



# QED Prototype Report

*Teen Workers: Identifying Skills*

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## *Purpose*

The goal of our product is to provide job hunt and acquisition skills to high school students through a series of instructional computer-based modules. Utilizing computers, internet access, video, audio and interactive animations, each module will provide learners with the practice and knowledge necessary to launch an effective job hunt, create the documents needed to get a job and provide resources for extending their learning beyond the instructional lessons.

## *Instructional Objectives for Design Concept*

Main Lesson Objective: Using a job ad, student will be able to identify the hard and soft skills needed by an employer and develop a list of skills that the “video” student possesses which meet the employer needs.

Supporting Objectives: (1) Learner will be able to sort a series of skills into the appropriate categories of hard and soft skills. (2) Learner will be able to distinguish between interview questions which address hard skill, soft skills or both when given a list of sample questions. (3) Learner will develop three to five skills/traits statements possessed by a “video student” and categorized them as hard or soft which relate to a job ad.

## *Brief Description of Design Concept*

The goal of this module on identifying skills and developing skill statements is to provide students with a framework for identifying hard and soft skills and how their skills will address the needs of the employer. Due the far transfer nature of this goal and the extreme variability of the student background and needs it is not reasonable to develop a strictly procedural method of instruction. Instead this instructional module focuses on providing conceptual skill building combining a variety of practice lessons with immediate feedback, interactive case studies, and access to an online forum to extend the learning beyond the initial lessons.

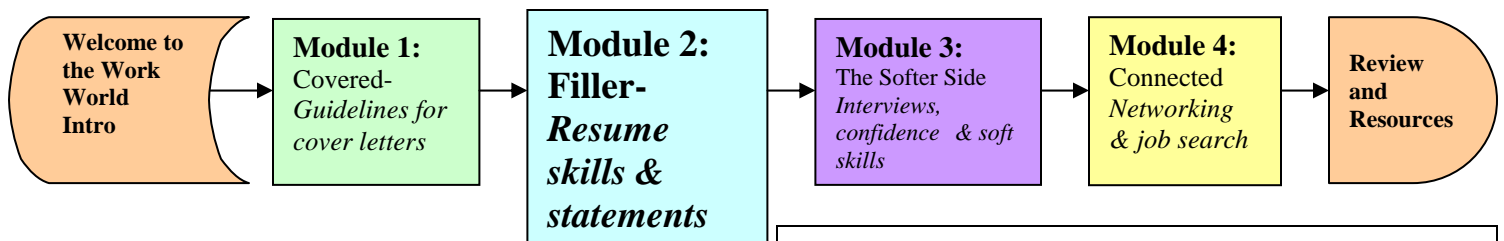


Figure 1

Overall design concept sequence with Module 2 serving as the focus of this prototype.

## Formative Evaluation Questions

Of the seven major formative evaluation questions outlined in the design concept I have chosen to focus on the following three questions for this prototype testing:

1. Are the examples and practice age appropriate?
2. How motivating or engaging is the lesson and activities?
3. Is it easy to recognize how these activities fit into the larger goal?

## How You Built the Prototype

Using a slide show and action buttons created using PowerPoint, the prototype included elements from multiple software applications. The following applications were used to develop elements for the prototype:

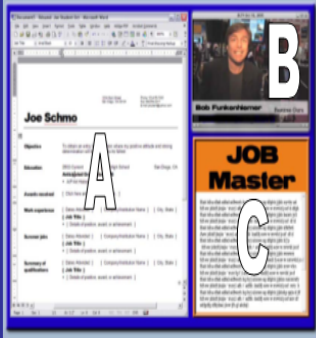
- Photoshop (Screen shot development and interface design)
- Flash (to save animations as animated gifs)
- Microsoft Word (Screen Shots of sample resume)
- Macromedia DreamWeaver(Form interface)

**Using the following ad, select from the list skills you believe the employer is looking for. For each skill, indicate whether it is a soft skill, hard skill or both.**

**Receptionist to \$29k+**  
 Company: ABC Corp. Location: 92108  
 Salary/Wage: 12.00 - 14.00 Full Time, Employee Job

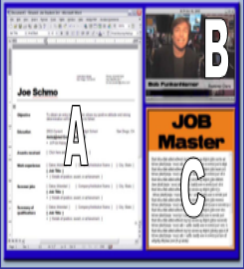
**Job Description:**  
 Stable and prestigious company has a growth position for a Receptionist to answer multiple phone lines, greeting vendors and customers, and keeping the flow of office traffic moving. This organization offers a great work environment for the right individual who is detail oriented, pleasant, and dependable. Exceptional career path and compensation.

**Job Experience:**  
 Customer Service, General Office, Microsoft Excel, MS Excel, MS Word, Multi-Line Phone, Bilingual Spanish a plus



**This information would appear in section A**

Using the form below, click on the appropriate button for each skill. Each click will take you to another slide with the correct answer.



SKILL	Hard	Soft	Both	Not Listed
Microsoft Excel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dependable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Microsoft Access	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Professionally Dressed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Figure 2

This slide shows the sample interface with the job ad activity.

Figure 3

This slide contains a sample form with action buttons linking to additional slides with feedback.

### *Time and costs for prototype development:*

Several hours were spent developing the action button sequence for the slide show in order to closely model the end product. Since the time and cost involved in producing video content is high, I choose to use a non linear sequence of slides by using action buttons to mimic the interactive nature of the envisioned final application. To duplicate the effect of video, a series of animated gifs instead combined with a written script was used.

### *Methods Used to Test the Prototype*

Using a PowerPoint mockup of the 15 minute segment of the module, the prototype focused on having students identify the skills employers need and how students can identify tangible examples of the skills they possess. The lesson started with having them look at a job ad and identify what skills they thought the employer was looking for. The second part introduced the students to the differences between hard vs. soft skills. They were prompted to sort the skills they had identified from the ad into these two categories. After providing feedback (and praise), they watched an animated image which represented an average student who wanted to apply for the job. Using an onscreen form, the testers “asked” interview-like questions to the video student about their work related experience (What clubs have you been in? What computer experience have you had? Have you ever had to resolve conflict? etc.) Using a written script in place of actual audio the testers then had to write three to five sentences describing the skills or characteristics that the video student possessed.

Each tester participated at different times in front of a computer. As they progressed through the slides, I took notes on their reactions, difficulties and verbal comments. After the testers completed the lesson I asked them about their thoughts and recommendations.

### *First Test: Observations/Findings*

There were three users who participated in the first test; two girls aged 16 and 17 and one male, age 17. Two of the three initial testers had never had a job while one had worked two different jobs. For the introduction I verbally explained how the purpose of the lesson and how it fit into the larger scope of the seven hour lessons. Through the individual tests each user appeared engaged and eager to see more. Two of the testers said they had to read too much but thought video or audio explanations would make the instructions more interesting. Despite my seemingly careful preparation, several of the action buttons in the slides did not link properly to the correct answers which lead to user confusion. The male student joked a bit about the “lack of stability” in the application. During the post interview one tester expressed confusion about how the identification of soft and hard skills related to the job hunt and interview.

## *Modifications to the prototype based on the first test*

After prototyping with three users, I made the following changes:

- Added several explanatory slides at the beginning to further explain how this module fit into the larger picture of the job hunt
- Fixed the three action buttons that did not link to the proper response pages.
- Corrected several typos that found as I watched the testers work through the prototype.

## *Recommended modifications of the design concept based on the first and second tests.*

Two more users tested the prototype (two sixteen year old males). The resulting comments and post interviews indicate the need to modify the design in the following ways:

- Include more choices in job advertisements (Allow for more options for students to choose from)
- Emphasize transferability of skills beyond resume and more make more direct connections to an interview.

## *Lessons Learned*

With lack of confidence being a major concern I wanted to have them start simple, have some success and then move them into deeper and more nebulous work. Almost every student tested received an 80% or higher on the identification of hard vs. soft skills. The testers were able to follow the instructions and navigation with little problem and found the lessons to be engaging. None of the testers expressed concern over the age appropriateness of the examples or the material.

While the testers liked the variety of examples, video and general content I found that several of them asked for less focus on skills for a resume and more on how to communicate their skills for an interview. After talking with the testers further I found that many felt the entry level jobs they would get do not require a resume. Although I felt the process of developing written skill statements for a resume is basically the same as preparing to orally communicate these skills this link was not apparent in the prototype. For future prototype testing, this assumed connection must be made more apparent.