In recent years, the academic world has been reviewing training programs to be responsive to the increasing demands of a changing workforce. The difficulty comes in finding information to identify the demand for certain training programs. In the past, educators took a very academic view and provided training programs with a series of diverse core classes and additional specialized classes based on student interest. Education programs which could enroll and graduate lots of students were seen as successful, regardless of employment opportunities.

Today with the increase in training costs, students want to be assured of higher wages and favorable long-term employment opportunities for their educational investments. In addition, successful training programs are ones that provide relevant training opportunities for specific industry needs. Employers now prefer to hire graduates that have the specific skills they need rather than individuals with broad backgrounds that they have to spend time and money on for additional training. Occupational demand and training program completers are two statistics that can assist in evaluating specific training program. There are several websites with easy to access to data sets that can assist in identifying if training programs are turning out too many students for the actual employment needs or the other situation where training programs are struggling to meet employment demands.

The first to highlight is from The National Occupational Supply Demand Consortium at http://www.occsupplydemand.org/. This site is excellent for educators, as they can find supply and demand information by Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) codes and titles which many are familiar with. Other options on this site for locating supply and demand statistics include Units of Analysis, Occupations, and Career Clusters. Once an individual has drilled down to a specific occupation, it’s easy to toggle from the supply highlighting number of schools, programs, and graduates for this occupation to the demand statistics showing job growth, wage trends, and industry employment. This site has New Mexico-specific information; however, it has not yet been updated to the 2008-2018 projections series and is still showing the 2006-2016 projections series.

The second website to highlight is LASER (Labor Analysis, Statistics & Economic Research) laser.state.nm.us. While this site doesn’t have the easy toggle from supply and demand, it does contain all the same information on the occupation profile (see Workforce Information Tip). The Occupational Profile Summary has the most up-to-date data series for New Mexico as well as regional information where available by County, Metropolitan Statistical Area and Workforce Investment Region.

Finally, here is a quick examination on how to evaluate these statistics if you have not worked with them. Compare Training Program Completers with Projected Annual Openings as well as Annual Average Percent Change employment to determine if programs are outpacing job growth or not meeting job demands. Three examples: