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Workable St. Louis

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University of Missouri-St. Louis

From the Selected Works of John A. Henschke EdD

2017

Workable St. Louis

John A. Henschke, EdD

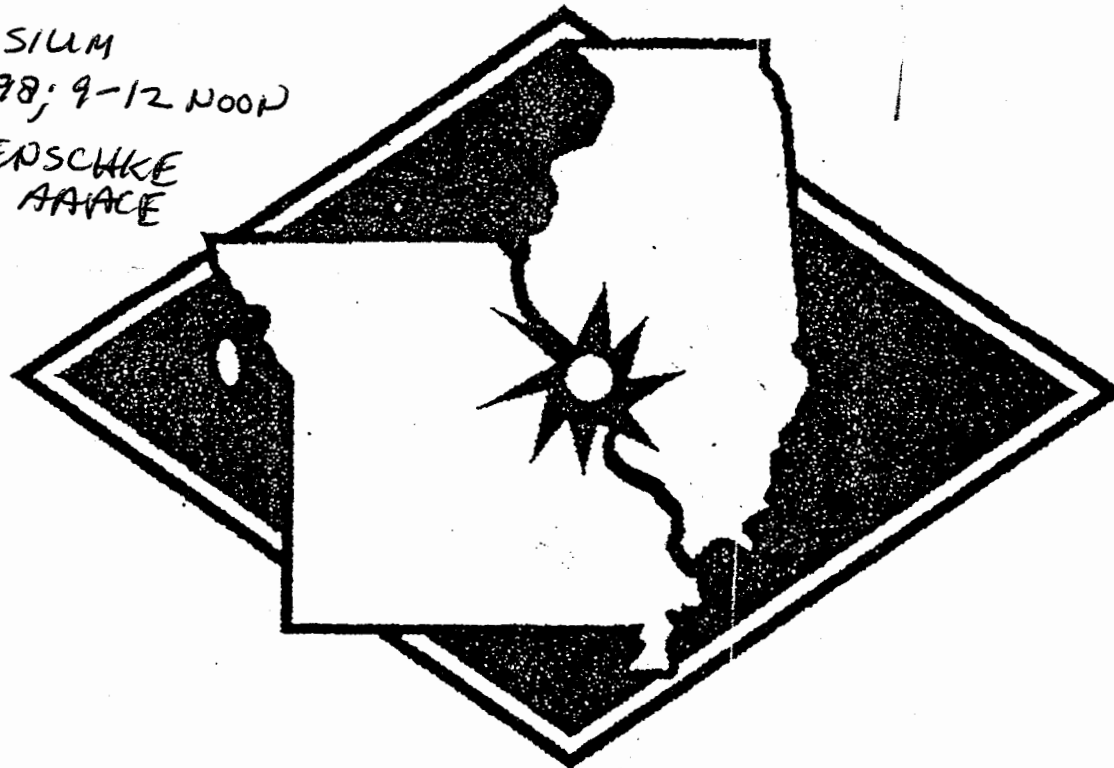


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NOVEMBER 17-22, 1998
PHOENIX, AZ

WORK KEYS SYMPOSIUM
THURSDAY - 11/19/98; 9-12 NOON

by DR. JOHN A. HENSCHKE
PAST-PRESIDENT, AAACE



Work**ABLE** St. Louis

WORK KEYS ALLIANCE OF BBUSINESS • LABOR • EDUICATION

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Fall 1997

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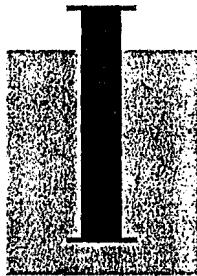
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AAACE and ACT

Partners in Development of the Work Keys™ System



Roxanne T. Miller

In late 1989, Dr. Ken McCullough was among a group of Tennessee state education officials who met with some staff members of ACT

(American College Testing) to discuss a different educational approach for work force development.

"The idea for what eventually became known as ACT's Work Keys System was born at that meeting," recalls McCullough, who served as AAACE president in 1993-1994.

At the time, McCullough was serving as state executive director of adult and community education for the state of Tennessee. He and his staff had received scores of calls from businesses around the state, requesting help in training employees. As a result, McCullough volunteered to conduct a number of work force analyses for companies around the state, including one furniture manufacturer that was having a problem with employee production errors.

"This company had 140 employees," McCullough recalls. "The owner had installed new state-of-the-art computerized equipment and had brought representatives of the German manufacturer over here to train the employees on the equipment. Yet three months later, the company had a 400 percent increase in defect rate. The owner just couldn't understand what was going on."

McCullough's analysis turned up answers — and a few surprises as well. After some investigation, he found that one employee had been cutting a groove in wood pieces 1/16" too long because he didn't know how to measure.

"All he remembered from his training was that he was supposed to make the cut at the little line next to the quarter-inch mark," says McCullough. "He guessed that point to be 9/32, but it was supposed to be 7/32. As a result, he cut 6,000 pieces of wood that had to be thrown out.

"It was the first time it was clear that employees didn't have the basic foundational skills they needed to be productive in the work force," says McCullough. "Until that time we thought the large amount of waste was due to poor attitudes of employees. But when we looked more closely, we realized it was a lack of skill."

At that time, Charles Smith, the Tennessee commissioner of education, was also a member of the ACT board of directors. He was aware of the work McCullough and his staff were doing to analyze job proficiency. In late 1989, McCullough and Smith arranged a meeting with representatives of ACT and the Tennessee Department of Education. In that meeting, the group discussed the idea of ACT transferring its college testing expertise to concentrate on work force development. Eventually that idea evolved into what is now known as Work Keys.

Roxanne T. Miller is the regional information specialist for University Extension, the educational outreach of the University of Missouri System and Lincoln University, Missouri's two land-grant institutions.



WorkABLE St. Louis

WORK KEYS ALLIANCE OF BUSINESS • LABOR • EDUICATION

In 1990, ACT began working with the U.S. Department of Labor, which had just released its own employee competencies report, the SCANS Report, which identified thirteen employee competencies.

Pilot Work Keys Program

Later in 1990, ACT initiated a pilot Work Keys testing program. Tennessee was one of the five states involved in this pilot project. "We used Work Keys to test our best high school senior math students," McCullough recalls. "On the Work Keys test, we found they had low math and applied technology scores. They were excellent on recall, but very poor on application. They had not learned how to apply their knowledge."

In 1992, the state of Tennessee began requiring that the Work Keys assessment be given as an exit test to all state high school students who were preparing for technical careers. In 1995, the Tennessee Board of Regents established the state's first Work Keys Service Center, which maintains fourteen satellite offices in the state through its community colleges.

"In Tennessee, Work Keys is perhaps the most powerful indicator of a person's proficiency," says McCullough. "It's important in professional training to be able to quickly respond to an adult's training needs. Work Keys enables us to do that because it gives us exact baseline data about an adult's specific

skill level and about what that adult needs to learn in order to achieve a desired skill level."

AAACE/ACT Partnership

As a result of the involvement of AAACE's Executive Director Drew Albritten with ACT and McCullough's involvement with Work Keys in Tennessee, both AAACE and ACT entered into an agreement on Work Keys in 1991. Current AAACE President John A. Henschke joined the AAACE/ACT Work Keys Advisory Committee soon after its formation. He says AAACE impacted the establishment of the Work Keys system in two distinct ways.

"AAACE adult educators provided ACT with the expertise in understanding the learning process," Henschke says. "AAACE also provided a mechanism for national distribution of the Work Keys system through our national membership and connections with state and regional affiliates."

Since formation of the committee in 1991, it has met annually with ACT officials to provide guidance and leadership in implementing the Work Keys system. Thomas Kinney, State University of New York-Albany, currently chairs the committee.

WorkABLE St. Louis

As a faculty member of both University Extension and the University of Missouri-St. Louis, Henschke was instrumental in bring-

ing the Work Keys concept to the St. Louis region when he explained the Work Keys system to area business and labor leaders. In November 1996 — after more than two years of planning and collaboration among more than twenty business, labor, and education organizations in the St. Louis metropolitan region — the first AAACE-sponsored Work Keys™ Service Center in the nation was licensed in St. Louis. Known as WorkABLE St. Louis, the name stands for Work Keys Alliance of Business, Labor and Education. The three founding St. Louis regional partners are University Extension (outreach of the University of Missouri System and Lincoln University), representing education; the St. Louis Regional Commerce and Growth Association (RCGA), representing business; and the St. Louis Labor Council, AFL-CIO, representing labor.

Work Keys™ System

ACT's Work Keys is a national system for teaching and assessing workplace skills that enables education and business to work together to strengthen achievement of workplace skills. Work Keys is being used by employers nationwide to identify the skills employees need to be successful on the job and to communicate to human resource and training personnel, as well as educators, what additional education or training is necessary to build a higher performance work force.

"The Work Keys System is on the cutting edge of helping to address the employability skills that individuals need for the future," says Henschke. "AAACE is a partner in this forward-looking system that addresses needs that adults and upcoming young adults have for employability in our society. AAACE is central to helping guide that process so that the learning needs are connected to the employability skills."

AAACE members who would like more information on Work Keys, or who are interested in establishing a service center in their location, should contact AAACE, 202-429-5131. ▲

WorkABLE St. Louis Timeline

| <u>DATE</u> | <u>ACTIVITY</u> |
|------------------|---|
| Late 80s | ACT develops and begins offering national Work Keys System for profiling, assessing and teaching critical workplace skills. |
| Oct. 94 | Initial St. Louis Work Keys informational meeting held with representatives of University Extension, UM-St. Louis School of Education, St. Louis Labor Council and an ACT representative. |
| Dec. 94 | Work Keys informational meeting at St. Louis Teacher's Union Hall attended by university and labor reps, as well as Loma Finch, St. Louis Community College; and Marcia Cline, United Way. Presentation given by Ken McCullough, vice chancellor, academic affairs, Tennessee Board of Regents, about Tennessee's use of Work Keys program. |
| Jan. 95 | First Work Keys meeting with various community reps explores feasibility of using Work Keys in school-to-work and apprenticeship programs. Held at Labor Council. |
| Spring/Summer 95 | Ongoing research on use of Work Keys around U.S. results in selecting Omaha, Neb., Work Keys project to visit to observe an operational Work Keys site. |
| Aug. 95 | Group representing university, labor and other organizations visits Work Keys project in Omaha. Several other community representatives interested, but unable to attend. |
| Sept. 95 | Follow-up meeting to Omaha visit brings together reps from numerous organizations. Interest high in moving forward to develop Work Keys St. Louis. |
| Nov. 95 | St. Louis Career Education District sponsors forum to present new concepts for defining high school student readiness for employment. Information on Work Keys presented by Tracy Panase, ACT, and Roz Sherman Voellinger, University Extension. |
| Nov. 95 | Bob Kelley, St. Louis Labor Council, meets with Dick Fleming, RCGA, to discuss Work Keys' potential role with Greater St. Louis Economic Council's initiative to attract 100,000 new jobs by year 2000. |
| Dec. 95 | Informal collaborative meetings lead to formation of Work Keys Advisory Council and commitment to train several job profilers in spring 96. |
| March 96 | Tracy Panase, ACT, gives Work Keys presentation at informational meeting held at RCGA. Attended by some 25 organizational reps, many for first time. |
| April 96 | Tracy Panase, ACT, gives Work Keys presentation at informational meeting held at RCGA. Well attended. Interest continues to grow. |

- April 96 ACT trains 8 job profilers at Doubletree Hotel in St. Louis. Persons trained: Deborah DeVries, AAACE; Mike Evans, UM-St. Louis; John Henschke, University Extension/UM-St. Louis/AAACE; Larry Hutchins, St. Louis Career Education District; Lyn Hutchins, Hutchins Group; Margaret Smith-Kenyon, Employer Gateway Project/RCGA; Glenda Sullentrop, St. Louis Community College; and Roz Sherman Voellinger, University Extension.
- July 96 Tracy Panase, ACT, presents Work Keys marketing workshop at RCGA, attended by recently trained job profilers as well as reps from various other organizations.
- July 96 Tracy Panase, ACT, gives Work Keys presentation at informational meeting held at Construction Training School.
- Aug. 96 Two additional St. Louis profilers trained in Denver: Russ Signorino, St. Louis County Economic Council; and Julie Hutchins, Hutchins Group.
- Sept. 96 Work Keys St. Louis becomes known as St. Louis Regional Work Keys Alliance with three lead partners: RCGA, St. Louis Labor Council and University Extension.
- Sept. 96 Work Keys Service Center application submitted by RCGA on behalf of St. Louis Regional Work Keys Alliance.
- Oct. 96 Margaret Smith-Kenyon, Employer Gateway Project/RCGA, and Roz Sherman Voellinger, University Extension, attend Work Keys Administrator training in Iowa City.
- Nov. 96 ACT approves application, establishing St. Louis Regional Work Keys Alliance as first Work Keys Service Center in Missouri. The functions and services of the Service Center draw upon the collective resources of all collaborative partners.
- Jan. 97 The newly named "WorkABLE St. Louis" (St. Louis Work Keys Alliance of Business, Labor and Education) launched Jan. 9 at kick-off luncheon hosted by RCGA at Kemoll's Restaurant, attended by more than 65 regional business, labor and educational leaders. Keynote address given by Richard Ferguson, president, ACT.

#

2/4/97

FACT SHEET

WorkABLE ST. LOUIS:

Work Keys™ Alliance of Business, Labor & Education

What is WorkABLE St. Louis?

WorkABLE is the newly established regional “St. Louis Work Keys Alliance of Business, Labor and Education,” a partnership designed to utilize the national Work Keys™ system developed by ACT (formerly American College Testing) for profiling, assessing and teaching critical workplace skills. WorkABLE is Missouri’s first Work Keys Service Center, established in the St. Louis region in November 1996.

What is WorkABLE’s mission?

The mission of WorkABLE is to utilize ACT’s Work Keys system to strengthen economic and workforce development in the St. Louis Metropolitan Area, in cooperation with existing organizations.

What are the lead organizations in the WorkABLE Partnership?

The three lead partners are the St. Louis Regional Commerce and Growth Association (RCGA), representing business; the St. Louis Labor Council, AFL-CIO, representing labor; and University Extension (outreach of University of Missouri System/Lincoln University), representing education. The RCGA initiated the administrative and contractual obligations of establishing WorkABLE as a licensed ACT Work Keys Service Center. These three organizations have demonstrated substantial organizational commitment during the developmental phases of the center.

What organizations are in the WorkABLE Partnership?

The following organizations contribute resources to the overall goals and objectives of WorkABLE and are represented on the WorkABLE Partnership Board:

- ACT (formerly American College Testing)
- American Association for Adult & Continuing Education (AAACE)
- Associated General Contractors/Construction Training School
- Jefferson College
- Maryville University
- Plumbers Union, Local 35
- Regional JTPA Agencies--Missouri & Illinois
- St. Charles County Community College
- St. Louis Career Education District
- St. Louis Carpenters Joint Apprenticeship Committee
- St. Louis Community College
- St. Louis County Economic Council
- St. Louis Labor Council, AFL-CIO
- St. Louis Public Schools, Adult Basic Education
- St. Louis Regional Commerce and Growth Association (RCGA)
- United Way
- University Extension (University of Missouri System/Lincoln University)
- University of Missouri-St. Louis, School of Education

WorkABLE uses the Work Keys™ system. What is Work Keys?

Work Keys™ is a national system for teaching and assessing workplace skills that was developed by ACT in the late 1980s. Its purpose is to link education and business to develop and improve employability and performance skills in the workplace. The Work Keys system provides a much-needed "common language" that is equally meaningful to those in the classroom and the workplace. Currently, Work Keys is in use in workplaces, employment offices, vocational programs, high schools, colleges and other sites throughout the United States.

What services will WorkABLE St. Louis provide?

WorkABLE St. Louis will operate as a “virtual” center with specific functions carried out by the various partnering organizations. The collective resources of the more than 18 partnering organizations in the St. Louis Metropolitan Area will provide:

- **Skills assessment**
Measurement of foundational workplace skills.
- **Job Profiling**
Identification of skills and level of respective skills required for specific jobs or occupations.
- **Reporting**
Providing relevant information useful in career planning, training program evaluation, and as a part of the employee selection process.
- **Instructional Support**
Supplementing workplace skills instruction.

What are the goals of WorkABLE St. Louis ?

In cooperation with the WorkABLE partners:

- develop WorkABLE as a public-private, broad-based, bi-state, 12-county collaborative venture
- broaden awareness and ensure availability of all components of the Work Keys system (assessment, profiling, instruction and reporting), designed in such a manner as to meet the specialized needs of the vast array of potential users/customers
- promote and support use of the Work Keys system within the already existing educational, employment and training agencies to enhance the region’s workforce development.

For more information, call: 314/206-3299

St. Louis Regional Commerce and Growth Association (RCGA)
One Metropolitan Square, Suite 1300
St. Louis, Missouri 63102



WorkABLE St. Louis Work Keys™ Alliance of Business, Labor & Education

Overview

WorkABLE is the newly established regional "St. Louis Work Keys Alliance of Business, Labor and Education," a partnership designed to utilize the national Work Keys™ system developed by ACT, Inc (formerly known as American College Testing) for profiling, assessing and teaching critical workplace skills. WorkABLE is Missouri's first Work Keys Service Center, established in the St. Louis region in November 1996. The Work Keys system currently is in use in workplaces, employment offices, vocational programs, high schools, colleges and other sites throughout the United States.

Mission

The mission of WorkABLE is to utilize the Work Keys system to strengthen economic development and workforce development in the St. Louis Metropolitan Area, in cooperation with existing workforce development partners.

Goals

In cooperation with the WorkABLE partners:

- develop WorkABLE as a board based regional collaborative venture
- broaden awareness and maximize availability and accessiblilty of all components of the Work Keys system (assessment, profiling, instruction and reporting), designed to meet the specialized needs of potential customers
- promote and support use of the Work Keys system within existing education and training initiatives in workforce development.

WorkABLE St. Louis

Standing Committees:

Committee membership is open to all individuals interested in furthering the mission and goals of WorkABLE St. Louis. All standing committees will make recommendations to the Steering Committee/Partnership Board and provide feedback to ACT.

1. **Profiling Committee** - comprised primarily of certified Work Keys job profilers who will meet and share experiences, opportunities, materials and data related to profiling activity.
2. **Assessment Committee** - comprised primarily of assessment professionals from partner organizations to review Work Keys instruments (tests and subtests), share opportunities, data, experience and materials. Special attention will be directed to ADA guidelines and accommodations from special needs populations.
3. **Curriculum/Instruction Committee** - comprised primarily of curriculum specialists and instruction providers from partner organizations to review current curricula, Work Keys "Targets for Instruction" and computer-based training materials. Committee members will share experience, materials, opportunities, data and feedback regarding curriculum and instructional activities and requirements.
4. **Marketing Committee** - comprised primarily of communications and marketing professionals from partner organizations who will meet to:
 - a. Identify target audiences that will contribute to or benefit from WorkABLE/Work Keys services.
 - b. Develop short and long term marketing objectives and goals.
 - c. Develop communication and marketing plans.
 - d. Develop basic marketing materials and logo for WorkABLE.
5. **Reporting/Research** - comprised primarily of professionals from the various WorkABLE sectors to discuss issues related to data collection for purposes such as marketing, funding, and research.

(11)

WORK KEYS KICK-OFF LUNCHEON

January 9, 1997
12:00 Noon - 1:30 P.M.

Knoll's

AGENDA

- I. WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS
Richard C.D. Fleming, President and Chief Executive Officer
St. Louis Regional Commerce & Growth Association

- II. COMMENTS BY REPRESENTATIVES OF BUSINESS, LABOR AND EDUCATION
 - A. William J. Graves, Vice President of Human Resources
Boatmen's Bank
 - B. Robert J. Kelley, President, St. Louis Labor Council
 - C. Dr. Charles Schmitz, Dean of Education, University of Missouri
at St. Louis
 - D. Dr. John Henschke, National President, American Association for Adult
& Continuing Education

- III. KEYNOTE ADDRESS
Richard L. Ferguson, President
ACT

- IV. CLOSING REMARKS
Richard C.D. Fleming

The Keys to Success

13

St. Louis alliance of business, labor and education develop workplace skills in a new partnership called WorkABLE St. Louis.

Help is finally here for businesses who want to become more effective in hiring and maximizing the productivity of their employees. The St. Louis Regional Commerce and Growth Association (RCGA) recently licensed Missouri's first Work Keys Service Center, known as WorkABLE St. Louis (St. Louis Work Keys Alliance of Business, Labor and Education).

As a partnership between the region's business, labor and education sectors, WorkABLE St. Louis is designed to enhance the economic development competitiveness of the St. Louis region by helping to prepare a skilled work force today and into the 21st century.

Developed in the late 1980s by ACT (formerly known as American College Testing), the national Work Keys system's purpose is to provide a common language and metric to link education and business to develop and improve employability and performance skills in the workplace.

ACT is one of the nation's leading developers of standardized assessment tools, and provides skills assessment, job profiling, reporting and instructional support to workers and employers. The organization's unique background and expertise has allowed it to develop this innovative program.

At the recent Work Keys kick-off luncheon held to announce the licensing of WorkABLE St. Louis, ACT President Richard L. Ferguson said, "The Work Keys Service Center offers through our partners job profiling, assessment, reporting and instructional support and other employment-related services to government agencies, labor organizations, businesses, workers, students and job-seekers."

The three founding partners are RCGA, representing business; the St. Louis Labor Council (AFL-CIO), representing labor; and University Extension (outreach of the University of Missouri System/Lincoln University), representing education. In



Charles D. Schmitz, dean of the school of education, University of Missouri-St. Louis.

addition, several other St. Louis area businesses and organizations are involved in WorkABLE St. Louis, which will operate as a "virtual center."

In place of an actual physical location, each organization involved in WorkABLE St. Louis will perform specific functions to be coordinated by the program directors. This way, the partnership can use the national Work Keys system within the already existing regional educational, employment and training agencies to enhance work force development.

"Competitive regional economic development in the '90s and beyond will turn on those communities with predictable and

well-trained work forces," notes Richard C.D. Fleming, RCGA president and chief executive officer. "This business, labor and education alliance through Work Keys holds the prospect of being St. Louis' competitive edge in economic development."

Boatmen's Bank Senior Vice President of Human Resources Arthur Fleischer agrees with Fleming. "The St. Louis Work Keys Alliance offers our region a serious competitive economic advantage," Fleischer says. "Finding, retaining and retraining qualified workers has become a critical issue for business and industry nationwide. Our future depends on the ability to identify and develop a predictable and dependable work force."

Job profiling identifies key skills and skill levels required for successful job performance using ACT's SkillPro software. Assessments determine an individual's job skill levels for comparison to required job skill levels. Instructional support offers *Targets for Instruction* that correspond to each of the Work Keys assessments to facilitate the development of instruction and training programs. Work Keys also offers database-compiled skill requirements references for jobs and occupations, reports for individuals and aggregated reports for all examinees.

Use of the Work Keys system through WorkABLE St. Louis will produce several benefits for St. Louis organizations. First, the program can reduce costs associated with poor hiring decisions including those for lost production, turnover, rehiring and additional training. Productivity can also be increased by matching applicants and employees with jobs based on their skills and the skills required by the job. In addition, WorkABLE St. Louis provides a "common language" for communication between employers and educators.

In order to produce these results, the Work Keys system identifies and assesses critical skills. The system assesses Applied Academic Skills including reading for information, applied mathematics and writing;

People and Interpersonal Skills including listening and teamwork; and Problem-Solving Skills including observation, applied technology and locating information. WorkABLE St. Louis can use the information obtained through these assessments to better utilize the city's work force, and employees can look forward to better training and more confidence in their jobs.

"One of the region's greatest strengths is its productive, skilled and available work force. Through this alliance, the region will have additional tools toward reaching its goal of creating 100,000 net new jobs by the year 2000," Fleming noted at the kick-off luncheon. "In fact, over the past 24 months the region has gained nearly 44,000 net new jobs toward that goal."

**"The St. Louis
Work Keys Alliance
offers our region a serious
competitive economic
advantage. Finding,
retaining and retraining
qualified workers has
become a critical issue
for business and industry
nationwide. Our future
depends on the ability
to identify and develop
a predictable and
dependable work force."**

**— ARTHUR FLEISCHER
Boatmen's Bank senior vice
president of Human Resources**

"Labor recognizes that we in the St. Louis area have long needed to identify skills and match workers to the training opportunities available," St. Louis Labor Council President Robert J. Kelley notes. "WorkABLE St. Louis is not just some little thing! We are strongly committed to this regional program."

University Extension Labor Education specialist Roz Sherman-Voellinger notes, "The strength of this partnership will enable us to accomplish training goals we haven't been able to accomplish individually." ■

Those interested in learning more about WorkABLE St. Louis are invited to call RCGA Work Force Development Director Margaret Smith-Kenyon at 314/444-1132.

Connection

Volume 3, Number 1
February 1997

A quarterly publication linking the educational resources of University Extension with governments, community organizations and residents of the St. Louis area

1996 ANNUAL REPORT

Extension partners with RCGA, Labor Council, other groups to establish WorkABLE St. Louis

After more than two years of planning and collaboration involving University Extension and more than 18 organizations in the St. Louis metropolitan area, Missouri's first Work Keys™ Service Center was licensed in November 1996 by the St. Louis Regional Commerce and Growth Association (RCGA).

Known as WorkABLE St. Louis, this partnership among the region's business, labor and education sectors is designed to enhance the economic development competitiveness of the St. Louis region by helping to prepare a skilled workforce today and into the 21st century.

The three founding partners are the RCGA, representing business; the St. Louis Labor Council, AFL-CIO, representing labor; and University Extension, representing education.

"This business, labor and education alliance holds the prospect of being St. Louis' competitive edge in economic development," said Richard C.D. Fleming, RCGA president and chief executive officer.

"The partnership will enable us to accomplish goals we haven't been able to accomplish on our own," said Roz Sherman Voellinger, extension labor education specialist.

WorkABLE St. Louis will promote and support use of the Work Keys system within the already existing educational, employment and training agencies to enhance the region's workforce development.

The purpose of Work Keys is to provide a common language to link education and business to improve employability and performance skills in the workplace.

The Work Keys system, developed by ACT in the late 1980s, provides skills assessment, job profiling, reporting and instructional support to workers and employers in the bi-state area.



Representatives of the founding organizations of WorkABLE St. Louis gather at a kick-off luncheon announcing the regional initiative. They are (from left): Dr. Charles D. Schmitz, dean, School of Education, UM-St. Louis; Richard L. Ferguson, president, ACT; Dr. John Henschke, extension continuing education specialist and associate professor, adult education, UM-St. Louis; Roz Sherman Voellinger, extension labor education specialist; Kay Gasen, director, East-Central Region, University Extension; Robert J. Kelley, president, St. Louis Labor Council; and Richard C.D. Fleming, president and chief executive officer, RCGA.

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First AAACE-Sponsored Work Keys™ Center Established in St. Louis

The first AAACE-sponsored Work Keys™ Service Center in the nation was licensed in St. Louis, Mo., in November 1996, some seven years after past AAACE President Ken McCullough first suggested an idea to ACT (formerly American College Testing) that led to the eventual development of ACT's Work Keys System. Known as WorkABLE St. Louis, the service center was established after more than two years of collaboration among more than 20 business, labor and education organizations in the St. Louis metropolitan area.

The three founding St. Louis regional partners are University Extension (outreach of the University of Missouri and Lincoln University); the St. Louis Regional Commerce and Growth Association (RCGA); the St. Louis Regional Commerce and Growth Association (RCGA); and the St. Louis Labor Council, AFL/CIO, representing labor.

McCullough originally suggested in 1984 that ACT consider applying their college test-making expertise to help address workforce preparation and training issues. AAACE President John Henschke, a faculty member of both University Extension and the University of Missouri-St. Louis, was instrumental in bringing the Work Keys concept to the St. Louis area in 1994, when he explained the Work Keys system to area business and labor leaders. WorkABLE St. Louis also has the distinction of being the first Work

Keys Service Center in the nation to be established through a collaboration involving business, education and labor. Five subcommittees have been organized: assessment, profiling, reporting/research, curriculum and marketing.

Dr. Henschke and several AAACE members have served in an advisory role to ACT for the past several years regarding development of the Work Keys System as it relates to adult education.

Other members of the AAACE-ACT Work Keys Advisory Committee are: Thomas Kinney, chair, State University of New York-Albany; Dr. Drew Allbritten, AAACE; Fadia Alvic, Knoxville, Tenn.; Joseph Cretela, Wellingford Adult Education, Wellingford, Conn.; Debbie DeVries, Resource Development Association, Madison, Fla.; and Dr. Ken McCullough, Tennessee Board of Regents, Nashville, Tenn.

The purpose of Work Keys is to provide a common language to link education and business to improve employability and performance skills in the workplace. The Work Keys system provides skills assessment, job profiling, reporting/research, and instructional support to workers and employers.

Any AAACE members who want more information on Work Keys, or are interested in establishing a service center in their location, should contact AAACE at (202) 429-5131.

AAACE's Public Policy Priorities—105th Congress

Now that the dust has settled from the 104th Congress and the field of adult education and literacy has received an additional \$100 million, there are numerous issues before the 105th Congress that will impact the adult learner as well as the adult educator. AAACE, in working with a number of other national organizations, identified 14 major issues that will be considered by Congress. These issues were sent to the AAACE Board, commission presidents and unit chairs for their prioritization. The following list indicates the rank order priorities of the Association's leaders:

1. reauthorization of the Adult Education Act (including the National Literacy Act);
2. inclusion of adult education set-aside funds in Workforce Training legislation;
3. better utilization of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (welfare reform);
4. Title I Educator Training to include adult educators (and eliminate age barriers for adult learners in order to gain access to certain Title I funds);

Continued on Page 2

**Election Issue—
Ballot Enclosed**

At Procter & Gamble, Work Keys Supports Recruiting and Training

At Procter & Gamble (P&G), we've just completed our second year of using a new, leading-edge system for hiring plant technicians into the Company. Our technicians work in teams and are responsible for making, packing, and shipping the product to our various customers. Team members must depend on one another to keep production flowing, meet performance goals, and maintain a high level of quality for the product.

P&G employs more than 17,000 plant technicians in 36 plants in the United States, and worldwide plant technicians represent about 50 percent of our workforce. Obviously, they are vital to the success of our businesses. In 1995 we introduced a new system that includes testing and interviewing designed to measure those skills critical for success in our work environment. We needed to be sure we were hiring people with the aptitudes and skills required to meet the challenging demands of technician work.

The quality of the people coming through our new selection process is outstanding. Those we've hired with the system are real team players

and have the initiative and personal leadership necessary for the work. So, with successful selection procedures already in place, why would we be looking to use the Work Keys program? And, how are we using it to complement our own system?

Simply put, we view Work Keys as helping us to make an excellent system even better. With our new selection system in place, we've turned our attention to improving our recruiting strategies. Given our much higher selection standards, some plants have learned that their traditional recruiting practices aren't finding enough qualified candidates. We're needing to find approaches, like Work Keys, to help broaden our recruiting reach and target our efforts toward those sources with the best qualified candidates.

The Work Keys program provides us with a common language that we can use with educators and potential candidates to communicate our expectations for employment. We see Work Keys, for example, as a primary vehicle to: (1) share the

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St. Louis Launches Major Workforce Initiative

After more than two years of planning and collaboration involving more than 18 organizations in the St. Louis metropolitan area, Missouri's first Work Keys Service Center—known as WorkABLE St. Louis—has been licensed by the St. Louis Regional Commerce and Growth Association (RCGA). "WorkABLE St. Louis" stands for St. Louis Work Keys Alliance of Business, Labor and Education. More than 65 regional business, labor, and educational leaders attended a January kickoff of the St. Louis initiative.

WorkABLE St. Louis, a partnership among the region's business, labor, and education sectors, is designed to enhance the economic development competitiveness of the St. Louis region by helping to prepare a skilled workforce for the present and into the 21st century. The RCGA, the St. Louis Labor Council—AFL-CIO, and University Extension (outreach of the University of Missouri System/Lincoln University) are the founding partners behind WorkABLE St. Louis, which will operate as a "virtual" center with specific functions carried out by the various partnering organizations. The WorkABLE St. Louis partnership will use ACT's Work Keys system within the already existing regional educational, employment, and training agencies to enhance workforce development.

"Competitive regional economic development in the '90s and beyond will turn on those communities with predictable and well-trained workforces," noted RCGA President and Chief Executive Officer Richard C. D. Fleming. "This business, labor, and education alliance through Work Keys holds the prospect of being St. Louis' competitive edge in economic development."

St. Louis Labor Council President Robert J. Kelley added: "Labor recognizes that we in the St. Louis area have long needed to identify skills and match workers to the training opportunities available. I believe ACT Work Keys offers us the ability to help workers move to jobs as needed. WorkABLE St. Louis is not just some insignificant program! This is gutsy stuff. We are strongly committed to this regional program."

In addition to the three lead partners, the following organizations are also represented on the WorkABLE St. Louis Partnership

Board: American Association for Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE); ACT; Associated General Contractors/Construction Training School; Jefferson College; Maryville University; Plumbers Union—Local 35; St. Charles County Community College; St. Louis Career Education District; St. Louis Carpenters Joint Apprenticeship Committee; St. Louis Community College; St. Louis County Economic Council; St. Louis Public Schools—Adult Basic Education; United Way; The School of Education for the University of Missouri—St. Louis; and various regional job training agencies in the bistate area.

"The St. Louis Work Keys Alliance offers our region a serious competitive economic advantage," noted Boatmen's Bank Senior Vice President of Human Resources Arthur Fleischer. "Finding, retaining, and retraining qualified workers has become a critical issue for business and industry nationwide. Our future depends on the ability to identify and develop a predictable and dependable workforce."

In his luncheon keynote address, ACT President Richard L. Ferguson stressed that the Work Keys system provides a much needed "common language" meaningful to people in both the workforce and the classroom. Ferguson noted: "When the St. Louis Regional Work Keys Service Center was formally established at the beginning of last November, it was the only one in Missouri. Although there is now a second one at Crowder College in Neosho, the St. Louis Service Center remains unique in that it is based on a large partnership of organizations rather than being just a physical location."

Anyone interested in learning more about WorkABLE St. Louis is invited to call RCGA Vice President of Economic Development Ronnie Bryant or RCGA Work Force Development Director Margaret Smith-Kenyon at 314/231-5555.

Work Keys USA is produced by ACT, Iowa City, Iowa. Please direct your comments and questions to:
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ACTIVITY

R E P R I N T

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Labor Backs Work Keys in St. Louis

By Laurie Finn

Organized labor is a key player in the St. Louis Work Keys Alliance of Business, Labor, and Education.

"Labor recognizes that we in the St. Louis area have long needed to identify skills and match workers to the training opportunities available. We are strongly committed to this program," says Robert J. Kelley, president of the St. Louis Labor Council. He describes the new alliance, called "WorkABLE St. Louis," as "gutsy stuff," and says that through Work Keys, ACT offers organized labor the ability to help workers move to jobs as needed.

WorkABLE St. Louis is a partnership comprising 18 organizations and is headed by representatives from labor, business, and education: the St. Louis Labor Council, AFL-CIO; University Extension (outreach of the University of Missouri system and Lincoln University); and the Regional Commerce and Growth Agency (RCGA).

"Part of the attraction on the part of the labor council was the credibility and the prestige that ACT brought with it," says Roz Sherman Voellinger, a labor education specialist with University Extension.

Involvement on the part of education is also important to the unions, according to Tracy Panase,

Work Keys specialist with ACT. Students planning careers in the skilled trades will be credentialed through Work Keys.

"The Work Keys partnership raises labor's image among potential workers," Panase says. "Labor wants students to know that many union jobs require high levels of academic and work-related skills, and that highly skilled workers are well compensated. Successful jobs await young people who acquire good skills, and parents should not dissuade students from going into those types of occupations."

"When I became aware of Work Keys, the first thing I did was bring it to the attention of Bob Kelley," Voellinger says. The partnership that became WorkABLE St. Louis grew out of the emphasis from organized labor, she says.

"Having labor integrally involved in the collaborative effort from the beginning kept the implementation of Work Keys from being seen as a management thing being imposed upon workers," says Margaret Smith-Kenyon, head of workforce development for the RCGA.

Work Keys also will help meet needs of another population in the union-oriented St. Louis area, as well as across the river in Illinois.

"We've had huge numbers of

layoffs, and dislocated workers have just struggled and struggled," Voellinger says. "Work Keys was seen as immediately useful for that population in terms of retraining."

And Work Keys provides analysis, assessment, reporting, and training in a language all of the players understand. "The exciting thing about what we're doing in St. Louis is that from the very beginning, we've included everybody, so we're all talking the same language," Smith-Kenyon says.

This means an employer can say to all training and referral agencies that a Level 5 reading score, for example, is required for a specific job. Agencies can use the Work Keys instructional support to help potential applicants achieve a Level 5 in reading; referring agencies know ahead of time whether or not to send a particular individual to apply. And employers will know, with assurance, that the applicant has the reading skills necessary for the job.

"Work Keys has totally demystified much of the selection process, and that's very important," Smith-Kenyon says. "People who fill out an application generally don't know why they weren't hired. They often think discrimination or favoritism are involved, when in fact we simply didn't have a way to qualify or quantify the academic and

foundational skills needed, and to do it in a fair and equitable way."

The instructional support component of the Work Keys system opens the door for educational institutions, both secondary and post-secondary, to address the needs of young students as well as adult learners. The initial educational institutions involved in WorkABLE St. Louis were the University of Missouri-St. Louis and University Extension (University of Missouri System and Lincoln University). Several area community colleges and other universities are now also involved in the partnership.

"We hope the K-12 community will recognize the value in using

this system and come on board," Smith-Kenyon says.

John Henschke, a faculty member in adult education at the University of Missouri-St. Louis and a continuing education specialist with University Extension, recognizes the opportunities Work Keys offers for students as well as teachers.

"The Work Keys system is the best approach to addressing the needs of people who want to enter the workforce," says Henschke, who currently is president of the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education, the organization responsible for bringing Work Keys to St. Louis.

Henschke appreciates the level of collaboration that exists with WorkABLE St. Louis, acknowledging, as do other principals, that such cooperation isn't easy to effect in Missouri. "Typically, the people of this state are very independent. People won't agree to a whole lot of cooperation and collaboration. We have worked very, very hard to make it a cooperative effort. We believe the region will benefit more as a result of cooperation rather than competition." ◆

**WorkABLE St. Louis
Partnership Agreement
Part 2**

(21)

As a partner in the Work Keys Alliance of Business, Labor & Education, WorkABLE, (Name of the Organization) agrees to fully participate in the effort to develop our region's workforce through the use of the Work Key s system. Specifically we agree to:

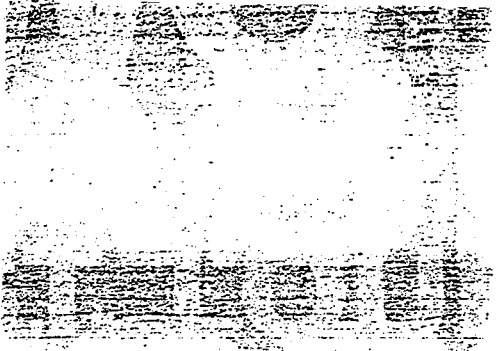
1. Attend and participate in WorkABLE meetings on a regular basis including Partnership Board meetings, sub-committee meetings and Executive Committee meetings where appropriate.
2. Share information about the use and effectiveness of Work Keys in our organization within the limits of employee/customer confidentiality and proprietary information.
3. Participate in the referral process between and among WorkABLE partners in order to maximize the use of the Work Keys system in our region.
4. Make our Work Keys resources available to other partners on an arranged basis within the limits of our Mission in order to assist in meeting workforce development needs.
5. Conform to the Operating Guidelines for WorkABLE as defined by ACT inc.

The Work Keys Alliance of Business and Education, WorkABLE, agrees to provide the following services to its partners:

1. Schedule and conduct meetings of the Executive Committee and the Partnership Board as dictated by the organization's in order to provide a forum for information exchange for Work Keys.
2. Encourage the development and functioning of sub committees in the areas of profiling, assessment, curriculum and instruction, marketing and reporting/research.
3. Facilitate the referral process between and among the partners including users and providers of Work Keys services.
4. Seek opportunities for workforce development initiatives using Work Keys.
5. Facilitate the exchange of information about Work Keys among the partners including research findings and exemplary projects.
6. Distribute Work Keys assessment materials and make profiling and scoring services available in the region.
7. Serve as the Work Keys Service Center in our region and provide the linkage between WorkABLE and ACT Inc.

(Partner Signature and Date)

(WorkABLE Signature and Date)



WorkABLE

MISSION

St. Louis

*The mission of
WorkABLE St. Louis
is to utilize ACT's
Work Keys system to
strengthen economic and
workforce development
in the St. Louis
Metropolitan Area,
in cooperation with
existing workforce
development partners.*

WORK KEYS
ALLIANCE
OF
BUSINESS
LABOR
EDUCATION



WORK KEYS SYSTEM

Critical Skills

ACT has identified eight key foundational workplace skills that are crucial to effective performance in most jobs. Additional skill scales will be developed as needed. The following critical skills form the basis of the Work Keys system:

- Reading for Information
- Applied Mathematics
- Listening
- Writing
- Teamwork
- Applied Technology
- Locating Information
- Observation

WorkABLE St. Louis Services

Job Profiling

Identifies skills and skill levels required for specific jobs or occupations.

Skills Assessment

Determines current skills of students and workers.

Instructional Support

Helps educators and trainers assist learners.

Reporting

Provides relevant information useful in career planning, training program evaluation, resumes, and as part of employee selection.

APPLICATION OF WORK KEYS

Business and Labor can:

- profile skill requirements for specific jobs or occupations
- evaluate job or apprentice applicant skills
- evaluate the skills of current employees
- determine skill needs of the employee and organization
- provide focused education and training needed to meet both individual and organizational goals
- aid communication among employers, labor, educators and trainers

Students and Job Seekers can:

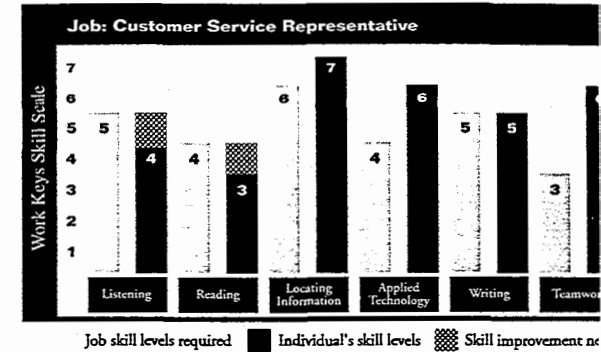
- document foundational workplace skills
- provide employers with evidence of skills attained
- identify needs for personal education and training
- link education and training with employment
- document skill development over time
- identify jobs for which current preparation is sufficient
- explore appropriate career paths
- target training to needed skills

Educators and Trainers can:

- accurately target instructional programs
- develop and revise curricula to meet needs of business, labor and education
- support and guide individual career development
- serve as a professional resource for business and labor communities
- reduce remedial education burden for employers and apprenticeship programs
- document instructional program effectiveness

WORK KEYS IN ACTION

Here's an example of the Work Keys system in action, using a customer service representative job in a technology products company. The chart below shows how the Work Keys skill scale can be used to compare an employee's skills to the skills required for the customer service representative job.



Job Profiling

A job profile of the customer service representative job was done to determine the skills and skill levels required. Of the eight critical skills, six were identified as related to the job: Listening, Reading, Locating Information, Applied Technology, Writing and Teamwork.

Skills Assessment

An employee's skills were assessed using the Work Keys skills assessment. In two of the six necessary job skills—Listening and Reading—the employee's skills fell below those required for the job.

Instructional Support

Appropriate training could then be provided by educators and trainers to improve the employee's skill levels in Listening and Reading.

The Work Keys system provides a much-needed common language that is equally meaningful to those in the classroom and in the workplace.

IMPACT

Since being developed by ACT in the late 1980s, Work Keys can be found throughout the U.S. in:

- workplaces
- employment and job training organizations
- apprenticeship programs
- high schools
- colleges
- other sites

The Work Keys system is improving the skills of the current workforce and preparing today's students for tomorrow's employment opportunities.

The Work Keys system is making its mark.

OVERVIEW

WorkABLE St. Louis is the regional Work Keys™ Alliance of Business, Labor and Education, a partnership utilizing ACT's national Work Keys system to profile, assess and teach critical workplace skills.

The St. Louis Regional Commerce & Growth Association (RCGA); the St. Louis Labor Council, AFL-CIO; and University Outreach and Extension (of University of Missouri/Lincoln University) were the founding partners of *WorkABLE St. Louis*.

Currently more than 30 organizations in the 12-county bi-state area participate in the partnership from these sectors: adult education, business, community-based organizations, community colleges, government, job training agencies, labor, and secondary education.

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<http://www.act.org>

Participating organizations do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability or status as a Vietnam-era veteran in employment or programs.



WorkABLE St. Louis
WORK KEYS ALLIANCE OF BUSINESS • LABOR • EDUCATION