

O*NET and Workforce Development Assessing Opportunities

O*NET Panel
National Academies of Science
March 26, 2009



Job and Family
Services

Workforce Development Objectives

Four primary tasks

- Ø Guidance and policy for economic development, education and workforce development partnership at a regional level (often by targeted industries or cluster analysis)
- Ø Skill transferability – adult job placement and rapid response
- Ø Skill gap analysis and training options – rapid response
- Ø Special Selections – high-skill/high-demand, STEM, career clusters, emerging, “green,” etc.

Primary O*NET Descriptors Used

- Ø Skills
- Ø Generalized Work Activities or Tools & Technology – more job-specific skill proxies
- Ø Related Occupations
- Ø Title descriptions and related titles
- Ø Ability and Interest Profilers
- Ø Creative and varied

Direct or Modified Application

Ø Two issues:

Ø Database downloads vs. direct links

Ø probably more direct links but desire for building state capacity

Ø O*NET select groupings vs. custom groupings

Ø Tend to customize or tap other definitions (Detailed Work Activities, High-Skill/High-Demand, STEM, Career Clusters, Educational Descriptors, etc.)

Recognition and Endorsement

- Ø Widely used.
- Ø Recognition of the need for a relational database of occupational descriptors as a key foundation to workforce development efforts.
- Ø A framework to link and integrate data for a complete occupational picture (employment, wages, industries, employment projections, educational training, etc.)

Opportunities

- Ø Operational and Institutional Clarity
 - Ø Too many products and purposes all under one brand – it is at once everything and nothing to users.
 - Ø Separation of the Collection and Database Function
 - Ø A representative advisory committee.
 - Ø The process of input and response could become more formalized and apparent.
 - Ø Such a body could guide input and communicate decisions in respect to O*NET enhancements.
 - Ø This approach provides O*NET developers a single objective and allows them to focus on what they do best.

Opportunities Continued

- Ø Application development as a separate function
 - Ø Train and push capacity to apply the O*NET database at state and regional levels.
 - Ø ETA delivery structure already in place – needs to be fully implemented and engaged.
 - Ø Ready connection to other data that need to be linked and integrated with O*NET for a full occupational picture.
 - Ø Closer to customers and more readily attuned to applied uses for job seekers.
 - Ø Incorporating features of the O*NET database within the Workforce Information Database as a developmental platform.
 - Ø Consider interstate teams to address capacity for application development across the states.

Opportunities Continued

- Ø Crosswalks - external
 - Ø O*NET has little value in workforce development unless it is connected with other information.
 - Ø Maintain a core connectivity and summary capabilities across NAICS, SOC, CIP and O*NET
 - Ø O*NET, the SOC system and the CIP are encouraged to move in a coordinated fashion.
 - Ø A formal effort to coordinate on definitions or classification schema.
 - Ø Educational taxonomies vary too widely.
 - Ø Need for skill-based assessments - Skills-Based Projections

Opportunities Continued

Ø Crosswalks – internal

- Ø the descriptor definitions and the scoring rubrics need to be more explicitly spelled-out to improve measurement reliability.
- Ø Issue guidelines for deciding which occupation-descriptor links are sufficiently prominent for skills accounting.
- Ø Central to workforce development's objectives - skill transferability & skill gap analysis

Opportunities Continued

- Ø Systemic strain
 - Ø Skills as **occupational** vs. **job** specific
 - Ø **Central** vs. **local** delivery of O*NET

Opportunities Continued

Ø Job Specific and Central Delivery

- Ø Since Generalized Work Activities are the most closely related to job-specific tasks, a *work activities assessment tool* (similar to the Ability Profiler) might be developed as a measure of skill transferability.
- Ø Similarly, the revival of something akin to the O*NET beta version of *Match Occupations*, with numerical “fit” level ratings, would aid in skill gap analysis.

Opportunities Continued

- Ø Occupational and Local Delivery
 - Ø A national system cannot succeed in creating a skill classification that universally captures all the unique needs of a region or industry groupings.
 - Ø The interactions in preparing such detailed skill analysis or detailed work activities is the very vehicle for uniting business, education, economic and workforce development in full partnership at the regional level.
 - Ø Rather than sending customers to an outside tool with different design and navigation, the information would more likely be used in a constructive and successful manner if it were incorporated into tools and products states readily market and use.
 - Ø Incorporation of features of the O*NET database within the Workforce Information Database might be a logical platform.

Questions? – More Opportunities?

- Keith Ewald
- 614-466-9820
- Keith.ewald@jfs.ohio.gov