



For Students and Parents

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Milwaukee's Youth Development and Employment Initiative

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Social skills more important than test scores

What's a better predictor of a high-school student's future earnings: Social skills or test scores?

A recent research study has found that, "Ten years after graduation, high-school students who had been rated as conscientious and cooperative by their teachers were earning more than classmates who had similar test scores but fewer social skills."

According to Christy Lieras, assistant professor of human and community development at the University of Illinois, good schools, "socialize students and provide the kinds of learning opportunities that help them to become good citizens and to be successful in the labor market."

Survey responses from employers stress the need for workers who can get along well with each other and get along well with the public.

The study analyzed data from a diverse group of 11,000 tenth graders for 10 years. The study tracked standard achievement-test scores, as well as teacher appraisals of the students' work habits, ability to relate well to peers, and participation in extracurricular activities.

Lieras found that social skills such as conscientiousness, cooperativeness, and motivation were as important as test scores for success in the workplace. Participation in sports and school organizations also had strong effects on a student's future educational and occupational success.

Lieras concluded that, "the most successful students are those who have not only high achievement test scores but also the kinds of social skills and behaviors that are highly rewarded by employers in the workplace."

This article is an excerpt from "[10 Years On, High-school Social Skills Predict Better Earnings Than Test Scores](#)" *ScienceDaily*, 16 October 2008, www.sciencedaily.com.

2008 Earn & Learn video premieres

A new video chronicling the successes of the 2008 Earn & Learn program has been produced and is available to view on a computer near you. The seven-minute video features Mayor Tom Barrett, Jack Fallucca, CEO of Palermo's Pizza, and some of the 1,500 students who participated this summer. Mayor Barrett and Jack Fallucca discuss why private sector business involvement is so important to build a bright future for our city. Youth workers and their supervisors describe the skills and lessons learned through Earn & Learn. Watch and see how you can become a part of this exciting partnership to prepare tomorrow's workforce. Just visit <http://www.mkedcd.org/EarnLearn/background.html>, and don't forget the popcorn!