html

Microsoft Office Specialist Certification

Presenters: Elsie Olson, Rich Devine

Regarded as one of the most widely recognized certification programs in business and industry, the Microsoft Office Specialist Certification has revolutionized the skill competencies of office professionals. Key components and applications of Microsoft certification programs were presented. www.certipoint.com/yourPersonalPath/officeSpecialist/Certification/

Innovation - A Mandate for a Competitive Tomorrow

Presenters: Richard Carpenter, [Edie West](#), [Tim Flynn](#)

In a world of competitive markets, innovation is key to continued success. During this luncheon session, three national leaders looked to the future as our nation seeks to re-establish itself as the world's strongest economic market. Each speaker brought a unique perspective to the role that their organization represents in the marketplace. Critical to success in the new economy are innovative education, and training systems that lead to new ways of educating and training skilled workers. www.board.tec.wi.us/; www.nssb.org

Key Aspects of Incorporating Standards and Certifications

Developing Performance-Based Curricula

Presenters: [Judy Neill](#), Robin Soine

Using standards to drive the development of educational curriculum and industry training calls for more than an update of existing course outlines. This session demonstrated how the Worldwide Instructional Design System model and tools can help connect national skill standards, WorkKeys, and other performance expectations with learning and assessment. www.wids.org

Certifying the Future through Curriculum Alignment

Presenters: Larry Rabalais, Cary Snowden

The state of Louisiana has reached new heights in achieving community and technical college accreditations. Based on workforce initiatives and national skill standards, education and training programs have taken on a new meaning and validity. This session featured the important role that curriculum alignment plays when designing and implementing portable occupational skill standards and certifications within education institutions. www.procertcom.com

Integrating Occupational, Academic and Employability Skills

Presenters: Kathlynn Frost, Sally Spieker

Alaska has identified performance standards in core vocational/technical areas and cross-walked those performance standards to academic, industry, employability, and cultural standards. Local school districts used these documents to embed standards in their own curriculum. The Alaska Department of Education partnered with school districts, universities, Alaska Vocational Technical Center and businesses to align Alaska Career and Technical Education to standards.

Screening Industry-Based Certifications for Use in Career and Technical Education

Presenter: Bob Mahlman

To effectively select industry-based certifications for Career and Technical Education programs you must understand the implications and outcomes of the selection process as well as the content of the standards. The focus of this session was on current

areas of research in assessment, program evaluation, and accountability systems that impact education and workforce development.

Managing Program Improvement and Postsecondary Articulation through Assessments

Presenters: [Lana Ford](#), Dan Cleveland

The National Occupational Competency Testing Institute has developed and validated over 250 career and technical competency assessments. NOCTI assessments provide a nationally recognized, standardized approach to occupational competency evaluation. In this world of global competition, business leaders and educators alike need resources to help them make appropriate and timely decisions about workplace readiness.

Marketing Skill Standards and Culture Change

Presenter: Michael Morales

Our nation's economic success depends on the success of our skilled workforce. This will take unprecedented cooperation from all parties. Communicating your message clearly and convincingly (re: industry skill standards and occupational certifications) is critical in this process – it can lead to “buy in” and successful workforce training partnerships. This presentation expressed experience leading edge marketing and communication strategies that produce outstanding results.

Profiling a Combined Internet Classroom that Works

Presenters: Robert Clarke, Brad Wachowiak

This session explored how one CTE center has developed an IT Certification Program for A+, Net+ and iNet+ and is delivering to partnering high schools 100 hours of introduction to IT via the Internet. This program offered flexibility to students and teachers and adult access to IT curriculum previously unavailable to them. The “Key Skills” curriculum for communications and math will also be featured in this session. Key Skills provides academic support for all career and technical programs. Rounding out the anytime, anyplace availability of curriculum are the iMAP Automotive and Introduction to Technology Careers Programs.

www.ljgroup.com/index.asp?flash=true

Model Practices, Programs and Alliances

Addressing Skill Shortages with Standards and Assessments

Presenter: Pam Lund

Participants were guided through an industry-driven workforce training model for current and future workers. The state of Washington received a DOL Regional Skills Shortages Demonstration Grant that has led to the National Department of Labor Prism Award. Learning how to apply this model of assessment to your local workforce development system was presented.

Utilizing Industry-Based Certifications for Employee Selection

Presenter: Jim Austin

Legal issues addressing defensibility and technical quality of the use of standards in the selection of employees is the topic of this session. A three part framework of technical excellence, feasibility, and fairness is used as a context in developing policies and procedures for employers.

Combining Certifications for Maximum Impact

Presenter: Joe Lualhati

With a vast array of occupational certifications available it is difficult to know where to start. This workshop was intended to provide ideas on how to select and combine occupational certifications to maximize the benefit to employers and employees.

Creating a Productive Local Labor Market Work Readiness Training and Certification Program

Presenter: [Nancy Humphrey](#)

Addressing the widespread employer need for employees with competence in foundation skills and certification in work readiness skills is the focus of this session. One of the topics covered was how to develop composite profiles of the entry-level skills desired in a particular jurisdiction or labor market. Selection of matching assessment and scoring procedures and implementation of a locally accepted certificate format will be featured.

Delivering Postsecondary Incumbent Worker Training

Presenters: Ed Knudson, Larry Wilkins, Bob Martin, Claudia Grace

This 2003 Bellwether Award winning partnership between the Gateway Technical College Business and Industry Division and SC Johnson – A Family Company, has created a program that strengthens the technical training and education of its incumbent workforce. Participants learned about the challenges, solutions, skill standards development, resources required and results achieved when private and public sectors team up to develop and implement an onsite employee training center. This team presentation will demonstrate how business and education can work together to achieve new models of training.

Building Successful Sectoral Partnerships

Presenters: Kim Tarr, Gretchen Schultz

This workshop introduced participants to the sector approach to workforce development, and to show how this industry specific approach can be used to meet the workforce needs of their communities. Participants learned how to develop a long-term initiative that can help employers and workers compete in a challenging economic climate.

State Skill Standards Approaches

Georgia's Technical Colleges Statewide Program Standards

Presenter: Fred Kiehle

Georgia's system of 34 technical colleges committed to statewide program standards for diploma and degree programs in 1987. The standards are developed in close collaboration with industry representatives and meet industry skill standards. The Georgia process and the benefits that the system believes have accrued from the adoption of the program standard process were discussed.

Kentucky State Skill Standards

Presenters: Emil Jezik, Keith Bird, Ken Carroll

In Kentucky skill standards are the benchmark for occupational success. With direct support from the Office of the Governor, Kentucky has instituted a system of skill certifications and program standards that have led to a stronger working relationship between business and education. This workshop provided insight to the development and integration of skill standards into the Kentucky state system.

North Carolina Statewide Experiences

Presenter: Vonna Vigilone

Developing support for the use of skill standards was the focus of this presentation. With business, industry and labor behind the effort, North Carolina has initiated a series of opportunities for education and training providers to successfully use occupational standards and certification programs.

Oregon Skill Standards Efforts

Presenter: [Eileen Casey White](#)

The Oregon Departments of Community Colleges and Workforce Development, and the Oregon Employment Department have taken the lead to create partnerships with business, industry, and labor around the development and use of skill standards. This session will provide an overview of the projects and programs among these partners and will highlight particular efforts made in manufacturing, customer sales and service.

Vermont Skill Standards Ventures

Presenter: Douglas Webster

This workshop approached the use of skill standards from three distinct perspectives; education, industry and government. Vermont was one of the first states in the country to recommend a system of skill standards and to link funding of training and education programs to occupational skill standards. In Vermont, skill standards are tools for program improvement and system collaboration.

Washington Skill Standards and Economic Development

Presenters: [Alan Hardcastle](#), Kyra Kester

Washington State has focused its skill standards efforts in support of the state's newest economic development and education initiatives. The state has worked to establish regional partnerships to identify key industry sectors around which economic development strategies will be launched. One of the foundation elements of this work is the provision of workforce education and training that meets employer skill requirements. This session described Washington's regional approach, the application of select skill standards in secondary and postsecondary programs, examples of work in progress and success as well as challenges to watch for when implementing state programs.

Wisconsin State Skill Standards Endeavors

Presenters: [Lisa Olson](#), Ann Westrich

Wisconsin has established a system of credentialing youth involved in standards-based, work-based learning programs. Through industry validated competencies, secondary education programs have raised the level of accountability as well as revitalized the curriculum. Completion of a Wisconsin Skill Standards program leads to a State Skill Certification and in many cases postsecondary credit. This session featured the Wisconsin Skill Standards Programs and showcase some of the state's best practices.

Thursday – May 8, 2003

National Skill Standards Board Voluntary Partnership Enterprises

www.nssb.org/certrecog/vpinformation.pdf

Manufacturing Skill Standards

Winnequah Room

Presenter: Ellen Scully

This highly interactive session was designed to introduce the audience to the MSSC standards, assessment and curriculum and to explore how these tools can best be used to enhance state and local workforce development programs. The mission, history and organizational structure of the MSSC was discussed. www.msscusa.org/

Sales and Service

Presenter: [Kathy Mannes](#)

The Sales and Service Voluntary Partnership has worked with thousands of individuals, companies, and organizations to identify national skill standards in customer service and sales. An initial web-based assessment leading to National Certification in Professional Customer Services was launched in 2002. This session focused on how these tools and credentials encourage professionalism and career advancement in retail and related industries. www.nrf.com and www.salesandservice.org

Education and Training

Presenter: [Joe Lualhati](#)

The Education and Training Voluntary Partnership is a coalition of organizations with a mission to support

the development of a nationally-based, world-class system of voluntary skill standards to enhance the skills and knowledge of workers in the Education and Training industry. This workshop focused on the progress made in establishing these national standards, assessments and certifications.

www.etvp.org/

Hospitality and Tourism Futures

Presenter: Doug Adair

Hospitality and Tourism Futures (HTF) is an alliance of businesses, organizations, institutions, agencies and individuals working together to promote and facilitate skills development and career opportunities in hospitality and tourism. This session explored the work of HTF in developing voluntary, national skill standards and certifications, and in supporting industry workforce development initiatives such as the ProStart Restaurant/Foodservice and Lodging Management career development programs for secondary school students and standards and certification programs. www.htfutures.org/

Information Communications Technology

Presenter: [John Engman](#)

Even with the hiring slowdown experienced over the past year, there remains a skills shortage throughout the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) industry. A consortium of industry, education, government and community organizations are creating skill standards to provide a blueprint for professional development in the ICT industry. Presented in this session was the progress of the ICT skill standards work and the next steps in making these standards the map for entering and growing a career in ICT. www.tcc.comptia.org

Serving Youth through Standards and Certifications

Automotive YES

Presenters: Ray Pedersen, Jeff Dowd

This national model of excellence is sweeping the country. Automotive YES is a national curriculum and certification program that is endorsed by top manufacturers in the automotive industry.

www.ayes.org/index.asp

MarkED

Presenter: Jim Gleason

MarkEd is a national consortium of 41 state education departments and other related organizations. A recognized leader in curriculum development and teacher training, MarkEd has been instrumental in developing industry-based standards and curriculum products. A partner in the Sales and Service Voluntary Partnership, MarkEd has built a series of youth initiatives that integrate and support student development. www.mark-ed.com/

SkillsUSA-VICA

Presenter: Tim Lawrence

SkillsUSA-VICA is a national organization representing nearly 300,000 students nationwide. This session featured the strong relationship SkillsUSA-VICA has built with business partners and the commitment they have made to youth training related to skill standards. SkillsUSA-VICA is a partner in the Manufacturing Skill Standards Council Voluntary Partnership. The session included a review of standards used for the enhancement of employability and leadership skills. The use of activity based instructional tools through the Professional Development Program and the brand new and just validated Chapter Standards will be presented. Both are based on NSSB core employability standards and SCANS standards, as well as research on leadership for adolescents.

www.skillsusa.org/

The MAT-SU Project-Certifications and Diplomas for High School Graduates

Presenter: Kris Forrester

This was truly a unique presentation on how one high school in Alaska has integrated the use of certifications in setting a new standard for high school graduation. Through this approach students learn what it takes to be successful in the working world and prepare for it by earning occupational certifications while in high school.

ProStart

Presenter: Susan Quam, Trisha Weisheipl

The ProStart initiative is an educational partnership formed by the National Restaurant Association to create a nationwide system of high school hospitality courses linked to mentored worksite experiences. Featured in this session was the nationally-

recognized ProStart School to Career Program that is changing the way young people think about careers in the restaurant and food service industry.

www.restaurant.org/careers/

Ongoing Technical Assistance and Training Opportunities

Facilitators: Dave Wilcox, Rick Spill, Jack Heesch, Bryan Albrecht, [Dave Osman](#), Joe Lualhati

During this program, participants engaged in mutually beneficial issue identification and problem solving related to topics noted as particular challenges throughout the conference; and strategized practical solutions for addressing them.