

**EMPLOYER PERCEPTIONS OF THE WISCONSIN EMPLOYABILITY  
SKILLS CERTIFICATE PILOT PROGRAM**

by

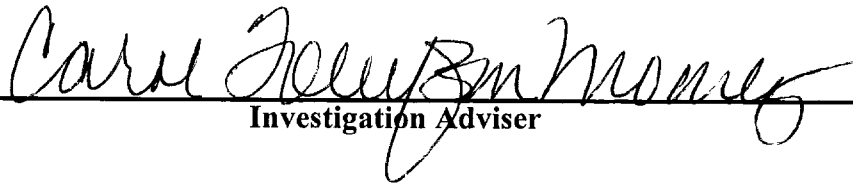
**Wendy J. Horbinski**

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University of Wisconsin-Stout  
Menomonie, WI 54751

ABSTRACT

Horbinski                      Wendy                      J.  
(Writer) (Last Name)      (First)                      (Initial)

EMPLOYER PERCEPTIONS OF THE WISCONSIN EMPLOYABILITY  
(Title)

SKILLS CERTIFICATE PILOT PROGRAM

Vocational Education      Dr. Carol T. Mooney                      8/00  
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The Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate program was piloted in Wisconsin high schools during the spring semester of the 1999-2000 school year. The Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate Program was designed by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction as a means to evaluate the employability skills of students as demonstrated at their work sites and through school-based projects. The target population that the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate was designed to serve, was those students who are in a school-supervised work-based learning program, but not participating in a state certified Cooperative Education (Co-op) or Youth Apprenticeship program. The Monroe School District piloted the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate program locally with students enrolled in the Business Education and Home Economics Related Occupations (HERO) Co-op programs which were not state certified.

Because employer participation is critical to the success of a work-based program such as the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate, Monroe School District felt there was a need to formally assess employer opinions of the pilot. Specifically, it was important to determine if employers felt the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate program student evaluation form was user friendly; if the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate program standards were achievable by students; what training employers needed to ensure successful completion of the Wisconsin Employability Skill Standards by their future student employees; and what potential value the employers felt the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate program could provide them in employee recruitment, screening, training, and evaluation.

Through interpretation of the research data, recommendations were made to develop local teacher-coordinator training, local mentor training, and a local program marketing plan. In addition, results were made available to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction for consideration when making improvements to the state delivered program standards and materials for the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate program.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

#### Background of the Problem

During the late 1990's, a thriving economy and a historically low unemployment rate made competition for entry-level employment extremely fierce. At the same time, new technologies, emerging team-focused management philosophies, customer service priorities, accessibility to information, and the need to maximize limited resources to be competitive caused a new set of skill demands for the entry-level employee.

The Lifework Education Team (2000, pg.2) at the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) explained that:

The mastery of employability skills is essential for all students, because virtually all students will one day go to work. Nationally, secondary schools offer a wide variety of school-supervised, work-based learning programs as a part of the curriculum which provide credit towards graduation and/or skill attainment credentials. Similarly, Wisconsin schools provide a variety of school-supervised learning experiences that help students prepare for their life's work and offer credits toward graduation and/or skill attainment credentials. In particular, work-based programs such as Youth Apprenticeship, Cooperative

Education, Work Experience, Internships, Service Learning and others provide valuable career development experiences for young people and some provide state certification of the skills students develop.

The Lifework Education Team went on to explain the currently recognized credentialed work-based learning programs in Wisconsin (Ibid):

Currently Wisconsin secondary schools participate in two major state-credentialed programs: Cooperative Education (Co-op) Skills Certificate Programs (credentialed by the DPI) and Youth Apprenticeship (credentialed by Department of Workforce Development). In addition, schools can participate in a variety of industry certified and sponsored skill-attainment programs.

Both the Cooperative Education Skills Certificate programs and the Youth Apprenticeship programs combine school-based and work-based learning to instruct students in a combination of industry specific and general employability skills. The Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate (WESC) program is unique in that it is designed to evaluate and certify just a student's general employability skills, not occupation specific skills. The employability skills in this program have been identified through the U.S. Department of Labor's Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) in partnership with educators, business, industry and labor representatives (Lifework Education Team, 2000).

The Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate program was piloted by the Monroe School District in the spring semester of 2000. Students enrolled in the traditional Business Education and Home Economics Related Occupations (HERO) Co-op programs were evaluated in late April, by their employers, using the WESC standards. The district was interested in employer opinions regarding the value of continuing the program, and if so how to improve the program in regards to teacher training, employer training, and program marketing.

#### Statement of the Problem

There is no study indicating employer reactions to the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate pilot program. In Monroe School District, eleven local employers had the opportunity to evaluate students using the pilot standards during third quarter of the 1999-2000 school year. The problem of this study is to determine employer opinions of the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate pilot program.

#### Purpose of the Study

It is necessary to conduct this study to gain employer feedback on the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate pilot program. Recommendations based upon interpretation of the research data will be utilized locally to develop teacher-coordinator training, mentor training, and a program marketing plan. In

addition, results will be made available to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction for consideration when making improvements to the state delivered program standards and materials.

### Research Questions

This descriptive study attempts to answer the following research questions:

- 1) Is the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate pilot program student evaluation form user friendly?
- 2) Are the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate pilot program standards achievable by students?
- 3) What training do employers need to ensure successful completion of the Wisconsin Employability Skill Certificate pilot program standards by their student employees?
- 4) What potential value do employers feel the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate pilot program can provide them in employee recruitment, screening, training, and evaluation?

### Significance of the Study

This study is important because the success of the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate program lies in the ability and willingness of

employers to provide skill training and the related evaluation of those skills for students. Employer training and evaluation of students is a key element in the design of the program. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that employers are involved in the evaluation of the program's pilot delivery. The information resulting from this study could be used to provide the following:

- 1) A Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate program student evaluation tool that is easily interpreted and completed by the employer.
- 2) Training for teacher-coordinators to ensure consistent delivery of the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate program between school districts and employers.
- 3) Mentor training for the employers that is focused on their specific needs.
- 4) A plan to market the program to other potential employer participants.

#### Limitations of the Study (Scope)

The study was limited to those eleven employers who piloted the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate program with the twelve Monroe High School Co-op students in the spring of 1999-2000. The survey instrument was developed by the researcher under the supervision of Dr. Carol Mooney,

Professor at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. It was assumed that each employer had a basic knowledge of the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate program. A copy of the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate evaluation form was included along with the survey to be used as a reference. A personal phone call was made to each employer to request participation in the survey and to set an appointment for the completion and of the survey by the researcher. The researcher conducted the survey in person in order to ensure a quick response and large response rate. The data is limited to the honesty of the respondent. No attempt was made to further verify information received.

### Summary

The workplace has been changing at a rapid pace, requiring greater demands on employees both in terms of productivity and skills. Work-based learning has been one opportunity that students have had to transfer knowledge developed in a classroom to an employment situation. One state recognized method to include more students in certificated work-based learning is through the introduction of the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate program which was piloted during the 1999-2000 school year. Employer support and participation is critical in any work-based learning program. This study was designed to collect employer opinions of the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate pilot program. Data collected was used to make recommendations for the

improvement of the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate program,  
marketing the WESC program, training school site personnel, and recruiting  
businesses and mentors—including their training.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Review of Literature

#### Introduction

Since the 1990's the United States has been refocusing its education goals to ensure its leadership in the competitive, global market. The review of literature provides insight to the specific initiatives that have influenced the direction of work-based learning and the implementation of evaluating student employability skills.

#### Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS)

There has been much talk about "SCANS" or "SCANS Skills". The United States Department of Labor's Education and Training Administration website provided the following description of "SCANS"(2000):

In 1990, the Secretary of Labor appointed a commission (Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills [SCANS]) to determine the skills our young people needed to succeed in the world of work. The commission's fundamental purpose was to encourage a high-performance economy characterized by high-skill, high-wage employment. Although the commission completed its work in 1992, its findings and recommendations continue to be a valuable source of information for

individuals and organizations involved in education and workforce development.

In their June 1991, What Work Requires of Schools report, the SCANS group outlined three major conclusions:

- 1) All American high school students must develop a new set of competencies and foundation skills if they are to enjoy a productive, full, and satisfying life.
- 2) The qualities of high performance that today characterize our competitive companies must become the standard for the vast majority of our companies, large and small, local and global.
- 3) The nation's schools must be transformed into high-performance organizations in their own right.

One may ask, "What does that mean to us as educators?" The SCANS report went on to identify five competencies and three foundation skill areas that they felt composed the core of job performance. These eight areas represent the essential preparation for all students, both those going directly to work and those planning further education. All eight must be an integral part of every young person's school life (SCANS, 1991). The Workplace Know-How skills identified by SCANS are identified in table 1.

Table 1

Workplace Know-How

<p>COMPETENCIES effective workers can productively use:</p>	
Resources	Allocating time, money, materials, space, and staff
Interpersonal Skills	Working on teams, teaching others, serving customers, leading, negotiating, and working well with people from culturally diverse backgrounds
Information	Acquiring and evaluating data, organizing and maintaining files, interpreting and communicating, and using computers to process information
Systems	Understanding social, organizational, and technological systems, monitoring and correcting performance, and designing or improving systems
Technology	Selecting equipment and tools, applying technology to specific tasks, and maintaining and troubleshooting technologies
<p>THE FOUNDATION competence requires:</p>	
Basic Skills	Reading, writing, arithmetic and mathematics, speaking, and listening
Thinking Skills	Thinking creatively, making decisions, solving problems, seeing things in the mind's eye, knowing how to learn, and reasoning
Personal Qualities	Individual responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, and integrity

The SCANS team (1991) went on to emphasize to educators that:

Your most gifted students need this know-how, and so do those experiencing the greatest difficulties in the classroom. We are convinced that if students are taught the know-how in the context of relevant problems, you will find them more attentive, more interested—indeed, more teachable—because they will find the coursework challenging and relevant.

The SCANS report provided an excellent summary of how to proceed with their findings:

The challenge this situation places before the nation's business and educational communities is three-fold. The first task is to develop a better means of communicating, a common vocabulary to guide the conversation between the business and school communities.....The second task is to set clear-cut standards and then convince students that effort invested in meeting these standards today will be rewarded in the work world of tomorrow. A major part of this task involves persuading students, teachers, parents, and business leaders that workplace know-how is not something "you just pick up." It can be defined. The third task is assess and certify students' workplace readiness so that students, their parents, and employers will know where they stand (1991, pg. 5)

## School-To-Work

The SCANS report provided a wake-up call to legislators that changes were necessary in the way that schools educate students. They realized however, that systemic change was in order, and wouldn't come without a price tag:

The School-to-work transition is the process of moving students from high school into postsecondary education and / or work with the goal of preparing them for high-skill, high-wage occupations. As such, it is an effort that should touch all students—those bound for four-year colleges and universities, as well as those who intend to move immediately into world of work. The federal School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994, which was signed into law by President Clinton in May 4, 1994, provides the vehicle for accomplishing this goal. (Paris, 1994, page 1)

The School-To-Work Opportunitites Act provided funding for states to develop comprehensive programs that combined relevant, integrated and applied school-based learning, school-supervised work-based learning, and connecting activities such as career plan development and articulation with postsecondary programs.

Paris (1994, pg.36) gives further reasoning for the development of work-based learning options as part of the School-To-Work Opportunities Act:

In an information-based and highly technical society, young people are excluded from work environments until their teen years when they are first able to assume part-time jobs. This separation first took place when the industrial Revolution centralized work activities, taking them out of the home and out of view from young people. Work-based learning is an essential part of school-to-work transition because it provides a dimension of reality that schools alone have difficulty providing for students. An assumption implicit in this model is that work experience in the community, whether paid or unpaid, should be an integral part of every student's school-to-work transition experience. Although the federal legislation gives priority to paid work experience, not all work-based learning experiences provided to students in high school need to be paid. The spectrum of work-based learning includes youth apprenticeship, paid work experience, cooperative education, job shadowing, business and industry mentoring, simulated work tasks at school or through vocational student organizations, school-based enterprises, and community service.

#### Business and Industry Update

Because the SCANS report was disseminated in 1991 and the School-To-Work Opportunities Act was signed into law in 1994, the researcher wanted to determine if the skills workers needed to be successful and the work-based learning approach to training was still relevant. The following excerpts validated

that the SCANS findings and work-based learning approach to training and development still rang true:

The U.S. economy is in the midst of its strongest sustained performance in decades. However, in this strong economy, employers face very real challenges as they try to expand, become more efficient, and compete in a demanding global and national economy. The combination of low unemployment and a shrinking labor supply places great strain on employers that rely on traditional strategies for finding—and keeping—qualified labor (WIN, 1998, pg. 5) Even as the pool of available workers shrinks, employers seek higher academic and social/communication skills from their entry-level workers. (WIN, 1998, pg. 6)

A 1999 article indicates that the trend continued:

Due in part to global competition and communication, as well as rapid advances in technology, newer and more sophisticated systems of work, new ways to deliver products, and innovative systems of management, the majority of jobs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century will require employees to have a broad range and depth of skills (21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Jobs, pg.1)

As the level of skill needed by entry-level workers continues to rise, the idea of certifying employees with documentation of portable skills continues to gain popularity:

Indeed, American employers increasingly seek employees with a portfolio of basic, technical, organizational, and company-specific skills (21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Jobs, pg. 5).

### Industry Skill Standards

The need for certifying the portable employability and industry specific skills has prompted the organization of the National Skills Standards Board.

The National Skill Standards Board (NSSB) is an unprecedented coalition of leaders from business, labor, employee, education, and community and civil rights organizations created in 1994 to build a voluntary national system of skill standards, assessment and certification systems to enhance the ability of the United States workforce to compete effectively in a global economy. These skills are being identified by industry in full partnership with labor, civil rights, and community based organizations. These standards will be based on high performance work and will be portable across industry sectors.

The NSSB has categorized the workforce into 15 industry sectors, which, under the guidance of the NSSB, are assembling skill standards, assessment and certification for their respective industries. (NSSB, 2000)

### Wisconsin Work-Based Learning

Wisconsin was one of the original eight states to receive a five-year School-To-Work Opportunities Act (STWOA) grant in 1994-1995 (Paris, 1994). One of the major focuses of Wisconsin's STWOA grant activities was the implementation of a Youth Apprenticeship program. The program combined school-based learning and work-based learning during the junior and senior year of high school to prepare the student to attain a pre-determined list of industry-recognized skill standards and employability skills. Occupational program areas were developed by the Department of Workforce Development based on the potential for graduates to obtain high-skill, high wage positions. Regional partnerships delivered their choice of programs based on needs of local employers.

Wisconsin had long been proud of its Cooperative Education programs sponsored by the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). However, there were no standards by which students in these programs were evaluated. The introduction of industry skill standards were applied to these programs in the 1990's:

During the 1994-1995 school year, standards were developed for Marketing Education. The Office of School-to-Work within DPI and a group of stakeholders, including educators, business and industry representatives, and parents, worked together to develop a cooperative

education skill standards certificate program. The program created business and industry skill standards which should be achievable by all co-op students at the high school level. The program was introduced in the 1995-1996 school year. Other program areas to develop co-op skill standards included Business Education, Agribusiness-Plant Science, Child Services, and Electronics and Telecommunications. The Cooperative Education Skill Standards Certificate program was introduced in the 1995-1996 school year (Fermanich, pg 15 1998).

Although most Cooperative Education program areas had implemented Skills Certificates, there were many school districts in the state that were not participating in having their co-op students earn a certificate. A study on the Marketing Education Skills Certificate programs was done in 1998 to determine the reasons that schools were not participating in the program:

When asked, "for what reason(s) did your students not graduate with a skill standard certificate?" 45.5 percent (n=5) indicated that there were too many competencies; 27.3 percent (n=3) indicated that the competencies were too difficult; 81.8 percent (n=9) indicated that the program was too time consuming; 0 percent (n=0) indicated that the students lost interest; 18.2 percent (n=2) indicated that the program was too restrictive; 36.4 percent (n=4) indicated that the program was too difficult to manage; 18.2 percent (n=2) cited difficulties with employers; and 9.1 percent (n=1) cited

the program was too rigorous (Fermanich, 1998, pg. 40).

### Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate

The Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate was developed and piloted in the 1999-2000 school year as an alternative state recognized work-based learning certification program. The goal of the program was to reach more students and work-based learning programs across the state by focusing specifically on the employability skills versus the combination of the employability skills and industry specific skills required of the Youth Apprenticeship and Wisconsin Cooperative Education Skill Standards programs. The main strategy was to provide, within state standards, state certification of a broader range of local district school-supervised work-based learning programs (Lifework Education Team, 2000, pg. 2).

Minimum requirements allowed this program to meet the needs of a variety of students and employers. The program required students to work a total of 180 hours. The work could be completed in a quarter, semester, year, or even summer. The student needed to have a signed training agreement with the school and employer. The student also had to develop a career plan and demonstrate the 22 employability skills at the worksite, school, or combination of the two. A wide range of student career interests and employer types could be accommodated because the employability skills were not industry specific. That does not mean,

however, that the skills being evaluated were not relevant. As the members of The Commission believe, the competencies are applicable from the shop floor to the executive suite (SCANS, 1991).

The Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate Program was not to be seen as a replacement for the Youth Apprenticeship or Wisconsin Cooperative Education Skill Standards programs. The program served several purposes: (a) as a viable work-based learning certification alternative for a student whose career area is not represented by one of the established programs, (b) as an alternative certification process for a company that cannot provide all the work or training opportunities required of one of the occupation specific programs, (c) as a method to certify the employability skills demonstrated through a school-based enterprise, or (d) to provide career exploration opportunities for the undecided student, or (e) as a stepping stone to an occupational specific program (figure 1).

Figure 1

Continuum of Work-Based Skill Certification Opportunities  
for  
Wisconsin Secondary Students



Local Program Status

Locally, small numbers of students were being served by the Youth Apprenticeship and Wisconsin Cooperative Education Skills Standards programs. Personal experience of the researcher determined the main reason for the low numbers being served was employer ability to provide training in all the competencies required by the programs for certification.

Personal experience of the research also indicated that employer support for work-based learning had generally been strong. The Wisconsin Employability

Skills Standards appeared to be a method to add value to our traditional co-op programs in a manner that employers could accommodate.

At the time of the pilot, traditional Co-op programs were being delivered in Business Education and Home Economic Related Occupations (HERO). The Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate program was used to certify these students.

### Summary

The SCANS report of 1991 indicated a need for students to learn and demonstrate five core competencies and three foundations in context. These became known as the SCANS Skills. In 1994, the first 5-year School-To-Work Grants were issued to eight states to implement a combination of school-based learning, work-based learning, and connecting activities for all students. In the America 2000 report, business and industry continued to support the findings and suggested action steps of the SCANS report. The National Skills Standards Board divided the workforce into fifteen industry sections, and is spearheading the development of standards, assessments, and certification for each area.

In Wisconsin, a new program was added to catapult students with specific career interest areas into high skill, high wage jobs. This program was called Youth Apprenticeship. At the Department of Public Instruction, consultants brought together industry groups to verify appropriate industry standards by

which to judge their Cooperative Education students for the awarding of Cooperative Education Skill Standards Certificates. But there was still the majority of the student population unreached by work-based learning. The Department of Public Instruction also answered this call with the development and pilot of the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate program. The School District of Monroe piloted the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate program with students enrolled in its Business Education and Home Economic Related Occupations (HERO) programs.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Research Methods

#### Introduction

The problem of this study is to gain employer feedback on the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate pilot program. In this chapter, the methods and procedures used for conducting the research and gathering the data will be reviewed.

#### Research Design

A descriptive study was used to determine employer opinions of the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate pilot program. The researcher telephoned each employer to request his or her participation in the survey and to arrange an appointment to complete the survey. The researcher conducted the surveys in person in order to ensure a quick response and a high response rate. Data collected via the descriptive format provided an accurate picture of employer perceived strengths and weaknesses of the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate pilot program.

#### Population

The population studied was employers of Monroe High School Co-op students enrolled in the Wisconsin Employability Skills pilot program. The total

population included 11 individual employers who employed a total of twelve students. (Please see Appendix A)

To accomplish the goals of this descriptive study, it was determined that due to the small size of the population, it would be important to survey all employers. To guarantee a high response rate, the researcher conducted the interviews in person.

Demographic information such as company size and company type was collected along with position title of the student-learner. This information provided a means of identification and a basis for cross tabulation.

### Instrumentation

The researcher, under the supervision of University of Wisconsin-Stout advisor, Dr. Carol Mooney, developed the survey instrument and introductory narrative. The instrumentation was designed to collect data regarding employer opinions of the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate pilot program. Questions were asked of employers to determine if they felt the student evaluation form was user friendly; if the program standards were achievable by students; if they felt a need for further training; and if they felt the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate was a valid recruiting/screening tool. The population responded to the survey by rating their opinions on a 5-point Likert scale.

### Data Collection and Recording

Data was collected by the researcher through personal interviews. Employers were contacted the first week of June 2000. Interviews were conducted to complete the surveys from June 7, 2000 through June 13, 2000.

### Data Processing and Analysis

The surveys were forwarded to the University of Wisconsin-Stout Computer Education and User Services on June 14, 2000 for tabulation and statistical analysis. The data is analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviation where applicable.

### Research Schedule

The major research activities were carried out in the following schedule:

May 2000	Complete survey instrument and receive approval from Advisor
June 2000	Receive approval to conduct research from The Graduate College Contact employers to arrange interviews Conduct interviews to complete surveys Forward completed surveys to Computer Education and User Services for tabulation and analysis of data
July 2000	Develop conclusions based on interpretation of data Determine recommendations from findings Complete research paper and submit for approval

## Summary

The descriptive method of research was used to answer the question of employer opinions of the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate pilot program. This was done using a two-page survey of the employers of Monroe Co-op students enrolled in the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate pilot program.

The surveys were conducted in person, via interview, by the researcher. One hundred percent of the population was surveyed.

Descriptive statistics were generated to present the data gathered from the study. University of Wisconsin-Stout Computer Education and User Services tabulated the data and conducted the statistical analysis. The researcher interpreted the data, providing a summary, conclusions, and recommendations.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Results

#### Introduction

This chapter will present the results of the descriptive study conducted to evaluate employer perceptions of the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate pilot program. Demographic data will be presented first to show the profile of companies that participated in the study. Following the demographic data will be the results of the employer opinion surveys. The specific research questions and findings will be shared.

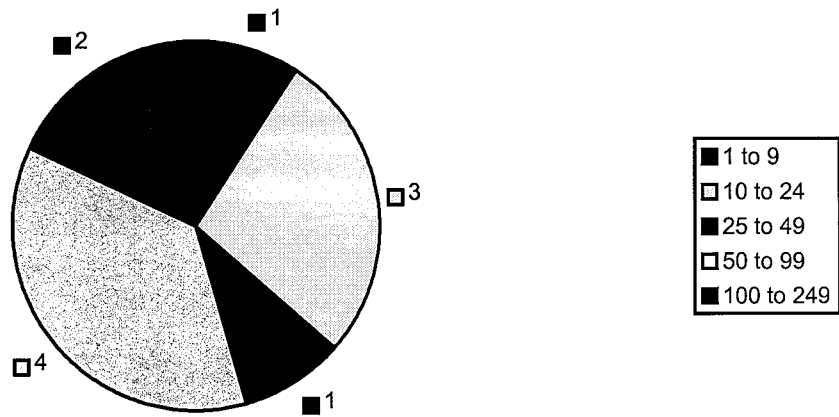
#### Response Rate

Twelve Business Education and Home Economics Related Occupations Co-op students, who participated in the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate pilot program, were employed by 11 different companies. The Co-op supervisor at each of these locations made up the population of this study. The small size of the population made it possible for the researcher to conduct personal interviews with all 11 employers in order to complete the questionnaires. Therefore, no sampling was necessary. All surveys completed were useable, so the data tabulated was based on a 100 percent rate of return.

Demographic Information

Employers were asked, “What is your company size?” Company size was reported in number of workers. The responses indicated that students worked in companies ranging from small businesses to mid-sized organizations. Five students worked in organizations of less than 50 employees. Six students worked in companies of 50 to 249 employees. There were no Co-op students working for a company with 250 or more employees (figure 2).

Figure 2  
Size of Companies Employing Students



Next, employers were asked to identify their company’s industry group. The employers being surveyed were sponsoring Co-op students in Business Education and Home Economics Related Occupations. The focus of the Co-op

programs are directly reflected in the industry group classifications of the employers. The majority the employers hiring students represented were retailers and wholesalers (36.4 percent); transportation, communication, and utility companies (27.3 percent), or service providers (18.2 percent), respectively. There were no Co-op students employed in the agriculture, forestry, and fishing; construction and mining; or government groups. Students interested in those areas are generally served by other Co-op or work-based learning programs (table 2).

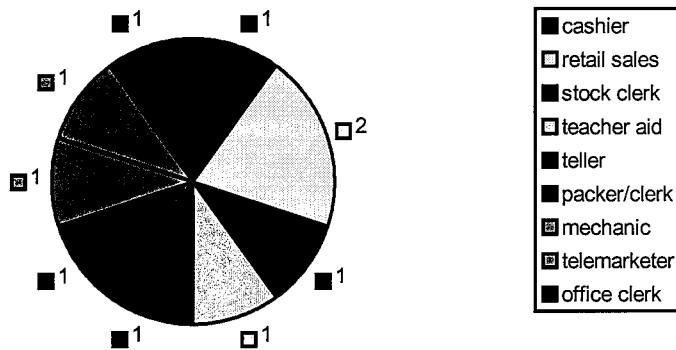
Table 2  
Number of Companies by Industry Group

<u>Industry Group</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
Agriculture, forestry, fishing	0	0
Transportation, communication, utilities	3	27.3
Retail and wholesale trade	4	36.4
Finance, insurance, real estate	1	9.1
Manufacturing	1	9.1
Services	2	18.2
Government	0	0
Construction, mining	0	0
<u>Totals</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Lastly, employers were asked about the title of the student's occupation. Two companies hired students for retail sales. The remaining nine companies hired students for various unique job titles. All the positions were entry-level (figure 3).

Figure 3

Job Titles Employers Filled With Co-op  
Students



Employer Opinions

Employers were questioned about their opinions of the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate (WESC) pilot program in regards to the use of the student evaluation tool, achievability by students, training they received in using the tool to evaluate students, and how useful the program is or could be. Employers responded to the questions using a 5-point Likert scale as follows:

- 1 = Strongly Disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Unsure
- 4 = Agree
- 5 = Strongly Agree

Research question #1. The first employer opinion question to be answered by the research was, “Is the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate pilot

program student evaluation form user friendly?” Three survey questions were utilized to gather their perceptions.

The first statement employers responded to was, “The 3-2-1-rating scale (of the WESC evaluation tool) is well defined.” Respondents indicated their strongest agreement with this statement. This is indicated by a mean of 4.27 and an overall rank of 1 out of 17 statements. It is clear that employers agreed the rating scale was easy to interpret and use. Suggested improvements included adding the choice of “does not apply to student’s position,” and to separate out the skills in a long descriptor such as number 1 which read, “Reading—locates, understands, and interprets written information in prose and in documents such as manuals, graphs, and schedules” (table 3).

Table 3

Response to Survey Question 1

No.	Question	Mean	SD	Rank
1	The 3-2-1 rating scale is well defined.	4.27	.90	1
Comments:				
1. needs a “not applicable” choice				
2. do not use more than one skill per descriptor such as in #1				

The second item, “The skill descriptors are easy to understand,” was ranked number 2--only to the first statement--with a mean of 4.18. This indicated that employers felt comfortable with the definition of the skill they were to evaluate (table 4).

Table 4

Response to Survey Question 2

No.	Question	Mean	SD	Rank
2	The skill descriptors are easy to understand.	4.18	.40	2
Comments:				

The final indicator for research question #1 was, “The skill descriptions can be easily applied to the student’s job.” This statement received less agreement than the first two statements. In fact, it had a mean score of 3.18 and a rank of 15 out of 17 statements. Comments indicated that one employer felt some skills did not apply to the job the student was performing. Another employer felt that a student may not be interested in performing all the skills listed (table 5).

Table 5

Response to Survey Question 3

No.	Question	Mean	SD	Rank
3	The skill descriptions can be easily applied to the student’s job.	3.18	.87	15
Comments:				
1. Student may not be interested in all the skills				
2. Some skills did not apply to the student’s job (2)				

Research question #2. The second employer opinion question to be answered by the research was, “Are the Wisconsin Employability Skills

Certificate pilot program standards achievable by students?” Six survey questions provided insight on employer attitudes regarding this question.

Statements 4, 5, and 6 provided an interesting scenario in the way that employers responded to them. To determine if employers felt students could earn enough rating points on the skills checklist to qualify for a certificate, the researcher presented three statements for employer reaction which were modeled after the descriptors used to rate students. The first, was Statement 4 that said, “All 22 of the (WESC) skills can be introduced to a student at my company. The second was statement 5 which read, “All 22 of the (WESC) skills can be practiced by a student at my company. The third, statement 6, said, “All 22 (WESC) skills can be performed independently by a student at my company. The results of the data showed that employer agreement with the ability to introduce skills and practice skills were similar with a mean of 3.73 each. The ability to introduce skills ranked 11 and to have students practice skills ranked 12 due to a higher standard deviation (tables 6 and 7). Surprisingly, employers rated question 6, performing all 22 skills independently, higher than questions 4 and 5, with a mean of 3.82 and an overall rank of 6 (table 8). Employer comments included, “depends on the student and his or her capabilities and attendance.” Two additional employers commented that the ability to teach the student all 22 of the skills depended on the position the student was performing (tables 6, 7, and 8).

Table 6

Response to Survey Question 4

No.	Question	Mean	SD	Rank
4	All 22 of the skills can be introduced to a student at my company.	3.73	.65	11
Comments: 1. depends on student, his/her capabilities and attendance				

Table 7

Response to Survey Question 5

No.	Question	Mean	SD	Rank
5	All 22 skills can be practiced by a student at my company.	3.73	.79	12
Comments: 1. if the student is in the right position				

Table 8

Response to Survey Question 6

No.	Question	Mean	SD	Rank
6	All 22 skills can be performed independently by a student at my company.	3.82	.75	8
Comments: 1. depends on the student's position				

Employers did not widely agree on the statement. "My student had the opportunity to demonstrate all 22 skills during the pilot period of January through

April. The statement received a mean score of 3.18, had a large standard deviation of 1.0, and an overall rank of 16 out of 17 statements (table 9).

Table 9

Response to Survey Question 7

No.	Question	Mean	SD	Rank
7	My student had the opportunity to demonstrate all 22 skills during the pilot period of January through April.	3.18	1.0	16
Comments: 1. had opportunity, but didn't				

Employers had strong agreement with the fact that the Wisconsin Employability Skills Checklist could provide direction to the training they provide students. The statement ranked 6<sup>th</sup> with a mean score of 3.91. One employer indicated that the company has its own training department (table 9).

Table 10

Response to Survey Question 8

No.	Question	Mean	SD	Rank
8	The WESC checklist could provide direction to the training I provide students.	3.91	.70	6
Comments: 1. have own training department				

Most employers agreed that with proper prior planning, they could provide an opportunity for a student to demonstrate all 22 skills. Support was high with a mean of 3.82 and a rank of 7. This statement was included, because employers in

the pilot were asked to evaluate students on the skills without first being asked to provide training on the specific skills (table 11).

Table 11  
Response to Survey Question 9

No.	Question	Mean	SD	Rank
9	With proper prior planning, I could provide a student with an opportunity to demonstrate all 22 skills.	3.82	.40	7
Comments: none				

Research question #3. “What training do employers need to ensure successful completion of the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate pilot program standards by their student employee?” was research question three. Two survey questions provided insight on employer opinions.

Employers strongly agreed that training on how to evaluate students in regards to the employability skills would be helpful. The statement received a mean score of 4.09 and an overall rank of 4 (table 12). They were somewhat divided, however on being required to attend a training session before using the skills checklist to evaluate students. That statement had a mean score of 3.45, with a standard deviation of 1.21 and an overall rank of 14. Employer comments included, “Hard to get away,” and “Will lose employers if they are required to go” (table 13).

Table 12

Response to Survey Question 10

No.	Question	Mean	SD	Rank
10	Training for employers, with examples of what to evaluate for each skill, would be helpful.	4.09	.54	4
Comments:				
1. one on one rather than a big meeting				

Table 13

Response to Survey Question 11

No.	Question	Mean	SD	Rank
11	Employers should attend a training session before using the WESC checklist with other students.	3.45	1.2	14
Comments:				
1. good idea, but hard to get away				
2. will lose employers if they are required to go				

Research question #4. The last research question to be answered was, “What potential value do employers feel the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate pilot program can provide them in employee recruitment, screening, training, and evaluation?” Six statements were used to gain employer response to this question

Employers ranked the statement, “There are additional skills specific to my student’s job or my company that I would like to add to the checklist,” as

number 17 of 17. The item had a mean of 3.09 and a high standard deviation of 1.04. One employer suggested adding cleanliness and neatness of student's work area (table 14).

Table 14

Response to Survey Question 12

No.	Question	Mean	SD	Rank
12	There are additional skills specific to my student's job or my company that I would like to add to the checklist.	3.09	1.04	17
Comments: 1. cleanliness and neatness of student's work area				

Employers were quite in agreement that the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate checklist is a good tool for evaluating the student's job performance. It received a mean of 4.09, a very low standard deviation of .3, and an overall rank of 3 (table 15). Comments included that the usefulness of the evaluation tool depends on the job the student is performing.

Table 15

Response to Survey Question 13

No.	Question	Mean	SD	Rank
13	The WESC checklist is a good tool for evaluating the student's job performance.	4.09	.30	3
Comments: 1. depends on the student's job				

Employers had multiple comments in regard to the use of the checklist with a student's future employers. One employer indicated that it would show growth if the evaluations were done quarterly. A second employer felt the checklist of skills achieved might qualify the student for a job with even greater skill requirements than the one he or she might be applying for. A third employer felt that students are too young to have a negative evaluation follow them. A fourth employer indicated that students should use their Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificates to market themselves. The overall rank for this item was 12 with a mean score of 3.73 (table 15).

Table 16

Response to Survey Question 14

No.	Question	Mean	SD	Rank
14	The completed checklist would be valuable information for my student's future employers.	3.73	.79	12
Comments: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. would depend on the student</li> <li>2. if done quarterly and at the end of the year</li> <li>3. students may be able to show more skills than the job they are applying for—could provide extra opportunities</li> <li>4. bad marks could hurt them, too young to be evaluated negatively and have it follow them</li> <li>5. put it in the hands of the student to use as they see fit</li> <li>6. student should use the certificate to market him/her self</li> </ol>				

Employers agreed that they would recruit students for their company that had earned a Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate. Reasons included because the student would know what the workplace expects, and because it

shows the student's interest in getting involved. The overall rank of this item was 5 with a mean score of 4.0 (table 17).

Table 17  
Response to Survey Question 15

No.	Question	Mean	SD	Rank
15	As an employer, I would recruit students that have earned a WESC.	4.00	.67	5
Comments: 1. because they would know what a workplace expects 2. would carry weight 3. shows their interest in getting involved				

Employers identified a number of reasons why they would consider completion of a Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate as a criteria in screening applications. Reasons included: (a) it would be considered as a reference, it lets me know strengths and weaknesses; (b) it would be considered as one indicator of employability; (c) it shows the person has had some prior training; and (d) it would be a deciding factor if everything else was equal between two candidates. The mean score of this item was 3.82 with an overall rank of 8 (table 18).

Table 18

Response to Survey Question 16

No.	Question	Mean	SD	Rank
16	As an employer, I would use completion of the WESC as a criteria in screening applicants.	3.82	.75	8
Comments:				
1. would consider it like a reference, lets me know strengths and weaknesses				
2. would look at it as one indicator				
3. yes, some kind of training has been done				
4. if everything else was equal				

Most employers agreed that the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate would have more value to them as an employer if, countywide, other schools were using it to evaluate their students and other companies were recognizing when hiring. This item also had a mean score of 3.82 and a rank of 8 (table 19). One employer suggested keeping a database of completers.

Table 19

Response to Survey Question 17

No.	Question	Mean	SD	Rank
17	The WESC would have more value to me as an employer if it were used by schools and companies county-wide.	3.82	.75	8
Comments:				
1. could possibly be put in a database				
2. any extra information helps				

Table 20 summarizes employer agreement to the survey statements ranked with the most highly agreed upon statement first. This information can be used to prioritize an action plan.

Table 20

Employer Responses Ranked by Employer Agreement

<b>Rank</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
1	1	The 3-2-1 rating scale is well defined.	4.27	.90
2	2	The skill descriptors are easy to understand.	4.18	.40
3	13	The WESC checklist is a good tool for evaluating the student's job performance.	4.09	.30
4	10	Training for employers, with examples of what to evaluate for each skill, would be helpful.	4.09	.54
5	15	As an employer, I would use completion of the WESC as a criteria in screening applicants.	4.00	.67
6	8	The WESC checklist could provide direction to the training I provide students.	3.91	.70
7	9	With proper prior planning, I could provide a student with an opportunity to demonstrate all 22 skills.	3.82	.40
8	6 16 17	All 22 skills can be performed independently by a student at my company. As an employer, I would use completion of the WESC as a criteria in screening applicants. The WESC would have more value to me as an employer if it were used by schools and companies county-wide.	3.82	.75
11	4	All 22 of the skills can be introduced to a student at my company.	3.73	.65
12	5 14	All 22 skills can be practiced by a student at my company. The completed checklist would be valuable information for my student's future employers.	3.73	.79
14	11	Employers should attend a training session before using the WESC checklist with other students.	3.45	1.21
15	3	The skill descriptions can be easily applied to the student's job.	3.18	.87

16	7	My student had the opportunity to demonstrate all 22 skills during the pilot period of January through April.	3.18	1.08
17	12	There are additional skills specific to my student's job or my company that I would like to add to the checklist.	3.09	1.04

At the conclusion of the interview, the researcher invited the employer to add any additional comments regarding the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate program. The following list represents the comments generated by the respondents.

General Comments. The researcher invited employer comments at the end of the interview. The comments are reported as follows:

1. The skills are fine, but are not applicable in all entry-level positions
2. Productivity is an issue for us. Students are required to work a piece rate that would generate \$5.15 an hour. They have the opportunity to earn more by working faster, but don't seem motivated to do so.
3. Attendance is an issue with students. Students have a casual attitude about changing their work schedule.
4. Teach kids the work ethic
5. With technology, times are changing, it's hard to keep up the skills!
6. Managers should work someplace else, too!

7. Students are short term in their thinking. This program may help students to think more long term in their goals.
8. Overwhelming the first time I saw it (skills checklist)
9. The program is excellent.
10. Helps kids to be more prepared
11. The certificate skills help them to realize what they are learning at their job vs. just focusing on the money they are making.
12. Points out the job is not as easy as it first looked.
13. Monroe needs to do a better job of pushing these programs to students
14. Is early graduation keeping students from choosing school supervised work-based learning?
15. How is the program promoted? A mailing should go to all Sophomores before scheduling.
16. Engage the parents, kids don't talk to them.
17. Have teachers fill one of these (the skills checklist) out on themselves or a co-worker. Help them to see the employer's responsibility of evaluating fairly. It's hard to be truthful, yet still motivating.
18. Have student provide a job description of their position for the teacher, and have the teacher spend a day doing their job.
19. Generally, the students in these programs are more serious.
20. Students think it is OK to change schedules at the last minute

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

#### Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the employer perceptions of the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate pilot program. Furthermore, it draws conclusions based on the survey data, and finally makes recommendations in regards to teacher training, employer training, and program marketing.

#### Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine the employer opinions of the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate pilot program. Twelve Monroe High School Co-op students were employed by eleven area businesses. All of the eleven employers were surveyed and all participated for a 100 percent response rate. The descriptive study discovered employers' opinions of the following four research questions:

- 1) Is the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate pilot program student evaluation form user friendly?
- 2) Are the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate pilot program standards achievable by students?
- 3) What training do employers need to ensure successful completion

of the Wisconsin Employability Skill Certificate pilot program standards by their student employees?

- 4) What potential value do employers feel the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate pilot program can provide them in employee recruitment, screening, training, and evaluation?

The following is a summary of the overall survey results:

- 1) Employers participating in the study ranged in size from 0-9 employees to 100-249 employees. Five companies employed under 50 workers, while six companies employed 50 or more workers.
- 2) The most frequently represented industry group was retail and wholesale trade (36.4 percent); followed by transportation, communication, and utilities (27.3 percent); the services industry (18.2 percent); and both finance, insurance, and real estate; and manufacturing (9.1 percent each). No students worked for employers in the agriculture, forestry, and fishing; construction and mining, or government group.
- 3) Two companies hired students for retail sales positions. The other positions students were hired for included stock clerk, office clerk, cashier, teacher aide, teller, packer/clerk, mechanic, and telemarketer.

- 4) Employers ranked the 3-2-1 rating scale on the Wisconsin Employability Skills Checklist being well defined as their number one most agreed with statement and a mean score of 4.27 on a 1-5 Likert scale.
- 5) Employers rated the skill descriptors as being easy to understand as their number two most agreed with statement. It had a mean score of 4.18.
- 6) Employers did not widely agree that the skill descriptions can be easily applied to the student's job. It had a mean score of 3.18 with a rank of 15 out of 17.
- 7) Employers ranked their ability to introduce a student to all 22 skill standards or to have a student practice all 22 skill standards at numbers 12 and 13 respectively. This was much lower than their rank of 6 for their ability to have a student perform independently all 22 skill standards.
- 8) There was low agreement by employers that their students had the opportunity to demonstrate all 22 skills during the pilot period of January through April. It ranked 16 of 17 statements.
- 9) Employers agreed that the Wisconsin Employability Checklist could provide direction to the training they provide the students.
- 10) Employers agreed that given the time to plan, they could arrange

an opportunity for the student to demonstrate the skills on the checklist.

- 11) Employers ranked the fact that they need training on how to evaluate the skills checklist at number 4, but ranked the requirement of going to a training session at number 14.
- 12) Employers were not sure (ranked 17 of 17) they had skills specific to their student's job or company that they would add to the list with the exception of cleanliness and neatness of the student's work area.
- 13) Employers were in high agreement (rank 3) that the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate checklist is a good tool for evaluating the student's job performance.
- 14) Employers had mixed reviews as to the completed checklist being a valuable tool for a student's future employer.
- 15) Employers agreed (rank 5) that they would recruit students that have earned a WESC because it shows they know what a workplace expects and shows their interest in getting involved.
- 16) Employers would use completion of the WESC as a positive criteria in the application screening process. It might be considered as a reference, it would indicate that the student has

received prior training, and it might be a deciding factor if all else was equal.

- 17) Employers indicated that the WESC would have more value to them as a company if other schools and companies in the county were using it. The information could be put into a database.

### Conclusions

Demographic Information. The conclusions about the demographic information collected on the companies that hired our Co-op students is as follows:

- 1) Size of the company did not have an impact on the decision to hire a Co-op student.
- 2) Employers surveyed hired students in the Business Education and Home Economics Related Occupations Co-op programs. The industry groups represented are true to the career areas of the Co-op programs. A wide variety of company groups are represented. One group that was not represented that may have a strong fit into these occupational areas is government.
- 3) Front-line, entry level positions seemed to be the most frequent positions employers filled with Co-op students.

Research Question #1. Is the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate pilot program student evaluation form user friendly?

- 1) Employers liked the simple definitions of the 3-2-1 rating scale.
- 2) Employers felt comfortable that they understood the meanings of the descriptors.
- 3) Some employers felt the skill descriptions easily applied to a student's job and others did not. Two employers indicated that it depended on the job the student was performing. A third employer indicated that a student may not be interested in learning all the skills. According to the review of literature, employability skills cross all industries horizontally and all companies vertically. Therefore, these skills should be relevant despite the position the student holds. As a result, helping employers to identify what activities a student does or could do at a job to demonstrate that particular skill needs to be done by the teacher-coordinator.

Research Question #2. Are the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate pilot program standards achievable by students?

- 1) The fact that employers indicated their ability to have students perform all 22 skills independently rated higher than their ability to introduce or have the student practice the 22 skills was surprising

to the researcher. The question was modeled after the descriptors of the 3-2-1 rating scale in an effort to determine if most employers felt they could at least provide exposure of a skill for a student.

The data collected leads the researcher to believe that perhaps the employers did not understand the differences between the questions. Again, two employers indicated that their ability to meet the 22 skills depended on the job the student was performing.

The inverse of the scores expected by the researcher, combined with employer comments that the student's position would determine the employer's ability to provide exposure to the employability skills, is again an indicator that employers need training in making the connections between the skill indicated on paper and a performance example in the workplace.

- 2) Completion of the skill standards will not happen on its own. There needs to be communication between the employer, the instructor, and the student as to which employability skills will be focused on during a particular evaluation period.
- 3) The Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate checklist could serve as the foundation of an individualized training plan for each student in the workplace. Both employers and the students would benefit from the communication of the goal they are to achieve.

Research Questions #3. What training do employers need to ensure successful completion of the Wisconsin Employability Skill Certificate pilot program standards by their student employees?

- 1) Employers indicated a preference to be trained up front and given a plan with specific examples for their industry area. It would help ensure the quality training the student needs to receive from the employer.
- 2) Employers want training and information, but they don't want to be pulled away from their place of business.

Research Question #4. What potential value do employers feel the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate pilot program can provide them in employee recruitment, screening, training, and evaluation?

- 1) Employers felt the skills checklist was quite comprehensive for the general, entry-level positions most students were working in.
- 2) The skills evaluated and recorded on the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate checklist are relevant in today's workplace.
- 3) It is important, once the students attain the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate, to teach to them how to market themselves with it. It should become the property of the student to

distribute as he/she sees fit. Showing quarterly growth on this document would be valuable to an employer. An employer may determine additional responsibilities that an applicant is qualified for based on the competency record.

- 4) Earning a Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate would provide students an advantage when applying for their next position.
- 5) The more schools and companies that adopt the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate program, the more clout they will hold with students, parents, teachers, and employers.

### Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, the researcher makes the following recommendations:

#### Demographic Information.

- 1) Target the government as a new industry group in which to place students.

Research Question #1. Is the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate pilot program student evaluation form user friendly?

- 1) Modify the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate student evaluation form to include space after each of the 22 competencies for the student/teacher/employer to write in the individual company example that the student will demonstrate for each competency. That procedure would clarify in each party's mind what will be evaluated for each competency.
- 2) Provide a means on the Wisconsin Employability Skills evaluation form so that the evaluator can use the same form to evaluate progress each quarterly evaluation period. This would provide an opportunity to show growth from the beginning to the end of a school year.

Research Question #2. Are the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate pilot program standards achievable by students?

- 1) Conduct train-the-trainer workshops for teacher-coordinators to provide them with strategies to utilize with employers and students when teaching them how to match the responsibilities of each and every student position with the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate skills.
- 2) Conduct train-the-trainer workshops to instruct teacher-coordinators to use the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate

as the foundation of an Individual Training Plan to communicate with each party involved how the student will be trained and evaluated to ensure completion of the program.

- 3) Conduct train-the-trainer workshops to share with teacher-coordinators how to hold regular progress meetings with employers for the purpose of evaluating students and revising the training plan to ensure the student is on track for completion of the certification.
- 4) Place burden of proof of competency attainment on the student by requiring them to develop a portfolio with examples of how he or she demonstrated all 22 skills on-the-job, in the classroom, or through a combination of both. This portfolio project would be the ultimate activity for the student to make the connection between school and work.

Research Questions #3. What training do employers need to ensure successful completion of the Wisconsin Employability Skill Certificate pilot program standards by their student employees?

- 1) Employers need training in interpretation and application of the skill standards to their company and more specifically to their students' positions.

- 2) Employers need training in developing, implementing and evaluating Individualized Training Plans for each student.
- 3) Encourage employers to attend a large group training session for the benefit of exchange with other employers.
- 4) Provide one-on-one training for employers who can not attend the group training.

Research Question #4. What potential value do employers feel the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate pilot program can provide them in employee recruitment, screening, training, and evaluation?

- 1) Make additional checklists available to employers for use in evaluating their other employees. Some companies have their own training and evaluation programs, but many small companies do not. This could be an outstanding benefit of their participation in the program.
- 2) Provide training to the students in how to use achievement of the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate to market themselves .
- 3) Develop a program marketing plan to include the following:
  - a) Recruitment of additional county schools to use the program with their work-based learning students.
  - b) Promotion of the program to the following audiences:

- I. Students
- II. Parents
- III. School Personnel
- IV. Work-based learning employers
- V. Other business and industry
- VI. Civic and community groups

- 4) Explore the development of a countywide database for those that earn a certificate, with regard for student information release policies.

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# *Employers Surveyed*

<i>Company</i>	<i>EmplLast</i>	<i>EmplFirst</i>	<i>Street</i>	<i>City</i>	<i>Stat</i>	<i>Zip</i>	<i>Phone</i>
Anchor Bank	Van Kaenel	Karen	1712 12th St	Monroe	WI	53566	(608) 325-716
Greenco Industries	Zweifel	Jean	1601 4th Ave W	Monroe	WI	53566	(608) 328-831
Greenco Industries	Zweifel	Jean	1601 4th Ave W	Monroe	WI	53566	(608) 328-831
Industrial Combustion	Murphy	Peggy	351 21st St	Monroe	WI	53566	(608) 325-314
J. Becker Trucking	Rasmussen	Dee	W2608 Hwy 11-81	Juda	WI	53550	(608) 934-100
Kundert Oil Company	Kundert	Tom	317 8th St	Monroe	WI	53566	(608) 325-357
Monroe School District	Kranig	Alice	1600 26th St	Monroe	WI	53566	(608) 328-915
Shopko	Sarbacker	Jim	405 W 8th St	Monroe	WI	53566	(608) 328-330
St.Vincent DePaul	Dietz	Mary	1800 12th St	Monroe	WI	53566	(608) 329-783
Super America	Snyder	Kathy	907 20th Ave	Monroe	WI	53566	(608) 328-432
The Charlton Group	Espinoza	Heidi	109 W 8th St	Monroe	WI	53566	(608) 329-748
The Monroe Times	Doherty	Bill	1065 4th Ave W	Monroe	WI	53566	(608) 328-420

## Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate Pilot Program Evaluation Survey

### Part I Demographic Information:

**1. Company Size (select one)**

- |                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a. 1-9   | <input type="checkbox"/> e. 100-249      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> b. 10-24 | <input type="checkbox"/> f. 250-499      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> c. 25-49 | <input type="checkbox"/> g. 500-999      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> d. 50-99 | <input type="checkbox"/> h. 1000 or more |

**2. Company Industry Group (select one)**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a. agriculture, forestry, and fishing         | <input type="checkbox"/> e. manufacturing           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> b. transportation, communications & utilities | <input type="checkbox"/> f. services                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> c. trade (wholesale and retail)               | <input type="checkbox"/> g. government              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> d. finance, insurance, & real estate          | <input type="checkbox"/> h. construction and mining |

**3. Student employee's occupation:**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a. bookkeeper              | <input type="checkbox"/> f. nursing assistant  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> b. cashier                 | <input type="checkbox"/> g. retail salesperson |
| <input type="checkbox"/> c. food preparation worker | <input type="checkbox"/> h. stock clerk        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> d. hand packager           | <input type="checkbox"/> i. teacher aide       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> e. janitor/cleaner         | <input type="checkbox"/> j. laborer            |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> k. other _____        |

### Part II. Evaluation of Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate

Please refer to the attached copy of the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate which you completed for your student employee. Choose the one response which most closely fits your opinion: strongly agree, agree, unsure, disagree, or strongly disagree. Please feel free to add comments to explain your opinion.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The 3-2-1 rating scale is well defined. <b>Comments</b>	5	4	3	2	1
2. The skill descriptions are easy to understand. <b>Comments</b>	5	4	3	2	1
3. The skill descriptions can be easily applied to the student's job. <b>Comments</b>	5	4	3	2	1
4. All 22 of the skills can be introduced to a student at my company. <b>Comments</b>	5	4	3	2	1
5. All 22 of the skills can be practiced by a student at my company. <b>Comments</b>	5	4	3	2	1

6. All 22 of the skills can be performed independently by a student at my company. <b>Comments</b>	5	4	3	2	1
7. My student had the opportunity to demonstrate all 22 skills during the pilot period of January through April. <b>Comments</b>	5	4	3	2	1
8. The Employability Skills Certificate checklist could provide direction to the training I provide to students. <b>Comments</b>	5	4	3	2	1
9. With proper prior planning, I could provide a student with an opportunity to demonstrate all 22 skills. <b>Comments</b>	5	4	3	2	1
10. Training for employers, with examples of what to evaluate for each skill, would be helpful. <b>Comments</b>	5	4	3	2	1
11. Employers should attend a training session before using the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate checklist with other students. <b>Comments</b>	5	4	3	2	1
12. There are additional skills specific to my student's job or my company that I would like to add to the checklist. <b>Comments</b>	5	4	3	2	1
13. The Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate checklist is a good tool for evaluating the student's job performance. <b>Comments</b>	5	4	3	2	1
14. The completed checklist would be valuable information for my student's future employers. <b>Comments</b>	5	4	3	2	1
15. As an employer, I would recruit students that have earned a Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate. <b>Comments</b>	5	4	3	2	1
16. As an employer, I would use completion of the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate as a criteria in screening applicants. <b>Comments</b>	5	4	3	2	1
17. The Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate would have more value to me as an employer if it was used by schools and companies county-wide. <b>Comments</b>	5	4	3	2	1

**III. Other feedback**

1. Are there any other comments you would like to share in regards to the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate program?

Research Survey  
Conducted by Wendy Horbinski

Verbal Commentary for Consent

I am Wendy Horbinski, School-To-Work coordinator for the School District of Monroe. In March of this year, you evaluated your Co-op student, \_\_\_\_\_, using the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate pilot. I am currently conducting research to gather employer feedback on the Wisconsin Employability Skills pilot program. This research will be used to complete requirements for my graduate project at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. The results of the research will be used to evaluate and improve our local participation in the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate program. Would you be willing to meet with me for about 15 minutes so that I may ask you the survey questions? Your participation is totally voluntary, and your answers will be kept confidential. If you have further questions or concerns regarding this research, you may contact my research advisor, Dr. Carol Mooney, at the University of Wisconsin-Stout (715) 232-1444.



Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction  
**EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS CERTIFICATE PROGRAM**  
 2000-2001  
**STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT RECORD**

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Submit one (1) copy of record to:  
**EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS CERTIFICATE PROGRAM**  
**ATTN: MARILYN BACHIM**  
**LIFEWORX EDUCATION TEAM**  
**125 SOUTH WEBSTER STREET**  
**P. O. BOX 7841**  
**MADISON, WI 53707-7841**

**SECTION I—COVER SHEET**

Please Type or Print the Following Information

Student Name *(As you would like it to appear on the certificate)*

School District

School Building

Supervising Teacher

Address (Street, City, State, Zip)

School Phone Number (      )

School Fax Number (      )

E-Mail Address:

LVEC or School-to-Work Coordinator

Address (Street, City, State, Zip) *(if different from above)*

Phone Number *(if different from above)*

Fax Number *(if different from above)*

E-Mail Address:

(      )

(      )

Work-Based Learning Site *(Employer name, street address, city, state, zip code)*

**SECTION II—SCORING**

*A score of 44 or greater is required to pass the following section. No more than two competencies may be achieved at the "1" level.*

<b>Core Employability Competencies Completed (Descriptions of Skills)</b>	<b>Required Points</b>	<b>Possible Points</b>	<b>Points Achieved</b>
Basic SCANS Skills	12	18	
Personal/Interpersonal Skills	10	15	
Thinking/Information Processing Skills	10	15	
Systems/Technology Skills	12	18	
<b>Total Points</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>66</b>	

**SECTION III—CERTIFICATION**

***I verify that the above-named student has met all of the requirements of the Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate program:***

Name of Supervising Teacher *Typed or Printed*

Signature of Supervising Teacher *Blue Ink Only*

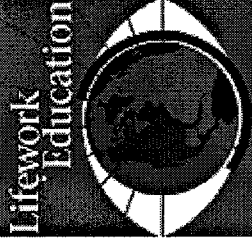
Date

Name of Workplace Mentor *Typed or Printed*

Signature of Workplace Mentor *Blue Ink Only*

Date

# Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate Program Portfolio



STUDENT INFORMATION	
Student Name	
School District	School Building
Supervising Teacher	
Address (Street, City, State, Zip)	
School Phone Number (    )	School Fax Number (    )
	E-Mail Address:
Workplace Mentor	
Work-Based Learning Site ( <i>Employer name, street address, city, state, zip code</i> )	
<b>EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS COMPLETED</b>	
Basic SCANS Skills	
Personal/Interpersonal Skills	
Thinking/Information Processing Skills	
Systems/Technology	

## Student Employability Skills Record

- 3 Proficient—able to perform entry-level skills independently.
- 2 Intermediate—has performed tasks, may need additional training or supervision.
- 1 Introductory—is familiar with process but is unable, or has not had the opportunity, to perform task; additional training is required.
- SB** School Based (Supervising Teacher)
- WB** Work Based (Workplace Mentor)

Description of Skills	Rating Scale					Initials		Comments
	3	2	1	SB	WB			

**PART ONE: Core Employability Competencies**  
*(A score of 44 or greater is required to pass this section. No more than (2) may be achieved at the "1" level.)*

**Basic SCANS Skills**

1. Reading—locates, understands, and interprets written information in prose and in documents such as manuals, graphs, and schedules.								
2. Writing—communicates thoughts, ideas, information, and messages in writing; and creates documents such as letters, directions, manuals, reports, graphs and flow charts.								
3. Mathematics—Performs basic computations and approaches practical problems by choosing appropriately from a variety of mathematical techniques.								
4. Listening—receives, attends to, interprets, and responds to verbal messages and other cues.								
5. Speaking—organizes ideas and communicates orally.								
6. Career Development—understands application process, develops personal career goals, understands individual potential.								

**Personal/Interpersonal Skills:** Displays responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, integrity and honesty, and extends these skills to facilitating working well with others.

7. Demonstrates integrity/honesty and chooses ethical courses of action.								
8. Serves clients/customers, working to satisfy customer's expectations.								
9. Participates as a member of a team, contributing to group efforts.								
10. Demonstrates leadership skills, including teaching others new skills.								
11. Works well with women and men from diverse backgrounds.								

**Thinking/Information Processing Skills:** Thinks creatively, makes decisions, solves problems, visualizes, knows how to learn and reason, and acquire and utilize information to aid these processes where necessary.

12. Organizes, maintains, interprets, communicates information, using computers to aid this task where necessary.								
13. Recognizes problems and devises and implements plans of action.								
14. Generates new ideas through creative thinking.								
15. Makes decisions through specifying goals and constraints, generating alternatives, considering risks, and evaluating and choosing the best alternatives.								
16. Uses efficient learning techniques to acquire and apply new knowledge and skills.								



***The Competencies in This Portfolio Have Been Endorsed By:***



Wisconsin  
Department  
of Public Instruction



Wisconsin Association for  
Career and Technical  
Education



Wisconsin Association for  
Leadership in  
Education and Work



Wisconsin  
Technical College  
System

**Please direct any questions concerning the Employability Skills Certificate Program to:**

**Employability Skills Certificate Program  
Lifework Education Team  
Department of Public Instruction  
P. O. Box 7841  
Madison, WI 53707-7841  
Fax: 608-267-9275**

**Attention: Bob Enghagen, Program Administrator  
Phone: 608-267-2275**

**Or**

**Attention: Marilyn Bachim, Program Assistant  
Phone: 608-267-2274**