

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 415 386

CE 075 591

AUTHOR Gbomita, Victor K. A.  
TITLE Employment Assessment Practices: Implications for Workforce Development in the 21st Century.  
PUB DATE 1997-12-00  
NOTE 15p.; Paper presented at the American Vocational Association Convention (Las Vegas, NV, December 11-14, 1997).  
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)  
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.  
DESCRIPTORS Adults; Employer Attitudes; \*Employment Potential; \*Employment Practices; Job Development; \*Job Skills; Job Training; \*Labor Force Development; \*Personnel Evaluation; \*Personnel Selection  
IDENTIFIERS \*Pennsylvania (Southeast); Secretarys Comm on Achieving Necessary Skills

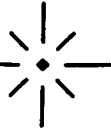
ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to use the SCANS (Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills) employability skills to identify the criteria used for hiring and employment retention by companies in Southeastern Pennsylvania. Results were intended to help personnel development and training institutions in the region align their training outcomes and human resource development curricula with the hiring and employment needs of industries in the region. A survey instrument was created and mailed to 559 companies, with 67 returns (12 percent). Factor analysis yielded eight components that were used to identify competencies that are essential in employment decisions. The study found that the majority of the staff who make hiring and employment decisions are not human resources development staff. The study also found that three elements--the hiring decision maker, the candidate's ability to organize resources, and the candidate's skills in human relations, predominate in hiring and postemployment decisions. The study also validated the idea that there are identifiable skills that can constitute competencies for preparing the work force to meet the needs of business and industry. The study suggested that it may be necessary to provide training in evaluating employees for staff who make hiring decisions and training to help work force development practitioners incorporate the appropriate elements in their curriculum for work force preparation. (Contains 13 references.) (KC)

\*\*\*\*\*  
\* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made \*  
\* from the original document. \*  
\*\*\*\*\*



The Center for Vocational Education  
Professional Personnel Development



ED 415 386

AMERICAN VOCATIONAL ASSOCIATION CONVENTION  
NEW AND RELATED SERVICES DIVISION  
LAS VEGAS, DECEMBER 11 - 14, 1997

EMPLOYMENT ASSESSMENT PRACTICES: IMPLICATIONS FOR  
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

Victor K. A. Gbomita

DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, AND  
TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

TEMPLE UNIVERSITY

2

**BEST COPY AVAILABLE**

1855591  
ERIC  
Full Text Provided by ERIC

# EMPLOYMENT ASSESSMENT PRACTICES: IMPLICATIONS FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

## Introduction

In 1991 the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) recommended a set of competencies and skills that would help job seekers secure and retain employment. Three years later, the Federal government enacted the School-to-Work Opportunities Act to facilitate the transition from school to work. In the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Governor noted that to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century the state must have a well-educated, trained and motivated work force. Businesses in the state have embraced the Governor's call and formed partnerships across county boundaries to address common workforce issues. In Southeastern Pennsylvania, leading economic development organizations such as the Strategy 21 partnership of regional organizations and Greater Philadelphia First member organizations have teamed up for a similar purpose. Working with the Pennsylvania Economy League the team hopes to develop for the region a workforce development system that offers a cutting-edge labor pool of sufficient quality and size to meet the demands of globally competitive businesses. Despite these exemplary efforts to meet the workforce needs of business and industry, there is the perception that the available workforce is not adequately prepared for employment.

## Purpose

The purpose of the study was to use the SCANS' employability skills to identify the criteria used for hiring and employment retention by companies in Southeastern Pennsylvania, so that personnel development and training institutions in the region can align their training outcomes and human resource development curricula with the hiring and employment needs of industries in the region.

## Assumptions

- There are two components of necessary work skills, technical and nontechnical.
- There is no doubt about the importance of the technical skills in hiring and employment decision making.
- Employers' complaints about job seekers' unpreparedness for the workplace is more about their lack of nontechnical skills than it is of the technical skills.

## Work Force<sup>1</sup>: Southeastern Pennsylvania September 1997

- Civilian Work Force - 2,503,400
  - Employment - 2,380,100
  - Unemployment - 123,300
  
- Rate of Unemployment
  - Pennsylvania State - 5.3%
  
  - Southeastern region - 4.9%
    - Bucks county - 4.3%
    - Chester county - 3.2%
    - Delaware county - 4.6%
    - Montgomery county - 3.9%
    - Philadelphia - 7.5%

1. Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry, Bureau of Research and Statistics: Pennsylvania Labor Force, November 1997.

## Methods

- The SCANS' workplace competencies and foundation skills were expanded into a survey instrument.
- 32 separate skills were identified.
- 559 companies were mailed the survey instrument, and 67/559 or 12% returned usable data.
- The data were factor analyzed and 8 components were derived. See Table 1.
- The factor components were used to identify competencies that are essential in employment decisions.

Table 1. Similarities between Factor Components and SCANS' Employability Skills.

FACTOR COMPONENTS	SCANS' SKILLS
Organizational skills	Resources
Dependability	Personal quality
Basic academic skills	Basic skills
Problem-solving skills	Thinking skills
Human Relations	Interpersonal skills
* Analytical skills	* Systems skills
Communication skills	Information skills
Technology skills	Technology

## Findings

- 1 situational variable, title, i.e. the individual responsible for making the hiring decision, appears to have a significant but inverse relation with hiring and post-employment retention decision. See Table 2.
- 2 factor components, “organizational ability” and “human relations”, show a significant relation with hiring and post-employment retention decisions. See Table 2.

Table 2. Significant Hiring and Post-Employment Decision-Making Considerations

	Hiring Stage	Employment Stage	
Factor	r	r	Significance Level
Decision Maker	-.47	-.47	.01**
Organizational Ability	.57	.57	.01**
Human Relations	.35	.35	.05*

$p < .01^{**}$ 
 $p < .05^*$

- Respondents also mentioned appearance, impression, comportment, temperament, maturity, stability, perseverance and safety consciousness as additional skills necessary for securing and holding employment.
- Respondents identified 12 of the initial variables as crucial skills for developing competencies for preparing potential job seekers. See Figure 1.
- Companies reported their location as:
  - urban - 20.9% or 14/67 companies;
  - suburban - 61.2% or 41/67 companies;
  - rural - 17.9% or 12/67 companies.
- Hiring and post-employment decisions are made by:
  - CEO/Owner - 43.3% or 29/67 companies;
  - HRD staff - 23.9% or 16/67 companies;
  - Other - 32.8% or 22/67 companies.

Other decision makers include Production Manager, Controller, Service Manager, Transport Manager, etc.

- The large majority of the companies surveyed, 95.5% or 64/67, have been doing business for more than 10 years.
- The majority of the companies employ between 11 and 250 workers. See Table 3.
- Most of the companies anticipate hiring between 11 and 250 workers during the next 3 years. See Table 4.



## CRUCIAL COMPETENCIES

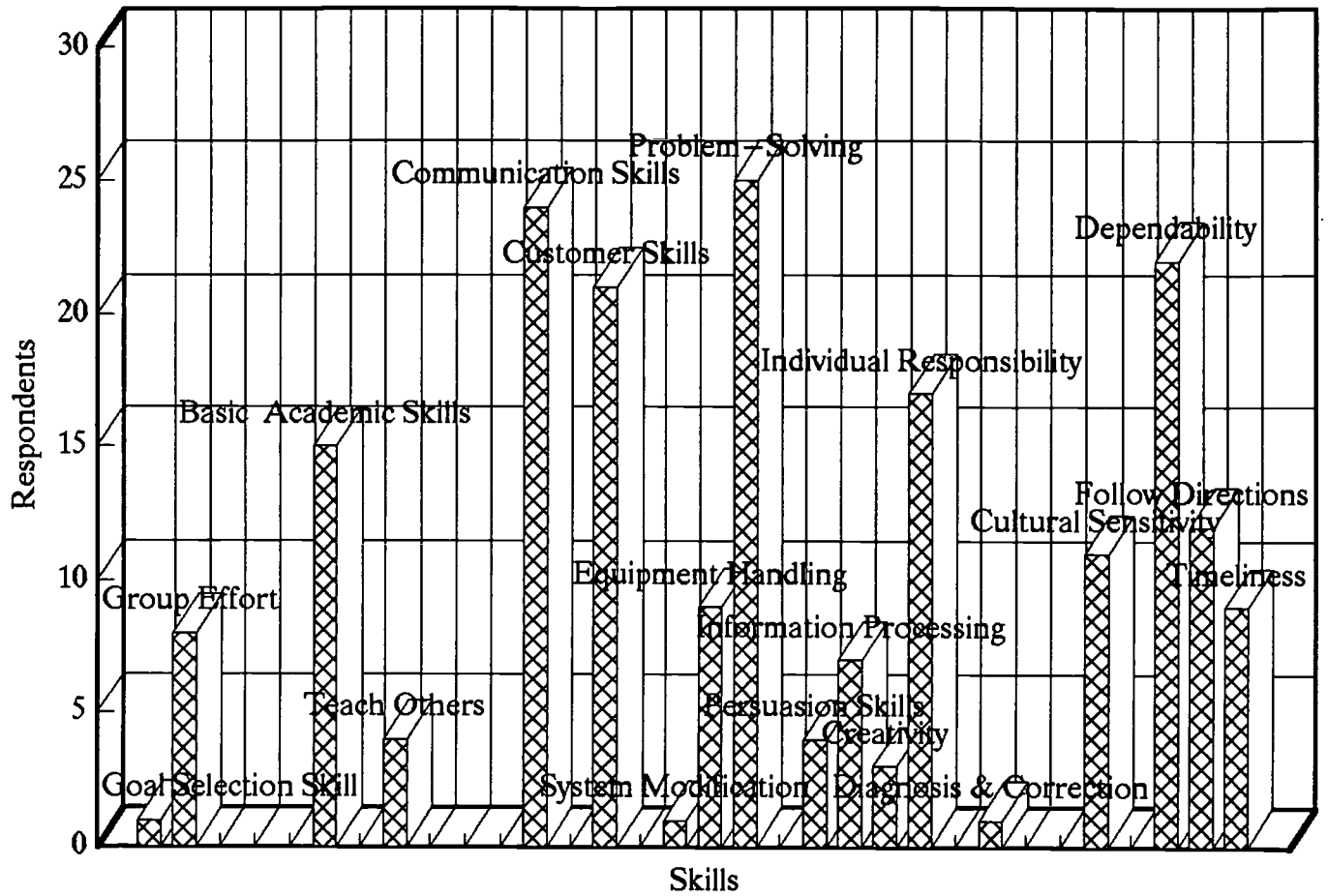


Figure 1.

Table 3. Company Size by Level of Employment

Level of Employees	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1-10	9	13.4	13.4
11-20	17	25.4	38.8
21-50	20	29.9	68.7
51-100	11	16.4	85.1
101-250	9	13.4	98.5
251-500	1	1.5	100.0

Total N = 67.

Table 4. Three-Year Employment Projection

Level of Employees	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1-10	19	28.4	28.4
11-25	15	22.4	50.7
26-50	13	19.4	70.1
51-100	8	11.9	82.1
101-250	11	16.4	98.5
251-500	1	1.5	100.0

Total N = 67.

## Conclusions

- The majority of the staff who make hiring and employment decisions, 76.1%, are not HRD staff.
- Three elements, the hiring decision maker, the ability to organize resources and skills in human relations, are prevalent in hiring and post-employment decisions.
- Certainly, there are identifiable skills that can constitute competencies for preparing the workforce to meet the needs of business and industry.

## Implications for Workforce Development

- First, given that the majority of the staff who make hiring and post-employment decisions are not HRD staff, perhaps, they may lack the skills necessary to assess job seekers and evaluate them effectively after they are hired. Therefore, it may be necessary to provide the staff who make such decisions the relevant information and training to function efficiently as employee evaluators. This will require the development of an appropriate training protocol that incorporates the essential elements for assessing candidates for employment.

- Second, since there are identifiable factors that influence hiring and retention decisions, those responsible for human resource and workforce development must focus on providing new workers and students the appropriate skills to assure their employment and success on the job. Trainers and human resource developers must continually search for the factors that affect employment decision so that they can incorporate them in their training program.

### Limitations

- The focus of the study was on the small manufacturing industry only.
- The number of companies that participated in the study was small.
- No distinction was made between decisions affecting employees in different occupations such as clerical personnel, health care practitioners or construction workers.

### Recommendations

- There are identifiable elements that influence employment decisions. Therefore, to enhance the employment opportunities of their clients workforce development practitioners must incorporate the appropriate elements in their curriculum for workforce preparation.

- The limited scope of the present study on manufacturing requires that there be a follow-up investigation involving more industries and a larger number of participants in order to validate the findings of the study.
- The respondents identified additional skills for employment and it is recommended that the relationship between the additional skills and employment decisions be studied further.

## References

Amway Corporation, Junior Achievement, and Newsweek. (1997). It doesn't add up. Newsweek, May. A special advertising feature.

Dirks, R. and Buzzards, J. (1997). What CEOs expect of employees hired for international work. Business Education Forum, 51(4), 3-7.

Glover, R. (1995). School-to-Work: An essential component of workforce development. Texas Business Review, 4-5, December.

GOALS 2000: Educate America Act (1994). H.R. 1804. The Congress of the U.S. Washington, D.C.

NBEA (1996). What is needed to work in today's ever-changing business world. Keying In - The Newsletter of the National Business Education Association, 7(2), 1-2.

Northdurft, W. (1990). How to produce work-ready workers. Across the Board, 27(9), 47-52.

Patrick, S. (1997). Recruiting trends 1996-97. Career Services and Placement. Collegiate Employment research Institute. MI: East Lansing.

Pennsylvania Economy League - Eastern Division (1996)  
Building a world-class technical workforce: The key to a  
competitive Greater Philadelphia. Report #686.

Schaeffer, R. (1997). SCANS: A balance between general  
employability and lifelong learning skills. VOCNET -  
NCRVE UC Berkeley Vocational Education Discussion List,  
[vocnet@cmsa.berkeley.edu](mailto:vocnet@cmsa.berkeley.edu).

U.S. Department of Labor. (1991). What work requires of  
schools: A SCANS report for America 2000. Washington,  
DC: Government Printing Office.

School-to-Work Opportunities Act. (1994). Public Law 103-  
239 (H.R. 2884). The Congress of the U.S. Washington,  
D.C.

Smith, B. N., Jones, C., and Lane, J. (1997). Employers'  
perceptions of work skills. Business Education Forum, 51(4),  
11-17.

The Information Technology Association of America. (1997).  
High-skilled info-tech jobs go begging. Vocational Education  
Weekly, X(4), 2.



**U.S. Department of Education**  
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)  
National Library of Education (NLE)  
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)



# REPRODUCTION RELEASE

(Specific Document)

## I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: EMPLOYMENT ASSESSMENT PRACTICES: IMPLICATIONS FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN THE 21st CENTURY.	
Author(s): VICTOR K. A. GBOMITA	
Corporate Source: THE CENTER FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT, COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, TEMPLE UNIVERSITY	Publication Date: 12/12/97

## II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education (RIE)*, are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign at the bottom of the page.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2B documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Level 1

Level 2A

Level 2B

↑

X

↑

↑

Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic) and paper copy.

Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only

Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche only

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits. If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

*I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.*

Signature:	Printed Name/Position/Title: PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST	
Organization/Address: CTR FOR VOC ED PROF PERSONNEL DEV TEMPLE UNIVERSITY 1301 CECIL B MOORE AVE PHILADELPHIA, PA 19122-6091	Telephone: (215) 204-6226	FAX: (215) 204-5154
	E-Mail Address:	Date: 2-9-98

Sign here, → please

18-552-027





### III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, or, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of the document from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of the document. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

Publisher/Distributor:
Address:
Price:

### IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant this reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

Name:
Address:

### V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

Send this form to the following ERIC Clearinghouse:  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Acquisitions Coordinator</b> <b>ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education</b> <b>Center on Education and Training for Employment</b> <b>1900 Kenny Road</b> <b>Columbus, OH 43210-1090</b></p>
---

However, if solicited by the ERIC Facility, or if making an unsolicited contribution to ERIC, return this form (and the document being contributed) to: