



SkillsUSA Louisiana Championships

The Purpose

The SkillsUSA Louisiana Championships is competition for Career, technical and health occupations education students designed to demonstrate the skills and abilities needed for employment. The skills and abilities tested in competition are determined by experts employed in the field. They choose skills-based on employer's expectations of the skills a student graduating from a career and technical education program should possess. These experts determine the format of the competition, the skills to be demonstrated, and the standards by which they are judged.

Local advisors are often reluctant to involve their students in a competitive situation with students from other programs; they feel it is their job to instruct, not compete. Yet, competition is part of our society. When students apply for jobs in industry, they are in competition and will be for the rest of their lives--in competition for jobs, advancement, recognition.

Recognition is important to all of us and the same kind of recognition should be given for excellence in the career and technical areas as is given those who excel in sports, music, or academic areas. One of the major philosophies behind SkillsUSA competitive activities is that individual students deserve recognition for demonstrating a high degree of competence in a particular area. Why shouldn't we recognize the "merit scholars" of career, technical and health occupations educational and restore pride of craftsmanship and dignity of work in our society through recognition programs?

Skills demonstrated in a competitive situation must be drawn from an analysis of skills needed to be successfully employed in the particular trade and skills taught in the industrial education programs. The idea of having students submit projects has been rejected because of the lack of assurances that a project would really represent a student's employment skills. Contest, as they are conducted, are structured in such a way as to prohibit the instructor from teaching for contests--in other words, teaching only with competition in mind.

Skilled trade contests must be the result of a quality instructional program and skills should be demonstrated on equipment comparable to that used in industry. This, of course, has implications for schools that are poorly equipped. Still, nothing is to be gained by "watering down" the state contests to the lowest standards of the various training programs. In fact, support for updating equipment may well be generated within local schools by demonstrating that students are not being given a chance to develop skills comparable to those of other students.

SkillsUSA Louisiana Championships contests are divided into the categories of Leadership Events, and Skill Development. All of these categories are important to a student's complete development within Louisiana Career and Technical Education Programs.