

Dilemmas in Youth Employment Programming: Findings from the Youth Research and Technical Assistance Project

Volume II



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P/PV oversaw the production of the 10 papers in the series and had responsibility for developing paper topics, assigning and reviewing papers and preparing the final publication versions for the Department. The project was managed by Thomas J. Smith and Michelle Alberti Gambone of P/PV, who worked closely with Susan P. Curnan (principal investigator for the overall contract) and Alan Melchior, both of Brandeis University, throughout the project.

Each volume contains five issue papers. The full table of contents for the series, the introduction to the series and the bibliography are contained in both volumes.

Contractors conducting research and evaluation projects under federal sponsorship are encouraged to express their own judgment freely. Therefore, this report does not necessarily represent the official opinion or policy of the Department of Labor.

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INTRODUCTION

Since the 1960s, the U.S. Department of Labor has underwritten a variety of programs and strategies designed to help youth make firm connections with the labor market. These programs have been enacted under a succession of policy mandates, administrative structures, funding levels and political philosophies. Thus, their focus, scope and results have shifted, often dramatically, over the years.

In the sixties, the programs were, in many ways, experiments; their impetus ranged from labor market concerns to interest in poverty reduction. In the mid-seventies, widespread youth unemployment emerged as a full-fledged policy issue, and major resources were expended through the Youth Employment and Demonstration Projects Act (YEDPA) to explore systematically the potential of federal/local programming to combat youth employment problems.

In the late eighties and early nineties, the focus shifted to issues of international competitiveness and the capacity of the nation to produce new workers capable of meeting the challenges of the workplace.

Attempts to develop useful knowledge about how well youth employment programming has succeeded reflect the relative newness of the field and the varied environments in which such programming has grown up. Although the field has benefitted from research efforts of varying intensity and quality, the base of knowledge on which policy, legislative and program decisions are built remains incomplete, and is often not well known among decision-makers and practitioners.

The nineties will see continued and, indeed, heightened interest in finding effective ways to connect youth to the labor market--particularly the economically disadvantaged youth who are the major target of federally funded employment training efforts. Thus, it is essential to take stock of what we know, to view our current knowledge clearly and realistically, and to use it to forge better policies for the future.

This was the aim of the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration when it undertook a project to conduct a broad review of what is known in the field, and contracted with Brandeis University's Center for Human Resources and Public/Private Ventures (P/PV) to design and carry out the work. Within this joint contract, P/PV assumed responsibility for organizing and overseeing the production of this review.

The Department sought not only an exploration of studies and evaluations related to youth training and employment programs, but a broader synthesis of evidence, findings and research from related fields and disciplines, including sociology, education and

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psychology, as well as from the numerous reports and studies that have been commissioned by foundations and interest groups in the field. This wider examination was to identify research and evidence in other disciplines that would enrich the youth employment training findings and help us interpret them more fully and realistically; and to produce ideas and guidance for both future research and future programming.

A secondary aim of the review was to identify findings of interest not just to policy and research analysts but to practitioners as well. Wherever possible, the work was to crystallize recommendations, based on research findings, that practitioners might adopt in their day-to-day design and management decisions. This latter aim was somewhat more difficult to attain than the first. Due to limitations in information on specific program practices, the review tended to focus more on theory and policy than on practice, though a number of papers recommend specific improvements or modifications in programming.

Finally, the Department wanted the review to identify areas where future research should concentrate. One product of the review was a multiyear research strategy paper, prepared for the Department's use, identifying major policy areas that might be the focus of research efforts in future years.

The Department gave P/PV latitude in how the review was to be carried out, within agreed-upon parameters. The work was cast in a manner that would produce pragmatic findings relevant to program planning and policy considerations. Thus, the history and the major legislative and programmatic structures of employment training programs in the United States were a starting point and focus for the review.

To carry out the retrospective research review effectively, it was necessary to be selective. "Youth" is a complex subject, one that is treated extensively (and not always with complete agreement) in a number of different disciplines. With limited time and resources, it was impossible to be exhaustive. Rather, the aim was to frame the most critical questions in a manner that would permit them to be addressed thoroughly, and to summarize the major findings in a pragmatic fashion that would produce insights and directions that could be used in a "live" policy and programming context.

An Advisory Group, composed of both research experts and practitioners in the youth employment field, aided the project and was periodically consulted about the research agenda and the actual work of the project.

The organizing framework for the research and the products to be delivered rested on three broad questions:

- What programs, services and techniques best prepare youth for jobs and careers?
- What strategies of governance and management offer greatest opportunity for effective delivery of these services?
- What factors regarding youth, their environment and the labor market must be addressed in providing these services?

RESEARCH PAPERS

Under each of these broad questions, the key issues were identified. The issues in turn generated additional questions of concern to both research and practice in youth employment and training. Most of the issues and questions were organized to form the basis for ten research syntheses, which are presented in these two volumes. The following topics were selected:

Programs, Services and Techniques

1. Effectiveness of youth employment training strategies
2. Supportive services in youth employment programs
3. Program length and sequence
4. Educational skills
5. The school-to-work transition

Governance and Management

6. Program coordination and collaboration
7. Performance measures and standards
8. National laws and local programs

Youth, Their Environment and the Labor Market

9. Youth in the nineties
10. Youth and the labor market

As part of the process leading to the development of the individual papers, P/PV worked with Brandeis University in defining their broad parameters. Experts in the relevant fields were identified, consulted and hired as needed for specific papers. Early attention

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to the organization of individual papers by the contract staff minimized overlap (a critical consideration, for the topics tend to be fairly closely related),¹ and provided individual authors with a well-defined area to study and analyze. Such an approach also permitted authors flexibility in interpreting and presenting conclusions.

Each paper was prepared using the same guidelines, which called for the issue to be identified and elaborated on, then analyzed; evidence and research from allied fields to be incorporated; and conclusions and recommendations to be presented. The papers largely adhere to this design. There are exceptions--reflecting the complexity of the subject and the variety of authorship--which make summarization of the major findings difficult, especially where the papers' findings and conclusions reflect multiple perspectives and varying emphases. The diversity of ideas in the papers highlights the complex nature of youth employment and the scarcity of easy, unambiguous answers to basic problems.

It should then come as no surprise that the review uncovered no "magic bullets"--no unequivocal guideposts to following "these" rather than "those" strategies. But the ten papers together reflect one theme: we have much yet to learn about the task of building a resilient and effective youth employment system in the United States.

MAJOR FINDINGS

Most of the papers contain summary sections that draw together their major findings. These sections should be reviewed to gain a full understanding of the scope of the findings and recommendations made by the authors. This introduction is intended only to present several key findings echoed in many of the papers, in order to give readers a sense of the cross-cutting themes affecting youth research.

1. The Current State of Knowledge. The point most consistently raised in the papers concerns the limitations of our current knowledge. Eight of the ten papers report a scarcity of data and reliable research on which to base firm conclusions about the best directions for future policy and programming.

Smith and Gambone, and Nightingale, Cohen and Holcomb are perhaps the most sobering in this regard. They review the specifics of programs for youth and the evidence regarding their effectiveness. They conclude that evidence is sparse, generally focused on short-term effects and sometimes inconsistent. Even reliable descriptive

¹ The intention was to minimize redundancy in the major areas of research. There is, however, overlap in certain areas--such as the history of employment training, the multiple problems of at-risk youth, etc.--that form the critical context in which the issues are considered.

information about participants and actual program services is often missing. Similar conclusions are echoed in most of the other papers.

In part, the limitations in knowledge stem from limitations inherent in evaluation methodology. Net impact evaluation is expensive and deals with relatively few issues in depth; thus, comparatively few programs benefit from the results. But several papers also note that research and data on disadvantaged youth populations (especially ages 14 to 21) are also scarce. Existing research on topics of concern to this project (e.g., education and adolescent psychology) is often limited to populations that are primarily middle-class and white, and thus provides little solid evidence or guidance in thinking about the economically disadvantaged and often minority youth who receive federally sponsored services.

2. Program Effectiveness. The existing research on the training strategies, program structures and supportive services tried in the past leads to sobering conclusions. Smith and Gambone, in their review of employment training programs, conclude that "excluding findings from the Job Corps, there is no evidence that any of the programs [evaluated in the 1980s had] more than a modest and short-term effect" on young participants. These findings are amplified in Higgins, who reviews a variety of well-researched programs and concludes that different program structures have comparatively little effect on youth's length of stay in programs, or on the impacts programs produce.

3. Reasons for Limited Program Effectiveness. The most commonly cited reasons for the limited results, a number of papers argue, are the serious problems of the youth who come to them. Lerman provides a detailed portrait of at-risk youth in the nineties (as do Holzer, Nightingale, et al., and Smith and Gambone), and he places special emphasis on youth with multiple problems.

These authors conclude that the intersecting problems of poverty, inadequate housing, dysfunctional families and poor education have powerfully negative effects on youngsters drawn to employment training programs, effects the programs often cannot overcome or simply do not seek to address. Limitations in our knowledge about which programs work, and for whom, make it difficult to determine how programs might better respond to multiproblem youth and foster sound development in such participants.

4. Strengthening Program Effectiveness. Many authors argue that multicomponent programs, programs that combine a range of strategies and services, represent the best hope for enhancing the effectiveness of program offerings for youth. Because of the limited information on combining training strategies and support services, the authors are not able to offer firm recommendations about what particular combinations should be tried. However, Nightingale, et al., argue for both wider inclusion and careful testing of

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"supportive" services in the employment training regimen. The papers by de Lone, by Johnson and Gambone, and by Smith and Gambone explore the issue of multiple-strategy interventions and how they might be tested.

A major obstacle to such approaches has been cost. Thus, one approach to enriched services may be through coordination of service agencies--particularly, closer linkages with programs sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. Bailis reviews the historical difficulties government agencies have had in finding common ground on which to collaborate. He recognizes a critical need for interagency coordination but also notes that, beyond common assumptions, there is little evidence to support conclusions about whether or not such coordination produces tangible benefits.

Finally, the potential of performance incentives for boosting performance (discussed in Melchior), as well as the lessons to be gleaned from closer scrutiny of how other countries approach the youth employment problem (a major theme of Hahn, Ganzglass and Nagle) represent other directions worthy of further pursuit.

5. The Potential of Work Experience. The U.S. approach to employment training has mainly centered on the notion of training--skills training and instruction on how to fill out resumes, seek jobs and behave properly in the workplace. Work experience has a reputation that is at best mixed, and often negative. This clouded reputation has extended to work experience programs for youth.

The evidence from youth employment program evaluations, reported in Smith and Gambone, indeed is generally negative. Yet they, as well as Lerman, summarize social science research from the past decade that paints a far more complex picture and underscores the need to examine the quality, quantity and developmental potential of work experience more carefully.

These authors (joined by de Lone) cite the potential of work experience in the school-to-work transition and in the "apprenticeship" schemes now being discussed as tools for building more capable workers in the future. Together, the papers reflect the controversies that continue to reign in considering the issue; and they reflect, too, a belief that work experience for youth may merit reconsideration in employment training policy in the future.

6. Funding Needs and Availability. Although none of the papers addresses the issue directly, a number touch on the question of whether the limited funding now available for youth employment training efforts is sufficient to meet the needs the papers identify, particularly to undertake the costly, multicomponent programming approaches recommended for youth with multiple needs. No clear evidence is presented; indeed, the issue

is a political as much as a research question, and hence the authors stop short of clear-cut recommendations. Nonetheless, several papers imply that, if more intensive programs and more research to understand them are to be undertaken, the current funding base will have to be expanded.

In short, the papers as a group focus more on needs than solutions, though none shies away from offering recommendations about new directions or initiatives the authors regard as promising and worthwhile. Two broad conclusions arise from reading all the papers together.

The first is that this young field has much yet to learn. Its base of findings is substantial and impressive, in view of the varied political and administrative contexts in which programs have been launched and scrutinized. Yet there remain significant gaps in our capacity to answer the question that has dominated the field since its inception: What works best for whom? Thus far, the available evidence provides only limited encouragement. Few programs seem to have marked and enduring effects. There remain many unanswered questions about how to serve youth effectively.

The second conclusion is that we must continue searching in a variety of different areas. We need to find ways of enriching current employment training efforts with better theory--about how poverty affects young people and how it can be addressed; how programs can shape youth into resilient adults, not just better-trained workers; and how employment training programs can be better integrated into schooling and other services that most authors argue are needed--even if the precise form and nature of those services is not yet understood.

In short, both research and program efforts must be viewed as part of a larger, unfinished agenda to strengthen all youth-serving institutions and to provide them with better tools for enabling youth to grow as individuals, as learners, as workers and as citizens in our society.

The remainder of this introduction presents brief descriptions of each of the papers, which are published in two volumes. The first volume contains the five papers on program services and techniques. The second contains the papers on program governance and management, and youth and the labor market. Both volumes include a bibliography that lists the extensive literature reviewed in the course of this project. Anyone interested in further reading on any of the topics covered here will find this a valuable resource, since it represents the best and most recent work published on many of these issues.

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PAPER SUMMARIES

In Paper No. 1, "Effectiveness of Federally Funded Employment Training Strategies for Youth," Thomas J. Smith and Michelle Alberti Gambone examine the findings from multiple program sources: a comprehensive review conducted by the National Research Council of 28 YEDPA research projects; an analysis by the Urban Institute of the Continuous Longitudinal Manpower Survey; and research on the California Conservation Corps (CCC), JOBSTART and the Summer Training and Education Program (STEP).

They conclude that the knowledge of program effectiveness produced from these research and demonstration projects is of limited value to either the policy or the practice of youth employment training. The findings are often highly qualified, provide evidence of only short-term outcomes and seldom offer insight into program implementation.

The authors suggest that programs providing a combination of employment and training strategies--work experience, on-the-job training, labor market preparation, job placement and occupational training--may be more effective in producing results. Multiple strategies are seen as necessary if programs are to address the multiple problems faced by minority and disadvantaged youth.

Smith and Gambone argue that, due to their adult focus, federally funded employment and training programs have ignored the developmental needs of youth. Evidence from social science research (sociology and psychology) provides support for the authors' argument that impeded cognitive and socioemotional growth results from the psychological and emotional deprivation often associated with negative environmental influences in the family, neighborhood and school.

Smith and Gambone maintain that such negative influences inhibit the ability of minority and disadvantaged youth to derive maximum benefit from employment and training programs. The authors assert, therefore, that to be effective, youth interventions must develop a broader range of services to better address the full range of developmental and social needs of program participants.

The paper makes a strong argument--one that foreshadows the findings and conclusions of several of the papers that follow--concerning the need for long-term research efforts in order to expand current knowledge about the effectiveness of federally funded youth employment training programs. For example, while the number of hours worked has been considered important for program effectiveness, the quality of the work has yet to be entered into the equation. The work experience debate is one area that could benefit from further study.

In Paper No. 2, "Supportive Services for Youth," Demetra Smith Nightingale, Barbara Cohen and Pamela Holcomb provide a useful discussion of the purposes of, need for and possible impact of supportive services on youth in employment and training programs. They review 14 employment and training programs or projects from the Manpower Development and Training Act, the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act and the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). The authors are critical of the paucity of detailed information and evaluation findings necessary to measure the need for, receipt of and potential effectiveness of such services for producing positive program outcomes.

Despite this lack of empirical evidence, however, many employment and training practitioners argue that such services are needed if programs for youth with multiple problems are to be effective. The authors call for further investigation of this critical link. Their analysis supports a movement away from limited supportive services, such as child care and transportation, toward a more comprehensive model that includes postprogram services.

A comprehensive model of supportive services is viewed as a response to the growing awareness that youth entering employment and training programs bring with them multiple problems related to family and neighborhood structure, education and health. Nightingale, et al., echoing Smith and Gambone, provide a good discussion of the multiple problems facing minority and disadvantaged youth and argue that such problems, if not addressed, constitute formidable barriers to positive program outcomes.

Perhaps the most significant contribution of this paper is its comparison of the objective and content of supportive services found in employment and training programs with those in non-employment and training programs, i.e., juvenile justice and delinquency programs, homeless and runaway youth programs and adolescent pregnancy programs. The authors argue that the role of supportive services in employment and training programs has been supplementary; non-employment and training programs are more likely to view supportive services as essential.

Finally, Nightingale, et al., discuss the use of case management, an approach to service delivery widely used in non-employment and training programs dealing with the most disadvantaged or multiple-problem youth. Increasingly viewed by practitioners in allied fields as an effective way of delivering supportive services to this population, this approach--characterized by needs assessment, coordination of services, and monitoring of client progress by a supportive advocate--is proposed as an option to be pursued by youth employment and training programs. The authors also advocate interagency dialogue to address the multiple supportive service needs of disadvantaged youth.

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Paper No. 3, "Structure and Sequence: Motivational Aspects of Programmatic Structure in Employment and Training Interventions for Disadvantaged Youth," by Catherine Higgins, probes the problem of attrition from youth employment and training programs by examining the structural variation of such programs. She surveys the findings from 15 sites in four employment and training demonstrations--Minority Female Single Parent, Supported Work, JOBSTART and STEP--and two independent programs--CCC and the New York City Volunteer Corps--and concludes that there exists no clear successful alternative to the traditional high school model, a didactic training model that has already been rejected by, or proven unsuccessful with, disadvantaged youth.

The solution to the problem of attrition, the author maintains, does not lie in issues of program structure and sequence. Despite diversity, programs have produced a narrow range of outcomes--a six-month average length of stay, a 30 percent attainment rate for participants undergoing GED preparation, and impacts limited to education or training. Practitioners are urged, therefore, to investigate the lessons from academic psychology on achievement motivation.

Higgins' review of recent literature from this field provides important insights into both the maladaptive thinking patterns of low achievers, which often compromise the motivation of such students to address new and challenging tasks, and the strategies that have been used to revise such patterns. By way of example, Higgins analyzes a particular program, the Center for Employment and Training. While success has usually been attributed to the program's practical orientation (i.e., the guarantee of a job motivates a program participant to learn a skill), the author argues that emphasis on the process of mastering a skill may increase participants' belief that their efforts can help them achieve their goals.

The author thus joins with others in this series who argue for broadening the range of professional disciplines involved in program planning. She concludes that knowledge from academic psychology should be considered in the design of second-chance programs for its potential to reduce attrition rates for disadvantaged youth facing multiple problems.

Paper No. 4 seeks answers to two central questions: "Critical Skills for Labor Market Success: What Are They and How Can At-Risk Youth Acquire Them?" While a review of the literature reveals a serious lack of consensus among educators and employers regarding the skills required to enter productive employment (core academic skills and a broader range of competencies, respectively), Amy W. Johnson and Michelle Alberti Gambone echo the findings of Higgins regarding the failure of the traditional approach to educating at-risk youth. Similarly, the authors encourage the employment and training

field to learn from and avoid mistakes made by the traditional school structure--segregation of the lowest achievers, low expectations and inadequate resources, among others.

Instead, comprehensive program models are needed to address the multiple developmental needs of disadvantaged youth. The current school restructuring movement--emphasizing instruction, development, leadership and school ethos--provides a systemwide model that incorporates components rarely addressed by employment and training programs but which have proven effective with at-risk youth.

The authors conclude that policy efforts should be directed toward a preventive rather than a remediation approach, i.e., the focus should be on school retention now, rather than remediation later. They also argue that, when remediation is needed, more effective strategies for providing it should be identified.

In Paper No. 5, "School-to-Work Transition: Failings, Dilemmas and Policy Options," Richard H. de Lone presents a critical, in-depth historical analysis of the past three decades of school-to-work transition as a policy issue. He provides ample evidence of the bias of basic education toward college preparation and the lack of coherent policy and program attention paid to the school-to-work transition system, more accurately dubbed a "non-system" by the author. In addition to more effective basic education, de Lone argues that an effective school-to-work transition system requires transitional assistance, increased employer involvement and an expanded system of post-high school training opportunities for non-college youth.

Opportunities for education beyond high school are essential for young workers, and ways must be found to provide such opportunities. Apprenticeship systems in other industrialized nations are discussed as examples of school-to-work systems that provide non-college-going youth with such opportunities.

The author outlines the three major approaches to improving the school-to-work transition that have characterized the period--reform of basic education, reform of vocational education, and the development of employment and training programs for youth. While questioning the value of research findings associated with the three major approaches that constitute this "non-system," de Lone concludes that lessons to guide program development can be extracted from the maze. For example, multiple-strategy approaches combining work and other activities are again recommended, following a review of the debate over the benefits of work experience. Like others in the series, de Lone calls for further exploration and development of the school-work link.

The author also makes a strong case for effective program implementation, noting that positive effects are found more often among programs characterized by fidelity to

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coherent program models, implemented by strong leadership and with dedicated staff involvement. The current school restructuring movement is again identified as a model based on such concepts. The model is seen as a resource for the school-to-work transition system to tap.

In Paper No. 6, "Coordination, Collaboration and Linkages," Lawrence Neil Bailis reviews the literature on the dynamics and outcomes of coordination. While maintaining that fragmentation and duplication of services are not always equally harmful, the author offers an analytic framework by which to organize what is known about the dynamics and outcomes of the coordination process.

Federal, state and local agencies seeking to coordinate services must gain an understanding of (a) the technical and nontechnical barriers that retard entry into collaborative relations; (b) the strategies employed to overcome these barriers; and (c) the extent to which efforts to promote coordination succeed in changing organizational relationships and lead to improved quality, accessibility and/or cost-effectiveness of services to young people.

Bailis's paper represents a useful resource for agencies seeking to build collaborative programs and research projects. Stressing the importance of context, the author cautions against mandating a given approach. While "top down" mandates have proven useful in creating opportunities for collaboration, they are atypical. Financial incentives are one strategy that has been used successfully to encourage community agencies with turf concerns to work together. Voluntary efforts forged out of self-interest appear to be the best approach.

In Paper No. 7, "Performance Standards and Performance Management," Alan Melchior provides an overview of the history of the JTPA performance standards system. He outlines its key elements and argues that the role of the system has shifted from accountability to performance management, reflecting a change in policy goals that has occurred at the national level.

Melchior reviews the limited research on the current JTPA performance standards system as an accountability tool, addressing issues of the accuracy, validity and impact of the system. He concludes that performance standards have "unintended effects," i.e., that they encourage less-intensive services as well as reduced services to the hard-to-serve population.

The author also discusses the effectiveness of the system as a performance management tool aimed at shaping local behavior. He determines that incentive grants designed to

reward the performance of local service delivery areas (SDAs) are too small and that the sanctions designed to punish SDAs are weak and ineffective.

In addition to a review of the 1988 national evaluation of the performance standards system, the paper provides a brief examination and assessment of recent changes to performance management systems in the business, health care and education fields.

For example, Melchior argues that JTPA could benefit from peer-review organizations (PROs) similar to those mandated by Congress to ensure that publicly funded health care services are medically necessary and meet quality standards. PROs in JTPA could review enrollments to prevent creaming; review placements to ensure provision of appropriate services; and review pre- and posttest data to ensure that competency deficiencies are real and certifications valid.

Similarly, the growing recognition of the importance of accurate data as a basis for effective performance management is a consistent theme across all three allied fields and has resulted in attempts to address data inadequacies. These and other changes are designed to address many of the same concerns raised about JTPA and may suggest ways for correcting flaws in the current JTPA performance standards system.

In Paper No. 8, "The Mission and Structure of National Human Resource Policy for Disadvantaged Youth: A Synthesis with Recommendations," Andrew Hahn, Evelyn Ganzglass and Gloria Nagle present a historical overview of American youth manpower policy. They use a political science framework to elaborate on the way in which choices--choices of scope, distribution, policy instruments, and restraint and innovation--made by national governments affect their youth manpower systems. The authors' intent is to frame the issues for future discussion and to demonstrate the need for additional research in the area of human resource policy for disadvantaged youth.

Hahn, et al., offer insights into the youth manpower systems of other industrial nations and call on the federal government to assume a greater role in system oversight by investigating and implementing innovative strategies--developed both in alternative service delivery fields at home as well as in the employment and training systems of other countries--directed toward capacity-building and system change.

In Paper No. 9, "Youth in the Nineties: Recent Trends and Expected Patterns," Robert I. Lerman examines the social and demographic characteristics of the current youth population and the implications of these characteristics for future employment and training policy. He draws from the literature to describe and explain the concentration of problem behaviors among certain groups. The field of sociology provides Lerman with important insights into the importance of negative influences--family and neighbor-

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hood instability, early parenthood, criminal activity, drug and alcohol abuse, and the absence of role models--on the development of young people.

Like other authors in the series, Lerman examines the mixed evidence regarding the merits of part-time work for in-school youth. His review of the research leads him to conclude that the weight of the evidence points to benefits for in-school youth who work a maximum of 20 hours a week. He advocates, therefore, second-chance programs built on the school-work link but cautions that, in order to be effective, such programs must address the multitude of family and other environmental influences that affect youth at an early age.

In Paper No. 10, Harry J. Holzer examines the changes in supply and demand that have occurred in the labor market over the past two decades and evaluates the effects of these changes on the employment prospects of young people. "Youth and the Labor Market in the Nineties" builds a strong case for the evolution of a serious skill mismatch: high school dropouts and inner-city blacks from low-income neighborhoods lack the necessary skills for today's labor market. Spatial mismatch, discrimination, lack of work experience and networking opportunities, negative family and neighborhood influences, and the availability of alternative income sources, especially crime, are also discussed as forces contributing to the disadvantaged employment status of minority youth.

Reviewing the literature on growing wage inequality among young workers, Holzer presents a number of possible explanations for the sharp deterioration in income and labor force activity for high school dropouts and black youth overall. Contributing factors include demographic changes, which have led to shifts in labor supply; occupational and industrial shifts, which have led to shifts in labor demand; and declining growth in productivity.

Thus, while shifts in the economy are in part responsible for the deterioration of employment opportunities for young black males, Holzer offers support for the position, taken in earlier papers, that expresses concern about deleterious neighborhood and other environmental influences on the motivation of at-risk youth.

Holzer concurs with de Lone, Hahn, et al., and Lerman in criticizing the limited apprenticeship and on-the-job training opportunities available in this country compared with those in other industrial countries. In the absence of such opportunities, the author argues, improving the high school dropout rate must be a priority; a high school diploma may be the only predictor of job performance and trainability available to an employer evaluating job candidates who lack referrals and previous job experience.

COORDINATION, COLLABORATION AND LINKAGES

**Lawrence Neil Bailis
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I. INTRODUCTION: THE SEARCH FOR PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

As one young bureaucrat expressed it, what we need is to make a mesh of things (Appleby, 1949:74).

The youth development program literature is replete with truisms about coordination. We often read that "no single system can meet all of the needs of disadvantaged youth" and "the key to effective programming is drawing upon the strengths of all relevant systems." We instinctively feel that "more coordination is better than less." We read reports telling us that "turf problems and certain federal regulations can hamper coordination" and calling for communitywide coordinating bodies. We are told that "you have to be creative to overcome the problems."

This paper intends to transcend these truisms. It brings together theoretical and practical lessons about factors that promote and retard coordination, benefits that can accrue to properly implemented coordination and linkage mechanisms, and steps that tend to prove effective in building and maintaining coordinated relationships among youth-serving agencies.

In recent years, a number of literature reviews have attempted to pull together coordination lessons from the employment and training literature (e.g., Bailis, 1987, 1989). This paper summarizes the relatively well-known findings and conclusions of this literature, and places this information in a broader context by incorporating theoretical and empirical material from the political science and public administration literature and the results of recent empirical studies of youth development and related social and human service programs.

Lawrence Neil Bailis is a Senior Research Associate at the Center for Human Resources at Brandeis University. This paper is a revision of an earlier version submitted to the Department of Labor in the summer of 1991 and has benefitted from the comments and suggestions provided by the Department's reviewers. Additional comments and suggestions were provided by Lisa LaCava, Terry Grobe and Alan Melchior of the Center for Human Resources at Brandeis University and Michelle Alberti Gambone of Public/Private Ventures. However, responsibility for the contents of this paper remains with the author.

THE SCOPE OF THE PAPER

First, the paper focuses on efforts to promote collaboration among publicly funded programs. Many of the dynamics of public/private partnerships are similar to those addressed in this paper, and the topic is worthy of a separate issue paper in itself.

Further, this paper deals with broad systems issues, in particular, efforts to link employment and training, welfare-employment, education and vocational education programs. While youth programming is the central focus, lessons from related employment and training programs for disadvantaged adults, such as Title II-A participants and homeless people, are also included.

The paper presents an overview of coordination issues arising in the past ten years at the federal, state and local levels, incorporating information from the 1970s and early 1980s only sparingly. Since the paper focuses on broad analyses relevant to youth-serving and related human service programs across the board, it does not generally address specific provisions of federal or state legislation except to provide examples of more general patterns.

YOUTH-SPECIFIC AND GENERIC ISSUES PERTAINING TO COLLABORATION, COORDINATION AND LINKAGES

Many of the issues pertaining to coordination in youth programming are common to programs for any hard-to-place client group. The most important issues include:

- A client population with multiple problems that extend far beyond education and training deficits, and hence beyond the purview of any given education or employment and training agency; and
- A fragmented and categorical social welfare system characterized by "turfism" among programs and agencies with their own goals, focus, accountability systems and sources of funding, all confounding efforts to promote collaboration.

Furthermore, virtually all efforts to promote coordination among youth-serving programs have to deal with special challenges presented by the education system. As noted in a publication of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) Resource Center on Educational Equity (1991:2): "The school [system]'s unparalleled access to youth makes

it an ideal location for providing, or at least coordinating, health and human services."¹ Therefore, wherever appropriate, this paper pays special attention to school-related issues, highlighting, for example, discussions of factors that promote and retard coordination with schools, and models of coordination/collaboration with schools that appear to be showing promise.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The employment and training literature has addressed coordination issues for more than two decades and produced at least three different types of materials:

- Program evaluations and reports on demonstration projects that touch on coordination as one element of their overall thrust,
- Studies that focus on coordination among discrete groups of programs, and
- Reviews of the literature that attempt to pull all relevant studies together.

All three elements were reviewed. However, wherever possible, emphasis has been placed on studies that have become available since the earlier literature reviews were completed, and on studies that deal explicitly with youth programs.

In addition to the employment and training literature, the paper also draws on experience with coordination/collaboration in programs that focus on the needs of low-income children and youth, including in particular welfare and education programs. Finally, the vast academic literature that touches on issues related to interagency coordination and draws from political science, public administration, business administration, economics, sociology and organizational sciences was reviewed quickly. This literature was not addressed in depth unless it yielded specific ideas about approaches that may or may not work and/or avenues for future research and demonstration activity.

ORGANIZATION AND CONTENT OF THE PAPER

Section II of the paper provides a framework for the analysis by reviewing the classic arguments in favor of improved coordination, clarifying what we mean by such terms as coordination and collaboration and how they relate to other goals in the youth develop-

¹ The same publication (1991:1) also points out: "In areas where youth and their families are facing multiple problems that are being addressed in a fragmented fashion, if at all, the school site can provide a sustained contact point for providing or coordinating whatever other health and social services the community has available to assist youth and their families."

ment field, then reviewing the issues associated with defining and measuring coordination. The current state of knowledge about the dynamics and outcomes of coordination is summarized in Section III. Lessons learned about "top down" efforts to promote coordination of youth development programs at lower levels of government and among agencies are presented in Section IV. Finally, Section V recapitulates the major conclusions in the paper and offers recommendations for further research by the Department of Labor and others.

II. FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS: UNDERSTANDING, DEFINING AND MEASURING COORDINATION, COLLABORATION AND LINKAGES

[In the provision of social services, the] extreme and irrational fragmentation of both tasks and clientele means that attempts to coordinate services at the local agency level and make them available to families in some integrated way are so time-consuming, costly, and difficult that they are unlikely to succeed

What is perhaps most striking about programs that work for children and families in the shadows is that all of them find ways to adapt or circumvent traditional professional and bureaucratic limitations when necessary to meet the needs of those they serve (Schorr, 1988:265).

Webster's New World Dictionary defines the word "collaborate" as follows: 1. To work together, especially in some literary, artistic, or scientific undertaking. . . . 2. To cooperate with an enemy invader (Bruner, 1991:6).

It is impossible to analyze empirical data about coordination, collaboration and linkages (terms that are used interchangeably in this paper) or to develop policy-relevant action or research recommendations on this topic without a clear understanding of what the terms mean and how they can be measured. This section first presents a framework for looking at the terms, then lays out a definition based on this framework, and finally reviews the problems faced in measuring coordination and proposes a solution.

THE OLD AND THE NEW CONVENTIONAL WISDOM

Over the years, several generations of conventional wisdom have developed on the topic of coordination. The "old conventional wisdom" stresses coordination as an obvious avenue to program improvement, without paying much attention to the costs of coordination or the extent to which it is likely to result in measurable improvements in program outcomes. The elements of this conventional wisdom are all logical, and all seem plausible. But they do not provide practical insights to those who try to understand why there is not more coordination, and they yield little practical guidance to those who seek to promote it.

On the other hand, in recent years a "new conventional wisdom" has emerged, stating that "coordination is a means and not an end." This also seems unarguable, but the full implications of this statement have rarely been spelled out or understood. This section

of the paper reviews the key elements of both the old and the new conventional wisdom, their relevance to analyses of existing coordination and, in particular, the implications of this point of view for defining coordination in ways that make it a useful tool in efforts to improve youth services.²

Three Decades of Old Conventional Wisdom

Two recent reviews of efforts to link education and human services summarize the fragmentation problem in now familiar ways:

Program definitions, eligibility rules, and financing patterns limit organizational actions and perspectives to a narrow focus. Systems essentially function in isolation from one another, and virtually none see the individual or the family unit as a whole, with all its interrelated problems and strengths (Levy, 1989:1).

Unfortunately, most youth-serving systems already struggling to meet narrow agency mandates seem able to do little more than provide fragmented, poorly coordinated services. Because limited resources often dictate that agencies limit themselves to responding to acute problems (i.e., teen pregnancy, HIV infection, drug abuse), often the only services available are problem-specific as well

Youth with multiple problems typically receive labels--substance abuser, teen parent, dropout--that oversimplify the nature of their troubles. This categorical approach . . . makes it too easy for each agency to relinquish responsibility for the overall well-being of youth and their families (CCSSO, 1991:2).

However, review of the literature makes it clear that criticisms about fragmentation of services in the 1990s are merely echoes of similar complaints over the past few decades. For example, Bendor (1985) cites a study of antipoverty efforts in the mid-1970s that showed that over 40 percent of those receiving aid from an antipoverty program were

² The examples presented in this paper are drawn primarily from the employment and training and related youth development fields. However, authors like Mudd (1984) make it clear that similar patterns exist for all municipal services in America, and Rogers and Whetten (1982) extend the analysis to the rural American context. Moreover, studies of social welfare programs in other national contexts reveal patterns of concern with fragmentation and calls for improved coordination that are indistinguishable from those with which American social policy analysts are familiar.

assisted by at least three programs and nearly 20 percent were helped by at least five programs.

Fragmentation clearly exists. There can be little doubt that clients would, in general, be better served by care-givers who address them as human beings with a variety of strengths and weaknesses rather than addressing one problem at a time. However, those who adopt the old conventional wisdom would argue that once we document fragmentation, no further analysis is needed. Given this situation, broad-based efforts should be undertaken to promote coordination wherever, whenever and however possible.

This kind of thinking appears to have formed the basis of most public policy discussion and most efforts to promote coordination in the youth development, employment and training, and related human service fields for the past few decades. The 1960s witnessed the birth of a large number of separately authorized and separately funded employment and training programs under the Manpower Development and Training Act and the Economic Opportunity Act. As noted in Mirengoff and Rindler (1976), there were numerous efforts to promote coordination of these programs, such as the Cooperative Area Manpower System, but little success except in cities where concentrated employment programs and similar efforts existed.

Those who drafted the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) hoped that the newly created prime sponsors would be able to pull the existing categorical employment and training programs together into integrated service delivery systems. Many of the precursors of current Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) requirements to coordinate with other programs originated under CETA, including local planning councils, state services councils and various state-level set-asides to promote coordination. In addition to these statutory requirements, the Departments of Labor (DOL) and Health, Education and Welfare (HEW), as well as other federal agencies, instituted a range of training and technical assistance efforts that were also designed to promote coordination.

However, progress in promoting this coordination was generally conceded to be limited at best under CETA, and therefore improvement of coordination was one of the major goals of JTPA, whose language has over a dozen references (Trutko, et al., 1990) to coordination requirements, including the creation of State Job Training Coordinating Councils (SJTCCs), which are expected to develop statewide coordination plans and to review local service delivery area (SDA) plans to implement these plans. Lewis, et al., (1987) have listed parallel requirements for coordination in other legislation, most notably the Carl Perkins Vocational Education Act.

Despite these efforts, studies conducted toward the end of the 1980s, such as Bailis (1987) and Levitan and Gallo (1988), report two apparently paradoxical findings: although there are examples of success in every conceivable kind of coordination, the overall record of progress in promoting coordination was dismal in most places for most programs.

As a result of these kinds of assessments, we can still hear the same calls for coordination that were heard more than two decades ago. For example, the JTPA Advisory Committee (1989b:5) reports:

The fragmentation of human resource programs remains one of the major unmet challenges to domestic policy in America. This challenge of coordinating similar, but separately authorized and delivered, social programs has been a perennial problem in public administration. While it is not unique to the United States, the problem is--in large measure--a by-product of our particular political system and approach to public policy development The thrust of the Committee's deliberations and recommendations became the pursuit of a more rational, coherent, and outcome-driven human investment system characterized by coordinated service delivery at the local level.

A similar point of view is expressed in a recent U.S. Conference of Mayors position paper (1991).

This kind of thinking is also reflected in the 1991 version of the proposed amendments to JTPA that were developed by DOL. These amendments call for strengthening coordination between JTPA and other programs through such steps as expanding the SJTCCs into broader human resource investment councils and requiring local SDAs to establish, where feasible, linkages with programs assisted under the Adult Education Act, the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Wagner-Peyser Act, the Family Support Act, the Food Stamp Act, the National Apprenticeship Act, the United States Housing Act and the Head Start Act.

If the logic behind the old conventional wisdom is so obvious, why has the "coordination problem" persisted? Why have continued efforts to legislate coordination and promote it through incentives, training and technical assistance had limited success? The answer appears to be that arguments like "the more coordination the better" lead to a scatter-shot approach that drains limited time and resources from any given initiative.

Advocates of the old conventional wisdom sometimes seem to be arguing that coordination should be seen as a necessary administrative function, much like accounting and management information systems, and therefore "good by definition" even if it is unlikely to produce measurable improvements in outputs. That is not the position taken here.

This paper argues that efforts to promote coordination use up scarce administrative time and other resources that could, at least in theory, be devoted to alternative ways to improve the accessibility, quality, quantity or comprehensiveness of services. It is not obvious that all forms of fragmentation and duplication are equally harmful. If barriers to coordination are overwhelming in some settings, it may not make sense to try to promote coordination with equal vigor everywhere. To put it differently, targeted efforts to promote given kinds of coordination in given kinds of settings are far more likely to be cost-effective than broad-brush, across-the-board strategies that arguments based on logic cannot accomplish. Therefore, despite its longevity, the old conventional wisdom can provide only limited guidance to those who wish to improve service delivery through improvements in coordination.

The New Conventional Wisdom

Over the years, repeated efforts to understand the coordination process have begun to yield new insights into the processes and results of collaboration. In particular, any analysis of lessons learned about coordination of youth development and related human service programs must take place within the context of a statement that is now widely repeated, but whose implications have never been fully explored: "Coordination is a means to an end, and not an end in itself."

It should be recognized that adopting this new conventional wisdom means that both analyses of coordination and steps to promote it need to be undertaken with the following in mind:

- Planning and administrative structures to promote coordination are only meaningful if they can be reasonably expected to bring about changes in the amount and quality (including intensity and relevance) of the services clients get. Therefore, activities designed to promote coordination are unlikely to have their intended effects unless they are well thought out and implemented.
- Efforts to promote coordination should be thought of as only one of several avenues that can be taken to further the overall goals of improving the quality, comprehensiveness and/or cost-effectiveness of services for young people.

- There are no universal panaceas. Efforts to improve coordination among two or more agencies may divert scarce administrative time and resources away from other program improvement endeavors, drive a wedge between these agencies and others in the community, or even succeed but not be followed by tangible improvements in services to clients.
- JTPA and many other human service programs serve fewer than a tenth of the eligible population. Therefore, efforts to promote coordination cannot, in themselves, meet the needs of the majority of young people who are in need of help.

In particular, we must be realistic about what improved coordination can and cannot accomplish in an era of shrinking resources. As noted by Melaville and Blank (1991:11):

Interagency partnerships hold great potential for the large-scale delivery of comprehensive services It is important to remember, however, that the extent of this capacity will depend on the scope of existing funds. Collaboration enables providers to get as much mileage as possible out of available resources, and to improve the quality and range of services. What interagency coordination cannot do is to deliver all of the prevention, treatment, and support services without additional resources.

The most intriguing implication of the new conventional wisdom is that it leads one to question whether all "duplication" is automatically harmful. The literature contains a small but convincing set of arguments that make this point. For example, Grubb, et al., (1989:14) have pointed out that a certain amount of duplication is necessary if true competition is to occur in a marketplace, and that competition is widely thought to promote greater efficiency:

The competitive aspect emerges most clearly in the request for proposal process by which many SDAs allocate their funds, and by which both Perkins funds and JTPA 8-percent funds are allocated in many states. Eligible institutions compete for funds and the "best" projects win Competition requires a certain amount of redundancy among the "producers" . . . [of] employment and training services. In addition, this redundancy fosters variety because the training provided by a community-based organization--a black or Hispanic organization, for example--may be effective for some clients who will not attend a community college or adult school. The fear of duplication ignores the effects of redundancy on both competition and variety, which can make the employment and training system more effective under the right conditions.

This point is made most clearly in a book-length analysis by Bendor (1985). The argument recognizes the multiple goals and objectives that we have for government programs:

Americans do not only want government to be inexpensive. They demand effectiveness as well. Effectiveness implies reliability; it means dependable performance in the face of the inevitable blunders that attend all complex ventures. And as the Iranian expedition [to rescue the American Embassy hostages in 1980] clearly reveals, reliability may entail having more than one thinks necessary. More than one computer in a command and control system. More perhaps than one public agency in a given policy area (1985:2).

Bendor cites three important virtues associated with duplication: it can provide reliability through the availability of backup agencies/programs to fill in when other agencies fail; it can stimulate agencies to become more efficient than they would be if they were monopolies; and it may increase the total amount of public support for programs.

Similarly, Rogers and Whetten (1982:vii) note that some organizational theorists have argued that duplication and competition are more likely than coordination to promote improved service delivery:

Public organizations [sometimes] use the recommendation to increase interorganizational coordination to mask organizational ineffectiveness and administrative ineptitude. Coordination is viewed as a legitimating mechanism used by those involved to divide up the territory and mutually work to prevent the entry of competition, and to dampen costly innovation.

Finally, such authors as Liebert (1976) go even further and argue that formal coordination may serve to reduce pressures for substantive change and improvement in programs.

To reiterate, the new conventional wisdom teaches us that policymakers should not automatically assume that promotion of more coordination should be the highest priority in all instances or that scarce resources should always be invested in difficult efforts to create coordination in those instances where it does not now exist. Instead, informed policymaking and program administration at the federal, state and local levels must directly address the following questions:

- Are efforts to promote coordination the best possible investment of scarce resources (in specific contexts)?

- What kinds of efforts to promote coordination are most likely to bear fruit (in specific circumstances)?

The remainder of this paper discusses these questions.

DEFINING THE TERMS COORDINATION, COLLABORATION AND LINKAGE

The terms coordination, collaboration and linkage are widely used--almost always as positive attributes and goals. However, there is no consensus on what these terms mean. For example, one study involving over 100 hours of discussion with key actors in the states of Alaska, Colorado, Florida, New Hampshire, Ohio, Texas and Washington found no consensus regarding usage of the terms coordination, cooperation and collaboration (Hickey, 1986).

Some research studies and program documents fail to define the terms, presumably because the authors assume that readers will understand what is being referred to. Moreover, no two studies that define coordination seem to use the same definition. In addition, studies often define coordination in excessively theoretical terms that nonacademics may find difficult to relate to, or add subtle distinctions that tend to confuse the average reader. For example, Melaville and Blank (1991) distinguish between cooperation and collaboration. In the former, partners help each other to meet their respective goals without making substantial changes in the basic services they provide or in the rules and regulations that govern their agencies.

While the terms coordination, collaboration and linkage are typically thought of for pairs of agencies or relatively small groupings, an alternative model of "communitywide" coordination is also emerging. The communitywide model calls for designating a "lead agency" that, in turn, is expected to bring together all relevant services within a given jurisdiction. This model can be found in both publicly funded initiatives, such as the New York State Community Services Program aimed at preventing adolescent pregnancy, and such foundation-funded initiatives as The Annie B. Casey Foundation's New Futures Initiative. The San Diego County New Beginnings program offers yet another model of this type of coordination: it created a communitywide partnership involving the city school system, the county departments of social services and health, and a number of other public and private agencies; and it will establish a multiservice center at a public school to serve both students and their families.

While useful for some purposes, distinctions between cooperation and coordination or between interagency coordination and communitywide coordination tend to complicate rather than simplify efforts to get staff in related agencies to work together; therefore, the term coordination is used to refer to both of these approaches in this paper.

Progress in achieving the goals of coordination is possible as long as there is a general idea of what the term means and general agreement that, according to the new conventional wisdom, coordination is a means and not an end in itself.

As a working definition, we offer one found in a paper by Laventhol and Horwath titled "Improving the Success of JTPA Coordination Efforts: An Idea Paper for the Florida Job Training System" (undated:2), with a modification (in parentheses):

Coordination is the means to decrease an organization's unit cost of accomplishing an important service goal (e.g., reaching selected target groups, providing effective services, increasing the range or variety of services to clients, and/or making services accessible and available at minimum burden to clients) through collaboration with other organizations.

This definition makes it clear that steps taken to promote "coordination" should be thought of as ways to achieve better service, equal service for lower costs, improved access to service, or similar benefits. If these results are unlikely, diverting scarce resources to promote coordination is unlikely to be worth the trouble. Adopting this point of view makes it clear that it does not matter what the precise relationships between two agencies are, or whether the goal is promoting coordination between pairs of agencies or communitywide. An effort to promote coordination, collaboration and linkage can be judged successful only if it promotes improvements in the service delivery system.

ISSUES IN MEASURING COORDINATION

During the past few decades, federal, state and local policymakers have enacted multitudinous coordination requirements and have taken countless steps to promote improved services through increased coordination. However, it is impossible for policymakers and researchers to assess the effectiveness of these efforts without viewing them as a two-step process. In order for these efforts to work, two different things have to happen. First, the interventions must be effective in promoting coordination, and, second, the coordination must be effective in improving service delivery.

Thus, we cannot expect to provide useful, systematic, empirically based guidance to policymakers and agency managers without having a clear picture of the effectiveness of the first step, i.e., without having a broadly accepted way to measure the extent to which coordination is or is not present in a given setting at a given time. It is unlikely that there will ever be total consensus on these measures, but this section of the paper attempts to promote the development of such a consensus by drawing on the available literature and practical experience of youth-serving and related human service agencies.

First, it is necessary to clarify a concept's major dimensions. Once this is done, one can come up with ways of assessing the extent to which a dimension is present. Unfortunately, there are dozens of generally recognized dimensions of coordination or types of coordinated activities. In particular, the term coordination is usually used to encompass discrete initiatives, such as collocating education, employment and human services. In the realm of youth services, the school building is a frequently considered site. But the term coordination is also sometimes used to refer to major systemic changes that create "integrated seamless systems" in which agencies are not only colocated, but clients are expected to move from one agency to the next in carefully planned sequences of services without even knowing which agency is providing them. For example, students may not realize that some of the health, social and job-related services provided in their schools are funded and administered by other agencies.

In addition to this, people sometimes consider only formal interagency collaboration that is documented in written agreements, and at other times they point out that the most effective forms of coordination are informal personal relationships among staff of different agencies without any formal agreements. Finally, and perhaps most intriguing, there is the distinction described by Grubb, et al., (1989). They introduced the term "substantial coordination" to refer to "coordination that goes beyond standard requirements to confer and consult among programs, and which instead develops new ways of delivering education and training services that would not exist in the absence of coordination" (1989:4). This is similar to the Melville and Blank (1991) distinction between cooperative and collaborative, with only the latter addressing situations in which there are "fundamental" changes in the way services are designed and delivered.

This very partial listing of dimensions of coordination leads to an important conclusion. Given the variety of dimensions of activity that falls under the rubric of coordination, it is difficult--if not impossible--to develop one or two simple measures of coordination and use them to take stock of the amount of coordination at a single point in time or to chart changes in coordination over time. The approach that makes the most sense is dividing coordination into more cohesive subcategories and finding ways to measure whether or not a specific type of coordination is present in a given setting.

As a first step, it is necessary to distinguish between two broad types of collaborative relationships: planning and service delivery. Many efforts to promote coordination focus on collaborative planning, with a stated or unstated premise that this will, in turn, lead to changes in service delivery that will lead to improved outcomes. However, changes in planning procedures cannot result in improved effectiveness, cost-effectiveness or access without affecting the way that services are delivered. Collaborative planning can only be considered successful (or effective) if it in fact results in changes in the way services are

delivered; and collaborative service delivery can only be considered to be better than disjointed and "fragmented" systems if it results in improved outcomes.

Efforts to measure whether or not collaborative planning is taking place should address such specific interagency activities as periodic meetings of high-level program administrators, appointment of agency leaders to each other's boards, reciprocal review and approval of agency service plans, and institution of common service boundaries. In addition, they need to address creation of new community-level planning bodies, such as the Tulsa Metropolitan Human Services Commission and the Dayton Human Services Partnership (Agranoff, 1991). The New York State GATEWAY initiative illustrates that agencies can move beyond joint or community planning and begin to create shared management tools, such as management information systems that share data and use common forms to promote collaborative planning and oversight of service delivery.

The steps to promote collaborative planning outlined above can lead to achievement of the goals of coordination only if they are followed by changes in the way services are delivered, such as:

- Collocation of offices in the same building in order to ease client burden and promote formal and informal efforts at coordination among staff in different agencies;
- Formal written agreements to refer clients to and from SDAs, thereby increasing the likelihood that clients will receive services from the most appropriate agencies;
- Formal agreements to provide feedback on clients referred to other agencies;
- Formal agreements in which job developers from two agencies agree to contact different employers or specialize in different types of jobs at the same firm in order to reduce the burden on personnel officers in firms that deal with more than one government agency or program;
- Formal agreements to share information about job development and on-the-job training experience that agencies have had with specific firms;
- Reduced duplication of services between an SDA and another agency by eliminating funding for one of the programs and referring clients to the remaining service provider;

- Joint funding of programs by two or more agencies, thereby providing services that would not be possible if the resources of only one agency were available;
- Shared staff;
- Development of case management procedures or provision for case conferences involving providers from different agencies; and
- Contracts or nonfinancial agreements that provide for services for agency clients from other agencies/programs that already provide them.

The Trutko, et al., (1990) study of JTPA coordination notes that collaborative efforts can affect client flow through such vehicles as joint intake and eligibility determination, joint assessment, case management/enhanced referrals, joint delivery of training, and joint job development/placement. Since youth development services typically go beyond the standard menu of employment and training offerings, coordinated service delivery in this area can also include:

- Joint counseling on pregnancy prevention and related health issues, substance abuse, and other adolescent issues;
- Joint recreation and related services;
- Jointly run community service initiatives; and
- Jointly run efforts to provide academic remediation and/or efforts to prevent dropouts or promote returning to school.

This approach implies that the most useful way to measure coordination lies in disaggregating the term into smaller, more cohesive subunits (types of coordination), then measuring whether they are present in given situations. This would enable researchers to collect data on the extent to which types of coordination are present in types of agencies, among different types of programs and so forth.

This method has, in fact, been adopted by many studies in the past (e.g., Brady and Balfe, 1987; Bailis, 1987), but it has several important shortcomings. First of all, many key steps toward coordination have not been operationally defined. It is by no means clear how frequently "periodic meetings" have to occur, what "meaningful input into the plans of another agency" might mean or what constitutes a "meaningful" referral agreement. In addition, policymakers and researchers still need to distinguish between coordination procedures that are "on paper" and those that are affecting clients. In

principle, there would be no difficulty in developing operational definitions of the key terms, but in fact it would be difficult to develop definitions that are more than arbitrary.

Second, disaggregating coordination provides no insights into which of the many subtypes of activities is the most important in terms of promoting desired improvements in program effectiveness, cost-effectiveness and/or access. In order to provide practical guidance to policymakers and administrators, researchers would have to do more than declare that "there are 48 major types of coordination, and during the past year coordination increased on 23 of them, stayed the same on 19 and declined on 6."

SPECIAL ISSUES IN MEASURING COORDINATION IN YOUTH-SERVING PROGRAMS

This discussion is explicitly generic, applying equally well to efforts to measure the amount of coordination among youth-serving and all other programs. However, there are at least two important youth-specific issues that need to be addressed:

- The large size of school systems (relative to that of most human service agencies) makes it necessary to clarify the subunit within the system with which other agencies are coordinating, and in particular to distinguish among efforts that focus on the classroom or the school versus the entire district or community; and
- The number of family-related issues affecting young people often requires an even broader array of agency participants before one can say that the needed levels of coordination have been achieved.

III. THE DYNAMICS AND OUTCOMES OF THE COORDINATION PROCESS AMONG FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES

Q. What problems is collaboration designed to solve?

A. Collaborative strategies may help to (1) provide better assistance to families already receiving services in several systems; (2) keep children from falling through the cracks and ensure that they receive needed services; and (3) reduce environmental risks that affect all children in a given neighborhood or community (Bruner, 1991:6).

It is difficult to get a man to understand something when his salary depends upon his not understanding it (Upton Sinclair, as quoted in Downs and Larkey, 1986:91).

What is known and not known about the dynamics and outcomes of the coordination process suggests that a full understanding of the process would require knowledge of three areas:

- The factors that promote or retard entry into collaborative relationships among human resource development programs ("barriers");
- The ways agencies have tried to overcome these problems ("strategies"); and
- The extent to which efforts to promote coordination have in fact succeeded in changing organizational relationships and eventually improving the quality, quantity, accessibility and/or cost-effectiveness of services for young people (or adults).

The research literature is rich in lists of barriers to coordination among youth development and related programs, and in strategies to overcome them. However, if one's objective is a search for practical guidance rather than knowledge for its own sake, many of the items on the list are of limited use. For example, it is clear from many sources:

- Coordination is more likely to occur when there are active commitments to improved coordination on the part of elected officials, good personal relationships among the key policymakers and managers, and a previous history of collaborative efforts.
- Providing funding for demonstration projects that require coordination tends to promote (what appear to be) coordinated efforts among the grantees.

The literature provides ample support for these unsurprising conclusions and exhortations to act on them. However, it is unclear how a policymaker could use this kind of advice to develop an action program. What, for example, does one do with the knowledge that high-level political support is useful, if no such support is likely to come from the incumbents in elected or appointive office? What advice do we have for an agency head who is trying to figure out how to get his or her elected officials interested in coordination?

Similarly, where can one go to find the new funding to support additional demonstration initiatives or coordination set-asides? How can we promote close personal ties among the heads of agencies that should coordinate? The answers are not obvious. Therefore, the challenge facing those who would try to improve coordination is to find barriers that are amenable to manipulation by federal, state and local officials, and to clarify the kinds of strategies that are useful in dealing with them in specific contexts.

In addition to this, the literature contains few--if any--reports that focus on failures of given efforts to promote coordination. Without a reasonable number of analyses of why given strategies failed, efforts to base future actions on the literature will be handicapped by a lack of presumably insightful material.

THE BARRIERS TO COORDINATION

The barriers to coordination faced by youth-serving and related programs can be divided into (a) program-specific ("technical") issues that relate to legislation, regulations, performance standards and related issues, and (b) issues that pertain to any efforts to get independent organizations to agree on and implement a common agenda.

Technical Barriers

State and local barriers to interagency coordination among youth development and related human service programs have been documented in numerous studies. The JTPA Advisory Committee subcommittee on welfare-JTPA coordination addressed the usual topics of misperceptions and "turf" issues, but also listed the following program-specific problems: overlapping but not identical goals and performance measures; different financing mechanisms and governance; and administrative differences. The subcommittee on coordinating programs administered by DOL's Employment and Training Administration came up with a similar list, but sliced the pie somewhat differently:

- Legislative barriers, such as varying eligibility requirements, variations in funding, planning and operating timetables, and different financial requirements; and

- Administrative barriers, including widely varying reporting requirements, definitions of key terms, information flows, varying communications networks, and institutional rigidities and entrenched practices.

There is no intrinsic reason to believe that any given listing is better than any other. Moreover, the quest for practical guidance requires identification of ways to overcome specific barriers, not just comprehensive listings.

In an ideal world, one could prioritize the barriers, then focus the efforts of policymakers and managers on overcoming the most important ones. However, given the critical importance of context, it seems most likely that different barriers will have different importance in given situations. For example, it seems self-evident that varying definitions of key terms and differences in eligibility across programs hamper efforts of agencies to collaborate. However, the literature does not provide any guidance about what the interagency landscape would look like if these differences were eliminated, and thus does not inform a decision on how much scarce staff time and energy to invest in efforts to get legislative bodies to change eligibility rules and definitions.

It is certainly harder to get two programs in a community to collaborate if one of them has broad autonomy and the other is controlled at the state level. The literature does address this issue. But it unfortunately provides contradictory conclusions. At one extreme, Brustein (undated:5) seems to feel that legislative and regulatory differences are the central problems facing those who would try to promote coordination:

There are provisions in the laws and federal agency practices which are possibly creating such chilling effects on the activities of responsible public administrators that what appears to be concern over "turf" may well be intelligent hesitancy to become involved with administrative complexities and potential costs beyond the value of the coordinated activity

On the other hand, such authors as Bailis (1989) argue the opposite position, i.e., that the importance of many of the commonly cited problems of differences in goals, purposes and target groups is overstated, and that many of the alleged differences are based on misperceptions rather than reality.

So what does one conclude? Clearly, congressional action to rectify some of these discrepancies would help to overcome such barriers. However, neither the research literature nor the experience of practitioners to date provides clear guidance on how much priority should be given to promoting changes in legislation and related technical issues as opposed to other strategies.

Nontechnical Barriers

Turf Issues and Organizational Culture

Several decades of experience in promoting local-level coordination in youth and adult employment and training programs have made it clear that the barriers to effective collaboration are as much political as technical, and that staff concerns about agency autonomy and serving clients with standard procedures are at least as important as discontinuities in funding cycles and mechanisms.

It is impossible to read a book about coordination or attend a conference on this topic without coming across numerous references to "turf" issues, or, as they are sometimes more formally called, "issues of organizational autonomy." Four of the six major administrative barriers to coordination cited in the Trutko, et al., (1990) study of JTPA coordination related to these kinds of issues: different perspectives on performance and service to clients, fear of loss of agency autonomy, distrust of other agencies, and lack of ownership.

Moreover, the findings of this study of exemplary coordination in several hundred locations suggest that "turf" is at least as critical a barrier to coordination as the often cited legislative and regulatory barriers:

The most common[ly cited] barriers [to coordination] are "turf" issues and ignorance or dislike of the philosophy or operations of other agencies Legal issues [such as eligibility restrictions, restrictions on the uses of funds and client confidentiality requirements] were not commonly cited as barriers [by respondents at exemplary coordination sites] (Trutko, et al., 1990:vi-vii).

Leemans' (1976:11) international perspective on management of change in government supports a conclusion that the issue goes way beyond the JTPA program in the 1980s and 1990s, since all organizations have "built-in protective devices to maintain stability which make it notoriously difficult to change organizations in the desired direction."

Efforts to get agencies that have previously acted in an independent fashion to work together clearly require changes in the structure and/or functioning of the affected organizations. Numerous students of public administration have catalogued the barriers to organizational change. The list in Leemans (1976) is typical:

- The perceived benefits of regularity to the functioning of the organization (a reformer may be considered a deviant who should be silenced);

- Calculated opposition by groups inside (and sometimes outside) the organization who expect their interests to be hurt by the proposed new structures;
- The considerable psychic costs of change (accommodation to new relationships, processes and methods causes stress to individuals and groups in the organization);
- Blindness to the defects of the organization and lack of knowledge about the needs and possibilities of organizational change and adaptation (this is closely related to the issue of the degree of openness of the organization as a system);
- Limited resources; and the complexity of large organizations.

Following the lead of Schlechty (1991) and Caiden (1969), it appears that the issues go even further--to the very culture of organizations. Writing about changes in schools, Schlechty argues:

Changing the structure of schools--or of any other organization--is no simple task. Social structures are embedded in systems of meaning, value, belief, and knowledge; such systems comprise the culture of an organization. To change an organization's structure, therefore, one must attend not only to rules, roles, and relations, but to systems of beliefs, values, and knowledge as well. Structural change requires cultural change (1991:xvi).

This assessment echoes one made by Caiden more than two decades earlier:

Administrative subcultures are quite different and when they come together without any overriding uniformity or preparedness to compromise for mutual goals, the results are often haphazard, sometimes tragically comic. For a start, people cannot communicate with one another, even when one common language is accepted Language is important simply because the bulk of reforms are achieved by talking and response to word evocation (1969:173).³

In order to be successful, efforts to bring about coordination at any level must deal with the tendency of organizations to resist change and maintain autonomy. This, in turn,

³ To cite one dramatic example of this, it took at least three two-day meetings of the welfare-JTPA coordination subcommittee of the JTPA Advisory Committee before the officials from the two systems realized they were using the term "placement" differently. JTPA officials tended to think of placement into unsubsidized jobs, and welfare officials tended to think of placement into employment and training programs.

presumably requires efforts to work with agency staff at all levels and convince them that the changes are in their own interests.

Political Forces Supporting the Status Quo

Since implementation of coordinated service delivery systems means changes in patterns of funding, agencies that stand to lose under such changes are likely to use whatever political influence they have to fight them. This point is discussed in some detail in Grubb, et al., (1989:37) with respect to the funding of community-based organizations (CBOs) under JTPA:

In many large cities, JTPA programs subcontract with community-based organizations that represent specific constituencies These special-interest CBOs often have considerable political clout, and use this power to win and keep JTPA contracts, effectively constraining how an SDA spends its money Such CBOs may be very effective in recruiting and training members of their particular target populations, and they often have staffs which are enormously energetic and dedicated. However, their existence hampers efforts to coordinate JTPA and public education because the allocation of JTPA funds to high school and vocational programs would require diverting resources away from special-interest CBOs, which is often politically impossible.

It is important to note that the authors of this study do not argue that funding CBOs is necessarily less effective than shifting funds to joint efforts with educational institutions, and it is by no means obvious that CBOs are any more "political" than school districts or other educational institutions. But in any event, the absence of research information on what types of services are most effective for specific types of clients makes it impossible to decide whether these pressures to support the status quo are barriers to change or whether they are efforts to maintain effective systems.

PROMISING STRATEGIES

The research literature and the experiences of federal, state and local policymakers suggest that there is a wide range of strategies widely believed (though not proven) to be effective in promoting coordination, collaboration and linkage.

"Getting to Know You"

The existence of literally dozens of examples of exemplary coordination makes it clear that the "turf" barrier (and all of the other barriers) is not insurmountable. In particular,

the literature provides explicit evidence that "turf" issues can be overcome by such approaches as persistent efforts to improve communication between and among agencies. Both common sense and Trutko, et al., (1990:vii) suggest an obvious remedy for this problem:

These ["turf"] barriers are generally overcome in the successful projects by getting to know and understand the other agencies involved.

Focusing on Self-Interest

Those who have engaged in exemplary efforts at coordination tend to feel that the benefits of their collaborative efforts have outweighed the costs, and those who do not engage in collaborative efforts in the face of mandates to do so presumably feel that the costs outweigh the benefits. Therefore, it would seem reasonable to conclude that efforts to convince others that the benefits of coordination outweigh the costs could play a key role in promoting coordination.

Support for this position can be found in the testimony of a key manager in a program to coordinate services for youthful offenders in rural Minnesota. As described in Bailis (1991b:2-13), his recollection of the process of putting together a case management system based on an interagency team showed that self-interest is a far more efficient motivator than coordination requirements or incentives to coordinate that are imposed from above:

We have learned one lesson: you can't mandate coordination and make it happen. There has to be something in it for everyone involved. There has to be benefit for their own clients and ways to make their own staff's life easier.

Implementing this approach therefore means structuring situations so that potential collaborators feel that it is in their own interest to engage in collaborative relationships, i.e., that the benefits are likely to outweigh the costs.

The research and public policy literature frequently contains lists of the benefits of coordination to the local agencies that engage in collaborative endeavors. The list in Trutko, et al., (1990) is one of the most comprehensive, suggesting that agencies that engage in (effective) coordination benefit in the following ways: access to additional resources; ability to secure additional public and/or private funding; greater flexibility in using funds; ability to offer a wide range of services targeted on client needs; increased knowledge and communication among agency staff; ability to share credit for client outcomes; ability to place clients (through other agencies) at little or no additional cost;

increased operational efficiency and reduction of duplicative agency efforts; better tracking of services received by clients and client outcomes; enhanced ability to serve mandated target groups; improved image with clients, employers and the community; specialization in areas of expertise; enhanced performance outcomes; and cost savings through the elimination of duplicative efforts. The disadvantages that were uncovered in the study include loss of autonomy in decision-making; need to resolve interagency conflicts; need to maintain new operational procedures, client flows and information systems; and potential inefficiencies of outstationed staff.

However, the authors argue that disadvantages to the local agencies engaging in collaborative efforts are "relatively minor," mostly the time and effort in planning and sustaining the coordinated efforts. Bailis (1991b:5-11) reports, for example:

The interagency team approach adopted in the . . . program appears to be a promising mechanism to achieve system-level coordination of services, but it requires substantial amounts of time and resources in order to operate at its fullest potential. Both conversations with [SDA] staff and . . . written [SDA] reports make it clear that planning and operating an interagency team was worthwhile, but the "valuable work of networking and team-building" took considerably more time than expected.

This discussion makes it clear that the broader issue facing policymakers and managers who wish to promote coordination is finding ways to convince their counterparts in other agencies that the balance sheet for properly planned and implemented coordination does lie on the benefit side rather than the cost side. This will involve educating them to this fact when it is the case and providing incentives when it is not.

Monetary incentives are the most obvious kind of "carrot." However, the increasingly tight budgets of the 1990s and the organizational development and behavior literature that stresses the limits of money as a motivator both lead us to conclude there will be an increasing need to find nonmonetary incentives, such as recognition.⁴ Further research is needed, however, to determine the kinds of perceived self-interest that appear to be the most effective motivators in given contexts, and the most effective ways of communicating this information.

⁴ The use of coordination grants and demonstration projects as well as other monetary incentives as a strategy by federal and state governments to promote coordination at lower levels of government is discussed in Section IV of this paper.

Entrepreneurism/Facilitation

Guidebooks to promoting coordination sometimes make reference to the need to be entrepreneurial. For example, Robinson and Mastny (1989) stress that a facilitator of collaborative efforts needs to have "an ability to 'seize the moment.'" They justify this position in the following way:

When a discussion has taken place and many views have been heard, someone often makes a statement that clearly defines the next step to be taken. The facilitator who is carefully listening will seize the opportunity to repeat the suggestion, obtain consensus on it, and [conclude the discussion by summarizing the suggestion] There is a fine line between allowing free discussion and sensing the right time to bring it to resolution (1989:6).

The literature on coordination does not go into much detail in discussing what happens at the "moment of truth" when representatives of different agencies get together to carry out coordination mandates. Nevertheless, discussions with practitioners make it clear that it usually takes a creative act on the part of at least one of the participants to develop a vision that will turn "paper coordination" into real changes in either planning or service delivery systems. It is an open (and researchable) question whether or not these kinds of entrepreneurial skills can be taught, and hence whether training and technical assistance in this area can indeed further the coordination agenda.

A Neutral Convener

All too often, people in a given agency look to other organizations to coordinate with them, rather than trying to find common ground. Given this situation, none of the agencies that could engage in collaboration may be willing to look to each other to take the lead. Therefore, as noted by Robinson and Mastny (1989:4) in Linking Schools and Community Services: A Practical Guide:

Any person or group of people who are interested in creative approaches to help children and youth can initiate a collaboration. [But] it is most helpful if the initiator remains neutral and speaks the "language" of both the educational communities and human service agencies The person or persons who initiate the collaboration may or may not also assume the role of a facilitator The ideal situation is one in which the facilitator is a person from neither the school nor social agency. One advantage of this is that the facilitator is perceived as neutral with no vested interest.

The logic behind this point of view is impeccable. Further empirical research is needed to explore the extent to which such neutral conveners can indeed be found or developed in most community contexts.

Case Management

The term case management means many things to different people. It is often thought about as the job done by an entrepreneurial worker trying to pull services together on his or her own, client by client. For example, Kane (1990:2) notes that the 1985 Coordinated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) defines case management as being "commonly understood to be a system under which responsibility for locating, coordinating, and monitoring services rests with a designated person or organization."

However, as discussed in Kingsley (1989:2), "well-conceived case management activities occur at both the client level and the systems level," and at the latter level, "case management may be defined as a strategy for coordinating the provision of services to clients within a system."

Put more simply, if this personalized, client-centered strategy is to work, case managers can't be left alone to do their stuff. They need to be backed up by a group of youth-serving institutions that have banded together through formal interagency agreements in a way that ensures that the broad selection of services commonly needed by young people are available to the case manager when the young people need them; enables case managers to know, in advance, what they can and cannot promise to their clients; empowers case managers to "requisition" services and resources across institutional lines; and revises traditional modes of operation if these modes do not work in the best interests of the young people they purport to serve (1989:3).

Both common sense and experience with case management efforts support this broad outlook as a productive direction in which to move. However, much still remains to be done to specify the kinds of activities that should be undertaken to utilize case management in efforts to promote coordination and the contexts in which each is most desirable.

ASSESSMENT OF COORDINATION STRATEGIES AMONG FEDERAL AGENCIES

State and local officials frequently suggest that the best thing their federal counterparts could do to promote coordination among their agencies would be to improve coordination among HEW, Labor, Education, Agriculture, Housing and Urban Development

(HUD) and other relevant agencies. In recent years, a variety of steps have been taken at the federal level to accomplish this objective by promoting coordination of employment and training, human service and related programs. Some new coordinating structures have been established at the White House staff level, such as the Low Income Opportunity Board created in 1987 and replaced by the Economic Empowerment Task Force in 1990. While these bodies have the standing to play a major coordinating role, there is no documentation of their impact, and they may be too political to be seen as neutral conveners.

On a less formal level, implementation of the Family Support Act and its Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) training program has promoted a new wave of collaborative activities among the staffs of DOL, HEW and Education. At a November 1989 meeting of the secretaries, an interagency agreement was signed, and there have been follow-up meetings of assistant secretaries and their staffs, and a jointly overseen training and technical assistance effort.

All of these efforts seem reasonable and appear to be laying a solid foundation for integration of policymaking and program oversight among the three departments. However, as noted in Bailis (1991a:14), the tangible benefits from these efforts have been slow to appear:

Two of the three Secretaries that signed this agreement are no longer in office [sixteen months later], and their collaborative effort does not seem to have altered the broad differences in perspective that the three agencies bring to employment programs. The ongoing collaboration around a JOBS technical assistance contract does not seem to have avoided at least some duplication of effort in the planning for a major conference on coordination of vocational-technical education, adult education, JTPA, and JOBS programs scheduled for this July . . . [and] as seen from the state and local level, [the Secretaries'] agreement has yet to produce many tangible results in terms of changes in program policy and regulatory frameworks.

Some studies have found other structures, such as presidential task forces, to be useful devices to promote coordination at the federal level, but none that we are aware of has affected state and local programming.

Another approach would be to reorganize federal agencies in a way that minimizes the need for interagency coordination effort. For example, the National Commission for Employment Policy has recently called for restructuring federal employment and training programs to unite JTPA, JOBS and the Food Stamp Employment and Training Program under a single organizational roof. This kind of reorganization would have many obvious

benefits; but, as in so many other instances, its expectation of improved services tends to be based on logic rather than on empirical evidence of success.

ISSUES IN ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GIVEN STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE COORDINATION IN GIVEN CONTEXTS

What have we learned about the effectiveness of given strategies to promote coordination in given settings? In particular, what do we know about measuring and/or predicting the success of efforts to increase the amount of coordination among JTPA, other youth development and related human service programs from year to year in different kinds of settings? The research literature has rarely addressed this kind of issue explicitly, and rarely contains enough description of context to allow readers to make independent judgments. This problem may prove insurmountable because of the wide variety of contexts in which coordination takes place and the absence of agreement on measuring it. Thus, it is unlikely that we will be able to move beyond informed judgments that "in general, strategy X seems like a good idea."

However, even if methodological barriers could be overcome, the crucial importance of context would still constrain the effectiveness of federal efforts to impose specific coordination approaches on states and of state efforts to impose approaches on local officials. Since higher-level officials cannot be expected to be aware of all of the relevant contextual issues at lower levels, they cannot be expected to know when given strategies are and are not likely to bear fruit. Mandating a given approach across the board (nationwide or statewide) might be helpful in some jurisdictions and counterproductive in others. This line of reasoning leads to a call for deemphasis on efforts to impose specific coordination structures and procedures from above, and instead argues that more emphasis needs to be placed on finding ways to get local officials together to realize the ways coordination can be helpful.

Gula and King (1990:94) apply this insight directly to employment and training programs in Texas by elaborating on the traditional "carrot and stick" dichotomy:

Positive reinforcement will typically produce better results [in terms of coordination] than more negative approaches. For example, the provision of joint (interagency) technical assistance on effective program models is preferred to monitoring reports on the insufficient numbers of joint staff meetings taking place.

On the other hand, strategies that require representatives of different agencies to get together on a periodic basis--such as required membership on planning committees and requirements for joint sign-offs--do appear to have a role to play; they are reasonable

ways to create the preconditions for coordination. But they will not be enough to promote meaningful coordination without the kind of entrepreneurial activity that allows each participant to see what is in it for his or her agency.

ISSUES IN ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COORDINATION IN PROMOTING IMPROVEMENTS IN SERVICE DELIVERY

If coordination is indeed a means to an end rather than an end in itself, it cannot be assumed that all efforts to promote coordination are worthwhile; it is not enough to document the institution of coordination mechanisms and assume that this means clients are being better served. Documentation of the benefits of coordination needs to go beyond the implementation of collaborative relationships to consider the effects on services. The research and program literature clearly spells out the kinds of benefits we expect coordination to achieve, including improved quality, improved cost-effectiveness and improved access.

However, as noted in several reviews of the coordination literature (Bailis, 1989; Grubb, et al., 1990), almost all extant studies focus on the coordination process and thus leave readers to assume that the observed collaboration is in fact producing better services at appropriate costs.

The research literature, the experience of more than two decades of employment and training programs, and common sense all warn us to differentiate between the institution of formal coordination mechanisms and the bringing about of real change in services. As Liebert (1976:81) puts it:

Formal coordination of an inclusive set of diverse parts does not in itself necessarily alter the distribution of services and rewards in any consensually intended direction, or significantly reduce the autonomy of functioning programs, nor is there evidence to support that it does so in practice Formal coordination of the sort optimally attained in the American context is often a symbolic response Coordination is [often] feigned by its sponsors to be a satisfactory substance response [to unmet needs] in and of itself even without making any tangible changes in circumstances for anyone but the new cadre of coordinators.

Rogers and Whetten (1982:vii) make a similar point (emphasis added):

Coordination among organizations and agencies in the public sector has increasingly been defined as desirable. The assumption is that concerted decision-making and cooperative program implementation will lead to

more successful outcomes than will independent actions of the same agencies.

Logic alone, then, cannot resolve the issues. Facts are needed. How can we get the needed empirical data? It is silly even to think of randomized experiments to demonstrate the impact of coordination. Therefore, assessments of the cause and effect relationship of coordination and improved outcomes would have to be quasi-experimental, seeking to demonstrate that coordination has in fact produced improvements in quality, cost-effectiveness and/or access. A "before/after" approach would mean first documenting changes over time, then eliminating all other plausible explanations (other than improved coordination) that might account for them. "Comparison group" studies would try to find pairs of agencies with similar programs, similar clients and similar contexts that differed only in the degree to which they were coordinated, then compare outcomes.

Neither of these approaches is 100 percent achievable and neither will produce definitive results. However, if one accepts the idea that coordination is a means and not an end, and if one's focus is practical guidance rather than academic rigor, research-based designs that utilize the two approaches would be helpful in assembling the facts that policymakers and managers could review and make their own judgements about. In any event, efforts to document the resources that have gone into specific efforts to promote coordination as well as the benefits of coordination would be useful in two important regards. First, they would help clarify the amount of resources that should be devoted to promotion of coordination (since the costs of coordination promotion should not exceed its benefits); and second, documented benefits would promote voluntary efforts to coordinate.

SPECIAL ISSUES PERTAINING TO YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

While the situation in each community is unique, there are a number of issues generically relevant to understanding--and hence fostering--coordination among agencies that promote youth development. In particular, coordination with schools inevitably lies at the heart of efforts to develop comprehensive services.

In recent years, many efforts have been made to link school systems and human service agencies. Some, like the New Jersey Department of Human Services's School Based Youth Services Program, aim to provide services at sites either in or near schools. Others include schools as partners in broader communitywide initiatives, such as those supported by Maryland's Office for Children, Youth and Families.

What are the elements that affect the dynamics and outcomes of efforts to promote coordination among youth-serving agencies that include elementary, secondary and postsecondary school systems? There are few--if any--unique factors involving outcomes when school systems play a key role in collaborative efforts, but many aspects of the education system shape the dynamics of efforts to promote coordination. For example, the discussion of barriers to coordination in Robinson and Mastny (1989:3) is not that different from those in sources that focus on other policy areas:

Questions about turf, differences in professional language, philosophy, and organizational style all point to potential pitfalls that must be addressed in order for a school-community partnership to be effective.

However, efforts to involve school systems in broader community collaboration efforts have been successful only when they are able to overcome such specific barriers as:

- Differences in jurisdictions between school districts and the catchment areas of other agencies;
- The variety of constituencies within school systems, including administrators, counselors, teachers and nurses;
- The severe limits on available space within schools for noneducational activities, and the problems in keeping buildings open after regular hours; and
- The need for teacher cooperation in releasing students from class for other activities.

The Dryfoos (1991) analysis of recent efforts to promote the community school approach provides an excellent illustration of these points. In particular, she notes barriers that have impeded efforts to import community services to the school setting:

- Jurisdictional issues--a city or county with only one social services or health district may have more than a dozen locally controlled school districts, or a rural school district may cover several cities or counties;
- Problems between school and service agency staff relating to differences in pay and benefits;
- Difficulty in finding space (and privacy) for community agency staff in the school;

- Unwillingness of some teachers to excuse students from classes to participate in activities offered by other agencies in the school; and
- Confidentiality of records.

Issues of administrative capacity and priorities also come up. As noted by Dryfoos (1991:27):

Most schools are not set up to operate clinics, treatment programs, job placement, after-school recreation, social service units or child care, and most school administrators feel that they have a large enough challenge just improving the quality of education.

Nevertheless, there are numerous examples of states and localities that have overcome these and other barriers in working with school systems. Therefore, the task for analysts and those who are trying to promote community schools and other youth-centered coordination schemes remains the same as in the generic case: understanding the specific elements of context that affect the likelihood that given strategies and approaches will bear fruit.

IV. DYNAMICS AND OUTCOMES OF EFFORTS TO PROMOTE "TOP DOWN" COORDINATION

We are about as coordinated at the local level as we can be until the big shots at the state and federal level get their acts together (adolescent services provider quoted in Dryfoos, 1991:2).

Strategies to promote coordination can be divided into two broad groupings: (a) efforts to force or induce agencies to coordinate through the use of authority from higher levels of government and/or incentives, and (b) voluntary efforts among equals to find and implement ways to work collaboratively. Gormley (1989) calls the choice between coercive controls and catalytic controls "muscles versus prayers;" other terms are "top down" and "bottom up" (Trutko, et al., 1990), and "top down" versus "bubbling up" (Dryfoos, 1991).

In general, those at high levels of government can set up rules to require coordination, can offer incentives to promote coordination, and/or can try to structure local perceptions and reality. This section summarizes what is known about these strategies and their effectiveness in upgrading services to young people.

OVERVIEW OF FEDERAL EFFORTS TO PROMOTE COORDINATION AT THE STATE AND LOCAL LEVELS

A 1989 report of the JTPA Advisory Committee (1989b) is perhaps the most prominent of numerous recent calls for a greater federal role in promoting coordination among education, employment and training, and human service programs at the state and local levels. As noted in one of its recommendations:

Collaborative efforts among schools, business communities, and JTPA to keep at-risk youth in school and get out-of-school youth back in school or in training programs should be encouraged through incentive awards, technical assistance and joint planning requirements (1989b:21).

The literature presents a clear picture of increasing efforts by federal officials to respond to these kinds of recommendations by taking steps to promote coordination of employment and training and related services at the state and local levels. As was discussed in Section II, these efforts have included:

- Enactment of mandates to coordinate in JTPA, the Carl Perkins Act, the JOBS program and most other major legislative initiatives, and enhancement of these mandates in the accompanying regulations and guidelines;

- Taking steps to identify and remove legislative and regulatory barriers to coordination;
- Provision of monetary incentives to coordinate by setting aside "pots of money" for projects involving coordination and joint operation of demonstration projects; and
- Provision of training and technical assistance to promote coordination.

Have these steps been enough? Can DOL and other federal agencies do more? Most major studies and numerous practitioners have concluded that the federal track record in using these techniques to bring about change at the state and local levels has been uneven at best. Some, like Grubb, et al., (1990:4), explain that these federal efforts to promote coordination are severely constrained by existing legislative frameworks:

Given the nature of effective coordination, which is now largely a local activity, [and] the structure of federal legislation, which delegates considerable authority to states, there are unavoidable limits to what federal policy can accomplish in the area of coordination.

Others, like Levitan and Gallo (1988:viii), appear to be somewhat less charitable:

JTPA has made little progress in achieving better coordination with related social programs, dashing exaggerated congressional expectations that efficient interprogram cooperation could compensate for radical budget cuts.

A similar pattern of limited success in the field of human service programs for children, youth and families is outlined in the Agranoff (1991) review of the history of "service integration." After vigorous efforts to promote better linkages among human service programs through such HEW and Health and Human Services (HHS) initiatives as Service Integration Targets of Opportunity, the review notes that service integration efforts at the federal level appeared to have receded by the late 1970s and early 1980s. While several service integration and partnership projects continued in similar or refined form, there were no more federal initiatives.

Thus, the overall pattern seems clear across a broader spectrum than the JTPA world: previous successes have been limited at best, and there is room for improvement in the effectiveness of federal efforts to promote coordination among state youth development and related human service agencies.

OVERVIEW OF STATE EFFORTS TO PROMOTE COORDINATION AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

State government has two important roles to play in the promotion of coordination of youth development and related human service programs: (a) enforcement of federal coordination mandates, and (b) development and implementation of coordination strategies that go beyond federal mandates. The resources states have to carry out these strategies include all those available at the federal level, as well as direct line authority over some local agencies.

How frequently do these top down initiatives occur? The literature typically contains dozens of examples of exemplary efforts but always leaves the impression that they are atypical. For example, Dryfoos (1991) provides a long list of child-oriented state initiatives that appear to show promise, including the Oregon State and County Youth Services Commissions, the Connecticut State Legislative Commission on Children, the Massachusetts Commonwealth Futures Program, the New Jersey School Based Youth Services Program, the Kentucky Education Reform Act that calls for creation of family resource centers in or near schools where disadvantaged youth are educated, the Florida Full Service Schools legislation, the New York Department of Education Community Schools Program and its State Council on Children and Families, and the Maryland Subcabinet for Children, Youth and Families.

This list (and other statewide initiatives) makes it clear that many states have already taken meaningful steps to promote coordination. However, the fact that most states are not listed leaves the impression that those on the list constitute a vanguard. In addition to this, most of the cited efforts are so new that rigorous evaluations of local-level changes they may have brought about are not yet widely available. Finally, the demise of the Massachusetts Commonwealth Futures Program and cutbacks at the New York State Council on Children and Families warn that it is one thing to develop innovative ideas and quite another to institutionalize them--especially in an era of continued government cutbacks in funding for service programs.

Studies that focus on JTPA have tended to present negative to lukewarm assessments. Levitan and Gallo (1988:56) are typically the most negative:

Several key assumptions by JTPA's designers regarding coordination have proven to be erroneous. Elevating the role of the states, JTPA relies upon the governors to guarantee better interprogram cooperation, but state agencies do little to promote coordination.

Grubb, et al., (1989:3) concur but state their conclusion in terms of the relative robustness of local-level "bubbling up" coordination efforts:

In general, we found both the state initiatives and the coordination requirements in the federal Acts to be less important than local initiatives. The real innovation in both JTPA and vocational education occurs, in our view, at the local level, where the amount of creativity, entrepreneurship, and doggedness in searching for solutions to the education and training needs of various groups is impressive.

Brady and Balfe (1987:17) say that the record is mixed--some progress and much disappointment:

Notable exceptions [to the rule of limited state promotion of coordination] do occur in states that have taken federal mandates seriously and vigorously pursued a coordination agenda by reforming the planning and service delivery process.

However, the Trutko, et al., (1990) study cites hundreds of (apparently) exemplary instances of coordination. The JTPA synthesis conducted by the National Commission for Employment Policy (Johnston, 1987), and the Grubb, et al., (1989) study provide numerous additional examples, including projects funded in Florida, Massachusetts, Michigan and Wisconsin.

A similar pattern exists in the literature that describes welfare-employment programs. There are numerous examples of innovations in coordinated welfare-employment programs that have taken place at the state level, both nationally recognized efforts in Massachusetts and California and lesser-known efforts in Florida, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. However, many of these efforts preceded the passage of the Family Support Act and cannot, therefore, be considered responses to this particular federal initiative. (On the other hand, many of them can be seen as a response to the Work Incentive (WIN) demonstration, which gave states the option to pursue these kinds of innovations if they so chose.)

How can one sum up this complex pattern of results? One may conclude that the potential for state leadership is there. The research issues facing us today revolve mostly around how to promote and channel it. In particular, policymakers and researchers would be well advised to abandon efforts to quantify the extent to which coordination does and does not exist, and instead try to specify the kinds of top down strategies that are most likely to bear fruit under specific circumstances.

The review of state coordination strategies focusing on education conducted by Dryfoos (1991) offers some excellent examples of possible answers to this research challenge, arguing that success is likely to occur only when certain preconditions are present, including legitimation by legislative or other authority, defined and shared cross-system goals, explicit mechanisms to promote coordination, and new money.

ASSESSMENT OF SPECIFIC STRATEGIES

A recent Council of Chief State School Officers publication (1991:4) summarizes the emerging consensus on the role of states in promoting coordination in youth development programs by underplaying mandatory approaches in favor of a combination of a range of voluntary approaches:

While effective collaboration cannot be mandated or forced upon a community by well-meaning state officials, state education agencies, in concert with other state-level child-serving agencies, can provide leadership, technical assistance, and incentives that will facilitate a community's efforts to deliver services more effectively and efficiently to children and adolescents.

The remainder of this section of the paper reviews each of the major strategies.

Mandates to Coordinate

As noted earlier in this section and in Section II, there is a good deal of language in JTPA, the Carl Perkins Vocational Education Act, the Wagner-Peyser Act and the Family Support Act designed to promote specific types of coordination with JTPA. Typically, these requirements focus on coordinated planning rather than coordinated service delivery, mandating input from one agency into the planning cycle of others and, at times, participation in governing or planning bodies. For example, according to Brustein (undated), there are 8 references to vocational education in JTPA and 22 references to JTPA in the Carl Perkins Vocational Education Act, including requirements in both to coordinate with each other.

The literature varies considerably in its assessment of the effectiveness of these provisions but tends to stress the shortcomings rather than the accomplishments. For example, Brady and Balfe (1987:16-17) have concluded:

The provisions in JTPA and the Carl Perkins Vocational Education Act mandating coordination are only vaguely known by a substantial proportion of respondents and have been ignored by many others Paper agree-

ments [that certify that coordination has taken place] are [often] a pro forma exercise without much genuine substance.

Lewis, et al., (1988:20) put it even more starkly:

From the local perspective, the provisions in the Perkins Act that require state-level coordination have not affected the local level.

The Melaville and Blank (1991:19) study of programs for children and families comes to a similar conclusion, namely that many "first generation" state-level initiatives have had an uneven effect on local communities because they "imposed rather than facilitated local action and were frequently seen as intrusive and counterproductive." In doing so, it cites a Public/Private Ventures study that concludes that virtually all youth service providers saw "mandated coordination as unrealistic and paper producing" (Watson and Jaffe, 1990). Bailis (1989:42) also has used the term "uneven" to describe the impact of mandates:

The research literature . . . suggests that the effectiveness of these provisions has been mixed, apparently making a difference in some instances and not in others.

The fact that the coordination provisions have been unevenly implemented leaves one inescapable conclusion: provisions of federal law can be helpful in promoting ends such as coordination, but they are not sufficient. It is therefore necessary to look beyond the laws to isolate other federal, state, and local-level factors that tend to reinforce or negate the coordination mandates in the Act.

The conclusion that can be drawn from all of these examples across the different policy spheres is that it would be helpful--but not sufficient--to promote more specific coordination mandates in all future legislation involving JTPA and the programs with which JTPA is expected to coordinate. Tightening the language in federal legislation would strengthen the hand of state and local officials who are already advocates of increased coordination, but this strategy cannot be depended on to bring about significant change in all states on its own.

Creation of Central Coordinating Bodies

One major approach to promoting or mandating coordination of programs at the local level is creation of coordinating bodies. Federal law has mandated the creation of SJTCCs to promote coordination of employment and training programs. Many recent

efforts to reauthorize employment and training and related programs have provided for expansion of these bodies to take on responsibilities beyond the JTPA system. Similarly, many of the community-based family and children's services initiatives supported by states and foundations use neighborhood or community coordinating structures as their linchpins.

There is little evidence that coordinating bodies imposed from the outside can make a difference. Indeed, some theoretical literature calls the centralizing instinct into question. In particular, the seminal political science analyses of Lindblom outline an alternative to centralized hierarchical planning called partisan mutual adjustment, and express the view that groups of agencies can effectively work together without the central direction that coordinating bodies can provide. Lindblom notes in one of his best-known works (1968:82):

On a naive view, cooperation requires a central coordinating authority. For if men need to cooperate, how better to do it than through a supervisory authority? The fact is, however, that proximate policymakers, like any other men, can arrange cooperation through central supervision, or through negotiation, bargaining, and other forms of mutual adjustment

Fear of concentrated power aside, central coordination is sometimes less desirable than mutual agreement on efficiency grounds. For central coordination may impose analytic and regulatory tasks on a central authority beyond its capacities. Each limit [on man's analytical capacities] is also a limit on a central coordinator's capacity to analyze the desired relations among subordinate policymakers and to regulate them.

Taken together, the evidence on central coordinating bodies is that they appear to be a sensible idea that can bear fruit. In particular, they can provide the framework in which managers and staff from different agencies can come together and take actions to promote coordination. But the expectations for such bodies should be limited, and there is no reason to put all the coordination "eggs" in this "basket."

Providing Incentives to Coordinate

The literature does not provide any clear guidance on the most effective ways to provide "pots of money" and other incentives to promote coordination activities, nor the circum-

stances under which incentives are most likely to be productive.⁵ However, virtually all references to efforts to provide financial and other incentives suggest that this approach is worthy of further attention and emphasis.

For example, several leading studies emphasize the changes that funding from higher levels of government can promote. In particular, Levy (1989) cites the financial incentives associated with the collaborative efforts of DOL and HHS in the Youth 2000 campaign, the grant awards by the Council of Chief State School Officers, The Ford Foundation's Urban Dropout Prevention Collaboratives and The Annie E. Casey Foundation's New Futures Initiative. The same report addresses state-level efforts that have collaborated at the local level, including the Maryland Investment in Job Opportunities program and the New Jersey School Based Youth Services Program (SBYSP).

Although formal evaluations are not yet available, SBYSP provides what appears to be an excellent example of the effectiveness of offering funding as an incentive for community agencies to work together. SBYSP limited its funding to communities that demonstrated the support and participation of a broad coalition of local community groups, businesses, public agencies and nonprofit organizations as well as the relevant school districts. In particular, applications had to be filed jointly by a school district and one or more local nonprofit or public agency.

This example notwithstanding, the Bailis literature review (1989:42) is not upbeat on this approach:

The logic behind earmarking a portion of a program's funds to promote an objective such as coordination is impeccable: if an agency is unlikely to do something with unrestricted funds, then the only way to make sure that they take the intended actions is to provide funds that can only be used for this purpose. In the JTPA program, this idea has been implemented through the legislative creation of "set-asides" or "pots of money" to promote coordination and a number of additional purposes.

⁵ Dryfoos (1991:28) provides an exception to this rule by pointing out that the request for proposal (RFP) process often used to promote local initiatives may sometimes unwittingly divert resources from the areas with the greatest need:

One problem with the simple RFP approach is that the most needy communities may fail to win grants because of th[e] competitive process. They do not have the grantsmanship skills required or there may be a shortage of potential collaborators. Yet in the long run, the solution to the problems in the highest-risk communities may be tied inextricably to their gaining greater resources.

However, the research literature to date suggests that the track record of the JTPA set-asides (including the 3 percent, 6 percent, 8 percent and Wagner-Peyser 10 percent monies) in promoting coordination has been mixed at best. As is the case in many other aspects of coordination, the record shows that this approach seems to have borne fruit in some circumstances and not in others.

On the other hand, Grubb, et al., (1989:19-20) describe a somewhat more optimistic picture:

[In some instances], the JTPA requirements are adhered to, and the individuals who receive the training are all in need of special assistance, but the central purpose of the 8-percent funds to encourage cooperation of vocational education and JTPA has been circumvented

Overall, however, our interviews showed a general agreement at both the state and local levels that the 8-percent funds have stimulated programs and experiments that would never have been established without this set-aside

The 8-percent funds . . . have been welcome as a more positive way of enhancing coordination than the usual administrative prescriptions and they have clearly supported some cooperation and some experimentation that would otherwise never have taken place. But the uses to which 8-percent funds have been put have sometimes been inconsistent with the purpose of fostering better coordination between vocational education and JTPA.

Again, the most sensible conclusion to be drawn is that this approach can make a difference, but further research and analysis is needed before one can identify the factors that systematically contribute to and/or detract from its efficacy.⁶

⁶ A Council of Chief State School Officers publication (1991:5) provides an unusual insight into the context in which incentives are more or less likely to be effective:

Knowing that they could not mandate school district participation, the State Department of Education agreed to solicit the participation of [districts in the Kentucky KIDS program] that had already enjoyed a good working relationship with local health and human service providers.

This example seems to suggest that it may be more effective to use incentives to try to build on existing cooperation than to use this approach to overcome barriers to coordination that had previously been insurmountable.

Provision of Training and Technical Assistance

For decades, federal agencies have sponsored meetings to promote coordination, have developed training and technical assistance materials to help those funded by one agency to learn about programs funded by others, and have convened meetings at which state and/or local officials can get to know each other better.

These written materials go back at least as far as the series of reports prepared to "provide specific guidance as to how HEW manpower and manpower-related programs may be coordinated with CETA to the mutual benefit of each program" (Urban Management Consultants, 1976) and Coordination: WIN and CETA (Southern Institute for Human Resources, 1978), prepared under contract to HEW. More recent materials in the youth development field include Linking Schools and Community Services: A Practical Guide by the Rutgers University Center for Community Education (Robinson and Mastny, 1989).

There is a widespread belief that the dozens of conferences and other structured opportunities for staff from different agencies to meet and share experiences have provided a good means of getting collaborative efforts off the ground. Relatively recent examples of these kinds of meetings include the Wingspread Conferences on Adolescent Pregnancy sponsored by the American Public Welfare Association and The Johnson Foundation, the Education Commission of the States' 1987 Forum on At-Risk Youth, the Council of State Policy and Planning Agencies' Dropout Prevention Academies (all cited in Levy, 1989) and the July 1991 conference, Making the Connection: Coordinating Education and Training for a Skilled Workforce, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education in cooperation with HHS and DOL, which brought together teams of five officials from each state.⁷

The idea that training and technical assistance can promote desired changes at the state and local levels seems unarguable. However, there has been little follow-up to determine which training sessions and/or technical assistance materials have made a difference in the way state and local agencies carry out their responsibilities.

Jointly Funded Demonstration Projects

DOL and other agencies have begun making joint awards for selected discretionary programs, such as the joint DOL and HHS efforts to provide both family life education

⁷ Each state was invited to send the top five administrators of the Carl Perkins Vocational Education Act, the Adult Education Act, JTPA, and the JOBS program of the Family Support Act.

and employability development services to teenagers. Similarly, officials from HUD have recently participated in a joint effort to upgrade the housing components of DOL's Job Training for the Homeless Demonstration Project.

However, as some see it, DOL's efforts to develop joint demonstration projects with other agencies have often been hampered by the lack of flexibility and discretionary funds at the federal agencies with which DOL wishes to collaborate. According to one DOL official, there is virtually no discretionary money for use in demonstrations at HUD, and very little at HHS, the Department of Education and the Justice Department.

Identifying and Removing Legislative and Regulatory Barriers to Coordination

A number of studies of coordination have concluded that the most useful things federal or state officials can do to promote coordination are identifying legislative and regulatory barriers at lower levels of government and eliminating them. For example, the New Jersey Department of Human Services has promoted the functioning of its School Based Youth Services Program by certifying participating schools as Medicaid providers so they can be readily reimbursed for providing health care services to eligible students.

This point of view is expanded upon in a somewhat pungent fashion by Grubb, et al., (1990:4):

Rather than continuing to rail about the state of coordination at the local level, we suggest that federal policymakers could accomplish more by putting their own house in order. Common suggestions include clarifying the intent of federal legislation, including coordination set-asides; simplifying client eligibility, accounting procedures, and other regulations that local administrators perceive as burdensome; and improving coordination among federal programs.

Although it has not yet received systematic attention in the literature, attendees at meetings to promote coordination often cite the caution that results from uncertain federal auditing practices, which discourages them from planning and adopting innovative service delivery approaches based on interagency collaboration.

CONCLUSION

Some states have been far more responsive to federal coordination mandates and incentives than others. Similarly, cities, counties and other local government bodies have varied considerably in their responses to coordination initiatives from the state level or from private foundations. The central issue in our search for practical guidance involves

determining why this is so, so that the factors that have promoted greater responsiveness in particular contexts can be identified and replicated. This issue cannot be resolved until we are clear about whether these patterns are the result of random effects of personality and history or whether we can identify "levers for change" that can be practically implemented by higher levels of government (and others). As noted in this section, the research literature and the experience of youth practitioners over the past few decades provide many clues as to the answers, but the search for practical guidance in this area is far from over.

V. SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS AND PRELIMINARY RESEARCH AGENDA

It lies within our reach, before the end of the twentieth century, to change the futures of disadvantaged children Highest priority must go to efforts to combine disparate programs into coherent combinations of services in neighborhoods where persistent poverty and social dislocation are concentrated. Government agencies must review their funding policies and regulations to identify the most important impediments to providing coordinated services and seek their removal (Schorr, 1988:292-293).

A fourth and final challenge for planners of [coordinated] community-based initiatives is to measure the success of these undertakings more by outcomes than by process. Given the complexity of effecting changes in how well children develop, it is tempting to ignore the issue of whether families are healthier once a community-based initiative has been in place and instead, to focus on less elusive improvements—for example, in the level of services provided or the number of children reached by services. To an extent, such an approach seems justified because without elaborate and expensive experimental studies, it is impossible to pinpoint the extent to which changes in children's well-being are attributable to a specific intervention On the other hand, outcome indicators, while an imperfect measure of effectiveness, provide more dynamic clues to how the intervention should be reshaped (Blum and Blank, 1991:19).

Rather than recapitulate each of the findings and conclusions of the previous sections, we have chosen to elaborate on a handful of overarching themes, then proceed to a discussion of the research agenda suggested by the findings and gaps in knowledge that now exist.

THE PREVALENCE OF EXAMPLES OF COORDINATION

Much of the public policy literature dwells on barriers to coordination and calls for new steps to overcome these barriers—including new laws and regulations that create mandates and incentives, new organizational structures and leadership from high-ranking officials. However, the examples listed in this paper (and the many more in the literature that are not cited) make it clear that these barriers can be overcome in at least some instances. Levy (1989:57) reports that a survey of collaboration between education and human services in 47 states noted a "great deal of collaboration underway, perhaps not yet as broad-based or deep-reaching as will develop, but nonetheless exciting and instructive in the promise that it holds for future efforts."

These kinds of findings reiterate the importance of the "new conventional wisdom" perspective and strongly suggest that both policymakers and researchers need to focus on the specific circumstances under which efforts to promote coordination are likely to succeed and produce improvements in service delivery and client outcomes.

THE NEED FOR EMPIRICAL DATA ON COORDINATED ACTIVITIES, OUTCOMES AND CONTEXTS

Most analyses of coordination have been based on case studies, logic and common sense rather than on empirical findings. Researchers and policymakers have:

- Identified factors that seem to present barriers to efforts to collaborate, based on the testimony of people in youth development and related human service agencies;
- Identified strategies that seem effective in overcoming these barriers, and cited examples of people in youth development and related human service agencies who have carried out these strategies and found them to work; and
- Documented changes in specific types of collaboration and assumed they have resulted in better programming, i.e., services that are more effective, cost-effective or accessible.

However, all of these activities are of limited value for those seeking practical guidance. First of all, lists of barriers to coordination, such as the ones presented earlier in this paper, do little or nothing to explain the exceptions to the rule, where the barriers have been overcome.

Similarly, if they mean anything at all, arguments that "coordination is a means and not an end" mean one cannot assume that implementation of a referral agreement, a shared planning effort or a case management system will improve service delivery and hence outcomes. No generalization is likely to help us to decide what kind of coordination is most likely to improve programming in given settings and what strategies are most likely to promote coordination in these contexts.

In essence, it is time to move beyond talking about what kinds of barriers exist in general and what kind of facilitators exist in general, and to begin to assemble and analyze empirical data to clarify (1) the circumstances under which potential barriers are important factors in the decisions of state and local decision-makers to engage in collaborative planning and service delivery--or to refrain from such activities; (2) the situations in which given strategies seem effective; and (3) the contexts in which given

forms of coordination seem to make a difference in improving services, and hence outcomes.

THE CENTRAL ROLE OF ORGANIZATIONAL DYNAMICS

Implementation of coordinated service delivery often implies major changes in the ways agencies select, serve and follow up on clients. Experience with the initial efforts to build coordinating mechanisms under both DOL's Youth Opportunities Unlimited demonstration and the Job Training for the Homeless Demonstration Project illustrates the difficulties that occur when staff in participating agencies have to learn and internalize new ways of doing business.

The numerous references to "turf" concerns throughout the literature on coordination make it clear that management and staff of collaborating agencies are likely to resist change imposed on them unless the change is clearly in their own interests. Agencies tend to keep doing what they have always done unless given persuasive reasons not to. This is precisely the situation that often yields "paper compliance" with mandates rather than real change.

The centrality of organizational and other nontechnical issues to the promotion of coordination is illustrated by the listing of factors said to inhibit collaboration between schools and community services in Robinson and Mastny (1989): competitiveness; dominating rather than shared leadership, which discourages group decision-making; inflexibility in scheduling meetings and activities; lack of understanding about how schools and community agencies operate; hidden agendas for personal advancement; cynicism about the advantages of sharing information; pressure to "push things through" without adequate time for discussion or for working through conflicts; more emphasis on talking than listening; preferring to do things alone rather than negotiate with others; closed participation with only a select few invited to participate; and prescribing actions for a partnership from the top down rather than taking the necessary time to involve participants at the local level. Each of these issues could have just as easily turned up on a list of factors inhibiting coordination of services for dislocated workers, homeless people or older Americans.

This point of view, in turn, means that the theory and practice of organizational change needs to take on increased importance in efforts to promote coordination, and that efforts to overcome organizational inertia through appeals to self-interest among agency staff must represent a key element in successful strategies to promote coordination.

THE IMPORTANCE OF VOLUNTARY COORDINATION AS OPPOSED TO MANDATES

As noted above, despite all of the well-known barriers to coordination, there are numerous examples of apparently effective collaboration between virtually every conceivable youth development and related human service agency. This implies that barriers can be overcome if state and local officials feel it is worth the effort to do so--the organizational inertia problem notwithstanding.

Thus, review of both the literature and the track record of coordination in employment and training and related fields suggests there has been relatively too much emphasis on mechanical steps toward coordination and relatively too little emphasis on motivating local program managers and staff to coordinate in their own interest. In particular, the research seems to show:

- If people are willing to collaborate and to commit time and resources to doing so, there are few absolute limits to the ability to develop coordinated programs under current legislative and regulatory authority.
- If people are unwilling to collaborate and to commit time and resources to doing so, there is little that can be accomplished through mandates to take such steps as "coordinated planning" or "interagency case management."

This point is generally more often made by practitioners than found in the literature, but its most blunt and colorful expression can be found in Gula and King (1990:93):

Mandating effective program coordination from the federal or state level is impossible. Unless conditions happen to be right, mandating coordination would probably be like pushing on a very heavy object with a limp rope.

Thus, in some ways, the most important value of the mandates for joint planning and the like are the opportunities they provide for personal contact and interaction that can lead to development of innovative changes in service delivery systems. Just as coordination itself should be viewed as a means toward other ends, mandating occasions for staff from different agencies to get together lays a foundation on which future efforts to work together may be built.

THE OVERARCHING IMPORTANCE OF CONTEXT

No one in the 1990s would argue that a single approach to employment and training is appropriate for all disadvantaged youth. Yet some people persist in looking for "the"

best ways to coordinate and "the" best ways to enter into interagency collaborative relationships. Both the research literature and the experience of more than two decades of practice suggest there are numerous examples of agencies that have entered productive collaborative relationships under the same institutional frameworks that others call barriers to coordination, and there are even more examples of cases where "mandated" coordination never occurs.

In order to transcend this "one size fits all" thinking, policymakers and researchers need to focus on context, addressing such questions as "What kinds of coordination are most likely to help achieve program goals in specific circumstances?" and "What strategies are most likely to promote and sustain interagency collaboration in given settings?" It is one thing for authors of guidebooks like Robinson and Mastny (1989:8) to say:

Sufficient time should be spent in the planning stage to work through the significant differences in philosophies and methods of implementation.

But it is quite another to provide guidance about how much time is "sufficient" in a given situation. Similarly, the authors note that "monthly meetings should take place during the academic year at the school site." Monthly meetings may in fact be a good idea in most cases, but in order to be useful, guidebooks need to help a policymaker or manager decide how frequently meetings should take place in the specific planning process in which he or she is participating.

The research literature is only beginning to provide practical guidance with respect to these contextual issues. The insightful study of welfare-employment programs in Texas by Gula and King (1990:94) provides one of the best analyses of the implications of an approach that recognizes the importance of context:

[State] policies on coordination should be sensitive to variations in local conditions. In areas which already have well-coordinated programs and an existing foundation of mutual trust, requiring greater and more specific coordination behaviors may well be counterproductive; the best state policies in this case simply support and nurture what is already in place and otherwise stay well out of the way. In areas without such relationships, additional coordination activity might be directed and tracked over time.

The Council of Chief State School Officers publications (1991:4) make this same point for youth-serving programs that are centered on schools:

The services that should be offered or coordinated at any given school site will vary depending on the degree to which health and human services

needs are already being met effectively elsewhere in the community
The particulars of establishing integrated school-linked services will necessarily vary from community to community; there is no "master plan" for linking services.

Perhaps the key contextual factor in analyzing efforts to promote coordination is the limited amount of funding available for most youth-serving (and other human service) programs. In particular, even if we were able to develop mechanisms to ensure perfect coordination among all existing programs, we would still be in a position to provide comprehensive packages of quality services to only a small fraction of those who could benefit, unless additional funding became available. Without additional funds, efforts to promote high levels of coordination will probably be limited to demonstration efforts that focus on limited numbers of sites and/or small geographic areas within individual cities and towns, such as the ongoing DOL Youth Opportunities Unlimited (YOU) initiative and The Annie E. Casey Foundation's New Futures Initiative.

KEEPING COORDINATION IN PERSPECTIVE

As noted at the beginning of the paper, no one argues that we need less coordination among employment and training and related programs. In fact, A Practitioner's Guide for youth employability development professionals issued by Public/Private Ventures (Smith, et al., 1988:64) puts increased coordination at the top of the priority list: "Developing a system to improve the coordination of youth services is thus the most important single task facing states and communities that wish to improve their approach to youth employment and training."

However, there is a danger that excessive emphasis on the potential benefits of coordination will distract us from other important program development and improvement goals. This paper has attempted to place the emphasis on coordination in a proper context by spelling out what can and cannot be expected to occur when efforts to promote coordination are undertaken. Among other things, it has noted:

- A literature that advances the possibility that significant benefits can occur from "duplication" and redundancy, and that potential losses can accompany improved coordination.
- The limited success that has followed most mandates to get agencies to collaborate, and the importance of barriers to coordination related to organizational politics and culture as opposed to such technical issues as differing funding cycles. Most successful efforts at coordination reflect a long history of efforts to evolve systems.

- The fact that perfect coordination of underfunded employment and training programs would probably mean that fewer than 10 percent of eligibles would be getting services, albeit perfectly coordinated services.
- The fact that coordination does not overcome the need to be sure the services being coordinated are as effective and responsive as they can be.

Thus, this paper attempts to walk a fine line. It recognizes the critical need for increased coordination, collaboration and linkages, and seeks to further a research strategy to support this end. But it also views coordination as only one of several "tools" that can be used to promote increased comprehensiveness, effectiveness, quality and cost-effectiveness of programs that serve young people (and their older counterparts). In the words of a state education official cited in Dryfoos (1991:28):

State agencies can coordinate, target, and reprogram until everyone is blue in the face, but if the basic school aid formulae leave poor school districts with 70 percent less per capita funding than wealthy districts, high-risk kids will never be adequately served.

Broader analyses of the impact of efforts to promote coordination therefore need to consider possible trade-offs between the achievement of coordination objectives and other agency objectives. At minimum, this means assessments of efforts to coordinate must take into account the costs (including opportunity costs) of these activities along with the benefits, and the likelihood of these benefits in the face of certain costs.

PRIORITY TOPICS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The analyses presented in this paper suggest four broad directions that DOL should and should not take in planning future research on coordination, collaboration and linkages. Each is summarized below.

1. The Department of Labor should fund research to better understand and promote voluntary efforts to coordinate publicly funded youth programs. Specific areas that might be explored include: (a) the costs and measurable benefits of particular efforts to coordinate; (b) the controllable factors that promote voluntary collaboration; (c) the effectiveness and replicability of the most promising efforts to promote coordination at the local level; and (d) instances in which promising strategies did not work out.

As addressed earlier in this paper, the theoretical literature on interagency coordination distinguishes between collaboration that is the result of mandates from above and collaboration that results from interagency negotiation. The former has received

extensive attention and the latter has not. The Department could foster efforts to coordinate at the local level by documenting the benefits of coordinating, and clarifying what it takes to get agencies to do so voluntarily.

Much of the literature (and much of the world) seems to assume there are always great benefits for agencies that enter collaborative efforts, and for their clients. While much of the available research on coordination was designed to address the issue of costs and benefits, researchers have not generally been successful in developing quantifiable estimates. As was illustrated in Section III, efforts to address costs and benefits are typically confined to lists of factors like those in Trutko, et al., (1990). Such lists appear to reiterate what common sense would suggest without any empirical research; they make little or no effort to prioritize the factors or to determine which are the most critical in which contexts.

If the Department could move beyond the "obvious" and "common sense" benefits and document actual benefits in given contexts, this information might be useful in encouraging local agencies to take and respond to initiatives to coordinate. While rigor in measuring costs and benefits would be ideal, any efforts that provide specific information would be helpful.

Similarly, the Department should try to document the costs and benefits of the current system, in which duplication and overlap are said to occur. Even the most vigorous defender of the position that there are benefits to the current system would agree that more research needs to be done in this area. As Bendor (1985:30) puts it:

The unmitigated wastefulness of bureaucratic redundancy is an untested axiom, sometimes explicitly stated . . . , sometimes implied, but in neither case doubted or tested. Thus there is no evidence that bureaucratic competition has the drawbacks attributed to it

Other theoretical arguments in favor of duplication that could be explored include the idea that "letting a hundred flowers bloom" makes sense at a time when we do not have any proven "methodologies" for dealing with the problems faced by disadvantaged youth and other hard-to-place Americans, and the idea that having competing programs and agencies increases the total "pot of resources" that is available to agencies trying to meet the same social need. The research would ideally transcend such general terms as "coordination" and address specific costs and benefits of specific varieties of coordinated planning and service delivery. While some would argue that coordination is a "good" by definition, it seems clear that efforts to marshal evidence about the measurable benefits of coordination would be more likely to motivate policymakers and managers.

It is unlikely that researchers will ever be able to develop methodologically pure quantitative studies that compare changes in program outputs as coordination increases and statistically control for the impact of all other variables. However, it would still be useful to assemble "before/after" studies that provide convincing evidence that "coordination matters." At minimum, case studies and mini-case studies might address the proportion of clients who have all (or most) needs met through a coordinated or collaborative mechanism without which a package of services would not have been available.

As noted in Section III, the literature has shown that many of the factors most effective in promoting coordination--most notably, previous histories of coordination and the personalities of higher-level officials--are beyond the control of federal, state and local agency staff. However, further research might identify and document the controllable factors, such as state plans and interventions, that bring key administrators from agencies together for planning sessions.

At the federal level, current efforts to plan and deliver coordinated technical assistance for the JOBS program are widely regarded as precedent-making. Once these efforts have had a chance to mature, they and similar efforts of other federal agencies should be explored to determine (a) the extent to which they have brought agency policymakers together on an ongoing basis and (b) the degree to which they have resulted in documentable changes at the federal, state and/or local levels.

The literature contains a wide range of recommendations about steps that can--or, more precisely, should--be taken to promote coordination but have not yet been subjected to rigorous research and evaluation. The specific strategies that might be explored include:

- Creation of community collaborative oversight bodies, such as those for YOU and the six-city New Futures Initiative;
- Foundation (or government) efforts to promote coordination at the national level, such as The Ford Foundation-supported Joining Forces initiative being carried out by the National Association of State Boards of Education (Levy, 1989) and other well-publicized state agency collaborative initiatives in youth employment, welfare-employment and related fields;
- Utilization of case management as the linchpin of coordination efforts, as is discussed in Kingsley (1989);
- Utilization of central coordinating bodies at the local level, such as expanded Private Industry Councils like the Massachusetts Regional Employment Boards;

- Creation of shared management information systems that cross program boundaries, as has been planned in a number of states (e.g., the Opportunity card initiative in Michigan and New York State's GATEWAY system);
- Efforts of businesses to enter and institutionalize collaborative relationships through such techniques as joint ventures and cooperative marketing agreements;
- Recent efforts by the Departments of Labor, HHS and Education to use jointly funded technical assistance and periodic meetings of assistant secretaries and their staffs to promote meaningful coordination; and
- The wide range of recent publications to promote coordination, such as the Joining Forces materials from the National Association of State Boards of Education (e.g., Levy, 1989), the Linking Schools and Community Services booklet put out by Rutgers University (Robinson and Mastny, 1989) and the materials put out by the Education and Human Services Consortium (e.g., Melaville and Blank, 1991; Bruner, 1991).

Each of these efforts has clearly been well-meaning and each has had logic behind it. However, there remains a need to try to collect information on the results each approach has produced, in order to determine how to make each most effective and the circumstances under which effectiveness is most likely to be attained.

These research efforts should be as broadly based as possible, incorporating, for example, lessons from the range of foundation-funded employment and training efforts as well as from publicly funded coordination efforts.

2. The Department of Labor should fund research that explores the "systems-level" delivery of service to young people--the effects of all agencies on individual young people. Specific areas that might be explored include: (a) the extent to which individual young people are in fact being served by different agencies and (b) the extent to which needy young people (or adults) are receiving any services.

Most of the studies in the coordination literature have been funded by a single agency (or in rare instances two agencies) and typically picture the clients of these agencies as the hub of a wheel with whom everyone else has to coordinate. The fact that programs like JTPA serve only a small fraction of eligible youth and adults is frequently repeated. However, while studies often demonstrate service gaps from the point of view of the funding agency, they generally do not address the extent to which clients are getting needed services.

Further insights could be obtained by studies that address a neighborhood or community as the unit of analysis and document the total amount of services that flow in, the way they are distributed across the total eligible population, and community-level outcomes. This kind of approach is the only way to determine the extent to which duplication really exists, the extent to which young people are not getting needed services, and so forth. It represents the kind of basic research that should provide useful insights on its own as well as generate further research.

Studies to address this issue would require information on a sample of community residents, ideally a random sample. Creativity would be required in developing plans to draw the sample, but once it is drawn, data could be collected either from the young people themselves or from providers (if it were possible to use a common identifier, such as social security number).

3. The Department of Labor should fund research on the perceptions other community agencies have of JTPA.

There is widespread belief among SDA officials that their efforts to promote coordination are not being met halfway by representatives of school systems and other potential partners. This belief may reflect perceptions that are not necessarily accurate about JTPA, its clientele, its service offerings and the benefits it can offer. Accurate or not, collection and compilation of perceptions of JTPA should provide guidance to the Department in planning actions that will help to promote coordination by modifying either these perceptions or the reality that underlies them. This, in turn, should prove to be useful in convincing others that it is in their self-interest to engage in coordinated activities with JTPA SDAs.

Efforts to learn about the image of JTPA could be carried out through a variety of methodologies, ranging from relatively inexpensive informal discussions with small groups of government and community officials, to research utilizing structured questionnaires. Formal surveys of large numbers of government and community leaders would be more expensive.

4. There is no need for further Department of Labor-funded research on such general topics as (a) the barriers to coordination among publicly funded youth and adult programs and the strategies that have appeared to be successful in overcoming them, and (b) effective coordination models. Instead, studies that address barriers should address the contexts in which they are and are not problematic, and studies that address strategies to promote coordination should address the contexts in which each are and are not desirable.

The employment and training literature contains numerous examples of studies that list barriers to coordination among publicly funded programs and strategies to overcome them. The items on these lists are increasingly well-known to federal, state and local officials, and there would be little value to replicating them at this time. Instead, as was noted at several points in this paper, those who would promote improved coordination need to know when the barriers can be overcome and when they are likely to be insurmountable, the kinds of resources and strategies that are needed to overcome specific barriers in specific contexts, and so forth.

There is an increasing stream of studies that document particular efforts to develop broad linkages among two or more agencies, or communitywide collaborative endeavors. However, these studies generally do not detail the specific steps taken to "make it happen," the reasons these steps were taken or the tangible benefits that have followed. This literature will undoubtedly grow, regardless of what the Department does with its scarce research dollars, and there is therefore little reason to consider this kind of research a priority.

However, context-specific research would be helpful. It can take several forms:

- Review of the existing research literature to develop and refine frameworks that address the contextual factors;
- Reanalysis of the existing case study literature in a form that resembles meta-analysis, in order to explore the validity of these frameworks; and (or possibly followed by)
- Conduct of additional site visit-based research that devotes equal priority to (a) description of coordination activities and outcomes, and (b) the contexts in which coordination occurs, using typologies that are based in the literature.

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PERFORMANCE STANDARDS AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

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I. INTRODUCTION

The enactment of the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) in 1982 marked a significant shift in the structure of the federal employment and training system. Three major changes stood out. First, after nearly 50 years of federally controlled manpower programs, JTPA created a fundamentally decentralized employment and training system, moving primary responsibility for management and oversight of local activities from the federal government to the states. Second, JTPA emphasized job training and private sector employment, and established a substantial role for the private sector as a key policy and oversight partner at the local level through Private Industry Councils. Finally, in an effort to introduce a new degree of accountability to publicly funded programs, JTPA established a system of performance standards as one of the central tools for managing the employment and training system. Reflecting the explicit premise that training is "an investment in human capital, not an expense," JTPA's performance standards brought a "bottom-line" outcome orientation to the system and a widespread recognition of the need to "measure up" to a new set of performance expectations.

JTPA's enactment as a performance-driven, outcome-oriented system represented a new direction for federally funded human resource and human service programs. While many systems track program outcomes, few prior to JTPA had used them as the basis for performance standards or tied financial incentives to outcomes. In most systems (including the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act), sanctions and rewards had tended to be "process-oriented" and tied to such measures as service shares for target populations, "error rates," or adherence to well-established planning and policy guidelines (see King, 1988, for descriptions of several systems). In changing the focus to outcomes (defined ultimately as employment and earnings gains, and welfare reduction), JTPA released much of the decision-making authority about "process" to states and communities, and focused on results as the primary means of evaluating performance.

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Since 1983, JTPA's performance-driven approach has made its way into a number of other pieces of federal legislation (for example, the new Perkins Act), and the JTPA system has itself evolved in significant ways. However, nine years after its initial implementation, the JTPA performance standards system remains in many ways an ongoing experiment. On the one hand, the purpose and emphasis of the system itself has changed considerably, moving from an overseer with a relatively narrow focus on program accountability to a more proactive role as a national tool for policy and program management. At the same time, changing national goals have prompted the development of new policies and standards. Lurking behind most of the adjustments and revisions in the system is the ongoing effort to find the "best" measures of local performance and the most effective means of using those measures to encourage effective delivery of services.

The purpose of this paper is to provide a (relatively) brief review of the major issues in and research on JTPA's performance standards system, as well as some lessons to be learned from the experiences of other fields in setting performance standards. The original intent of the paper was to focus on issues of particular relevance to serving youth; however, it became clear that the issues for youth and adults are not easy to disaggregate. In part, this reflects the research, which focuses almost entirely on either the system as a whole or the measurement of outcomes for adults. But it also reflects the nature of the issues and questions most often raised in regard to a performance standards system. While specifics differ, questions about the validity of performance measures, the impact of standards on services, or the role of standards in local decision-making tend to cut across age and program lines. (One of the arguments of this paper, in fact, is that many of the issues of concern in youth standards will soon also apply to those for adults.) Consequently, while youth issues are highlighted where possible and appropriate, the paper takes a broader view of performance standards and performance management and their impact on local programs.

The discussion that follows is divided into four major sections. Section II provides history and background on the JTPA performance standards system, outlining its key elements and arguing that as national policy goals have changed, the role of the system has shifted from accountability *per se* to one of performance management. Section III then reviews the research on the performance standards system as an accountability tool, examining a number of issues concerning the system's accuracy, validity and impact. Section IV discusses the effectiveness of the system as a performance management tool aimed at shaping local behavior. Section V looks to performance management systems in several other fields for ideas on how to address some of the issues in JTPA's performance standards and performance management approach. The paper concludes with a summary of recommendations.

II. FROM ACCOUNTABILITY TO PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT: JTPA's EVOLVING PERFORMANCE STANDARDS SYSTEM

The development of the JTPA performance standards system can best be described as an ongoing process of evolution that began during the last years of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) and has continued throughout the life of JTPA. One major element in that evolution has been a shift from a system whose primary purpose was program accountability--the "policy-neutral" measurement of implementation of the Act's basic mission of providing training to economically disadvantaged youth and adults for entry into the labor force--to a more proactive "program management" function aimed at actively influencing the types of programs and services offered at the local level in a decentralized system. As the focus of federal policy has moved from job placement to long-term employability development, the role of the performance standards system has moved from ensuring "that tax dollars are efficiently managed and productively spent" while allowing local communities "maximum flexibility to determine the types of services to meet the performance standards" (U.S. House of Representatives, 1982:2), to actively encouraging local entities to provide longer-term services to a higher-risk population. The two roles (both of which continue) provide a useful framework through which to view the performance of the system since the early 1980s.¹

CETA ORIGINS OF PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The development of the current performance standards system began in the late 1970s as the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) began to look for ways to better define and measure program performance.² The first major step was taken in 1977, with the definition of a series of performance indicators for use by DOL's regional offices in negotiating planned levels of performance for each prime sponsor (the local administrative entity under CETA). As part of its grant review guidelines, DOL defined ten indicators that were grouped into three broad clusters (termination, costs and fund

¹ It is important to be clear that, while the initial goal of the performance standards system was to be "policy-neutral," the system did in fact influence local targeting and program design decisions in significant ways. See Section III for a discussion of the "unintended effects" of the JTPA performance standards.

² The basic source for this section is Rubin and Zornitsky, 1988. Other studies that briefly discuss the CETA background include King, 1988; King and Pittman, 1987; National Association of Counties, et al., 1986; Geraci, 1984; Dickinson, et al., 1988.

utilization).³ The indicators were to be used in evaluating planned performance, with the proposed level of performance evaluated in terms of the previous year's local outcomes as well as regional and national performance figures. Proposed local performance levels below the prior year's performance, or below the region's lowest third, for example, would require explanation as part of the planning and negotiation process. In negotiating local standards, federal staff were also expected to take into account local "interpretive factors," which included measures of participant characteristics, program mix and environmental conditions--in essence, to adjust the standards based on local circumstances.

While criticized as too subjective and too focused on termination-based measures, the grant review guidelines represented an important step toward a structured approach to performance management. The 1978 CETA amendments moved the process forward another step. Partly in response to DOL's experience with the grant review guidelines, the amendments required the secretary of labor to establish formal performance standards (taking into account the characteristics of those served, economic and geographic differences, etc.) and an Office of Management Assistance. They also required prime sponsors to begin collecting follow-up information on postprogram employment and earnings. In 1980, a performance standards working group was formed to develop methods to quantify the factors believed to affect performance, and in 1982, "trial" standards were introduced based on regression modeling. Those standards continued to be refined over the next two years. As Rubin and Zornitsky (1988:19) note in their brief review of the JTPA standards history, "as CETA came to a close in September 1983, over six years of experience had been gained with an increasingly sophisticated approach to performance standards management."⁴

THE JTPA PERFORMANCE STANDARDS SYSTEM

The passage of the JTPA in 1982 moved the performance standards system to center stage. In contrast to CETA, which had been largely "process-oriented," with performance defined primarily in terms of "in-program" measures (for example, service to specified

³ The 10 indicators in the termination cluster were positive termination rate; two entered employment rates (entered employment over total terminations, and positive terminations); and two nondirect placement rates (nondirect placements over total terminations, and entered employments). The indicators in the cost cluster were cost per positive termination, cost per entered employment and cost per nondirect placement. The indicators in the fund utilization cluster were carryout rate (remaining funds over available funds) and administrative cost rate.

⁴ It is worth noting that experience, while substantial, was almost entirely focused on developing measures for adult programs. Little, if any, of the early technology focused on youth (Geraci, 1984).

target populations), JTPA was to be performance-driven and outcome-oriented. In the words of the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources:

The legislation must insist on performance. The current CETA system does not have any effective means of measuring program results or penalizing non-performance. The new legislation will provide standards for judging the programs for what they accomplish--by whether those trained are hired and earn more as a result of training. It will end federal involvement with the process of how people are trained. It will provide for measurement of the outcomes and remove the federal government from involvement in the details of program operations (Senate Report No. 97-469, quoted in Bailey, 1988:302).

The legislation provides for the definition of national performance standards aimed at establishing accountability based on program outcomes. The secretary of labor is responsible for defining the national standards, for setting their levels, and for establishing parameters within which the standards can be adjusted to local circumstances. States are responsible for implementation: adjusting standards to local conditions, establishing additional standards, awarding incentive funds to SDAs that exceed standards and sanctioning those whose performance falls short. Private Industry Councils (PICs) and service delivery areas (SDAs) decide who to serve and what services to offer within the context of these federally defined and state-managed standards. In the words of one researcher, "it is a hierarchical system, with roles and responsibilities for federal, state, and local actors differentiated in rough relation to their distance from service provision" (King, 1988:9).

Perhaps more to the point, however, JTPA's performance standards system is a decentralized system, with primary responsibility for performance management delegated to states and localities. While the standards are nationally defined, states adjust the standards and make decisions concerning the award of incentive grants or the imposition of sanctions. Six percent of the Title II-A funds (JTPA's core training allocation) are designated for incentive grants, to be awarded by states to SDAs that exceed their performance standards. States also have the power to mandate reorganization of SDAs that fail to meet their standards two years in a row. In the national system, these rewards and sanctions are seen as the engine that drives local performance, with much of the leverage in the system placed in the states' hands.⁵

⁵ A number of guides and policy papers discuss the state role and options in some detail. See National Association of Counties, et al., 1986; Figeroa and Ganzglass, 1988; Center for Human Resources, 1989; and SRI International and Berkeley Planning Associates, 1990. For discussions of local roles and options, see Center for Human Resources, 1989; Laventhol and Horwarth, 1988; and Strumpf, 1986.

As described in the legislation, the major purpose of the performance standards system was to establish accountability for the use of federal funds. Its basic premises, as outlined in Section 106, were that "job training is an investment in human capital and not an expense," and that "the basic return on investment is to be measured by the increased employment and earnings of participants and the reductions in welfare dependency." The legislation directed the secretary of labor to prescribe standards for both adult and youth programs. Adult standards might include the following:

- Placement in unsubsidized employment;
- Retention in unsubsidized employment;
- Increases in earnings, including hourly wages; and
- Reduction in the number of individuals and families receiving cash welfare payments and in the amounts of such payments.

Youth programs were to be evaluated in terms of these adult factors when appropriate, as well as for several youth-focused outcomes:

- Attainment of PIC-recognized employment competencies;
- Elementary, secondary and postsecondary school completion;
- Enrollment in other training programs or apprenticeships; and
- Enlistment in the armed forces.

The legislation also directed the secretary to prescribe cost standards relating gross program expenditures to various performance measures.

As a result, DOL defined seven initial performance measures, which are described in Table 1. The initial performance standards (i.e., the required levels of performance) were based on outcome data from CETA and were intended to reflect the average level of performance. In program year (PY) 1986, JTPA data were first used as the basis for the standards, and the standards were redefined as the minimum level of expected performance. As such, the numerical standards were relatively low--generally the 25th percentile of expected performance based on the prior year's experience (DOL, 1988a).

In addition to defining the standards, DOL also issued an optional adjustment model based on the regression modeling approach developed for CETA. Through use of the

Table 1
INITIAL JTPA PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Adult Measures

Entered Employment Rate: The number of adults who entered employment at termination as a percentage of the number of adults who terminated.

Cost Per Entered Employment: Total expenditures for adults divided by the number of adults who entered employment.

Average Wage at Placement: Average wage for all adults who entered employment at the time of termination.

Welfare Entered Employment Rate: The percentage of terminated adult welfare recipients who entered employment at termination.

Youth Measures

Entered Employment Rate: The percentage of terminated youth who entered employment at termination.

Positive Termination Rate: The percentage of terminated youth who had a positive termination (i.e., at termination, the youth had entered unsubsidized employment, met one of the youth employability enhancement termination definitions or attained youth employment competencies recognized by the Private Industry Council).

Cost Per Positive Termination: Total expenditures for youth divided by the number of youth who had a positive termination.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, 1984.

model, governors could adjust the national standards for SDAs serving unusual numbers of hard-to-serve populations or operating in areas of particularly high unemployment. The goal was to ensure that SDAs were not penalized for conditions out of their control. It is important to note that, while "optional," use of the model was strongly encouraged by DOL.⁶ In 1986, 42 of the 50 states used the adjustment model (Dickinson, et al., 1988).

In briefly reviewing the initial standards, there are several observations to be made, some of which will be discussed in greater detail later. First, while a major goal of the standards was to assess changes in earnings and welfare status, the initial performance standards were entirely termination-based, largely because of the difficulties of collecting and evaluating net impact data. As a result, one of the ongoing issues for the performance standards system has been the adequacy of the termination measures as proxies for increased earnings and employment and reduced welfare dependency, and the degree to which they steer the system in the appropriate direction (Bailey, 1988; also see Barnow, 1990, and Zornitsky and Rubin, 1988, for discussion of some of the measurement issues in designing standards).⁷

Second, from the beginning, the youth standards incorporated a degree of ambiguity (and perhaps ambivalence) in regard to appropriate outcomes for youth programs. Little of the early work on national performance measures focused on youth outcomes, so there was relatively little experience to work from, and early versions of the Act appeared to leave the development of youth measures entirely to local communities (see U.S. House of Representatives, 1982). And although eventually mandated in the Act, "attainment of youth competencies" remains the only measure to be defined at the local level. As a result, the early youth standards sent a mixed message to the field, and accountability for performance in serving youth has been a problem from day one.⁸

⁶ In order to encourage use of the model, DOL noted that states would not have to produce any additional documentation for adjustments made through the model and that in cases of appeals where an SDA is sanctioned, "the Secretary will be predisposed to agree with those governors who used the Department's methodology appropriately" (DOL, 1984:4055; see also DOL, 1988a).

⁷ Postprogram follow-up measures were considered at the time of the initial standards, but DOL indicated that more research on postprogram measures was needed before they could be implemented. Follow-up measures were implemented on an optional basis in PY 1988 and mandated in PY 1990 (DOL, 1984, 1988c).

⁸ From the beginning of JTPA, substantial local variation in the definition of youth competencies was anticipated, making both data gathering and performance management difficult at best. In its PY 1984 performance standards issuance, DOL noted that it could not begin data collection on youth competencies until it had a better sense of how those competencies would be defined locally: "Until the PICs have defined

Third, one of the original major goals of the performance standards system was to be "policy-neutral" at the federal level. This is summarized in the 1988 evaluation of the system:

The intention of federal performance-standards policies is to foster accountability and cost-effectiveness without undue influence on SDA design decisions Careful effort went into choosing federal performance measures that would not constrain SDAs in their decisions about whom to serve and what services to offer The adjustment models developed for the federal standards are intended to ensure the "neutrality" of the standards with respect to decisions about client targeting and to "hold harmless" SDAs that choose to serve more difficult clients . . . (Dickinson, et al., 1988:2).

In short, the initial approach to the performance standards was intended to reflect JTPA's decentralized design. The goal of the standards was to hold states and service delivery areas accountable, and to encourage quality and efficiency, but, in the words of the House Committee on Education and Labor, "not preempt what are appropriately local decisions . . . about what persons are to be served, and how they are to be served" (U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Education and Labor, 1982:11).

MOVING TOWARD PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Beginning in the mid-1980s, DOL's "policy-neutral" approach to the performance standards system began to change. With the introduction of a series of new youth and adult standards, the system began to take on a new and additional role as a management tool for achieving both federal and state policy goals.

This change in approach grew out of a number of developments. In the mid-1980s, publication of A Nation at Risk (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), Workforce 2000 (Johnston and Packer, 1987) and a series of other studies began to prompt increased concern over work force competitiveness and the problem of basic skills in both youth and adults. The 1986 JTPA amendments, which incorporated basic

such competencies and the Department has had an opportunity to study the manner in which competency systems are being designed and applied at the local level, it is not possible to establish an informed performance standard and its related reporting elements" (1984). Later efforts to report competency-related outcomes were stymied by local opposition and opposition from the Office of Management and Budget, which saw data collection on competency outcomes as an intrusion into local discretion. See the report by the U.S. General Accounting Office (1987) for a brief discussion of the difficulties in collecting data on youth competencies.

skills instruction into the Title II-B summer program, were one reflection of this growing concern. At the same time, there were continuing concerns over the impact of JTPA's performance standards on client selection and types of services offered, and over the limitations of the employment-focused and termination-based standards.

PY 1988-89 saw the first significant revision of the JTPA performance standards system since the system was established in 1983. After considerable discussion with the field through technical working groups and public comment on proposed revisions, DOL announced the establishment of five new measures as well as a series of changes in definitions, reporting requirements and numerical levels for several key standards (DOL, 1987, 1988b, 1988c). Four of the new measures established postprogram follow-up standards addressing employment rates, weeks worked and weekly earnings. The fifth was the youth employability enhancement rate, which measures the non-employment youth outcomes formerly included in the positive termination rate. (The new standards are summarized in Table 2.) Rather than introduce the new standards wholesale, states were required to select 8 of the now 12 national standards for use in managing local performance as part of the transition strategy for PY 1988-89.⁹

The new standards for PY 1988-89 marked several important changes in JTPA performance standards policy. In program terms, the establishment of a distinct youth employability enhancement standard clearly signalled the growing importance of skills development and provided an unambiguous message that "enhancement" represented as appropriate an outcome for JTPA youth as placement.¹⁰ The move toward follow-up measures similarly signalled a major effort to refocus JTPA adult services on longer-term employability development. The changes in performance measures were accompanied by redefinition of competency attainment, adjustments in the numerical standards and new data collection requirements, all of which were aimed at encouraging more intensive and comprehensive services for a more at-risk slice of the JTPA-eligible population (DOL, 1987; Strumpf, 1988; Figueroa and Ganzglass, 1988).

⁹ In selecting from among the national standards, governors were required to include an adult placement measure (e.g., placement wage, or weekly earnings at follow-up) and a non-cost youth measure (entered employment, positive termination or employability enhancement).

¹⁰ While the positive termination rate had always included placement as well as "enhancement" outcomes as part of its definition, it placed little pressure on SDAs to provide employability development programming. SDAs could still meet their goals through short-term job placements alone. By establishing a separate employability enhancement measure, DOL helped to legitimize outcomes other than placement, and directly encouraged more intensive, competency-based programs. (See Center for Human Resources, 1989, and Strumpf, 1988, for discussions of the enhancement standard.)

Table 2
ADDITIONAL DOL PERFORMANCE MEASURES
PY 1988-89

Follow-Up Measures

Follow-Up Employment Rate: Total number of adult respondents who were employed (full-time or part-time) during the 13th full calendar week after termination, divided by the total number of adult respondents (i.e., adult terminees who completed follow-up interviews).

Welfare Follow-Up Employment Rate: Total number of adult welfare respondents who were employed (full-time or part-time) during the 13th full calendar week after termination, divided by the total number of adult welfare respondents (i.e., adult terminees previously or currently on welfare who completed follow-up interviews).

Average Weekly Earnings at Follow-Up: Total weekly earnings for all adult respondents employed during the 13th full calendar week after termination, divided by the total number of adult respondents employed at the time of follow-up.

Average Number of Weeks Worked in Follow-Up Period: Total number of weeks worked (full-time or part-time) during the 13 full calendar weeks after termination for all adult respondents who worked, divided by the total number of all adult respondents (whether or not they worked any time during this 13-week follow-up period).

Youth Measures

Employability Enhancement Rate: Number of youth who attained one of the employability enhancements at termination, whether or not they also obtained a job, as a percentage of the total number of youth who terminated. Youth employability enhancements include: (a) attained two or more PIC-recognized youth employment competencies; (b) entered non-Title II training; (c) returned to full-time school; (d) completed major level of education; and (e) completed program objectives (14- and 15-year-olds).

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, 1988c.

But the new standards also marked a shift in approach to the management of the performance standards system. As part of the performance standards review, DOL set explicit policy goals to shape the performance standards management process and to establish criteria by which potential revisions could be evaluated. In doing so, DOL began to move away from use of the performance standards system as a "policy-neutral" accountability mechanism and toward more active use of the system as a tool implementing national policy.¹¹

In 1990, after two years of experience with the postprogram and employability enhancement measures, a further adjustment in the standards was made. Six "core" performance measures were adopted for PY 1990-91, eliminating the "menu" approach used for the previous two years and significantly streamlining the performance standards system. The six 1990-91 measures were:

- Adult Follow-Up Employment Rate;
- Adult Weekly Earnings at Follow-Up;
- Welfare Follow-Up Employment Rate;
- Welfare Weekly Earnings at Follow-Up;¹²
- Youth Entered Employment Rate; and
- Youth Employability Enhancement Rate.

As part of the 1990-91 revisions, the cost standards were eliminated, though cost data were to be collected for program oversight and fiscal management (DOL, 1990a).

As with the PY 1988-89 revisions, the changes for PY 1990-91 reflected DOL's growing use of the performance standards system as an active policy and performance manage-

¹¹ This shift was part of a broader move to establish a more active policy guidance role for DOL (DOL, 1988d). The performance standards system goals defined for PY 1989-90 were to encourage increased service to individuals at risk of chronic unemployment, particularly youth; provision of training that leads to long-term employability; increased basic skills and youth employment competency training; and implementation of postprogram performance measures (DOL, 1988a).

¹² The only new measure, defined as total weekly earnings for all welfare respondents employed during the 13th full calendar week after termination, divided by the total number of welfare respondents employed at follow-up.

ment tool. As stated in the notice of proposed revisions, the focus on follow-up measures was meant to "send an explicit policy signal that JTPA is a value-added program which generates long-term employment for its participants." The youth employability enhancement measure was also meant to emphasize the value of skills attainment and educational credentials, and to "focus program design on skill development, with particular emphasis on dropout prevention." The cost standards were excluded from the core measures "in support of the Department's policy goal of fostering improved service to more at-risk individuals" (DOL, 1990b:514-515). Finally, as the final notice stated, DOL focused on six measures because "the Department believes that streamlining the number of performance measures to a focused set of core standards sends an explicit policy message on what national JTPA priorities and program expectations should be promoted in state and local performance management policies" (DOL, 1990c:14012).¹³

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS IN THE 1990s

As it moved into the 1990s, the JTPA performance standards system had seen well over a decade of development. During that period, the "technology" used to establish performance levels and to adjust for local circumstances became well-established, and a number of refinements were made to the system to improve its accuracy and performance (most notably, the shift to follow-up standards).

At the same time, one might argue that the most significant change has been a shift in the function of the performance standards system from promoting and measuring performance to serving as a tool for national employment policy. While JTPA began with a relatively broad mission of providing training to those economically disadvantaged individuals "who can most benefit from, and who are most in need of, such opportunities" [Section 141a], the growing recognition of the need for more intensive services and increased services to those most at-risk shifted both national policy and the role the performance standards system could play.

In broad terms, one of the questions raised by the evolution of the system is what impact all this change has had on implementation. The standards, which remained constant for the first five years of JTPA, were changed twice in four years. Many of the changes (particularly those prompted by the youth employability enhancement standard) require substantial lead time and investment in program and system development, raising the question of whether the original provisions in the Act limiting changes in the standards to every two years provide enough stability. One area of investigation for DOL, then,

¹³ The need to streamline the number of performance measures was one of the recommendations of the JTPA Advisory Committee (1989).

might be to examine the implementation and impact of regular revisions and assess the trade-offs between the responsiveness of a two-year cycle and the stability and development time provided by a longer interval between revisions.

But the evolution of the performance standards system also provides a useful framework against which to assess the research conducted in the field. Given the primary role of the performance standards system as a means of promoting and measuring accountability and efficiency, how well have performance standards stood up? Are they appropriate and effective measures of quality training? At the same time, what have we learned about the effectiveness of the standards as performance management tools? What impact have they had on local practice, and how effective can we expect them to be as policy tools in the future? Finally, based on the experience of other systems, how can the JTPA approach to performance standards and performance management be improved? These questions are addressed in the balance of this paper.

III. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE JTPA PERFORMANCE STANDARDS SYSTEM AS AN ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

Given the importance of the performance standards system in the structure of JTPA, and its evolving role as a tool to improve accountability and program management, what do we know about its use and effectiveness? How well does the system account for performance, and in what ways has it succeeded in shaping the delivery of services? How well has JTPA's outcome orientation translated into standards for youth? Are there special issues involved in the youth standards, and what perspective can we gain on the system as a whole by examining those issues?

The answers are mixed and somewhat tentative. While the performance standards system has been subject to substantial criticism (particularly that it encourages "cream-ing"), evaluations of the system by informed observers have been generally positive. Researchers have pointed to its coherent design and implementation (King, 1988); its broad acceptance within the field; its success in focusing states and SDAs on the importance of outcomes (Barnow, 1990); and its effectiveness in building a positive image and public support for JTPA (Johnston, 1987; Dickinson, et al., 1988). Even its harshest critics consider the commitment to performance standards in JTPA "an advance" (Levitan and Gallo, 1988).

But it is also important to recognize the system's limitations. Much of the performance standards methodology is weakened by problems of definition and inadequate data. As the management gurus often point out, only what gets measured gets attention, and there is much that the system fails to measure or measure adequately. In terms of the youth standards, the problems of measurement are substantial enough to cast doubt on the credibility of any national measures.

Our knowledge of the system is also thin. There has been only one major evaluation of the system (Dickinson, et al., 1988); much of the rest of the research is based on very limited data. Research on standards for youth programs is virtually nonexistent. Moreover, the research itself is very time-bound. As Section II of this paper indicates, JTPA's performance standards system is a moving target, and the bulk of the research focuses on the system prior to the revisions in PY 1988. Consequently, much of what we would like to know about the system awaits further research.

The conclusion that emerges most clearly from the literature is that the performance standards system may be "working," both as accountability system and performance management tool, but is still far from ideal. As it stands today, the system represents a compromise among often conflicting demands and goals (accuracy versus cost, federal versus state or local control, etc.). There are many ways in which it can be strengthened

and improved. However, to quote King (1988:63), "refinements are in order, not wholesale restructuring."

In considering the effectiveness of the performance standards system, it is important to recognize both its limitations and its role as part of a broader system of policy and governance. To be effective as a system of accountability, a performance standards system must be appropriate, fair and accurate. Its measures must be clearly related to performance goals; be based on accurate information; minimize "unintended effects;" and actually measure what they purport to measure. While DOL has made a significant effort to develop a system that meets these criteria, the system has its fair share of weaknesses and shortcomings. Taken together, they point to a need to improve the quality of the data used in the performance standards system and a need to better evaluate its effects.

MEASURING JTPA's GOALS

The first question to be asked in reviewing JTPA's performance standards system is how well it measures the goals set forth in the Act. JTPA is clearer than most legislation in defining its purpose and setting goals and measures. In Section 106, the Act sets the terms for all that follows: "job training is an investment in human capital and not an expense," and the return on that investment is to be measured in increased employment and earnings of participants, and reductions in welfare dependency.

The problem for JTPA has been how to translate that agenda into a workable system of performance standards. On the face of it, the Act appears to be setting net impact as the basis for measuring performance--simply put, are services making a difference? Is there a payback to the investment? However, as Barnow (1990), Levitan and Gallo (1988), and others point out, measuring program impact presents a number of methodological problems. To measure net impact effectively generally requires a formal evaluation and an experimental control group so that comparisons can be made with what happens in the absence of any intervention. But conducting experimental evaluations is costly, and the results are not likely to be available until long after the fact. While statistical methods are available for estimating impacts nonexperimentally, Barnow notes that they have not yet been shown to be reliable. Nonexperimental evaluations of CETA programs, for example, produced widely divergent estimates of earnings gains using essentially the same data (Barnow, 1990).

The measurement of gross change, a less ambitious measure, has also proven difficult. In terms of adults, Dickinson, et al., (1988) note that DOL investigated the possibility of establishing standards based on the difference between pre- and postprogram wages of participants, and on direct measures of welfare reduction. In these instances, the

difficulties in accurately determining preenrollment wages (since the majority of participants were unemployed or out of the labor market at time of enrollment) and the diversity of state Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) guidelines made it impossible to establish reliable measures.

In terms of youth, there is a similar problem in establishing a benchmark from which to measure change. How do you measure a consistent starting point or benchmark for "completed major level of education" or "entered non-Title II training"? The Job Corps has explored standards for competency attainment based on measured skill increases. However, that measure was based on the use of the same assessment instruments by all Job Corps centers, a degree of control not normally available in JTPA (DOL, 1986). For youth as well as for adults, the solution to the problem of measuring change seems elusive.¹⁴

On the one hand, the issue is a significant one. Even with the shift to follow-up rather than termination-based measures, JTPA's performance standards still focus on gross outcomes--numbers employed, weekly earnings, youth enhancements, etc. The absence of a clear and unambiguous connection between measures and the Act's goals of increased earnings and reduced welfare dependency leaves open the question of whether the standards are driving the system toward maximum impact.

In youth programs, the absence of effective measures of change leads to questions about both the reality of skills gains and the likelihood that enhancement outcomes would have taken place without JTPA intervention. As one study points out, the reliance on gross outcome measures rather than measures of change provides at least some incentive to serve the most job-ready youth and adults: "To the extent that these standards . . . differ from the true measure of program efficiency (net impact), efficiency-incentives for program operators will be confounded" (Sandell and Rupp, 1988:30).

However, it is also important to recognize the limitations inherent in performance management generally. As both Barnow (1990) and Dickinson, et al., (1988) point out,

¹⁴ In the PY 1988 revisions to the definition of youth competency attainment, some effort was made to address this issue by requiring participants to be initially deficient in at least 5 of the 11 preemployment/work maturity competencies in order to claim attainment. Similarly, some requirements were set to ensure at least a minimum level of service was associated with the school-based outcomes. However, these are very rough gestures at best, since most of the critical definitions (such as "competency attainment" and "satisfactory progress") are set locally. In terms of measures of change, they provide no real information. As discussed elsewhere in this paper, one of the problems with all the competency measures, of course, is consistency in definition and measurement of competencies across SDAs. An effective measure would require a much higher degree of federal control over local definitions than the Act currently allows. See U.S. General Accounting Office, 1987, and DOL, 1989, for discussions of competency attainment measures.

performance standards are generally not designed to measure net impact, but to provide answers to simpler process and outcome questions--in this case, are adults becoming employed, and are young people gaining skills and completing school? In contrast to evaluation, which tends to take place on an occasional or a one-shot basis, performance management is an ongoing function. As such, it has to be more timely, and less costly and intrusive. The price of that timeliness and efficiency is often a compromise between the ideal, in terms of "fit" to the program's goals, and the practical.¹⁵

ACCURACY AND PROBLEMS OF MEASUREMENT

While the discussion about the "fit" between the performance standards and JTPA's goals may favor theory over practice, concern over the quality of the data used in measuring performance is very real and immediate. The bottom line for performance management is the ability to measure and compare performance against a set of objectives. In order to be fair and meaningful, performance standards must be built on a foundation of accurate and consistently reported information. Here, in large part because of Office of Management and Budget (OMB) limitations on reporting requirements (Johnston, 1987), there are serious questions about the quality of the information used in the performance standards system.

The problem of data definition and accuracy is most serious for the youth competency-related standards. As established under JTPA, youth competencies are defined and recognized by the PICs. They are, in fact, the only standard-related outcome entirely defined at the local level. SDAs and PICs determine what competencies to teach, how to assess deficiency and attainment, and how to define critical measures of success, such as "competency attainment" and "positive termination."

The result of this local discretion, as a U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) report (1987) detailed, was tremendous diversity among local systems during JTPA's early years in terms of the skills required, the training provided and the criteria for attainment. At that time, the GAO found that of 87 surveyed SDAs, 42.5 percent provided training in only one of the three broad competency areas defined by DOL (preemployment/work

¹⁵ Zornitsky and Rubin (1988) make a similar point in discussing the trade-offs between termination-based 3-month follow-up and 6-month follow-up measures. While the longest-term follow-up measures are the most accurate, they are the least practical and most expensive to implement. The "best" measure, as a result, may be the compromise 3-month follow-up.

maturity skills, basic educational skills and job-specific skills);¹⁶ 32 percent trained in two competency areas; and 25 percent provided training in all three areas. Training time for the different competency areas varied widely, with generally less than 50 hours of training for preemployment/work maturity skills, and several hundred hours for basic educational and job-specific skills training. Definitions of attainment also varied from attainment of 1 of 15 locally defined preemployment/work maturity skills in one SDA (about 3 to 4 hours of training time) to attainment of 22 of 24 skills (40 to 48 hours of training) in another. Some SDAs required attainment in only one area (again, usually preemployment/work maturity), while others required attainment in two or three before claiming credit for a positive outcome.

As the GAO report concluded, "differences in SDAs' minimum criteria for reporting positive terminations could render meaningless a comparison of SDA performance standards statistics that include competency attainment data" (1987:48). What was a positive termination in one SDA was, at best, an interim benchmark in another. The GAO also noted that, given the awarding of incentive funds for high performance, SDAs with more stringent requirements might be tempted to lower them to compete for incentive dollars: "As such, incentive awards would function to encourage smaller rather than larger enhancements of youths' employability" (1987:48).

By the time of the GAO report, DOL had begun to take steps to tighten the reporting requirements around youth competencies, and DOL has taken additional steps since. In 1986, DOL established criteria for a "sufficiently developed system" aimed at providing basic quality controls governing local reporting. In PY 1988-89, DOL further refined the system by defining a series of 11 "core" preemployment/work maturity competencies; by requiring that youth be deficient in at least 5 of these 11 competencies; and by requiring that youth attain competency in at least two of the three major areas (preemployment/work maturity skills, basic educational skills and job-specific skills) before a positive termination or employability enhancement outcome could be claimed (DOL, 1988c; GAO, 1987).

Despite these changes, the definition of competency attainment remains largely a matter of local discretion. According to the project leader for SRI's forthcoming national evaluation of the JTPA youth competency system, there is still tremendous variation among local systems. While the DOL regulations have brought greater consistency in the preemployment/work maturity competencies, the definition of individual skills, teaching strategies and assessment methods still vary widely from SDA to SDA. The

¹⁶ Preemployment/work maturity skills were taught in 34 of the 37 SDAs providing training in only one area.

definition of basic skills attainment is similarly diverse, with some SDAs defining attainment in terms of grade-level gains and others in terms of functionally defined skills. In some SDAs, gains of as little as one-half grade level in reading and math are required for "attainment;" in others, gains of a grade level or more are required; and in still others, an eighth-grade reading level or its equivalent is the criterion for attainment.¹⁷

In short, five years after the GAO report, the diversity in local definitions of youth competencies continues to lead to questions about the consistency and effectiveness of the youth employability enhancement standard that is based, in part, on competency attainments. While the forthcoming evaluation will report that the tighter definitions of competency attainment and the requirement for attainment in two of three areas have had an impact on the services offered in the field (particularly a substantial expansion in basic skills education), the youth competency system still lacks the consistency needed to be a meaningful national measure of performance. As the system now stands, one SDA is offering apples and another oranges, and all are being equally counted and credited as fruit.

Little of this is news to the system, and DOL staff have consistently pushed for improvements (against both OMB and local objections; see GAO, 1987). But as long-term skills development moves to the forefront of the national youth agenda, and as discussions continue concerning establishment of adult competency measures, the problem of measuring skill gains or "competency attainment" will grow more significant. One of the clear policy issues to emerge from the research (particularly the forthcoming national competency system evaluation) is whether the balance of local versus national definition of the youth competency system must be changed to improve the outcomes, in terms of both consistent services and meaningful performance measures.

While problems of consistency in reported data are most evident in the youth competency system, concerns have been raised elsewhere as well. Johnston (1987) and King (1988) both note that while improvements have been made, many of the definitions for key reporting elements, including "participant" and "entered unsubsidized employment," lack essential specificity and "raise serious questions about the quality of program data" used in evaluating performance and in developing performance standards adjustment models (King, 1988:5). Johnston, citing a 1986 GAO report, notes, for example, that "entered unsubsidized employment" includes full-time and part-time employment, entry into the armed forces, entry into an apprenticeship program, and self-employment.

¹⁷ Based on conversation with Katherine P. Dickinson, January 1992. Completion of the DOL-sponsored national evaluation is expected in 1992.

Under this definition, full-time, part-time and temporary employment are counted as essentially equivalent positive outcomes.¹⁸

The lack of specificity--essentially the grouping of reported outcomes--raises the same potential issues as the competencies, that "bad" outcomes will drive out good and that inaccuracies will dilute the credibility of the system. At the same time, it limits the capacity of the system's adjustment models to account for different types of outcomes (as noted later, the models can only adjust for factors reported on a national basis). The move to follow-up standards reduces somewhat the likelihood that credit will be claimed for short-term placements, but the grouping of part-time and full-time employment in the same measure means continued "looseness" in the definitions.

As always, this becomes a policy decision: whether the collection of information necessary for more accurate or more finely tuned reporting is worth the increased cost and potential infringement on local prerogatives. While JTPA (and OMB) have tended to opt for less information (while making better use of it), it is worth noting that JTPA's reporting requirements seem relatively mild compared with those of other federally funded programs.

In terms of the implementation of these reporting requirements, Levitan and Gallo (1988) raise the issue of inflated entered employment rates and the possibility of outright fraud. Follow-up surveys in two states, they note, indicate that claimed placement rates may be exaggerated by 5 to 10 percent. Recent critical reports by the GAO and DOL's Office of Inspector General also raise the question of the reliability of reported outcome data (GAO, 1991; DOL, Office of Inspector General, 1989, 1990). While few practitioners in the field credit the concerns of widespread fraud in reporting, the issue may provide added impetus for further definition of key reporting elements and for development of a more routinized process to monitor and evaluate the reporting system.

UNINTENDED EFFECTS

Perhaps the most visible area of concern about the performance standards system is the standards' impact on local practice--in particular, the degree to which they promote "unintended effects." Perhaps the central issue in discussions of the JTPA performance standards is the question of whether the standards promote "creaming"--that is, focusing services on the least disadvantaged and most job-ready among the eligible population. Other questions concern how well the performance standards adjustment models

¹⁸ The problem of consistency has also been particularly evident in program cost figures, and was a major element in elimination of the cost standard (Dickinson, et al., 1988; JTPA Advisory Committee, 1989; DOL, 1990c).

compensate for variations in local conditions, and the ways in which the standards are implemented at the state and local levels. Here as elsewhere, the answers are mixed, though a few clear lessons about the effects of the standards do emerge.

Creaming and Services

One of the central tensions inherent in JTPA's commitment to a performance-based system is between a focus on outcomes and attention to the population served. The drafters of JTPA attempted to finesse the issue by calling for measures of net gain in evaluating performance and by directing that services be targeted to "those who can benefit from, and who are most in need of such opportunities." However, the difficulties in measuring gains, and the almost total local discretion in determining needs and benefits have led to continuing concerns about what services are being offered and how they are being targeted (Johnston, 1987; Sandell and Rupp, 1988; GAO, 1990a).

In terms of the performance standards, a number of critics have argued that the emphasis of the initial performance standards on job placements and costs pushed the system to focus services on those most job-ready and to emphasize short-term training and placement, and limited the capacity of SDAs to serve the hard-to-serve. Levitan and Gallo (1988) and others (reported in Johnston, 1987) note the perception among practitioners that there was "widespread" creaming in the system. Bailey (1988) also argues that because of the standards, JTPA was serving proportionally fewer dropouts than CETA.

However, the 1985 Westat evaluation of JTPA (as reported in Johnston, 1987) found that JTPA was enrolling higher proportions of blacks, AFDC recipients and youth than the estimated proportions in the eligible population, and underserving females, Hispanics and high school dropouts. They also found that JTPA participants tended to be more severely disadvantaged than the eligible population as a whole. Reports by Sandell and Rupp (1988) and the GAO (1989, 1990b) have concluded that, on average, JTPA was serving disadvantaged youth and adults roughly in proportion to their presence in the eligible population. In the words of the GAO, while JTPA failed to target those most in need, "there is . . . little evidence that JTPA is 'creaming' by serving a disproportionately high number of those who have less need--the more job-ready" (1990b:20).¹⁹

¹⁹ In broad terms, Sandell and Rupp (1988) found that whites and Hispanics were slightly underrepresented, and blacks overrepresented. Those from the lowest income groups also tended to be overrepresented, as were AFDC recipients. Dropouts were underserved, but primarily among adults. Among youth, dropouts represented 19 percent of the eligible population and 29 percent of JTPA participants.

In terms of services, there is stronger evidence of a move toward shorter-term, placement-oriented services, at least in the first few years of JTPA. Bailey (1988) and Levitan and Gallo (1988) both cite figures indicating a substantially higher use of on-the-job training (OJT) and job search training under JTPA than under CETA. Levitan and Gallo also note a decline in classroom training and in the average duration of training. A DOL discussion paper (1988d:30484) reports similar findings: "Under JTPA there appears to have been a marked shift toward activities geared to more immediate and direct placement, such as job search assistance." The paper notes that job search assistance and "other" services accounted for about one-third of the JTPA enrollment, compared with the less than 10 percent of CETA participants who received direct referral and "other" services; approximately 22 percent of JTPA enrollees were in OJT programs--about twice the rate under CETA.

In sum, the enrollment and service research suggests that the performance standards have encouraged a shift toward shorter-term, placement-oriented services, though not rampant creaming. It is important, however, to recognize the limitations of both conclusions. On the one hand, it is not yet clear what impact the shift to the youth employability enhancement and adult follow-up standards has had on the service mix. In theory, both sets of standards should move the system toward longer-term, more intensive training.

On the other hand, the conclusions concerning creaming are based on data that were largely limited to demographic characteristics. As Zornitsky and Rubin (1988), Sandell and Rupp (1988), Barnow (1990), the Center for Human Resources (1989) and others have pointed out, there are clear variations in skill levels, motivation and labor market attachment within reported demographic groups, so creaming within those groups is still a distinct possibility. Data on reading levels and long-term welfare status were added to the reporting system in PY 1988 in an effort to better answer some of these questions (DOL, 1988b). An analysis of that data has not yet been published.

The DOL Adjustment Model

One of the central features of the performance standards system aimed at reducing such "unintended effects" as creaming is the opportunity for governors to adjust the national standards to local conditions. The purpose of the adjustment provision is to ensure that SDAs that operate in particularly tough economic environments or serve high proportions of "hard-to-serve" individuals are not penalized by unreasonably high performance standards (or alternatively, that SDAs operating in favorable environments do not unduly benefit). The goal is for SDAs to be "held harmless" for conditions out of their control, thereby creating a "level playing field" in the competition for incentive funds. The

parameters for these adjustments are set at the national level, but the actual adjustments are determined (at least in theory) by the states.²⁰

In practice, however, the adjustments in more than 40 of the 50 states are made using a statistical model developed by DOL. The model uses regression analysis of nationally reported data from the JTPA Annual Status Report (JASR) and the Census to develop "factor weights" adjusting for such factors as proportion of terminees who are black, female and read below the seventh-grade level, or local conditions, such as unemployment rate or average annual earnings in the retail and wholesale trades (DOL, 1990a). As a result, how well the model works in making "fair" adjustments has become an integral part of the ongoing performance standards debate.

In general, the DOL model has gained wide acceptance, as evidenced in part by use by more than 80 percent of the states. In surveying SDAs about the model, Dickinson, et al., (1988) found that more than 50 percent of the SDA directors surveyed rated the adjustments as either good or excellent, with somewhat higher satisfaction with adjustments for adult than for youth standards. At the same time, critics have argued that the model does not adequately compensate for service to hard-to-serve individuals and, as a result, contributes to the likelihood of creaming. Two major themes stand out.

Limited Data

One set of criticisms points to the limitations of the data used in constructing the model and argues that, as a result, the model does not adequately account for the factors that might influence local performance. Dickinson, et al., (1988) and Trott and Baj (1987), among others, note that the ability of the model to adjust for participant characteristics is limited to the data available through the national reporting system. An adjustment cannot be made for a factor that is not reported, such as long-term unemployment, or rural or urban residence.

Further, factors are dropped from the adjustment model if they are statistically insignificant on the national level. A factor may be insignificant because there is no actual relationship between the characteristic and performance, or because there is too little

²⁰ JTPA, in Section 106, charged the secretary of labor with the definition of adjustment parameters, which were then issued as part of the national performance standards regulations. According to the parameters, the adjustment procedure must be responsive to the intent of the Act, consistently applied among SDAs, objective and equitable, and in accordance with widely accepted statistical criteria. Source data must be of public use quality and available on request. Results must be documented and reproducible, and adjustments must be limited to economic factors, labor market conditions, characteristics of the population to be served, geographic factors and types of services to be provided (DOL, 1984).

variation of that factor among SDAs (the latter is one of the arguments for using individual-level data in constructing models, which is discussed below). When factors drop out because there is too little variation among SDAs, the result is a model that may provide no opportunity for SDAs to adjust for characteristics that, on their face, are likely to affect performance.²¹

The quality of the model also depends on the degree to which the data are an accurate proxy for the population they represent. The National Commission for Employment Policy (1990), for example, notes that while Hispanics are represented as a single data element, Hispanic populations vary widely in language skills and education. It argues that a model that averages all Hispanics together adequately adjusts for none, and that the failure to adjust for Hispanics is one reason they are underrepresented in JTPA. Research on welfare participants has found that program outcomes varied according to the skill levels of the participants, suggesting that the single characteristic "AFDC recipient" tends to mask important differences (Friedlander, 1988; Friedlander and Long, 1987).

In short, the performance standards model is subject to the same "garbage in, garbage out" limitations as are all statistical procedures. That is, the quality of the data determines the quality of the results. In this case, some argue that the characteristics that make individuals "hard to serve" are not sufficiently represented in the data available for the adjustment model, and as a result, SDAs providing increased services to hard-to-serve youth and adults are not recognized for their efforts.

Limitations of Aggregate Data

The second set of criticisms points at the construction of the DOL model itself, arguing that the use of national averages and aggregate SDA data tends to limit the predictive force of the model (Trott and Baj, 1987; Baj and Trott, 1988). In developing state-based adjustment models for use by states in Region V, Trott and Baj found that models using regional rather than national data produced more accurate adjustments and were often

²¹ For the PY 1990 youth standards, the entered employment rate model included adjustments for several factors, including the percent of participants in each of the following categories: 14 or 15 years old, black, dropout, student, and reading skills below seventh grade. The youth employability enhancement rate model, however, included adjustments for only three factors: percent student, percent not in labor force and unemployment rate (DOL, 1990a). It is important to note that the performance standards regulations include provisions for governors to make adjustments "beyond the model" through a documented negotiation. However, that process has been little used. The national evaluation found that only half the states had policies for adjustments beyond the model, and only 15 percent of the SDAs surveyed had applied for adjustments in PY 1986 (Dickinson, et al., 1988). See National Association of Counties, et al., 1986, for a description of the adjustment process.

based on different factors than those in the nationally developed model. (That is, factors that were statistically significant in the national model dropped out of the regionally based calculations, and vice versa.) Similarly, they argue that models using individual-level data (rather than aggregate SDA totals) are more likely to reflect the actual relationships between characteristics and outcomes and have proved substantially more accurate in predicting local performance. In essence, Trott and Baj argue two points: that models based on national data are relatively insensitive to local conditions; and that the use of more finely tuned and individual-level rather than aggregate data in models leads to better adjustments for hard-to-serve client populations and fewer incentives for creaming.²²

While there is no strong evidence that the adjustment model actively promotes creaming, it is clear from the research that the adjustment methodology could be improved to better recognize and adjust for hard-to-serve populations. One step in that direction would be improved data collection on a national level, including more information on participant characteristics and potential barriers. An intermediate step might include development of several regional adjustment models rather than a single national one. Trott and Baj (1987) found that even using SDA-level data, regional models were better predictors than the national one. Finally, DOL could encourage states to develop state-based models using individual-level data. Based on the Region V project, as Baj and Trott note, state-based models provide states the greatest capacity to build their policy priorities into the system and are best able to accurately adjust the national standards to local conditions.

Implementing the Standards

The most comprehensive and coherent evaluation of the national performance standards system (and the only full-scale evaluation effort) is reported by Dickinson, et al., (1988). That report examines the effects of national standards as implemented by the states in terms of their impact on who was served, services provided and costs. The evaluation also looks at the role of SDA policies, contracting and program decisions, and how they were shaped by state and national policies.

The core of the quantitative evaluation was a regression analysis of the impact of state performance standards policies on service to specific target groups and on the types of

²² Baj and Trott (1988) also point out that models based on individual-level data can be used to make adjustments in performance-based contracts at the provider level as well as the SDA level, again reducing incentives for providers to cream.

services offered. The analysis used data from PY 1986 (prior to the major revisions in the national standards). In particular, the analysis looked at the following:

- Whether states used the DOL adjustment model;
- Whether states provided for adjustments "beyond the model" in their state policies;
- Emphasis (through incentive policies) on exceeding standards;
- Whether states had provisions for use of incentive funds to serve hard-to-serve populations;
- Whether there were additional state policies targeting services to specific groups (dropouts, welfare recipients, etc.);
- Emphasis on entered employment standard;
- Emphasis on welfare standard; and
- Emphasis on cost standards.

In broad terms, the evaluation found that performance standards had an impact on service delivery at the local level, and, perhaps more important, that the nature and degree of that impact was shaped by the state policies for implementing the national standards. The analysis found:

- State incentive (6 percent funds) policies that emphasized exceeding standards (the incentive award increased according to how much an SDA exceeded its standards), and policies that placed greater weight on cost standards tended to discourage services to hard-to-serve groups.
- State policies that adjusted for serving hard-to-serve (use of the DOL model and adjustments "beyond the model") and those that encouraged targeting specified groups tended to increase services to hard-to-serve populations.
- State policies that adjusted standards tended to reduce the amount of job search assistance and slightly increase basic skills remediation, while state policies encouraging services to welfare recipients substantially increased basic skills services. State policies encouraging services to dropouts resulted in longer-term services, but also increased job search assistance.

- State policies that emphasized exceeding standards reduced basic skills training and tended to increase the employment focus of training, while state policies that emphasized cost standards tended to result in shorter programs (for adults) and increased job search assistance (for youth).
- In general, standards appeared to have a stronger impact on adult than on youth services.²³

While there is substantial detail to be digested here, the major conclusions from the evaluation are clear. First, the performance standards did affect clients and services on the local level (their impact on costs was apparently less clear-cut).²⁴ Second, several of the standards (and associated state policies) carried clear "unintended effects"--that is, they were not policy-neutral. Put simply, the cost standards, and state standards that awarded incentive funds based on the degree to which SDAs exceeded their standards tended to encourage reduced services to hard-to-serve groups and shorter, less-intensive services.

Third, the impact of the performance standards on local practice, while significant, was not large. The difference in the levels of welfare recipients served between states that encouraged and those that discouraged such service, for example, was less than 5 percent. "Even in states with policies that are found to discourage service to hard-to-serve groups," the report notes, "SDAs are enrolling a considerable number of hard-to-serve clients" (Dickinson, et al., 1988:73-74). One conclusion to draw from this is that the standards only had an effect "at the margins." JTPA performance standards may have inhibited services to at-risk populations, but they did not prohibit those services. A second conclusion, however, is that the standards had only a limited impact on local behavior. As discussed in Section IV of this paper, the standards are only one element in the local decision-making process. As such, they can help point the system in a particular direction, but there is question about how far they can move it on their own.

²³ See Tables A-1 and A-2 in the appendix to this paper for a summary of the statistically significant findings from the quantitative analysis. It is possible that the evaluation underestimates the impact of the standards on client mix; the unintended effects may have been larger than reported (Barnow, 1990). The regression models used in the analysis could look only at characteristics reported in the JASR, and since those characteristics are also the basis for the DOL model, adjustments may have already been made for those groups. It is possible, if not likely, that the standards had a larger, yet unmeasured impact on client groups not included in the JASR.

²⁴ The evaluation found that the relationship between performance standards policies and program costs was relatively inconsistent and often contrary to common sense, in part because of inconsistencies in how costs were reported (Dickinson, et al., 1988).

Unanswered Questions

The national evaluation of the performance standards system has had a major effect on the system at the national level, leading directly to the elimination of the cost standards from the group of "core" measures in PY 1990 and to a substantial national effort to inform states about the development of incentive policies that encourage rather than discourage services to those most at risk (see SRI International and Berkeley Planning Associates, 1990; Center for Human Resources, 1989; Figueroa and Ganzglass, 1988). It stands as the most substantial and influential research on the performance standards system to date.

But the national evaluation was designed to assess how the existing performance standards affected local services. It did not look at the effect of no standards or investigate alternatives. As a result, a number of basic questions remain open. Is there a more effective mix of standards available? Presumably, the new postprogram and employability enhancement standards will soon be evaluated and will begin to answer that question. However, Zornitsky and Rubin (1988), for example, advocate strongly for use of target-group standards; King (1988) also suggests differentiating standards by target groups. Research into the relative effectiveness of different approaches for reaching the DOL's current policy goals is still needed.

In the same vein, one has to ask whether the performance-based approach is, ultimately, more efficient and effective than the earlier process-oriented systems. The experience with the 6 percent incentive funds suggests that, with the proper guidelines, the absence of performance standards can promote service to hard-to-serve groups and innovative services (SRI International and Berkeley Planning Associates, 1990). The fact that the impact of the standards was "at the margin" also suggests that other tools may be more powerful (Zornitsky and Rubin, 1988, make a similar point). Are standards, then, worth the effort? In part, this is a policy decision; some of the benefits of JTPA's commitment to performance standards come in the shape of business commitment and public support. But at the level of local services, we still do not know if the standards system represents a more effective means of governance.

VALIDITY

The final question asked of performance standards as accountability systems is whether they are valid: Do they reliably measure what they purport to measure? Are the performance standards appropriate proxies for JTPA's broader goals and objectives? The answers to these questions are less than certain. As discussed earlier, rather than measure long-term gains in earnings and welfare reduction directly, JTPA has measured

performance in these areas through termination-based measures and, more recently, short-term follow-up measures.

To the extent that validity studies of these types of measures have been done, they have produced mixed results. The early studies of DOL's proposed performance measures under CETA (Borus, 1978; Gay and Borus, 1980) found termination measures to be extremely poor predictors of long-term earnings and employment. Both studies found that job placement was among the poorest indicators (Borus called it little better than random as a predictor of earnings gains), though other measures were somewhat more effective. More recent studies have been more positive, finding that placement has been an accurate predictor of longer-term net impact on earnings, and that follow-up measures of employment and earnings have provided even better indicators (King, 1988; Geraci, 1984; Zornitsky, et al., 1986; Zornitsky and Rubin, 1988).

Two points stand out in the literature on the validity of the common employment and training performance indicators. The first is the degree of methodological uncertainty involved in all the studies. As Zornitsky and Rubin (1988) point out, most are based on quasi-experimental methods. In their words, "since it has been demonstrated that such estimation techniques yield biased results of an often unknown magnitude and direction, it would be difficult to defend the use of such results . . . in an effort to modify the existing JTPA performance standards" (1988:41).

The second, perhaps more important point is the general paucity of either quasi-experimental or formal impact evaluation data in support of the JTPA standards (in fact, most of the studies use CETA data). In particular, despite the central place of youth competencies in the JTPA system, there has been no formal effort to validate the assumption that competency attainment, at least under its current broad definitions, contributes to a young person's long-term employability. The absence of research on the validity of those measures contrasts sharply with the attention (however limited) paid to the adult measures and leaves the current competency system open to question.

The more intriguing, and ultimately more challenging issue related to validity is the relationship of the traditional measures of employability (such as employment or wages at termination or follow-up) to long-term employability in a rapidly changing economy. Ten or twenty years ago, one could readily assume that a youth or an adult with the skills to gain and hold a job over the short term would, with luck, be able to remain employed over the long haul with the same skills. However, based on the spate of recent studies and commission reports, the coming mark of long-term employability will be the ability to learn new skills and adapt to new work requirements in a changing workplace (Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, 1990; American Society for Training and Development and U.S. Department of Labor, undated; Johnston and

Packer, 1987; Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, 1991). As we move toward a "high-performance" economy with an assumption of regular change as the central characteristic of employment, the ability to gain one job on program graduation is going to become less and less relevant as a predictor of improved opportunities.

Clearly, the development of appropriate performance standards for the new, high-performance economy is going to require increased forays into the world of workplace skills and competency attainment, with all the uncertainty evident in the JTPA youth competencies. As the initial Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills report (1991) makes clear, that is necessarily going to involve efforts to measure and document an increasingly abstract, complex and elusive set of skills--teamwork skills, the ability to understand and work with systems, etc. The development of practical and operational definitions of these skills is and will be a major challenge, as will the initial assessment and final certification of these cognitive and affective behaviors. And, as the education community is discovering, there are inherent conflicts between the process of assessing and teaching these "higher-order" skills (through more individualized and "subjective" performance-based assessments) and the demands of statewide and national reporting.

It is in this context that the issues of youth and adult performance standards come together. In the short term, for both youth and adult performance standards, the most pressing issue is the consistency and accuracy of the data, both the characteristics and barriers affecting performance, and the measures of performance. In the assessments of the fairness, appropriateness and accuracy of the system discussed here, it is clear that the basic performance standards approach is sound, but that the system is seriously weakened by poor data.

But a broader set of issues has to do with the question of whether we are measuring the right things. For both youth and adults, what skills, attitudes and behaviors do we need to ensure as outcomes of our programs? How do we develop a performance standards system appropriate for the 21st century, one that can define and measure complex skills and maintain quality and consistency (in measurement and performance) on a national basis?

IV. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE JTPA PERFORMANCE STANDARDS AS A PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

While much of the discussion thus far has focused on the "technical" elements of performance standards, performance management involves a significant "political" (as in policy and persuasion) dimension as well. Above all else, JTPA is decentralized; the vast majority of decisions concerning implementation of performance standards and management of services are made at the state and local levels. How well the current performance standards system operates as a federal (or state) performance management tool depends in large part on how well it convinces relatively independent players to make decisions supporting national (or state) goals. The conclusion one must draw from the existing research on the system is that, in its current form, the performance standards system has an impact, but that the impact is "at the margin" for many SDAs. The fact is that, as visible and much discussed as the performance standards system is, it is but one element in the state and local decision-making process. If the system is to be used as one of DOL's central policy tools in the future, as recent developments might suggest, there are a number of areas in which the system's design and/or federal practice must be reviewed and possibly strengthened.

INCENTIVES FOR STATE AND LOCAL DECISION-MAKING

As the research and "how-to" literature on the performance standards system makes clear, the key decisions affecting local services are made at the state and local levels, not in Washington. Although the federal government defines the national performance measures and sets the national standards, it is the states that implement those standards through state policies, and it is localities that make service decisions based on the standards and other local priorities. At the state level, decisions range from use of the DOL adjustment model and adoption of state standards, to the decision to impose sanctions on nonperforming SDAs. A recent technical assistance guide for state policymakers (SRI International and Berkeley Planning Associates, 1990) lists nearly a dozen major performance standards decisions to be made by states, involving more than 20 different options (see Table 3). Local decisions, ranging from decisions about target groups to determining the structure and payment benchmarks of provider contracts, are also needed to translate state or local priorities into recruitment and program operations (see Center for Human Resources, 1989, and Laventhol and Horwath, 1988, for discussions of local performance management decisions).

Local Rewards and Sanctions

The engine that is expected to drive local decisions toward improved services is the set of incentives and sanctions that reward and punish SDAs based on their performance.

Table 3
STATE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS OPTIONS

State Decision/Options	State Experience	Predicted Impacts
Emphasizing Different Outcomes		
<p>Choosing Additional State Standards</p> <p>A Standards for Service to Hard-to-Serve Groups</p> <p>B Standards for Outcomes for Hard-to-Serve Groups</p> <p>C Standards for Additional Outcomes (e.g., more than 8 federal standards, or such standards as youth retention)</p> <p>D Standards for Other Program Goals (such as expenditure rate or coordination)</p>	<p>14 states set standards; 8 states set separate standards for specific groups (dropouts, welfare recipients, etc.); 8 states set standards using a broader definition of hard to serve.</p> <p>7 states, generally using placement standards.</p> <p>10 states: 5 designated additional federal standards, 5 set standards for additional outcomes.</p> <p>5 states; 15 states incorporated expenditure rate into calculation of incentive awards.</p>	<p>Option A tends to increase services for targeted groups. Unintended effects include decreased performance on wages at placement and weekly earnings (for welfare recipients); increased use of job search assistance and reduced performance on employment measures (for dropouts).</p> <p>Unclear effect from Option B; too closely tied to service-level standards.</p>
<p>Emphasizing Performance on Key Measures</p> <p>A Weighing Standards Differently in Calculating Incentive Awards</p> <p>B Establishing Core Standards</p>	<p>25 states</p> <p>9 states</p>	<p>21 states unintentionally gave greater weight to easily exceeded standards by use of composite measures.</p> <p>Option B tends to increase performance on those standards, but with unintended effects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • possibly reduced performance on other standards (e.g., emphasis on youth employment rate reduced performance on enrichment standard); • emphasis on wage standard reduced service to dropouts; emphasis on youth entered employment reduced service to in-school youth; • emphasis on cost standard decreased performance on all measures, decreased services to hard-to-serve groups and reduced provision of longer-term services for adults.
Qualifying for Incentive Awards		
<p>Defining Exceeding and Failing to Meet Individual Standards</p> <p>A Use a Single Performance Level to Separate Exceeding from Failing to Meet</p> <p>B Use a Lower Level to Define Failing to Meet the Standard and a Higher Level to Define Exceeding the Standard</p>	<p>28 states</p> <p>15 states</p>	<p>No clear effect from either choice. However, states choosing option A tended to emphasize exceeding standards in their incentive award calculations, which does have the effect of reducing services to hard-to-serve groups or reducing provision of basic skills training.</p>

Table 3 (continued)
STATE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS OPTIONS

Defining Exceeding Performance Standards Overall		
A Setting a Minimum Number of Standards that Must be Met or Exceeded	13 states set no minimum (exceeding one standard would earn an award); 31 states required a minimum of 4 to 8 standards be met; 7 states required that all 8 standards be met.	The major difference among options is the extent to which they emphasize specific standards. Options A and C are neutral among standards, though Option C tends to unintentionally emphasize the cost standard. Requiring that a large number of standards be met emphasizes performance, which tends to discourage service to hard-to-serve groups (particularly welfare recipients) and provision of basic skills.
B Requiring that Core Standards be Exceeded	9 states established 3 to 5 core standards that must be met or exceeded.	
C Minimum Score on a Composite Index of Performance	24 states used a composite index of performance.	
Calculating Incentive Awards		
Policies for Calculating Incentives		
A Separate Pool for Each Award	18 states	Option A makes weights for each standard explicit and visible to SDAs, and hence conveys policy most clearly.
B Composite Measures of Performance	24 states	
Amount Received for Marginally Exceeding Standards	30 states awarded a portion of funds for marginally exceeding standards.	Reduces emphasis on exceeding standards, which tended to increase services to hard-to-serve groups and provision of basic skills training.
Rewarding Performance Beyond the Standard		
A Tiered Systems (or a "cap" on possible awards)	19 states	Option A is easy to understand, tends not to overemphasize exceeding standards (depending on how tiers are defined).
B Continuous System (e.g., awards based on a continuous measure of performance, such as percentage by which standard is exceeded)	23 states	Option B tends to place substantial emphasis on exceeding standards by providing increasingly higher awards for increasingly higher performance.
Caps on Rewarded Performance	21 states capped rewarded performance.	Reduces emphasis on exceeding standards
Competition Among SDAs		
A Noncompetitive (an SDA's award is not affected by performance of others)	18 states had noncompetitive incentive policies; 27 have either highly or moderately competitive policies.	Competitive formulas increase emphasis on exceeding standards.
B Moderately competitive (unearned awards are redistributed, so base award is noncompetitive, but not secondary awards)		
C Highly competitive (all awards dependent on relative performance of SDAs)		
Adjustments for Size of SDAs	29 states based 6 percent awards on SDA size; 9 states made no adjustments; 6 used a mixed approach.	Adjustments for size make performance equally important for all SDAs, though awards for small SDAs may be too small to use effectively.

Table 3 (continued)
STATE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS OPTIONS

Conditions Placed on Incentive Funds		
Exempting Incentive Funds from Performance Standards	20 states: 10 states excluded incentive funds for all SDAs; 10 gave SDAs the option of excluding the funds.	Variety of responses, ranging from use to establish high-risk programs to ongoing support for underperforming providers. Overall, impact was to increase the number of hard-to-serve individuals served, particularly welfare recipients.
Requiring Incentive Funds be Used for Specific Purposes	20 states, most requiring funds be used for hard-to-serve groups; 8 states required use for specific services, mostly basic skills remediation.	Tended to reduce unintended effects of exempting funds from performance standards; e.g., SDAs were more likely to fund innovative programs and less likely to fund underperforming providers.

Source: SRI International and Berkeley Planning Associates, 1990.

SDAs that exceed their performance standards (as defined by the governor) receive additional program funds--incentive awards. SDAs that fail to meet their standards are provided with technical assistance and, if they fail to meet their standards two years in a row, threatened with reorganization.

As a number of reviewers have commented, however, the relevance and impact of the system of rewards and sanctions is open to question. Several studies have argued that adjustment models and incentive policies have, in many cases, grown so complex that they have lost their power as policy tools (SRI International and Berkeley Planning Associates, 1990; Barnow, 1990; King, 1988). Simply put, between the factors in the adjustment model and the complexity of some state formulas for allocating incentive funds, local policymakers are no longer able to discern the consequences of their targeting or service decisions.²⁵

Dickinson, et al., (1988) and Rubin and Zornitsky (1988) also report that many SDAs see the JTPA incentive funds as relatively unimportant. According to those SDAs, the incentive grants are too small, the SDA has other resources to draw on, and the funding is unpredictable and usually has to be spent quickly--in short, it is not worth the effort. For those SDAs (approximately half of those studied by Dickinson, et al.), the motivation to respond to state performance standards policy has to come from some other source.²⁶

At the same time, the sanctions--technical assistance and reorganization--also appear relatively weak. Barnow (1990:12), tongue in cheek, questions whether "the possibility of sitting through lectures on how to perform better may serve as an incentive to perform well." Levitan and Gallo (1988) and Bailey (1988) both note that states were reluctant to impose sanctions and, five years after JTPA had begun, there had been no reported instances of sanctions by the states for poor performance. The relatively low level at which the standards were set (the 25th percentile) tends to further remove the threat of sanctions for most SDAs. The "bottom line" on incentives and sanctions may be that, for

²⁵ King (1988:62) notes that the adjustment models in particular "have remained beyond the grasp of most and are nearly unintelligible to the average person in contact with the system."

²⁶ Bailey (1988:303) also questions the effectiveness of the incentive awards, commenting that "maximizing allocations is not necessarily a strong motivation."

many SDAs, there is less "push" or "pull" from the performance standards system than one would have expected.²⁷

State Incentives

The question of what pushes or pulls the states to support national performance goals may be even more serious. As JTPA is constructed, states are expected to have substantial discretion in their decision-making and the setting of statewide policies. And given the relative openness to interpretation of JTPA's mission (particularly the phrases concerning service to "those who can benefit most, and are most in need"), states have tended to exercise that discretion broadly (Table 3 indicates variations found in the national evaluation).

However, as King (1988) notes, while states have many decisions to make, there are few incentives for states to either align with federal policy or make the hard decisions often needed to improve performance. King argues that, for all their decision-making authority, governors get few benefits from being strong performance managers. As political actors, governors are typically more concerned with distributional than results-oriented objectives. They can make many friends through incentive awards and have no incentive to make enemies by imposing sanctions. (A state's JTPA funding, King notes, "is unrelated to managerial vigor.") It is not surprising, King suggests, that "the JTPA system, with help from federal and state actors, has declared most SDAs winners, sanctioned very few, and generally undermined the credibility of the system's performance" (1988:59).

The findings at both the state and local levels suggest that the issue of incentives and sanctions must be examined. King proposes establishing a system of incentives for states, to reward good performance at the state level. Zornitsky and Rubin (1988) suggest increasing the size of the financial incentives available to SDAs. Additional technical assistance, particularly aimed at local policymakers, might improve understanding of the system and its implications for local policy. Whatever options are explored, it is clear that the mechanism by which states and SDAs are "persuaded" to support the system and its goals warrants further examination.

²⁷ A counterargument can be made that the standards are, in fact, important to many SDAs. Half of those surveyed in the national evaluation indicated that the system's incentives and sanctions were important--that the funds were needed, or that the political and public relations costs of failing to meet the standards were too high to risk (Dickinson, et al., 1988). The point here, however, is that the effect of the standards system is less than absolute. While it may work as expected in some SDAs, for a surprisingly high number, the incentives and sanctions are not major factors in local decision-making.

PROVIDER INVOLVEMENT

A second area of weakness in the performance management system is the limited involvement of service providers. One of the key lessons of "quality management" research in business is the need to involve all members of the system, from senior management to front-line staff (GAO, 1990b). Although JTPA service providers often bear primary responsibility for recruitment, instruction and job development at the local level (and are consequently in a position to directly affect client mix and local services), the research suggests that they are rarely included in the performance standards system. Zornitsky and Rubin (1988) note that incentives and adjustments are rarely passed along to providers, which means that most have incentives to cream. In their discussion of local practices, Dickinson, et al., (1988) note that SDAs tended to fall into one of several groups in terms of the degree to which they kept or passed along responsibility and risk to providers: "risk-sharers," "risk-keepers" and "risk-passers." Although the study did not try to count the number in each category, it notes that relatively few SDAs varied contract terms according to who was being served, and in more than half the SDAs studied, contract terms governing placement assigned a maximum share of the risk associated with performance standards to the service provider.

Perhaps more to the point, the research suggests that few providers were offered (or took) the opportunity to more actively participate in the performance standards process. Dickinson, et al., (1988:88) report:

Service providers were by and large unaware of the existence of performance standards in general, although a few know that the SDAs were somehow judged on outcomes and received bonus funds on those outcomes. Even when service provider staff know of the existence of a performance-standard system, they were usually unaware of the levels at which they were set.

In the JTPA "how-to" literature, a number of guides echo the emphasis on the importance of widespread participation and a "top-down/bottom-up" process. They also point to the importance of sharing risks and benefits with providers, primarily by structuring contracts to recognize and reward more intensive services or services to hard-to-serve populations (Center for Human Resources, 1989; Laventhol and Horwath, 1988). "Best practices" research being conducted by SRI International into JTPA assessment, contracting and case management practices should cast some light on improved methods for involving providers in performance management. Baj and Trott's (1988) work on state-based performance standards models also provides tools for applying adjustment models directly to providers. In both instances, DOL needs to explore ways of more directly involving and "vesting" providers in the performance management process.

THE INFLUENCE OF LOCAL FACTORS

As the national evaluation (Dickinson, et al., 1988) and studies of performance management for targeted welfare programs (Rubin and Zornitsky, 1988; Zornitsky and Rubin, 1988) point out, a performance standards system is only one of many influences on local decision-making; effective use of the standards as performance management tools requires that they be viewed in context. One of the strongest findings of the national evaluation, for example, was that the impact of the performance standards was significantly affected by the policy orientation (and, in fact, the presence or absence of clear policy) at the local level. As the evaluation notes: "Performance standards have their greatest unintended effects on program design and implementation practices in SDAs that are lacking in strong client or employer orientations to counterbalance their performance concerns" (Dickinson, et al., 1988:115). The evaluation also found that local risk-management strategies ("risk-managers" versus "risk-avoiders") similarly shaped the local response to national standards.

Both Zornitsky and Rubin, and Dickinson, et al., note the influence of outside institutional and environmental factors on local programs. In performance systems for welfare programs, Zornitsky and Rubin argue that such factors as the clarity of targeting, the ability to provide flexible and comprehensive services (through interagency coordination), the availability of adequate support services, and limitations on the use of funds are perceived by practitioners as having a greater impact on their ability to provide services than JTPA standards. Based on SDA case study interviews, the national evaluation produced a similar list of factors affecting the ability of SDAs to respond to performance standards, including the local unemployment rate, the structure of the local labor market, and service provider availability. Both studies also point to the influence of JTPA's 40 percent youth expenditure requirement, the equitable service requirements, and the limitations on stipends and services as key factors influencing local decisions. The conclusion reached by Zornitsky and Rubin (1988:74) concerns AFDC recipients but is applicable to others as well:

A growing presumption underlying much of the policy discussion over how to improve performance standards is that "the right changes" will induce program administrators and their contractors to devote more attention to serving AFDC recipients, and particularly those deemed hard to employ. However, several other key variables, such as child care and health benefits as well as interagency coordination, bear upon the ability of employment and training programs to target on such individuals and provide them with the mix of services needed to ensure gainful employment. Unless efforts

are made to address these issues, modifications to the performance standards system may have only a limited effect on future targeting and programming decisions.

The final element that must be considered in terms of local factors is local capacity--that is, the ability of SDAs and providers to design and operate services to meet targeted needs in response to performance standards. One of the anticipated findings of the national evaluation of the JTPA youth competency system is that local systems not only vary in quality, but that few SDAs or providers have the capacity to undertake the tasks involved in system development--labor market and job task analysis; development of functional, competency-based curricula; selection of appropriate assessment tools; and the like. While the evaluators note that the revisions of the competency requirements have had an impact on local services, particularly increased provision of basic skills education, few SDAs have the experience or resources to develop truly effective programs.²⁸ The likelihood of an SDA responding to national and state policy may ultimately depend on its ability to effectively implement the programs and services the policy requires.

The point to be made here is simple: in order to move the local service delivery system, it is necessary to view the national performance standards in context and recognize that other levers may also need to be applied. Several areas of emphasis are clear. First, the role of the PIC as a policymaking body, while often neglected in practice, represents a strong potential influence. As such, the evaluation findings suggest that a significant payoff could be had from an increased state and/or national investment in policy-oriented training for PIC members (i.e., more than neutral information on roles and responsibilities). To the extent that PIC members, as well as local administrators, understand the performance standards system and the implications of their local decisions, they will act in ways that increase program effectiveness.

Second, the importance of interagency linkages as a factor affecting services to hard-to-serve populations also stands out in the research. While much can be done at the local level, both the national evaluation and the Zornitsky and Rubin reports suggest that a high priority be placed on efforts by states and the federal government to lower interagency barriers.²⁹

²⁸ Based on conversation with Katherine P. Dickinson, January 1992.

²⁹ For an overview of the recent research on collaboration and state or federal strategies to increase interagency cooperation, see Bailis, this volume.

A third issue is supportive services. The proposed JTPA amendments would provide additional flexibility in the provision of supportive services; however, alternatives to the current limitations, such as adjusting spending limits according to the population being served, must be considered.

Finally, local capacity is key. As suggested earlier, the issue of long-term employability skills and competency-based education and training is likely to grow more central and more challenging over time. Current experience with the youth competency system suggests it is unrealistic to expect that each of the 600-plus SDAs around the country will have the capacity to effectively respond without significant research, development and assistance from the federal level. There are many possible options. One approach might involve federal support of state or national networks to develop and pilot competency-based systems and programs. As the JTPA Advisory Committee has noted (1989), a model for that approach can be seen, at least in part, in the Project of the States (see Center for Human Resources, 1991a, for a description). Another alternative might be the development of several "models" that, like the optional DOL adjustment model, could be adopted by interested states and SDAs. Whatever approach is taken, it is clear that as the requirements of preparing youth and adults for the labor market grow more demanding, a significant investment in local capacity-building must be part of national performance management policy.

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Because of the relative paucity of recent evaluation research on JTPA, many of the conclusions concerning the effectiveness of the standards as tools for performance management border on speculation. Evaluators in the field today, for example, informally report that the performance standards changes in PY 1988 and PY 1990 have had an impact in terms of more intensive programs (to address the follow-up standards) and increased basic skills education (to meet the youth employability enhancement standard). If so, the conclusion might be drawn that the impact depends on finding the "right" measures. Certainly a change to a new set of measures appears to have had a greater impact than efforts to influence behavior within the context of the original JTPA performance measures.

At the same time, the research and practical experience remind us that the performance standards represent only one of many influences on local decision-makers, and that to depend on standards alone to shape performance is to put too many eggs in one basket. At least in part, DOL's efforts to amend JTPA grow out of the recognition of that fact, but research clearly suggests that if and when JTPA amendments are passed, substantial research and policy work must still be done.

V. INVESTING IN QUALITY: LESSONS FROM ALLIED FIELDS

The case can easily be made that JTPA and the employment and training field stand at an important crossroads. With nearly a decade of experience behind it, JTPA is trying to shift its focus and refine (if not redefine) its mission to better prepare those youth and adults most in need of services for an increasingly challenging labor market. Regardless of questions about its direct and measurable impact on local services, JTPA's performance standards system quite clearly has a central role to play in this transition. At the most basic level, it is through the performance standards system that the fundamental mission of JTPA is translated into operable goals and that the quality and effectiveness of training is measured.

To meet the challenge of the 1990s--to provide increasingly complex and comprehensive services to an increasingly disadvantaged population--the JTPA performance standards system must move in new directions. Although the system "works" for measuring the employment outcomes of relatively traditional job training, its major weaknesses are in those areas most likely to grow in importance: the measurement of skills gains, the ability to generate quality data that can be used to analyze and manage performance, and procedures to evaluate program quality as well as overall performance. Without improvement in these areas, the ability to set realistic standards will likely decrease, and the gap between reported outcomes and actual impact will widen.

These are not simple issues to address, particularly in a system as strapped for funding as JTPA. However, a review of approaches to performance management in "allied" fields--business, health care and education--points to issues and approaches to consider. Two major themes stand out. The first is the shared investment in information as the basis for effective performance management and its associated effort to develop baselines and criteria for performance. The second is the ongoing involvement of practitioners (employees, physicians, educators) in the process of defining and reviewing performance.

TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT (TQM)

One of the major influences on the design of JTPA and its performance standards system was the market-driven, "bottom-line" orientation of the private sector. Outcome-based performance standards tied to incentives and sanctions would drive local programs toward effective services much as bottom-line profits drive companies toward efficient operations. As Bailey (1988) points out, this analogy breaks down under close examination. But, since the beginning of the 1980s, the corporate approach to performance management and measurement has begun to change. One of the major movements has been away from short-term profit and financial figures as the foundation for performance measurement, and toward a broader approach to performance management (Eccles,

1991). At the heart of that movement is what is often referred to as "total quality management" (TQM).

Simply put, TQM is an effort to reorganize and restructure traditional management practices around the ideas of customer satisfaction, continuous improvements and employee involvement. Growing out of the theories of statistical process control, and popularized first in Japan by W. Edwards Deming and Joseph Juran, the TQM approach begins with the simple idea that quality and improved productivity come from improved control of the process of production rather than from efforts at the end of the line (inspection, reworking and repair). That improved control, in turn, comes from a focus on customer needs (both internal and external customers); continuous measurement, evaluation and improvement of quality; employee participation (on the assumption that those closest to the daily process can best see how to improve it); and leadership commitment to quality as a central strategic goal of the company (GAO, 1990b; Berwick, et al., 1991; Svenson and Brown, 1990). In one view, TQM can be seen as a set of broadly stated management principles, such as Deming's "14 points." (See Table 4.) In practice, however, TQM is a focused, ongoing effort to analyze and improve the process through which goods, services, and information are produced within an organization, through the use of data and a commitment to fix problems before they affect the final product or outcome.

In the corporate community, TQM has led to significant restructuring within a number of major corporations, and to measurable improvements in employee relations, operating procedures, customer satisfaction and financial performance (GAO, 1990b). In health care, pilot TQM initiatives have addressed issues ranging from delays in access to medical records, to inconsistencies in diagnostic and treatment procedures, and inaccuracies in billing records (Berwick, et al., 1991).

In at least one health maintenance organization (HMO), an examination of both internal (staff) and external (employer and patient) customer needs led to the definition of a multidimensional set of quality measures as the basis for a comprehensive approach to performance management. Information gathering was also expanded to include focus groups and regular patient surveys. The activities of the HMO were broken down into discrete "encounters," and performance measures were weighted and applied differently to each type of encounters. In contrast to traditional quality assurance measures that focus on structure (such as staff qualifications), technical process (such as procedures), and outcomes (such as death), new measures include access, coordination of care, patient satisfaction, support staff training and staff morale. The resulting system provides the capacity to manage performance along a number of dimensions, all contributing to quality outcomes and patient satisfaction (Berwick and Knapp, 1987; Jennison and Jordan, 1991; Jennison, 1992).

Table 4
PRINCIPLES OF TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT

A Business View: Deming's 14 Points

1. Create constancy of purpose.
2. Adopt the new philosophy.
3. Cease dependence on mass inspection to achieve quality.
4. End the practice of awarding business on price tag alone. Instead, minimize total cost, often accomplished by working with a single supplier.
5. Improve constantly the system of production and service.
6. Institute training on the job.
7. Institute leadership.
8. Drive out fear.
9. Break down barriers between departments.
10. Eliminate slogans, exhortations and numerical targets.
11. Eliminate work standards (quotas) and management by objective.
12. Remove barriers that rob workers engineers, and managers of their right to pride of workmanship.
13. Institute a vigorous program of education and self-improvement.
14. Put everyone in the company to work to accomplish the transformation.

A Health Care Perspective

1. Productive work is accomplished through processes.
2. Sound customer-supplier relationships are absolutely necessary for sound quality management.
3. The main source of quality defects is problems in the process.
4. Poor quality is costly.
5. Understanding the variability of processes is key to improving quality.
6. Quality control should focus on the most vital process.
7. The modern approach to quality is thoroughly grounded in scientific and statistical thinking.
8. Total employee involvement is critical.
9. New organizational structures can help achieve quality improvement.
10. Quality management employs three basic, closely integrated activities: quality planning, quality control and quality improvement.

Sources: Dobyns and Crawford-Mason, 1991:289; Berwick, et al., 1991.

As the foregoing might suggest, the lessons of TQM are likely to have a greater performance management impact at the organization (the SDA or service provider) level than at the system or national level. For SDAs, TQM--emphasis on clear goals; leadership commitment to quality; constant measurement and analysis of the work process; and employee training and participation--provides a framework for the development of strong, well-managed programs at the local level (see Strumpf, 1991, for one such application).

But the major themes of TQM also provide support for reexamining the information and standards used to measure performance in employment and training on a national level. As the process of employability development has become more comprehensive and sequential in nature, the "production process" of training has become more complex and subject to breakdown. With a greater mix of services, there are more internal customers who must coordinate and share information (within an agency, and with cooperating agencies); a greater need for accuracy in assessment and diagnosis; and a greater chance that customers (participants and employers) will not be satisfied. In that context, an emphasis on quality management at the national level suggests better information on the components of the process (specific services and activities); on the process itself (for example, service delivery); and on the final outcomes (measured skills and customer satisfaction at follow-up, as well as wages and employment). The basic lesson from TQM is relatively simple: "You can't manage what you don't measure." A commitment to the measurement and management of performance along a variety of dimensions is increasingly seen as the best means of improving the bottom line.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IN HEALTH CARE

While the business community has moved away from simple "bottom-line" measures of performance, the publicly funded health care system has moved strongly toward attaching price tags to services as a means of performance management and cost control. The implementation of the Prospective Payment System (PPS) for Medicare has raised concerns similar to those in JTPA about the "unintended effects" of cost controls: unnecessary admissions and lower-quality care. But the publicly funded health care system also provides examples of how information can be used to more finely tune performance in a decentralized system, and how the effects of performance standards can be balanced through a process of review and local standard-setting.

The Prospective Payment System (PPS)

In 1983, in an effort to contain spiraling health care costs, the federal government radically changed the ways in which hospitals and other providers were paid for services. With passage of the Social Security amendments, payment for in-patient Medicare

services was changed from a retrospective, cost-based reimbursement process to the prospective payment of a flat rate per type of discharge, based on the classification of each case in a "diagnosis-related group," or DRG. Under the PPS, rates are fixed and determined in advance, and each hospital gains or loses the difference between the payment rate and the actual cost of care.

At the core of the PPS are the DRGs, designed to classify patients into groups that are "clinically coherent and homogenous with respect to resource use." Their purpose is to allow equitable payment across hospitals for comparable services. In a rough analogy to JTPA, the DRGs are part of the process by which hospital performance standards (payments) are adjusted to reflect both client characteristics and local conditions. In the PPS process, the base Medicare payment rate (based on an average cost of care) is first adjusted according to a local wage index (to account for variations in local costs), then adjusted by a DRG weighing factor that represents the relative costliness of a hospital discharge in that DRG. There are 467 DRGs currently in use, grouping several thousand individual diagnoses (Guterman and Dobson, 1986; Binner, 1986).

The DRGs provide clear, quantifiable measures of performance--in this case, in the form of cost targets. Proponents of the system argue that DRGs have slowed the growth of hospital care costs. However, critics have charged that hospitals can, with relatively minor changes in wording, manipulate the DRG classifications to substantially increase the level of payment (Binner, 1986). Others suggest that the PPS provides incentives for providers to select patients who are relatively easy and inexpensive to treat, and to avoid patients who are difficult or more expensive to serve; they raise questions about the equity and quality of in-patient care, and access to postdischarge services (Eggers, 1987). Finally, there is concern that the DRGs are distorting the delivery of services--that patients are being discharged to institutions or out-patient care not subject to the PPS (Guterman and Dobson, 1986). One conclusion that might be drawn is that any approach to the management of care or services will generate unintended consequences.³⁰

But for all the criticisms, the DRGs also represent an important effort to categorize and systematically describe key variables affecting performance--an area in which the JTPA

³⁰ Eccles (1991) notes a number of "unintended effects" of business's traditional focus on financial figures, pointing not only to the "short-term thinking" of many corporate managers, but also to the manipulation of reported quarterly earnings figures to satisfy the investment community. He comments: "The extent and severity of such gaming is hard to document. But few in management deny that it goes on or that managers' willingness to play the earnings game calls into question the very measures the market focuses on to determine stock prices" (1991:132). For a more general discussion of the "dysfunctional consequences" of performance management, see Ridgway, 1956.

system has been consistently criticized. As discussed earlier in this paper, one significant weakness of JTPA's performance standards system is the "looseness" of its data. Data categories are broad and inclusive ("dropout," "Hispanic," etc.), and provide little information about specific work or education needs. As a result, efforts at targeting or making appropriate adjustments in the standards often have mixed results. Similarly, program activities and program outcomes are described, at best, in general terms ("classroom training" and "entered employment"). The limited measures used in employment and training are one of the reasons the field's research base has remained so underdeveloped; without finer measures, it is difficult to establish meaningful comparisons among research projects.

In sharp contrast, the DRGs grow out of and are based on ongoing efforts in medicine and mental health to establish consistent classification schemes for diagnosis. The two major systems, the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) in medicine and the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) in mental health, provide tools for making consistent diagnostic decisions, and for defining and analyzing research and performance data over time and across different settings.³¹ The DSM, ICD and DRGs represent major commitments of time and resources. For example, the 1980 revisions to the DSM took place over a period of years through a process of task forces, draft reviews, field trials and reliability studies (Millon, 1983; Binner, 1986). However, as the introduction to the DSM notes, the manual "reflects an increased commitment in our field to reliance on data as the basis for understanding mental disorders" (American Psychiatric Association, 1980:1).

Peer Review

The peer review system in Medicare began in the early 1970s. In the context of the cost-reimbursement form of funding in use at the time, Congress mandated Professional Standards Review Organizations (PSROs) to conduct utilization reviews to assure that the provided services were medically necessary and met quality standards. The PSROs also were directed to conduct profile analyses to identify patterns of service; and to conduct periodic health care research projects. The PSROs were open to any physician in the area, and by the end of the program in the early 1980s, it is estimated that nearly half the physicians in the country had joined.

³¹ In discussing the addition of diagnostic criteria to the DSM (DSM-III), Millon (1983:808) notes: "It is this very precision in articulating specific and uniform rules of definition . . . that makes the DSM-III so serviceable and potentially fruitful also as a research tool. Not only do the criteria delineate the components that will enable reasonably homogeneous group assignments, but its application as a standard national (and, it is hoped, international) gauge will ensure at least a modicum of reliability and comparability among studies undertaken at diverse research settings."

In 1982, the PSROs were replaced by Utilization and Quality Control Peer Review Organizations (PROs). With establishment of the PPS, the PROs took on major quality review responsibilities. In contrast to in the days of cost reimbursement, the primary role of the PROs was to guarantee that the quality of service did not decline under the weight of cost controls. Every hospital providing Medicare services was required to contract with a PRO, which was responsible for conducting admissions reviews; reviewing subsequent admissions, transfers and "outlier" cases; and validating the hospital-assigned DRGs. If a JTPA analogy was to be drawn, the role of the PROs might be described as reviewing enrollments to ensure that creaming did not take place; reviewing quick placements to ensure that appropriate services were provided; and reviewing pre- and posttest data to ensure that competency deficiencies were real and certifications valid. Where PROs found inappropriate DRGs or unnecessary admissions, they could deny payment. In addition, the PROs were responsible for selecting a quality-of-care issue and working to improve local practices in that area. As part of that process, the PROs might establish criteria for effective procedures, conduct physician education activities, conduct special medical record reviews and impose sanctions where appropriate (Lohr, 1985; Graham, 1982).³²

While the results from the PSRO and PRO process are mixed--poor on cost control, generally positive on improving quality of care (Lohr, 1985; Donabedian, 1982)--peer review represents an approach to performance management and quality assurance that actively involves practitioners in the development and enforcement of standards of quality for services. As Elwood, et al., (1973) note, one of the most important and unique characteristics of performance management in the health care field is the degree to which it is accomplished by individual providers and professional organizations (as opposed to government bureaucracies). To the degree that questions are regularly raised about the quality and consistency of employment and training services under JTPA, the peer review process offers one strategy for increasing quality control without entirely sacrificing local autonomy.³³

³² In conjunction with medical societies and insurers, peer-review systems were also being established in the mental health field during the same period. See, for example, Rodriguez, 1983.

³³ The Project of the States offers examples of one function of a peer review process--the development of common standards and criteria. In those states participating in the demonstration, SDA working groups define common competencies, develop criteria for assessment and select instruments for use, and jointly review curricula against criteria developed by the project (Center for Human Resources, 1991a).

MEASURING "HIGHER-ORDER" SKILLS IN EDUCATION

The concepts of quality information and peer review in many ways lie at the center of the education community's efforts to address the dual demands of increased school accountability and more appropriate assessment of the "higher-order" skills required by the high-performance workplace. As in JTPA, "accountability" has become a national issue in education--one of the central themes in the America 2000 education strategy is increased school accountability, in part through development of national achievement tests. At the same time, educational researchers are increasingly clear that traditional, standardized, multiple-choice tests not only fail to adequately measure the skills needed by today's students, but also send the wrong messages to educators about the needed focus of instruction (National Commission on Testing and Public Policy, 1990; Resnick and Resnick, 1989; Haney and Madaus, 1989). One of the key performance management challenges facing both JTPA and the education community is how to define and assess the new "higher-order" thinking and problem-solving skills in ways that are both educationally appropriate and amenable to large-scale reporting.

In education, the primary effort to address this issue is through the development of statewide performance-based assessment programs that use a mix of strategies to ensure consistency and provide a base for statewide reporting. In this context, examples of performance-based assessment are assessment of writing skills through writing samples, or assessment of problem-solving skills through demonstrations. The argument for performance assessment is that it provides a more direct and "authentic" assessment of an individual's skills than traditional tests because it tests the application of skills in realistic context (Center for Human Resources, 1991b, provides a brief introduction to performance assessment; also see Resnick and Resnick, 1989; Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, 1990).

Among the efforts now taking place, two have received substantial attention, though neither has been formally evaluated (Center for Human Resources, 1991c). In Vermont, the state Department of Education has been piloting a statewide performance-based assessment system in writing and mathematics, and is now implementing it statewide in over 350 schools. The system uses a mix of assessment approaches, including a portfolio of each student's work, evaluated throughout the year; a single "best" piece at year's end; and a statewide assessment in which all fourth- and eleventh-grade students write in response to the same "prompt." As part of the assessment process, approximately 150 teachers will be trained in scoring techniques for math and writing samples, and evaluation teams of teachers will visit each school to review portfolios, "best" pieces and prompted writing samples.

In Kentucky, a somewhat different approach is being taken through the development of a competency-based and performance-assessed curriculum under the auspices of the state's 1990 Education Reform Act. The Kentucky Instructional Results Information System incorporates the definitions of a series of statewide learning goals and 68 "valued outcomes." The goals and valued outcomes will inform both curriculum revision and assessment. Once in place, assessment will take two forms: "continuous assessment," which focuses on the instructional progress of individual students, and "accountability assessment," aimed at providing a baseline for statewide reporting. For both forms, three types of assessments will be used: an annual test incorporating a mix of multiple choice and open-ended questions (similar to the National Assessment of Educational Progress); a series of performance tasks; and a portfolio of student work covering the year as a whole.

In both Kentucky and Vermont, several key elements are suggestive for the employment and training system. First, of course, is the movement toward performance assessment. To the degree that JTPA is concerned with what participants are able to do, it must ensure that its methods of assessing skills are appropriate. Second, in both Kentucky and Vermont, the foundation for performance assessment is the careful definition of the skills (competencies) to be assessed. That process took place through a series of statewide task forces and working groups, involving teachers, school administrators and other professionals. As with the peer-review process in health care, practitioners in the field took on a significant role in defining the standards and criteria by which institutional and individual performance would be measured. In the same vein, trained reviewers, particularly in Vermont, are a central element in the performance assessment approach; the evaluation teams ensure a degree of consistency and quality across school districts. As suggested earlier, the development of a peer-review process on a state, regional and/or national basis in order to improve the quality and consistency of JTPA's competency and assessment systems is a strategy worth exploring.

MOVING FROM PERFORMANCE TO QUALITY

What runs through the literature in each of these fields is the difficulty and ongoing challenge of improving performance management beyond the simplest (or crudest) approach to measuring performance. Despite the central importance of accurate data and record-keeping in the health care field, researchers estimate that 20 to 30 percent of hospital medical records are in error (Graham, 1982). Similarly, despite years of medical research, there are major gaps in the evidence linking specific treatments and outcomes; much of medicine, it would appear, is not substantiated by "scientific" evidence (Donabedian, 1982). As noted earlier, the corporate community still struggles to find a satisfactory mix of performance measures (Eccles, 1991), and acceptance of the validity and reliability of performance-based assessment is far from universal.

At the same time, several themes emerge that tend to reinforce many of the issues found in the literature on JTPA. The first is the importance of quality data as the foundation of any performance management initiative. Aphorisms, such as "you can't manage what you don't measure" and "what gets measured gets attention," reflect a basic truth: an investment in performance management without a concomitant investment in quality data is an exercise in futility.

A second theme is the involvement of professionals in the field as active developers of criteria and reviewers of performance. As the TQM gurus might suggest, participation of local providers and state and SDA staff in the evaluation of the training process and the development of criteria for quality represents a means of building their investment in quality systems and outcomes.

Both of these approaches cost money, which has often been a key limiting factor in JTPA's efforts to improve the quality of its systems. As such, the third and final point to be drawn from this review of "allied" systems is that the investment of any system in the measurement and management of performance appears to be proportional to the importance of high-quality outcomes. It may be that the first step toward improving JTPA's performance standards system should be an assessment of the costs of poor performance in employment and training. Once these costs are clear, so too may be the investments necessary to strengthen the system's approach to performance management.

VI. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

A number of recommendations have been made in the course of this paper, identifying issues for further research and development by DOL. The recommendations fall into four broad areas.

EVALUATION OF THE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS SYSTEM AND ALTERNATIVES

One theme of this paper is the relative absence of solid research on the performance standards system as it now stands, and of research into alternative standards and policies. Specific issues recommended for additional research and evaluation are:

1. Impact of revisions in performance. To what degree has the addition of the employability enhancement rate and the follow-up standards led to changes in the population served and the types of services offered? To what extent has the change in standards also led to improved or weakened outcomes? Finally, what impact has the relatively frequent change in standards since 1988 had on program management and the quality and effectiveness of services?
2. Alternative performance standards and policies. While the existing research provides some insight into the impact of the performance standards system as currently structured, little research has been conducted on alternative standards or policies. Several authors have recommended increased use of target-group standards to increase service to hard-to-serve groups, and standards for state-level management performance. Both options deserve investigation, particularly the target-group option should the proposed JTPA amendments fail to pass. Similarly, the research has left open the basic question of the relative effectiveness of standards versus other forms of performance management. Research into the uses of the incentive funds might point to relative advantages and disadvantages of performance standards as a means of governance.
3. Costs of quality. One of the primary recommendations of the TQM literature is to better evaluate the costs of quality. While JTPA's standards provide rough measures of success and failure, and in doing so average in some of the costs of failure, research into the costs of poor-quality training and/or inadequate or failed services would provide a cost baseline for decisions about quality improvements at both the national and state levels.

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF DATA

A second major theme is the need to improve the quality of data used in managing and evaluating JTPA. As a number of the studies reviewed point out, the use of broad data categories and the lack of data on key characteristics and/or services severely limit the capacity of the performance standards system to adjust for local conditions or to guarantee consistency in reporting. Also, the limited and often inconsistent data available to the system hamper efforts to compare research across programs and settings and to cumulate research findings in support of specific conclusions. Finally, the TQM literature suggests that reliance on traditional outcome measures handicaps national and local efforts to assess and improve the quality of services, and that a broader array of process and quality measures should be developed.

One of the primary research recommendations, therefore, is to examine alternatives for improving the quality of JTPA performance standards data. Among the issues to be examined are: How can the quality and consistency of reported data be improved within the current JTPA reporting process? What are the feasibility, costs and benefits of developing (with substantial field involvement) a classification system for employment and training to ensure consistency in definition of participant characteristics, employment barriers, services and outcomes? What types of "process" and "quality" measures might be appropriate for use in the employment and training system at the federal, state and local levels?

STRENGTHENING SKILLS MEASURES AND COMPETENCY SYSTEMS

A third critical area for improvement is the strategies and tools for assessing and teaching basic employability skills. While JTPA has left much of the development of youth competency systems to local discretion, evaluators of local competency systems, as well as the growing importance of skills attainment as an outcome, suggest that a more active federal role is required. Two major recommendations are made to improve the quality of performance management in regard to employability competencies:

1. Explore federal support for competency system development. One of the clear conclusions from the forthcoming evaluation is that few SDAs have the capacity to research and develop employability competency systems that are appropriate for today's skills and that operate effectively and reliably. Consequently, DOL should explore funding the development and piloting of a series of such systems, including definitions of needed skills, appropriate performance-based assessment strategies, curricula and instructional approaches. These systems might be disseminated through a national replication effort and/or be offered as an option for local use much as the DOL adjustment model is made available.

2. Explore establishment of a peer-review system for local programs. In support of the development of "model" employability competency systems, DOL should also explore the feasibility of establishing a formal peer-review structure within JTPA aimed at developing standards and criteria for local programs, reviewing local services for quality of care, and evaluating or certifying consistent use of new or existing competency systems.

REFINING THE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS MODEL

The final set of recommendations is aimed at continued "fine tuning" of the existing performance standards model. Two recommendations stand out:

1. Examine the feasibility of developing regional adjustment models and/or providing support for development of state-based models. The research in Region V into state-based adjustment models demonstrates the improved accuracy and flexibility over the national model of both state models based on individual-level data and regional models using aggregate data. As a means of ensuring that model adjustments are appropriate and best reflect local circumstances, DOL should explore the feasibility of using regional adjustment models and/or supporting development of additional state-based models.

2. Examine the feasibility of provider adjustment models. One of the points made in several of the studies is the relative absence of adjustments in provider contracts to reflect service mix or increased service to hard-to-serve populations. DOL should examine the technical and policy options for providing adjustments to providers and involving them more directly in the performance management process.

APPENDIX

**Table A-1
SUMMARY OF ESTIMATED IMPACTS OF STATE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS POLICIES
ON PERCENTAGE OF JTPA TERMINEES WITH VARIOUS CHARACTERISTICS^a**

Adults						
	Welfare Recipients	Dropouts	Minorities	Females	Other Barriers to Employment	55 Years and Older
Use of DOL Adjustment Model	Increased Services	Increased Services				
Adjustment Procedures Specified in Policy			Increased Services		Decreased Services	
Emphasis on Exceeding Standards	Decreased Services		Decreased Services			Decreased Services
Use of 6 Percent Funds for Hard-to-Serve	Increased Services			Decreased Services	Increased Services	
State Policy for Serving Client Group	Increased Services	Increased Services				Increased Services
Incentive Weight on Cost Per Entered Employment Standard	Decreased Services	Decreased Services				
Incentive Weight on Wage Standard		Decreased Services			Increased Services	Increased Services
Incentive Weight on Welfare Standard						

Table A-1 (continued)
SUMMARY OF ESTIMATED IMPACTS OF STATE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS POLICIES
ON PERCENTAGE OF JTPA TERMINEES WITH VARIOUS CHARACTERISTICS^a

Youth							
	Welfare Recipients	Dropouts	In School	Minorities	Females	Other Barriers to Employment	Ages 18 to 21
Use of DOL Adjustment Model						Increased Services	
Adjustment Procedures Specified in Policy	Increased Services			Increased Services			
Emphasis on Exceeding Standards	Decreased Services		Decreased Services	Decreased Services			Increased Services
Use of 6 Percent Funds for Hard-to-Serve	Increased Services	Decreased Services	Increased Services		Decreased Services		Decreased Services
State Policy for Serving Client Group							
Incentive Weight on Cost Per Positive Termination Standard	Decreased Services	Decreased Services				Decreased Services	
Incentive Weight on Employment Rate Standard	Decreased Services	Increased Services	Decreased Services			Decreased Services	

Source: Dickinson, et al., 1988:45-46.

^a Empty cells indicate no statistically significant impact.

Table A-2
SUMMARY OF ESTIMATED IMPACTS OF STATE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS POLICIES
ON PERCENTAGE OF JTPA SERVICES IN VARIOUS PROGRAM ACTIVITIES*

Adults					
	Job Search Assistance	Basic Skills Training	Classroom Occupational Skills Training	On-the-Job Training	Average Length of Participation
Use of DOL Adjustment Model					Increased
Adjustment Procedures Specified in Policy	Decreased	Increased			Decreased
Emphasis on Exceeding Standards		Decreased	Increased		
Use of 6 Percent Funds for Hard-to-Serve		Decreased	Increased		
State Policy for Serving Welfare Recipients		Increased		Decreased	
State Policy for Serving Dropouts	Increased			Decreased	Increased
Incentive Weight on Cost Per Entered Employment Standard					Increased
Incentive Weight on Wage Standard			Increased	Decreased	

Table A-2 (continued)
SUMMARY OF ESTIMATED IMPACTS OF STATE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS POLICIES
ON PERCENTAGE OF JTPA SERVICES IN VARIOUS PROGRAM ACTIVITIES^a

Youth							
	Job Search Assistance	Basic Skills Training	Classroom Occupational Skills Training	On-the-Job Training	Work Experience	Try-Out Employment	Average Length of Participation
Use of DOL Adjustment Model	Decreased						
Adjustment Procedures Specified in Policy							Decreased
Emphasis on Exceeding Standards	Decreased	Decreased	Increased				Decreased
Use of 6 Percent Funds for Hard-to-Serve		Decreased					
State Policy for Serving Welfare Recipients		Increased					
State Policy for Serving Dropouts	Increased				Decreased		Increased
Incentive Weight on Cost Per Positive Termination Standard	Increased						
Incentive Weight on Employment Rate Standard							

Source: Dickinson, et al., 1988:78-81.

^a Empty cells indicate no statistically significant impact.

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THE MISSION AND STRUCTURE OF NATIONAL HUMAN RESOURCE POLICY FOR DISADVANTAGED YOUTH:

A Synthesis with Recommendations

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I. INTRODUCTION

This paper describes the evolution of our national system of job training and education for disadvantaged youth, culminating in the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). It looks at how the system is organized; its basic mission; and the series of relationships among federal, state and local entities that affect how schools, employers, community groups and job training agencies work together and separately to deliver services at the local level. By focusing on the organizational elements of the present youth-serving system and how those elements can affect the quality of local services, the paper identifies what is known and not known about the effectiveness of the present system; describes possible new policy directions; and illustrates how gaps in our knowledge might be filled by new research, demonstrations and evaluations sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL).

As this paper is written, amendments have been submitted in Congress to improve JTPA and shore up fiscal and management problems that have been revealed not only by internal audits conducted by DOL, but by outside watchdog agencies and commentators as well. These amendments include various proposals that would alter the services provided to disadvantaged youth--possibly affecting the payments service providers receive, targeting, allocation formulae, contracting techniques, and even the termination of the enabling legislation itself through new "sunset" provisions (Gainer, 1986; DOL, 1989, 1991a; U.S. General Accounting Office, 1989a).

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In addition, other bills have recently passed (such as the National and Community Service Act of 1990), are pending or are likely to be submitted that will affect policy on apprenticeship, the school-to-college link and vocational education. Also, some in Congress are considering new legislation to link services covered in non-JTPA youth initiatives or to coordinate the activities that are now divided between DOL and the Department of Education. Finally, with the coming elections, advocacy and public interest groups will likely generate new proposals for youth legislation apart from the JTPA framework.

With all this legislative activity, we believe it is an especially useful time to consider the roots of the youth components of JTPA, review their historical origins, and identify relevant lessons from allied fields and the experience of other countries. This review will become especially relevant if Congress or the administration succeeds in introducing sunset provisions to the present JTPA system. Such a change would warrant a full-scale review of the basic JTPA system and an examination of such questions as whether a dedicated youth program should be created within existing legislation or should reside separately.

This paper is intended to provide a framework and a way of thinking about these knowledge development opportunities. The purpose is not to advocate a particular constellation of national human resource policies for "at-risk" youth but rather to help frame future discourse and stimulate new investments in knowledge development.

The paper develops two central points. The first is that the very structure of our national human resource system has profound impacts on the quality of local service delivery; thus the structure and mission of youth manpower policy must be examined periodically to ensure that national goals are being adequately met. This point may seem obvious until one realizes that most policy development in this field is aimed at shoring up parts of the present system rather than considering how all the pieces fit together or how alternatives to the system might work. The second point builds on the first--that new knowledge development investments should at least partially be informed by "comparative public policy" analysis. This type of analysis would draw insights from developments in other domestic social policy spheres as well as international experiences of interest.

The paper's framework is drawn from the political science field. The framework reflects the choices national governments make with respect to four factors: (1) the scope of particular social welfare policies, in this case youth human resource policy; (2) the distribution of services; (3) the policy instruments used by the national government; and (4) the degree to which the central government balances restraint with a willingness to innovate.

II. YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING IN THE MODERN ERA

A flood of youth-oriented human resource legislation and programs has risen in the United States since the New Deal, but many observers contend that neither legislators nor programmers have been clear or consistent about the purpose of employment and training policy for youth. At the national level, confusion has led to a proliferation of programs that often have contradictory aims; at the local level, there has been disagreement among and between practitioners and policymakers regarding fundamental policy questions, such as who should decide what segment of the youth population to serve and how best to serve them.

The U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) quotes the enabling JTPA legislation as saying that the act was intended to provide training programs to "economically disadvantaged individuals and other individuals facing serious barriers to employment," but goes on to characterize the legislation as providing "only general guidance on how the program is to be targeted among this large eligible population" (1990a:12). The JTPA Advisory Committee (DOL, 1989) acknowledges the "looseness" in the basic mission statement of JTPA and the degree of discretion local entities have in deciding which services should be delivered to which populations. However, many state government representatives and local practitioners have resisted a stronger federal hand in setting targeting requirements or performance standards that ultimately affect the choice of services delivered to target groups.

Some scholars have suggested that there has always been a gap between the theoretical underpinnings of U.S. manpower policy and the institutions that have been developed in response to national and local human resource needs. Consider economist Osterman's (1988) review of the history of job training programs.

Osterman describes how one school of thought among economists in the 1950s and early 1960s led to the Manpower Development and Training Act (MDTA) of 1962. That school anticipated significant "structural unemployment," unemployment caused by technical changes in the economy that make the skills of some workers obsolete. MDTA was passed to help these workers acquire new skills in the face of rapidly changing workplace technology.

Other economists disagreed, stating that the so-called "skills mismatch" would largely take care of itself if the economy grew and labor markets performed well. This "human capital" school of economists had a simple and straightforward idea: poverty was caused by low levels of education and training; therefore, if people could have their skills upgraded, they would be rewarded by finding well-paying jobs in the labor market. With periods of low unemployment in the middle to late 1960s, this school gained prominence

and the countercyclical approach of MDTA was gradually transformed to fit their theory of human capital formation. Beginning with the War on Poverty programs, the human capital school was enshrined in federal approaches to low-income workers and youth. The programs were created to provide poor young people with remedial education, labor market preparation, skills training and other "supply-side" interventions.

Osterman concludes his brief history with the sobering observation that poor and marginal results from many of these programs and an ideological attack on the modern welfare state have combined to discredit the antipoverty and human capital approaches to skills upgrading. While he describes the present era as still dominated by human capital approaches to youth development, he also sees the country searching for a new theory that would help explain such phenomena as the existence of low-wage working poor and jobless youth locked in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty. Those who allege failure of human capital approaches are not drawn exclusively from one political wing or another. In fact, the limitations of the human capital approach have been cited by some as a call for less government (e.g., Murray, 1984) and by others as evidence of a need for a more comprehensive approach to youth problems, starting with a strong prevention component (e.g., W.T. Grant Foundation, 1988b).

In our assessment of the effects of changes in the manpower system on the organization of programs, the relationships among federal, state and local communities, and the quality of local service delivery, we attempt to address a primary question: Has new legislation radically altered previous delivery systems or has the "system" evolved logically through a progression of steps, each building on the other, leading to consistency in local operations? We argue that, despite the weak theoretical underpinnings of the system and notwithstanding rampant disagreement in the field about even the most basic structural questions (e.g., who should decide who should be served and how), the characterization of a logically developing system is largely accurate.

Despite the gaps between theory and institutional responses, there has been remarkable consistency in the ideology and organizational shape of American youth training policy. This consistency is reflected in five major ways:

- There has been an unwavering belief that employment and training are private matters, best left to individuals and the marketplace. It follows then that the organization of manpower policy has not actively intervened with the private side of the labor market. Supply-side policies focused on changing clients have dominated youth development policy.
- There is an associated belief that government should step in only when unusual circumstances dictate its presence. This involvement is then seen as transitory,

rather than as part of the permanent public policy landscape. Empowered by the notion that manpower policy should be dynamic and responsive, administrations have felt free to alter the system every four years. Serious consideration of a permanent youth training policy has not developed.

- Youth programs have been add-ons and adjustments to a delivery system originally created for adults, sometimes with inappropriate results.
- Fragmentation of responsibility at the federal level has been a cornerstone of federal youth policy.
- Since MDTA, youth programs have generally been locally managed and federally funded. Even in the New Deal era, the federal government deferred to the states and local governments for assistance aimed at the subset of the needy who were thought to be persistently poor. As for private sector involvement in job training, it has grown gradually rather than dramatically, starting with the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA).

All these themes are developed in the brief historical overview of youth programming that follows.

The modern era of youth employment and training policy has its roots in the New Deal. At that time, the most dramatic market failure of this century, if not in the history of our country, had set off the Great Depression, a period when unemployment rose to almost 25 percent. The federal government responded with massive public works and income-support programs that bolstered the economic security of a large number of American families.

It is important to consider that the New Deal programs that were put into place as a result of the Great Depression primarily helped the mainstream working population. Some writers (Bullock, 1985; Levitan and Taggart, 1976) have commented that the New Deal initiatives were only marginally helpful to African Americans. Equally important, the federal government relegated responsibility for the able-bodied, chronically dependent population (what we would call today the population served by work-welfare programs) to state and local governments. The National Conference on Social Welfare (1985:18) cites the committee responsible for drafting the Social Security legislation of the New Deal era (emphasis added):

"With the federal government carrying so much of the burden for pure unemployment, the state and local government we believe should resume responsibility for relief. The families that have always been partially or

wholly dependent on others for support can best be assisted through the tried procedures of social case work, with its individualized treatment."

"The families that have always been partially or wholly dependent on others for support" is a good description of the chronically unemployed--a group that became the major target population of federally funded employment and training programs developed during the Great Society era. This expansionary period (1961-1973) was the start of the modern era of federally funded employment and training programs--a period typified by a strong federal role and the development of diverse and broadly based employment and manpower development programs for the structurally unemployed (Haveman, 1977; Levitan and Taggart, 1976; Mangum, 1973).

This period was followed by the CETA period (1973-1981). The CETA decade was characterized by an attempt to consolidate and decentralize the diverse federal employment and training programs developed in the 1960s, and by the proliferation of counter-cyclical public service employment (PSE) to accommodate a large influx of new entrants into the labor market during a time of slow economic growth.

Following CETA, manpower policy entered the present JTPA period (1981 to the present). This period has been characterized by a significant cutback in federal funding, primarily due to the elimination of PSE, by the transfer of substantial administrative responsibility from the federal government to state and local governments, and by a renewed emphasis on private mechanisms to correct market failures.

Throughout this history, the target groups shifted along with changes in federal manpower policy. We noted earlier that in the early 1960s, policymakers at the national level began to address the problems of the chronically unemployed: those who experience long-term unemployment or underemployment even in times of economic prosperity. This expansionary period of the 1960s was highlighted in 1962 by the passage of MDTA, which was designed to retrain experienced workers displaced by technological change. By 1963, however, youth unemployment was becoming a special concern, as youth joblessness rose to three times the national average. Black youth unemployment was more than twice the national average for youth, and many older unemployed workers were lacking basic skills. Youth training and basic literacy training were therefore added to the MDTA mission. But it is important to consider that these enrichments were seen as an afterthought or as a temporary adjustment to a response originally crafted for adults.

By 1966, MDTA had become part of the War on Poverty, which was launched by President Lyndon Johnson in 1964. Sixty-five percent of MDTA training positions had to be filled by the disadvantaged, defined as a person with two or more of the following

characteristics: nonwhite, not a high school graduate, unemployed for at least 15 weeks, under age 22 or over age 44, and handicapped or a recipient of public assistance.

The centerpiece of the War on Poverty was the Economic Opportunity Act, which established three employment and job training programs for youth. The Job Corps provided disadvantaged 16- to 21-year-olds with occupational skills training, remedial education, health care and counseling in a residential setting for up to two years. The Job Corps, of course, has endured to the present day. The Neighborhood Youth Corps (NYC) provided subsidized summer and year-round community jobs for low-income youth. This subsidized jobs strategy for youth later flourished under CETA but was greatly curtailed under JTPA, except for the summer jobs component, which today has become the largest American youth program, the Summer Youth Training and Employment Program. Interestingly, a Work/Study program was also set up during this era to help college youth from poor families. Today, the latter emphasis has remained with the federal education bureaucracy (the TRIO programs) rather than with DOL, whose current programs are largely concerned with the school-to-work transition rather than the school-to-school approach.

Where did responsibility and accountability lie during the expansionary period of youth programming? The 1960s generated many diverse new initiatives primarily aimed at helping the disadvantaged worker overcome labor market difficulties. Responsibility and administration of the various programs were, from the outset, scattered throughout different federal government agencies. For example, the Office of Equal Opportunity had been given responsibility for the Job Corps, Head Start and the Community Action Program. DOL had responsibility for NYC and MDTA. The Department of Health, Education and Welfare had responsibility for the various educational initiatives. Among the major challenges today is making coordinated strategies work at the federal, state and substate levels--a task necessitated by the piecemeal approach crafted by early human resource planners.

Not surprisingly, one goal of the Nixon administration, which assumed office in 1969, was to consolidate and decentralize the complex network of employment and training programs created in the 1960s. Pressed by the recession of 1970-71, the administration's attention was initially directed to the Emergency Employment Act of 1971, which established a Public Employment Program (PEP). PEP funded jobs with state and local governments and nonprofit organizations. With substantial federal funds for jobs available under PEP, mayors and governors placed a high priority on controlling employment and training resources. The term public service employment (PSE) first came into widespread use at this time, and PSE was carried over into the consolidation effort, CETA.

CETA became law in December 1973 as a locally managed, federally funded training and PSE program. In this respect, CETA was similar to JTPA, which replaced it. Title I of CETA authorized funds for training programs: classroom training, on-the-job training (OJT) and work experience. Titles II-D and VI of CETA provided for PSE.

The Carter administration and Congress authorized a major expansion of PSE slots in 1977-78. The additional funding, most of which was targeted to the countercyclical Title VI program, increased job slots from 310,000 to 725,000. In fiscal year 1980, approximately \$3.8 billion, or 41 percent of CETA's \$8.9 billion in outlays, went to PSE. In all, the PSE components of CETA served more than 3 million participants from 1973 to 1981, with outlays of \$26.5 billion. Although the majority of CETA funds went to training youth and adults, the PSE component of the program received the lion's share of publicity, much of it bad.

In 1977, the Youth Employment and Demonstrations Project Act (YEDPA) was enacted, greatly expanding funding for training and employment of youth (Hahn and Lerman, 1984; Betsey, et al., 1985). The Carter administration also implemented measures to encourage private expansion of jobs through the New Job Tax Credit in 1977 and the Targeted Jobs Tax Credit in 1978. The latter, greatly underutilized, was aimed at helping certain categories of young and adult workers (National Commission for Employment Policy, 1981).

In 1978, CETA was amended to encourage greater private sector involvement. The Private Sector Initiatives Program called for the development of Private Industry Councils (PICs) to advise prime sponsors (the operators of CETA programs) on existing programs, to develop and administer new training programs, and to improve the links between the CETA system and the private sector, aimed at stimulating private hiring of CETA eligibles. The legislation mandated that a majority of PIC members be from the private sector. Additional PIC members included labor unions, educational institutions, community-based organizations, employment services, and other federal and local agencies. The private sector initiatives begun in the employment and training area under the Carter administration were intensified under the Reagan administration.

Federal funding of employment and training programs was cut back drastically in the 1980s, primarily because of the elimination of all PSE in 1981. In October 1982, during a period of economic recession, CETA was replaced by JTPA, primarily a preemployment program, featuring job search instruction, job placement, and short-term vocational and skills training. Under JTPA, there are limited work experience components, in contrast to its predecessor, CETA, which had a strong public work experience dimension. JTPA's first-year appropriation was \$3.7 billion, far short of CETA's \$8.1 billion appropriation in 1980.

On the administrative front, JTPA transferred substantial federal administrative responsibilities to the states, but retained federal responsibility for financing, monitoring and technical assistance. JTPA requires states to establish a State Job Training Coordinating Council to recommend the coverage of service delivery areas (SDAs), plan the coordination of services, review local plans, adapt performance standards to state needs and make annual reports to the governor.

Other state functions involve administration of the performance management system, including oversight to ensure compliance with federal laws and mandates. The role of the private sector was enhanced by assigning PICs, which are dominated by private business, the responsibility of working with local government officials to distribute JTPA training funds and decide, within federal parameters, who should be served by local service providers.

The entire JTPA system, including the youth components, came under review in 1989. The JTPA Advisory Committee (DOL, 1989) examined and endorsed the JTPA human resource framework, but made 28 recommendations for improving the system so it could better address the training needs of the 1990s and the next century. Seven were considered key:

- Target the program more directly to disadvantaged persons with multiple barriers to employment, especially serious skills deficiencies.
- Individualize and substantially intensify the quality of services provided.
- Realign the services currently authorized for youth into a new, consolidated year-round program title with increased funding.
- Redesign outcome measures to reflect more accurately the program's goal of increasing the long-term economic self-sufficiency of participants.
- Substantially relax program constraints to increase the responsiveness of the system and to improve its capacity for effectively serving participants with serious barriers to employment.
- Increase the productivity of the system by undertaking a major training and research effort to improve program quality and build the capacity of staff who administer and deliver the program at the state and local levels.

- Create expanded public/private partnership arrangements to achieve linkages between JTPA and other human resource programs in order to serve a larger proportion of the eligible population more effectively with a broader range of services.

III. UNDERSTANDING AMERICAN YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING POLICY: A FRAMEWORK

Political scientists offer many analytic frameworks for studying national policies. The framework of Heidenheimer, et al., (1983) is particularly useful for the youth manpower system. They describe a four-factor framework beginning with choices of scope, i.e., the dividing line governments establish between public and private responsibilities. In the American human resource field, for example, we have chosen as our public responsibility to assist low-income youth, but only in ways that minimize interference with labor markets. Participation in the private economy is seen as a private choice made by young people; markets, in the American context, are best left alone and unfettered.

The next factor in the Heidenheimer, et al., framework involves choices of distribution, which refers to the many questions of fairness, equity and efficiency implicit in all policy formulations. Good examples in JTPA are the law's provisions for targeting economically disadvantaged youth, and the funding formula that distributes funds based partly on local unemployment levels. Do these criteria work, in terms of equity, when poor people are crowded in neighborhoods of persistent poverty? How does income testing work in school settings--the single largest provider of JTPA youth services--when there is reluctance to determine income eligibility? What happens when many youth are just over the income notch of eligibility? What about the reputation of JTPA as a system that "creams," i.e., chooses to serve only the most able of the eligibles? These are all issues of distribution.

Consider the third factor, choices of policy instruments, the tools governments choose for their policy interventions. In the United States, we rely on a complex set of relationships among federal authorities, governors, state coordinating councils, local PICs, SDAs and the vendors who actually deliver services (such as schools, community-based organizations, community colleges and private firms). We use financial set-asides, mandates, performance standards and other policy instruments to make the partnerships work.

McDonnell and Elmore (1987) describe four general categories of policy instruments:

- Mandates, or "rules governing the action of individuals and agencies, intended to produce compliance." There are many examples of JTPA mandates, ranging from income eligibility requirements to performance-based contracting.
- Inducements, or the "transfer of money to individuals or agencies in return for certain actions." The 8 percent set-aside and special funds for coordinated strategies at the state level are examples of inducements.

- Capacity-building, or the transfer of funds for upgrading intellectual capital, human resources and materials. The DOL investment in technical assistance, practitioner-oriented dissemination and research are all elements of capacity-building.
- System-changing activities, or the "transfer of authority among individuals and agencies to alter the system by which public goods and services are delivered." This factor lies at the heart of what JTPA policymakers try to do when they support comprehensive youth initiatives at the local level, such as the multisite Youth Opportunities Unlimited demonstration, or when they promote coordination between the Family Support Act and JTPA.

The final factor in the Heidenheimer, et al., framework is choices of restraint and innovation. What is the balance between regulation (restraint) and innovation, experimentation and loosening of requirements? How do such questions, for example, translate into the roles and responsibilities DOL chooses for itself? How much should the federal government prescribe versus recommend; what is the balance between the roles of cheerleader and tough cop? In the decentralized JTPA system, in which federal-state relationships are often touchy, the balance between innovation and restraint often turns on issues of authority and interpretation of the federal/state role.

CHOICES OF SCOPE

Where is the dividing line between public and private responsibility in contemporary youth manpower policy? Is the publicly financed American system of employment and training services for youth big or small? Before trying to answer these questions, it is important to consider whether there even is an American job training system to describe.

Federal employment and training policy for youth is just one component in a broader array of human resource programs that encompass public education, especially the career education, counseling and guidance components of secondary schools; the separate vocational education system, with its recent amendments requiring state coordination and targeting of services to the lowest-income populations; higher education, especially community colleges and proprietary schools (not to mention the entire system of financial aid in the form of grants and loan programs); private training, which goes on daily in the workplace; work-welfare policy and programs; and community-based programs (GAO, 1990b; American Vocational Association, 1990). The "system" of job training for economically disadvantaged young people in the United States might be better characterized as a galaxy of planetary systems, each having its own unique history, policy debates, linkages with other systems and performance records.

For the majority of Americans, employment is a private matter between the individual and a private employer. Americans have a deeply felt belief that, excepting initial preparation for working by public education, the responsibility for developing manpower resources lies with individuals, their families and employers. Employer-based training activities therefore account for the bulk of training the existing work force. Estimates on money devoted annually to private training range as high as \$250 billion, with perhaps \$25 billion spent on young workers (Lynch, 1989; Carnevale and Gainer, 1989).

Despite these broad estimates, not much is known about the actual scale of youth training in the regular economy or the motivations of firms providing the training. Distinguishing between private and public training is itself a difficult task (for example, many proprietary schools enjoy public subsidies primarily but not exclusively through federal sources). Lynch (1989) has tried to derive reliable estimates of the numbers of young people who receive private training in the United States. Using the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth cohort (all youth who were between 14 and 21 years of age at the end of 1978) and restricting the sample to people who completed their schooling by the 1980 interview, she found that between 1978 and 1983, only one in four young Americans were involved in private training. This included a significant number who were involved in training that was provided off-site (for example, business colleges, barber or beauty schools, nurses programs and training institutes); a smaller number who were engaged in training at the job site; and a much smaller number who were in formal apprenticeship programs. Lynch finds that race and sex influenced the probability of receiving different types of training; she notes that women and nonwhites were much less likely to receive training within a firm, either through an apprenticeship or other forms of OJT. For example, only 2 percent of all nonwhite youth were in on-site private training, half the 4 percent figure for white youth.

Bartel (1989) has looked at formal employee training programs from a sample of 493 businesses to answer the question, "why do companies invest in training?" She finds that the "profit maximization" model reliably predicts which companies will provide training for workers and which will not: "Large companies, those introducing new technology, and those with a high proportion of internal promotion were more likely to have formal training programs" (1989:27). These findings help explain why only 6 percent of youth receive on-site training in the private sector. As the Holzer paper in this series shows,¹ most firms in the youth labor market are small, "low-tech" and offer few opportunities for advancement. Bartel concludes about both youth and adults that "if the goal is to ensure that virtually all American workers have the opportunity to participate in formal training programs at the worksite . . . there is not enough training" (1989:27). She suggests that

¹ See Holzer, this volume.

special incentives will be required to increase the perceived marginal return or to lower the marginal cost of training, if more widespread training is the goal.

Vaughan and Berryman (1989) disagree with this policy conclusion but not with the diagnosis of the problem. They argue that "further subsidies would increase rather than reduce inequities since those trained by employers are already relatively well-educated and economically advantaged. Further, employers train firm-specific skills that have limited use outside of the firm" (1989:4). With fundamental policy questions in dispute, such as whether or not to subsidize private training, there is a compelling case for more research and demonstration activity on the subject of private training and public incentives. We need to know whether subsidies can be targeted effectively to certain categories of young workers who would not otherwise receive training and whether government incentives change employer practices and result in economic payoffs to employers.

If the amount of private training of young people is limited, the public side of the American youth training system is even more marginal, in terms of the size of federal funding and the ability of the system to reach those in need.

The GAO (1990a) reports that in fiscal year 1989, DOL operated nine youth programs with a total of \$3.8 billion, most of them under JTPA. This is a tiny figure in relation to the entire federal budget, representing not even one-quarter of 1 percent. It is altogether insignificant in terms of gross national product. The underinvestment results in a very significant unmet need in the youth populations designated as eligible for service.

To get a sense of the comparative magnitude of federal spending on JTPA employment and training policy, compare the federal outlays in 1990 for health care--about \$798 per person (\$201.3 billion)--to the \$15 spent per American on JTPA activities (GAO, 1989e, 1990a, 1990b, 1991). Of course, such statistics do not account for federal outlays in allied human resource spheres, such as college loans and grants. But as the William T. Grant Foundation (1988a) has pointed out, federal outlays for the non-college-bound lag greatly behind expenditures devoted to the college-going population. For example, recent data from unpublished material assembled by the GAO (1991) show that while federal spending on education and training is about \$16 billion dollars annually, 40 percent is devoted to graduate student loans and Pell grants for the college sector, with the remaining 60 percent spread among 45 separate programs for adults and youth.

How many youth are served by the JTPA second-chance system? The answer to that question reveals that JTPA is a very small youth system indeed. In fact, the youth manpower system is a good example of social policy trying to "wring" the most performance out of a relatively small enterprise. We have estimated the total number of youth

in JTPA as approximately 1,117,300. Most (54%) are enrolled in short summer job training programs (GAO, 1989e, 1990a).

Consider now how we estimated the youth enrollments. Title II-A of JTPA requires that at least 90 percent of all participants come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and at least 40 percent of II-A funding must go to youth between the ages of 14 and 21. With the approximate \$1.9 billion appropriated for this component in 1989, the II-A program served 1.1 million youth and adults. Youth enrollments were roughly 40 percent of the total, or 440,000. The summer program (Title II-B) was funded at \$709,000 and in 1990 served approximately 604,000 additional youth (39 percent were 14 to 15 years of age); the Job Corps was funded at \$762,000 and served another 67,300 young people. Other youth were served in special pilots and demonstrations. These were funded at \$30,000,000 and served up to 12,100 people, but not all were youth. We estimate that half of the 12,100, or 6,000, were youth.

How do these enrollments match the national need? To calculate the need is a difficult and often subjective exercise; in fact, the concentration of youth problems and the degree to which problems correlate with one another and with available services is an area of research that would be useful for DOL to support.²

Dryfoos (1990) reviews much of the literature on the concentration of youth problems and finds a preponderance of evidence that about 15 percent of 15- to 21-year-olds, the general ages served by JTPA programs, are at very high risk, while 62 percent are at moderate risk, and only 25 percent are not at risk. As indicators, Dryfoos uses involvement in crime, drugs and unprotected early sex, rather than family income, employability skills, work experience or similar measures of direct interest to DOL. Still, with the population in this age range being approximately 20 million, the JTPA program is serving only 5 percent, far short of the 15 percent Dryfoos estimates to be at very high risk.

Other studies have looked at the share of income eligibles that JTPA serves nationally and have also concluded that JTPA reaches only 5 percent of eligible persons (e.g., DOL, 1989). By any of these standards, then, the JTPA program is small. That small a program, even if 100 percent effective, cannot be expected to shift aggregate social and economic indicators, such as the national jobless rate among teens, and illiteracy or school completion rates.

² See Lerman, this volume, for a similar conclusion.

CHOICES OF DISTRIBUTION

U.S. policymakers in the human resource field have generally made clear choices about the distribution of services. American youth programs are targeted rather than universal. In JTPA, there are explicit income guidelines governing who can participate. Such targeting can lead to peculiarities, such as when a public school serves JTPA-eligible youth through a special "pull out" program while other youth, many just over the income notch of eligibility, are not allowed in the program. New features in the reauthorization of the Perkins Vocational Education Act replicate this JTPA approach.

In addition to the income guidelines that set conditions for program eligibility, JTPA encourages informal targeting as well. For example, practitioners at the federal, state and local levels focus a considerable amount of attention and use ample JTPA discretionary funding to ameliorate the special problems faced by African-American teens and others who often fare poorly in the labor market or are thought to be at risk. This type of targeting in American youth programs stands in sharp contrast to the universal practices found in most European and Asian countries (Skocpol, 1989; Osterman, 1988).

The American choice of a targeted approach rather than a universal one derives in part from the decision to locate youth policy under the jurisdiction of DOL rather than in the mainstream of public education. Put differently, youth employment and training policy has developed as a subset of manpower policy rather than as a subset of education policy. That is, most American youth programs have been designed as second-chance programs outside the education system. Grubb (1989:70) points out:

[The] existence of parallel systems for job-related training extends back at least to the 1930s. The Roosevelt administration, believing that public schools were unsympathetic to the poorest children, established job training programs outside the educational system, both to reach the poorest individuals who might not accept school-based training and to establish a more flexible and shorter-term job training program than were conventional within high schools.

There has also been a formal yet somewhat rhetorical drive by American policymakers toward establishing a set of distinctive services for youth. This is evidenced by the Title II-A rule that 40 percent of all local JTPA funds be spent on youth between the ages of 14 and 21; youth competencies are linked to attainment; and eligible activities are available through the schools.

There is not, however, always clear differentiation made between adults and youth within specific programs. Youth and adults continue to be enrolled together in programs that

lack clear age distinctions and therefore fail to provide services based on such distinctions.³

To a lesser extent, gender separation is also a distinguishing feature of the American approach. Despite the rhetoric about eliminating sex stereotyping in occupational choice, many programs (but not all) prepare young men and women differently and place them in different kinds of jobs and settings on completing the training program (GAO, 1989b, 1990c). To the extent that sex stereotyping is a problem, it can be traced to local decisions by program operators in response to federal performance standards. For example, if performance standards favor short-term programs leading to rapid placements, these incentives make it difficult for local programs to serve multiproblem youth, such as teenage mothers who need long-term support through subsidized employment with provision for child care.

One might think that a policy of targeted services would avoid the inefficiencies usually associated with universal approaches. However, the American strategy has come under attack by critics who have raised the specter of "creaming," the phenomenon of programs choosing to serve only the most able of the eligibles (e.g., Grinker Associates, 1986; Orfield and Slessarev, 1986; Walker, et al., 1985). Not surprisingly, this is a contentious issue that has evoked contradictory responses. In response to the charge of creaming, a senior official of DOL has responded that the Reagan administration originally proposed far narrower eligibility criteria, but that Congress "loosened it up to 'economically disadvantaged.'" We're doing just what the Congress intended" (Victor, 1990; see also Jones, 1985).

Even the usefulness of the term creaming is debated by federal officials. Some feel it incorrectly suggests that services are deliberately withheld from intended target groups of youth. In fact, according to one interpretation of the official position, JTPA consistently exceeds the legislative requirement that a minimum of 90 percent of participants come from economically disadvantaged groups.

In the only large-scale national study of creaming known to these writers (National Commission for Employment Policy, 1988b), the authors argue that before charges of creaming are leveled at JTPA, the interests and motivations of potential participants must be examined. They point out that approximately 39 million people are JTPA-eligible, including 31 million persons between the ages of 16 and 64. However, 90 percent of this group are either already employed or are not actively seeking jobs, and are thus unlikely to be interested in training.

³ Current proposed amendments to JTPA call for the establishment of a separate youth title.

The National Commission for Employment Policy study does not look at various administrative factors that surround the alleged creaming phenomenon. Kogan, et al., (1990) report that SDAs often do not target at all, except in the broadest terms--for example, by earmarking funds for at-risk youth.

All told, these factors may add up to an administrative system incapable of serious creaming in the youth area. Moreover, we have only sketchy information about the competencies young people possess when they enter youth training programs. How many, from a national perspective, are severely at risk, how many need "brush up" and short-run services, and how many do not need the programs but find themselves enrolled? Our larger point is that creaming has not been researched carefully enough. We also do not believe that this issue will go away, even if future JTPA amendments establish additional eligibility criteria.

In contrast to the American targeted approach, many European youth manpower schemes have assumed universal characteristics by locating job training in the school sector. In Sweden, for example, the education system is responsible for youth until they reach the age of 18, whether they are in or out of school-based programs (Nothdurft, 1990a; GAO, 1990b). Australia, whose levels of prosperity and education are somewhat comparable to those in the United States, provides a particularly instructive comparison for American policymakers.

Recent changes in the Australian approach to youth manpower policy include structural reforms and attempts to tighten up the school-to-work transition. The government virtually eliminated short-term labor market policies and placed greater emphasis on mainstream education and training. This was accomplished, in part, by moving youth policy from the Department of Employment to a new Department of Education and Youth Affairs (Vickers, 1991).

An explicit attempt was made to focus on comprehensiveness and coordination among education, income support and labor market policy. The rationale provided by Vickers, a key advisor in youth policy, was that "subsidizing the employment of early school leavers in low-skilled work was neither in the interests of the young person nor of the nation; in the long term, what would be needed were higher levels of youth participation in mainstream education and training" (1991:23).

Various national agencies worked together to eliminate the "piecemeal financial arrangements" associated with various financial aid and other programs and replaced them with a "rationalized system of benefits." Finally, the federal education and employment programs were joined in a new Department of Employment, Education and Training. Now, instead of nearly 20 programs, there are only four: the Skills Share program,

which consolidates a wide range of community-based programs for disadvantaged young people; Jobs Start, which offers employer subsidies under limited circumstances for young people having trouble finding a job; the Job Search Program, for young people receiving job search subsidies; and the Traineeship system, which combines on-the-job and off-the-job training.

All Australian youth 15 to 19 years old are eligible to receive a study or job search allowance to enable them to stay in school or look for a job. Eligibility for the job search allowance is delayed six weeks after leaving school to provide an incentive to stay in school. A job search training program is also available for youth receiving the allowance. This program is part of the education system (Vickers, 1991).

The changes in the Australian approach to youth manpower policy raise many questions--such as how decisions were made, and how effective the initiatives have been and under what conditions--that could serve as the basis for a program of comparative research studies.

Now consider the American approach. For example, have American youth policymakers resolved whether they want to serve in-school or out-of-school youth? The 1989 proposed JTPA amendments reflect ambivalence regarding the extent to which employment and training programs for youth should emphasize prevention of school failure or second-chance supports once young people have left mainstream settings. On the one hand, the proposed amendments would shift even more emphasis than is now the practice to out-of-school youth with the proposed requirement that at least 60 percent of youth served be out-of-school. (The proposal did not distinguish between dropouts and graduates.) At the same time, the amendments would promote year-round programming in conjunction with the summer youth employment program.

When the Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce examined the American school-to-work transition system, it characterized it as "the worst school-to-work transition system of any advanced industrial nation" (National Center on Education and the Economy, 1990:9). However, there may be common problems among Western countries. For example, Osterman (1991) notes that in France, as in the United States, many young people work in secondary labor market jobs and only secure stable employment after much turnover and experimentation. He points out that even in Germany, young people in apprenticeships are "overly represented in small firms . . . and have to move from these firms when their training ends . . . and thus while teenage German unemployment is low, some of it is simply deferred to later years" (1991:6).

Research and demonstration strategies comparing various school-to-work transition schemes, drawn from the United States and other countries, are clearly needed. These

schemes include job search assistance for all non-college-bound seniors in particular high schools or labor markets (Philadelphia has had such a program for years); job placement models, such as Jobs for America's Graduates; use of Employment Service staff (the British model) or PIC-supported employment counselors (the Boston Compact) in schools; or such new proposals as an Employment Information Exchange Service, which would make career and higher education information available to all students as well as job-seekers requiring assistance in job search or placement (Wills, 1991).

CHOICES OF POLICY INSTRUMENTS

The federal government's policy instruments include mandated financing schemes and performance standards.⁴ Here, we want to limit discussion to a brief review of what is distinctive about the American approach to financing job training for youth and a look at what might be done to expand our knowledge of alternatives.

The fiscal and performance standards of JTPA make it results-oriented. Contractors are paid only if they achieve certain performance goals, such as placing a target share of trainees in jobs, arranging alternative education or helping youth achieve approved competencies believed by PIC community leaders to be useful for entering the labor market (Center for Human Resources, 1989; National Commission for Employment Policy, 1988b).

This outcome-driven approach is rather unusual in terms of domestic policy. Most bureaucratic governments fund inputs or, as in national health care, try to control costs by setting ceilings on approved practices. Public education is a good example of the input approach. Once funds are collected on the basis of local property tax assessments, they are distributed by a formula that builds on "average daily attendance," an example of an input. At the federal level, elementary and secondary education funds are earmarked to meet certain broad purposes established by Congress. These funds are also distributed on the basis of inputs, such as the number of needy students in eligible school districts.

The use of results-oriented performance standards has been seen in many quarters as a positive social policy development worthy of replication. Thus, when the Perkins Vocational Education Act and the Family Support Act were considered by Congress, policymakers adopted parts of JTPA's performance standards approach.

⁴ The latter are the subject of another paper in this series; see Melchior, this volume.

But curiously, JTPA's system of performance standards has not been scrutinized for the role the standards play in shaping local human resource programs for youth. Rather, performance standards have been studied mostly as a compliance issue, for example, in terms of repairing such abuses as fixed unit price contracting procedures. Rarely has the results-oriented approach been examined in terms of how the costs and benefits of the standards affect the quality of services provided in the youth manpower system.

We would like to know, for example, whether the financing of job training through performance measures has become too cumbersome; whether it has stimulated or constrained quality in youth programs (see Berkeley Planning Associates, 1991, for a good start on this question); and whether it has led to achievement of genuine self-sufficiency in the postprogram period for young clients. What, for example, is the statistical association between "attaining youth employment competencies" (a youth performance standard) and long-term success in the labor market in terms of job quality, wages, hours, etc.?

We found very little literature on these themes and thus can only recommend further investigation. We also believe that a review of youth performance standards should be separate from a review of all performance standards in JTPA. Youth and adult standards are different, and a study of youth standards alone will be more manageable in the short run.

What is known about other aspects of the financing system is that JTPA did innovate over CETA through its authorization as a permanent program and its change in the fiscal cycle to begin in July rather than October. The intention of the latter was to give localities more advance notice about funding, which they have judged helpful (Levitan and Gallo, 1988). The purpose of the former was to protect the job training community from the domestic policy battles that often arise every four years with a new presidential election.

However, support for JTPA itself has not been measured and the recent congressional debates over amendments to JTPA, including the proposal for sunset provisions, show that the consensus today supporting the legislation may be weaker than many believe.

The funding formulae used in JTPA have been subject to legislative debate and considerable study. For example, DOL allocates two-thirds of state and local funds based on the distribution of unemployment. The rest is disseminated according to the distribution of low-income populations. Unemployment rates (several indices are used to assess unemployment in SDAs) therefore count heavily in the formulae, even though unemployment is not always a prerequisite for program assistance. Simply put, areas with high

unemployment may receive a disproportionate share of funds even if their share of the low-income population is low (Abt Associates, 1986).

Since instability in the unemployment rate is related to changing funding levels, programs often have a difficult time planning and managing their administrative functions. The American approach, in a sense, may be trading off fairness at the national level (an objective criterion is used) for local management difficulties and inefficiencies. There is much speculation about this in the JTPA literature, internal DOL studies and the testimony of youth program practitioners.

We have observed that the system of financing, including alternatives, has not been carefully scrutinized by outside researchers (for notable exceptions, see Barnow, et al., 1990). Rather, elements of the system (such as the allocation formulae) are examined only under the assumption that what we have today is the permanent operative system, which may need a few repairs. Compare this approach to the health care debate, in which entirely new systems of financing are offered for debate almost monthly in public policy circles. Much of the discussion in health care is financed by the federal government through a network of research centers, think tanks, commissions and so on. We would like to see more research on alternative financing schemes for youth employment and training.

The proposed research program would consider the following illustrative questions: How might youth employment and training funding be increased? What funding mechanisms would provide more stability to youth program providers? How would European tax schemes work in the American context? What are the simulated impacts of various employer training tax proposals? How would school districts handle job training opportunities if districts received the equivalent of average daily attendance funds for returning dropouts? A comparative policy research and demonstration initiative to consider these and related questions would spell out the financial implications of the alternatives, since the current budget deficit situation is unlikely to lead to expensive proposals.

Consumer choice is one of the recommendations of the president's education reform package. There is a long tradition of research investigating consumer-choice models. The policy arguments involve issues of equity, access, information for decision-making and the role of public services.

In the manpower field one proposal (Choate, 1982) involves using tax incentives to encourage businesses and/or workers to set aside money for individual employees for future education and training. Another version would allow businesses and workers to contribute to a pooled insurance fund. A third variation would allow parents to establish

accounts for their children in state trust funds that could be used for education or training.

Many of these proposed schemes have been criticized for lacking target efficiency. Will people who need to invest in training be the least likely to use individual training accounts or other approaches? Will they have the knowledge and information, not to mention the resources, to make these investments? Further, will businesses support such funds?

In response to these criticisms, Levin (1977, 1983), the National Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce (National Center on Education and the Economy, 1990), Vaughan, et al., (1984) and others have called for government grants or subsidized loans to all individuals who wish to obtain further education or training. The mix between grants and loans could be set by family income. Entitlement programs of this kind should be the focus of review and evaluation, with implications for the human resource community developed.

Great Britain is pilot-testing training credits within the scope of its Youth Training Program. Under the pilot program, young people leaving school (typically, 16- and 17-year-olds) are issued a credit by the government to pursue an individual training plan developed by the young person with advice and guidance provided through local offices of the national Careers Services, schools or other providers. In effect, the British youth training credit is an individual training account. If the youth is employed, the employer is expected to contribute resources to support the training; various time limits have been set on the use of the credit.

For the purposes of this review, we suggest that many of these questions and options are amenable to formal comparative research, descriptive studies and experimentation. For example, state initiatives could be assessed and lessons disseminated. What, for example, has been learned from Kentucky's use of vouchers? California, New York, Michigan and London are experimenting with the use of cards containing a "credit line" for off-the-job training and assessment; a "debit line" shows how much training time remains, and an "achievement line" shows the units earned toward a vocational qualification.

THE CHOICE BETWEEN RESTRAINT AND INNOVATION

Americans have chosen a youth manpower system that is restrained in several ways. First, as we have seen, the American approach to job training for youth focuses on human capital upgrading rather than on direct interaction with labor market institutions. Osterman (1988:132) says the "consequence of this philosophy is that American programs aim to provide the individuals with information and skills but are not integrated in any

substantial way into the human resource calculations or industrial relations strategies of firms." He concludes that useful employment policy "helps firms create and maintain flexible internal labor markets The notion of 'usefulness' helps explain the ineffectiveness of American employment policy and the comparative importance of European policy . . ." (1988:132).

The tilt toward supply-side interventions in American human resource policy has likely limited our ability to mesh the goals of youth manpower policy with other economic goals. This is not to suggest that the nation has failed to experiment with demand-side interventions; the controversial youth subminimum and training wages, the Targeted Jobs Tax Credit, and the wage subsidy experiments of YEDPA's Youth Incentive Entitlement Pilot Projects are good examples. But each time such initiatives were promulgated, they ran into serious political and ideological troubles. Policymakers have learned that political consensus is easier to obtain if the focus is on young people and their deficits rather than on employers and their hiring and training practices.

A second example of restraint relates to the federal role in manpower policy and its shared decision-making with state and substate entities. Simply put, the federal government is constrained by the partnership context. Although the balance between passivity and activism is determined by each Secretary of Labor, the basic functions of the federal government have not changed much over time, as our section on manpower history has shown. What does change is how federal authorities interpret their roles and responsibilities.

The balance between restraint and innovation is a consistent theme in any attempt to evaluate the mix of partnerships under JTPA. While our literature review indicates that the partnerships themselves have not been examined thoroughly or recently, some attempts have been made to draw conclusions about the mix.

Quality of Federal and State Leadership

The federal role under JTPA is largely prescribed by law to include financing, monitoring state and local compliance with the law, supplying technical assistance, assessing the program and ensuring fiscal accountability. Simply put, whether these functions have been done well is not known from the available literature. Levitan and Gallo (1988) and articles in the popular media (Victor, 1990) have accused the federal government of lackluster leadership at one time or another. But that is a rather skimpy basis on which to form firm conclusions on such an important matter.

Generally, criticisms of the federal role have dealt with specific issues, such as the government's ability to monitor the use of fixed unit price performance-based contracts

or mount a program of effective technical assistance. A number of monitoring and implementation reports on these issues are available (e.g., Westat, 1984, 1985), but do not provide a clear picture of federal leadership.

For the broad purposes of this paper, it is interesting to note that the role of the federal government in national youth policy has rarely been studied in and of itself. The authors uncovered few studies of federal leadership, and suggest that the results of such studies should be useful not so much for reversing the present devolution of authority from the federal government to state and substate entities, but rather for helping the federal government monitor its own role in a decentralized system of partnerships. Without such studies, the federal government's role in stimulating "continuous improvement" and quality control in the local system is likely to be hampered.

Similarly, research about the current state-federal relationship and the effectiveness of state agencies has not been prepared. Such a program of research would certainly be useful. For example, Levitan and Gallo (1988:30-31) believe such a study would conclude:

[T]here is little evidence that the states have rushed in to exercise their statutory responsibilities, or that state leadership has produced significant results The partnership which Congress envisioned between the governor, the newly created state advisory council, the legislature, business, labor and other state governmental agencies has emerged only in isolated cases With few exceptions, . . . most states have passively waited for federal instruction [I]ronically, a program (JTPA) which was designated to demonstrate the potential of state leadership instead suggests that a strong federal presence is necessary [W]hile a genuine federal-state partnership would be more desirable, the JTPA experience casts doubt on whether this arrangement can be achieved.

These are strong charges, and are based on a single study's observations, interviews and analysis of secondary reports. One study is an insufficient foundation for such conclusions. Clearly, the subject is important enough that additional, more systematic studies must be undertaken. We also recommend that future studies not be confined to questions of leadership under the current system, but also include the potential of leadership under alternative approaches to training for young people.

Local Service Delivery by SDAs and PICs

JTPA's framework is strong on expectations for outcomes but relatively quiet on the types of services, and the people and institutions to deliver them. Put differently, JTPA

relies on a form of accountability that may be labeled "bureaucratic accountability"--the enforcement of rules and regulations.

Other forms of accountability are equally important parts of the JTPA framework. These include "political accountability" (assurances that State Job Training Coordinating Council and PIC members, for example, meet their obligations); "legal accountability;" "professional accountability" (standards of professional practice); and "market accountability" (Darling-Hammond and Ascher, 1991). While all these forms of accountability affect local service delivery, bureaucratic accountability is the only one that receives attention at the national level.

Where, for example, are the policies, studies and demonstrations that focus on how youth select training programs (market accountability)? Will DOL's nascent interest in upgrading local youth program staff find the right balance between prescription and innovation in professional accountability? Similarly, to what extent should the federal government monitor the effectiveness of state JTPA entities--would aggressive monitoring be seen as a violation of the partnership concept (political and legal accountability)?

Consider the market accountability of the JTPA system as it operates at the local level. Our review of JTPA concludes that the performance-driven nature of the system results in a hybrid system of service delivery at the local level. But does this mean that the system operates competitively?

In theory, service providers must compete for funding in an outcome-driven environment controlled by performance indicators. Such competition should tend to keep costs down. Costs are also controlled by national formulae that arbitrarily limit administrative costs to a stipulated fraction of total costs. In practice, however, many program managers were able to operate their programs through the 1980s by using fixed unit price, performance-based contracts, which gave them a way to categorize administrative and support costs as training costs. Abuses of this option have received widespread attention by DOL and others (GAO, 1989a).

More important, some observers have written that the interaction among local providers has rarely translated into an innovative training environment, high quality programs, or even the ability to respond quickly to the changing demands of employers (e.g., Levitan and Gallo, 1988; Grubb, et al., 1989). The reasons for this assessment are many, but a primary explanation is that genuine competition among vendors offering the same services rarely exists.

One explanation for the lack of competition is that in JTPA, the real customers are not the youthful clients but rather the PICs and SDAs, who write the requests for proposals

to fund local service providers. In a system where clients do not pay tuition but instead often receive stipends, most communities find that real competition, stimulated by trainees, remains a goal rather than a reality. This helps explain why JTPA is a hybrid system: on the one hand, it is performance-driven; on the other hand, there is no independent payment system to increase the number of vendors and foster true competition among them at the local level. The relatively low funding level of the system also contributes to the lack of competitiveness.

Grubb, et al., (1990a, 1990b) have examined the service delivery system in detail in several communities and conclude that there is little overlap in the services provided. They find that different groups reached different kinds of individuals and provided specialized services.

Grubb, et al., describe five distinct "systems" operating at the local level: the "primary system"--high schools, four-year colleges, vocational education programs in community colleges and technical institutes, and graduate and professional schools; the "secondary system"--remedial programs in elementary schools, community colleges, adult schools and other institutions designed to integrate individuals into the primary system; the "tertiary system"--JTPA and other job training programs targeting the disadvantaged and hard-to-place; the "quadrant system"--programs serving welfare recipients; and the "quintary system"--programs in correctional institutions.

Grubb, et al., conclude that there is no genuine competition among and within categories at the local level. In fact, they argue that in the present undercapitalized environment for human resource programs, we need more duplication and competition among vendors, not less. They equate this strategy to that of engineers who purposely design with redundancy in mind. It will be interesting in this regard to see how governors will use the set-aside funds (earmarked in recent proposals for JTPA amendments) to stimulate coordination of services, when in many locales there are not enough providers.

Compare this characterization to the movement underway in public education, which many hope will lead to more choice and competition. We recommend that DOL try to increase the competitive environment of JTPA at the local level by undertaking reviews of policies and by conducting studies and experiments to determine the degree to which competition is occurring and the best methods for promoting it. These tasks would initially be exploratory, since local conditions vary greatly and the goal of stimulating competition at the local level is not easily achieved. It is made even more difficult by JTPA's limited resources. However, if studies reveal that competition matters, perhaps a JTPA outreach campaign would stimulate the growth of youth service providers. PICs could also receive training in how to stimulate competition by combining JTPA funding with other resources.

IV. CAPACITY-BUILDING ACTIVITIES AND SYSTEM-CHANGING INITIATIVES

The federal government has a variety of tools for helping states and substates develop coherent, quality systems of youth program service delivery. Federal oversight of State Job Training Coordination Councils and the integration of these councils with other umbrella coordinating councils at the state level (e.g., in vocational education) is one way the federal government builds capacity and stimulates system-changing behaviors.

The federal government's special interest in coordination is generally conveyed through the technical assistance and research functions of the national and regional offices of DOL. For example, coordination has attracted recent interest as a research theme, and the "3 Cs"--coordination, collaboration and case management--have been the subject of many training workshops and forums. This attention results from concern that fragmented authority, turf battles, competition for funds, and rivalries among public programs inhibit cost-effective service delivery and hold back progress on treating "the whole child." As we have seen, competition is generally not addressed as a service improvement strategy.

Technical assistance guides with "dos and don'ts" and a growing academic research literature have emerged in response to the challenge of getting schools, community groups, welfare agencies, courts and others to cooperate with JTPA entities (see Bruner, 1991; Melaville, 1991; William T. Grant Foundation, 1991.) As noted, the JTPA law itself contains incentives for coordination. Governors can reject SDA plans that are weak on coordination, and governors and the councils can encourage coordination through creative uses of the 8 percent funds and the regular functions of planning and oversight. Students of these coordination criteria have found them to be generally helpful. For example, Grubb, et al., (1989) report that state and local administrators believe the coordination requirements have been helpful.

Coordination is a theme particularly suited to this paper's principal recommendation--to undertake studies of a comparative nature. The subject has long been of interest at the community level in addressing the issues of aging (the Area Agencies on Aging set up Home Care Corporations to coordinate services); mental health (the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is deeply involved in coordinating community mental health services for children); health care (the Kellogg Foundation is about to embark on a major project coordinating health care delivery at the local level); social services (almost every state has grappled with coordination at the community level); drug abuse; and so on. Before expanding Youth Opportunities Unlimited programs and similar ventures--which call for unified, coordinated programs in very poor neighborhoods--we recommend that relevant experience from allied fields be synthesized, with the implications for DOL initiatives spelled out.

Tangible management tools that build on experiences in allied fields are also needed. For example, the challenge of tracking and managing the case of a JTPA participant who has been referred to a remediation program is very similar to the tracking and case management challenge faced by substance abuse programs, welfare administrators or aging agencies. The sending program needs to learn whether the client actually enrolled in the program to which he/she was referred; whether he/she completed the program; and whether he/she returned to the sending agency. Managers want to know whether the client is making sufficient progress, and funders would like to know which programs work best and under what conditions. These questions are generic, suggesting that lessons from one field may apply nicely to others. The value of cross-sector sharing seems so obvious, yet separate authorities and providers too often "go it alone," rather than help facilitate shared learning. DOL could take a leadership role in stimulating cross-sector learning about the "3 Cs" and associated topics.

Another component of the capacity-building and system-changing agenda involves the federal government's use of its research, data collection and technical assistance activities to promote high-quality local service delivery. On this front, we have found little evaluation of DOL efforts to support and provide technical assistance to the youth-serving field. Some information is available on the scope of these activities, but next to nothing has come to the attention of these writers about effectiveness (National Governors' Association and National Alliance of Business, 1985).

Levitan and Gallo (1988) contend that technical assistance was radically scaled back in the early days of JTPA in deference to giving states and localities maximum feasible discretion to implement the JTPA youth programs. The authors also point to potential problems in the organization and administration of technical assistance: reliance on subcontractors rather than federal staff in Washington and the regions; unevenness in the distribution of technical assistance; the question of who--states or the federal government--should take the leadership role in technical assistance; and the requirement that hard-pressed SDAs pay travel and other costs associated with technical assistance. Again, however, there is little available research evidence about any of these matters, much less on the alternatives.

How have other domestic agencies handled this question? For example, how has the Department of Education organized its technical assistance efforts and evaluated their effectiveness? What about other nations' initiatives--the British manpower reforms, for one? Through comparative studies, technical assistance can and should be examined.

Our recommendation is that the review of the technical assistance function be conducted by an internal working group, backed by small-scale review studies. The working group would include DOL officials, peers drawn from other domestic agencies, several techni-

cal assistance providers and practitioners, and knowledgeable representatives from the National Academy of Sciences, a group with considerable experience in tracing the impact of knowledge development and technical assistance in federal agencies. The initial focus of the project should be the distribution of present technical assistance efforts, their content and intended goals, and the self-reported effectiveness of the services from a practitioner's perspective.

A similar conclusion can be reached about federal involvement in data collection, research and evaluation. There is information available on spending patterns but little on the utilization, dissemination and effectiveness of the products that have been produced with federal support. To the best of our knowledge, DOL data collection, research and evaluation efforts have not been the subject of an outside review. But in other federal agencies, research utilization and knowledge diffusion have received considerable support and been the subject of formal evaluations. As in the technical assistance area, we recommend that peers from other federal agencies, scholars of research utilization, and consumers be assembled in a task force to consider the strategic uses of research.

JTPA's primary data collection tool, the Job Training Quarterly Survey (JTQS), exemplifies our earlier point that much in youth policy has been crafted as an add-on to adult-centered frameworks. This system is the closest the federal government comes to a management information system, and yet it uses categories of service that fit only imperfectly the youth components of JTPA. Moreover, the data system says little about the actual service deliverers (Community-Based Organizations, schools, colleges). Since many of these vendors receive funding from a variety of sources, studying them is complicated but nonetheless very important. This point is discussed in a Berkeley Planning Associates report (1991) and suggests a range of research topics and reforms in the reporting systems.

Another aspect of the system-changing agenda concerns the government's monitoring of the make-up, organization and effectiveness of PICs and SDAs. While not ignored, this subject has also received less attention than it deserves. A number of observers have pointed to the change in community attitudes from CETA to JTPA. Broad community involvement in SDAs and especially PICs has been cited as helping to stimulate respect for human resource and youth issues at the local level (National Alliance of Business, 1985, 1986).

But the federal government largely defers to the states when it comes to collecting information on a routine basis on SDA and PIC composition and effectiveness. It would fit DOL's mandate to improve the quality of local services if we knew, periodically, the backgrounds, experience with youth issues, interests, motivations and experiences of PIC

and SDA members. Moreover, a national study of PIC effectiveness has not been conducted since the early days of JTPA; one is needed to measure the strength of JTPA as a mature program.

If a full-scale study of PIC effectiveness is not possible, a series of small studies of the role of PICs in apprenticeships or education reform would be useful in the following ways: in helping policymakers think about the possibilities of alternative manpower schemes, such as worksite-based learning and apprenticeship arrangements; in determining whether an American version of German apprenticeship should use PICs as the business or labor market board entity; and in defining the potential and limits of such a development, based on PICs' present orientation and structure.

V. RESEARCH AND DEMONSTRATION IMPLICATIONS: THE NEED FOR A COMPARATIVE FRAMEWORK

Numerous studies have compared the achievement of American youth to that of young people in our trading partner nations. These studies find that American youth are less able than their counterparts to meet the rapidly changing requirements of the global economy. Findings from these studies have helped create the movement that has led the president and governors to announce implementation of national education goals and to seek national school reform. Comparative studies covering mainstream education policies (Department of Education, 1991; National Governors' Association, 1990; Nothdurft, 1990a, 1990b) have been valuable policy tools and are now routinely cited by President Bush and Education Secretary Alexander as they tour the country building support for their goals.

A similar but smaller-scale movement is underway in the manpower field, as evidenced by growing interest in manpower schemes in other countries, apprenticeship, and financial incentives to stimulate training opportunities in the private economy (see, for example, George, 1987; Glover, 1988; Osterman, 1989). A good example of a DOL-sponsored project on the latter theme is the review by Barnow, et al., (1990) of relevant experience in the United States and abroad. This and other emerging studies (Osterman, 1991) represent a fine start, but after reviewing recent literature from the manpower field, we suggest that the comparative knowledge development process needs further expansion. A recent example from Congress shows the urgency of this recommendation: in an early draft of proposed legislation from Senator Kennedy's staff, "The High Skills, Competitive Workforce Act of 1991," the staffers call for a "high-skills training trust fund" in which employers would be assessed 1 percent of total annual wages (with certain exceptions).

State experience with employer financing schemes for training provide evidence of the viability of this approach. More, however, must be done, particularly simulation modeling and research and demonstration efforts. This example also shows that alternatives to the present training system, both youth and adult components, are likely to surface from time to time in Congress and in the states. We believe that a readiness posture is required, and that it would be a mistake to wait for specific triggering events in Congress or the administration before undertaking a review of alternative youth development schemes. To summarize, we would like to see the federal government support not only descriptive studies but also a vigorous program of simulations and systematic demonstrations of alternatives to the present system.

We have noted that the vast majority of DOL spending on research, evaluation and demonstration is devoted to making JTPA work better. This is not unreasonable, since

most of such spending is authorized by JTPA. But there are additional uses for knowledge development investments, especially, as we have argued, in the field of comparative analysis. That this has not occurred sufficiently is only partly a reflection of JTPA's concern for its own integrity and quality. Another reason is that until recently, most academics have not shown an interest in comparative studies and research on alternative manpower schemes. The statement of Heidenheimer, et al., (1983:vii) could be generalized to most researchers: "the majority of the world's political scientists are Americans, and the majority of these have not regarded foreign experiences as relevant to their research."

There are exceptions to this general point. Consider the work of Reubens and her colleagues. Her books (1981, 1983) reflect a career of comparative policy analysis in the manpower field. But until recently, there was remarkably little follow-up of this work. Now, however, some policy experts and academic scholars have begun to shift attention to the international and comparative manpower field. Consider Lerman and Pouncy (1990a, 1990b), Hamilton (1990a, 1990b), Osterman (1989, 1991), the GAO's recent study (1990b), the aforementioned study by Barnow, et al., (1990) and the publications of the William T. Grant Foundation (1988a, 1988b). The recent commission report by the National Center on Education and the Economy (1990) and the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills report (DOL, 1991b) were also influenced by comparative policy analysis.

We must note, however, that even among the researchers and writers who have recently come to the comparative policy perspective, few have received federal support for their research and most of the intellectual work has thus far been strictly descriptive. The German Marshall Fund, for example, has been an ongoing source of support for policy experts and policymakers interested in international perspectives. More recently, the William T. Grant Foundation, The Pew Charitable Trusts, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, and The Commonwealth Fund have engaged in cross-national research reviews and supported activities in this area. Partnerships between the government and private foundations in a joint program of comparative research of manpower policy would be highly desirable.

One need only consider the daily references by American health care experts to the Canadian and German health care systems to appreciate that comparative research is fairly well-developed in the health policy arena--to name just one allied field. Yet in the manpower field, outside of the exciting new activities cited earlier (and a subset of activities sponsored by DOL's new Office of Work-Based Learning), most DOL youth research begins with the current constellation of programs and is aimed at improving or modifying them. Little current research in the youth manpower field is devoted to examining entirely new ways of doing business.

An area for potential comparative research and demonstration efforts is the use of transcripts and portfolios to determine eligibility for higher education and training. Bishop (1989) and Rosenbaum (1990) recommend that employers make greater use of school transcripts in hiring decisions in order to motivate students toward higher achievement. This recommendation, aimed at getting employers interested in the quality of the education or training behind transcripts, has also appeared in the reports of the Commission on Workforce Quality and Labor Market Efficiency and the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS), and is part of the general interest in creating uniform hiring standards for non-college-bound youth.

In response to these interests, both the Educational Testing Service and the American College Test are developing national systems of such transcripts. The American Business Conference is funding Vital Link, which will ask businesses to require detailed student records when making employment decisions.

DOL could devise pilot or demonstration projects testing the use of transcripts and/or alternative credentials, such as work portfolios. These portfolios would document both student and worker skills, including test results (as proposed in the Bush administration America 2000 reform package and the SCANS report). The manpower field has used portfolios in the past, but we know of no sizeable, formal test of their implementation or effectiveness. The structure of the demonstrations should be informed by experiences in Asia and Europe, which have made extensive use of test-based credentials.

Another potential area for comparative research is approaches that connect community service and youth employment strategies. Youth service has grown and gained prominence during the past two years. The National and Community Service Act of 1990 demonstrates the appeal that community service, as a program and a voluntary strategy, has acquired across the country. For example, the president praises community service in his Points of Light initiative; special foundations have been set up to encourage community service; and national intermediary organizations, such as Youth Service America, promote the concept and work toward quality standards.

To professionals in the human resource field, community service runs parallel to youth employment programming, but is not identical. In Pennsylvania, however, a marriage of community service and JTPA has taken shape. Young teens enrolled in JTPA's Summer Youth Employment and Training Program (SYETP) work on service crews in all 28 SDAs across the state, carrying out a variety of community improvement and service projects. Generally, this type of approach would be applauded and perhaps even serve as a prototype for national replication. But a potential barrier to replication is the fact that JTPA restricts eligibility to low-income families, whereas community service programs generally enroll people from a wider range of backgrounds.

A program of DOL-sponsored research and evaluation might look at the potential of the Pennsylvania approach and the comparative advantage of enrolling young teens in community service rather than SYETP's regular jobs. Institutional analyses would examine whether an expanded summer program of JTPA community service opportunities would require modification of current eligibility requirements or alternatives to present practices. Research might also consider the role of stipends in community service and summer training.

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

At present, information available on the effectiveness of JTPA's youth-serving elements is limited and often out-of-date. Now that JTPA is a mature program, more information is needed on the role of federal leadership, federal-state relationships, state-substate relationships, PIC effectiveness, targeting and creaming, uses of research and technical assistance, and other topics that go to the "heart" of the system. Moreover, we have described the small scale of JTPA's youth components and noted that even if the system were 100 percent effective, the national impacts would be small. Expanding coverage will require extensive knowledge development.

Our primary recommendation is for a program of research on how JTPA works as a youth-serving system and how alternatives to the present system might work. Consideration of the latter would require detailed reviews of other countries' experiences. This recommendation does not result from a belief that the present system is a failure, nor that systems in other places are necessarily superior to the American approach. Our point is that although the effectiveness of alternative approaches may not be known, lessons for the American system could be extrapolated. Armed with this information, DOI would be better able to perform its role in the present system and to contribute to future discussions of potential youth service and self-sufficiency systems for America.

We recommend research on JTPA and reviews of its policies.

1. Conduct new studies and evaluations of the federal and state roles in the youth-serving components of JTPA. Federal, state and local leadership should be examined in and of themselves. These studies will help the various levels of government improve their effectiveness in the present system of partnerships.
2. Review the implementation (complexity of administration) of performance standards and their institutional impacts on youth programs.
3. Conduct careful studies and evaluations of the creaming phenomenon in the youth side of JTPA--studies that have not taken place despite a preoccupation with this theme in the field.
4. Conduct up-to-date institutional analyses and evaluations of PIC effectiveness. The focus should be on present performance, as well as the potential of using PICs in alternative manpower schemes, such as youth apprenticeship and school reform.
5. Conduct studies and experiments to better understand the extent to which competition exists among service providers at the local level, document current barriers and

propose policy, program or technical assistance solutions. What policies would stimulate more competition and more consumer choice?

6. Conduct comparative research on coordination, collaboration and case management. This research would draw on other domestic fields and would include investigation of such management tools as integrated case management systems.

7. Evaluate the Employment and Training Administration's technical assistance and research strategies, review current spending by topic area, and study utilization patterns. This evaluation should be conducted as an internal review, drawing on peers from other federal agencies.

We also recommend development of alternative youth development policies and financing schemes.

8. Undertake a program of policy review and research that supports investigations into alternative youth development policies and programs. Forge partnerships with private foundations for this purpose.

9. Conduct analyses of the decision-making process used in foreign countries, such as Australia, which have tried to move from a targeted youth employment and training strategy to one with more universal elements. Survey youth services in other countries that might be useful in U.S. programs.

10. Initiate a program of research on alternative financing schemes for the American youth employment and training system. This research program would cover, for example, tax levy schemes, school reform approaches (using average daily attendance money to fund training vouchers), individual training accounts, entitlements and card mechanisms. Fund studies on private training and the role of public subsidies. This series of studies should be sensitive to budget realities and demonstrate the financial implications of various proposals.

Finally, we recommend evaluation and demonstration of new programs.

11. Conduct evaluations, syntheses and demonstrations comparing school-to-work schemes. The focus should be on identifying the best strategies, in terms of both client outcomes and the ability of the government and others to institutionalize the approaches.

12. Conduct demonstrations of the use of transcripts and work portfolios.

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**YOUTH IN THE NINETIES:
RECENT TRENDS AND EXPECTED PATTERNS**

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I. INTRODUCTION

The youth population of the 1990s will make the transition to adulthood in a time characterized by increasing economic competitiveness and changing family and social patterns. The result is greater uncertainty about long-term career opportunities. Today's young people face serious challenges as they navigate their way through formal education, gain work experience, develop careers and form families. Although they are equipped with more years of schooling than earlier cohorts, young men and women will be challenged to obtain a well-paying job; to avoid the lures of drugs, crime and unprotected sex; and to rely less on the support of family and community.

Much has been written about the changing nature of youth and their futures. One common and disquieting view is that too many young people are learning too little in school; engaging in too much crime, sex and drug use; having children too early and outside marriage; working for cash instead of studying; and holding negative attitudes toward hard and sustained work. Young people are becoming sexually active at younger ages but entering adult jobs and careers when they are older. This widening gap between the time youth begin sexual activity and the time they land their first adult job may be an underlying cause of high teenage pregnancy and unwed parenting rates. An added concern is that a rising share of young people are growing up in poor and one-parent families.

Still, many emerging trends involving youth have positive aspects as well. The decline in the youth proportion of the population means a smaller potential work force but encourages employers to compete for and develop the skills of young workers. While many believe high school students learn too little, a larger proportion of youth are earning a high school diploma. The proportion of minorities in the youth population has

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been increasing, but so has the number of minority parents with middle-class incomes. Although fewer children now live with both parents, the fact that today's families have smaller numbers of children somewhat offsets the parental financial burden. American youth use more drugs, alcohol and cigarettes than other youth, but the extent of use is declining. An increasing proportion of children are born to unmarried young mothers, yet this is partly because of delays in marriage and the declining birth rate among married young women.

Trends in the world of work also require careful interpretation. The flexible labor market permits today's youth to find jobs and earn money while remaining in school. But there are two sides to this coin: the job experience gained by youth may provide valuable learning and credible references, or it may undermine their education and chances for long-term success.

Over recent years, the economy has been increasing its demand for high-skill workers faster than the schools and social system have been creating them. The wage and employment gap between college educated and high school educated workers is widening to the advantage of the college educated. The negative side of this development is increasing inequality; the positive side is that the economy is generating enough high-skill jobs to absorb many more workers. So, if schools and families can improve the skills of young workers, the jobs will be there. Alternatively, employers may choose to restructure work so as to produce more lower-skill jobs.¹

These changing social and economic realities make employment and training policy at least as challenging today as it was when the federal government started its manpower system for youth 30 years ago. This paper examines our current challenges in detail. Section II describes the youth cohort of the 1990s and looks at the demographic, economic and social changes affecting the cohort as a whole. We examine trends in the size and distribution of the youth population, in the educational attainment and capabilities of youth, in family and household backgrounds and in the marital and parenting status of youth. In addition, the section assesses what is known about various negative behaviors of young people, including drug and alcohol use and criminal activity.

In Section III, we examine selected evidence on the causes and consequences of these behaviors and their relationship to the development of young workers. Section IV takes up the literature by social psychologists and others on how work in the teenage years influences social development, motivation and involvement in schooling. The section considers evidence on the impacts that different aspects and types of work experience

¹ This argument is developed in Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, 1990.

have on young people. It also looks at vocational education and other approaches to education and employment.

The final section deals with the implications of the literature review for employment and training policy and research. One set of questions deals with the scale of future problems: What component of the youth cohort of the 1990s will be unable to make a productive adjustment to the job market and adulthood? Are the numbers overwhelming, or can second-chance employment and training programs realistically make a dent in the key problems? A second set of questions concerns the types of program and policy approaches likely to prove most effective: To what extent are the emerging job market problems of young people related to educational deficiencies, social behaviors, lack of job networks or weak incentives? What might be a sensible place to intervene to upgrade the skills of less-educated workers? What changes in social life should we encourage to improve the transition to adulthood?

II. A PROFILE OF THE YOUTH COHORT

Conventional wisdom has it that the youth population is decreasing, is composed increasingly of minorities and disadvantaged youth, and is beset by a range of problem behaviors, such as drug use, crime and unprotected sex. Are these appropriate images of youth in the 1990s? We find that the facts are generally much more complex. This section brings together a variety of key facts about the demographic, social, educational and economic situation of the youth of the 1990s.

POPULATION PATTERNS

Population is one of the simplest characteristics of a group. The U.S. Census Bureau provides the most comprehensive estimates of current population as well as projections of future population. We rely on both.

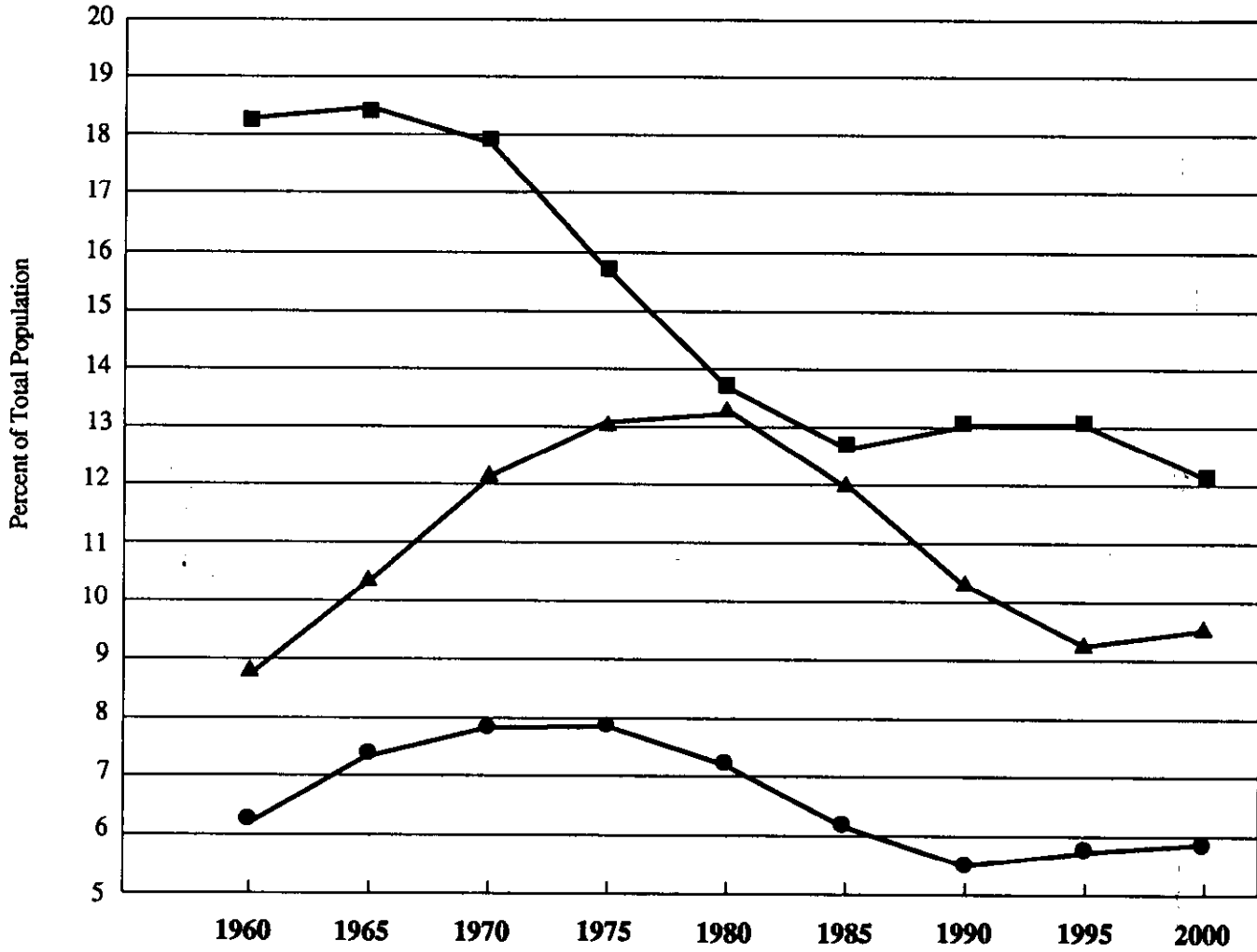
Figures 1 and 2 reveal the trends in the youth population in absolute terms and as a percentage of the total population. The patterns differ by specific age group and by the comparison years. The share of 5- to 13-year-olds declined sharply between 1960 and 1980; is rising slightly from 1985 to 1995 and is projected to fall further after 1995. For both 14- to 17-year-olds and 18- to 24-year-olds, recent declines in their proportion of the population follow large increases over the 1960-75 and 1960-80 periods, respectively. Despite these shifts, the two age groups will make up almost as large a share of the 1990s population as of the 1960 population.

These population shares result partly from changing birth cohorts but largely from recent increases in the elderly population. Thus, absolute numbers of youth will rise even though their share of the population is declining. Figure 2 reveals divergent patterns for 5- to 13-year-olds, 14- to 17-year-olds and 18- to 24-year-olds. Between 1985 and the end of the 1990s, the population of 5- to 13-year-olds will increase by over 3.5 million. The population of 14- to 17-year-olds began to rise later and more slowly but will increase by over 2 million from 1990 to 2000. Only the 18- to 24-year-olds will continue to decline in absolute numbers, finally levelling off between 1995 and 2000.

Table 1 reveals that these population trends are broadly similar for blacks and whites. Although whites have experienced a somewhat larger slowdown than blacks, projections indicate only a small rise in the black proportion of the youth population. Thus, the growth in the youth population will be more rapid among other minority groups.

The changes in the youth population vary widely by region. Note in Table 2 that the New England, Mid-Atlantic and Central regions of the country will experience the largest declines, while the South Atlantic, Mountain and Pacific regions expect increases over

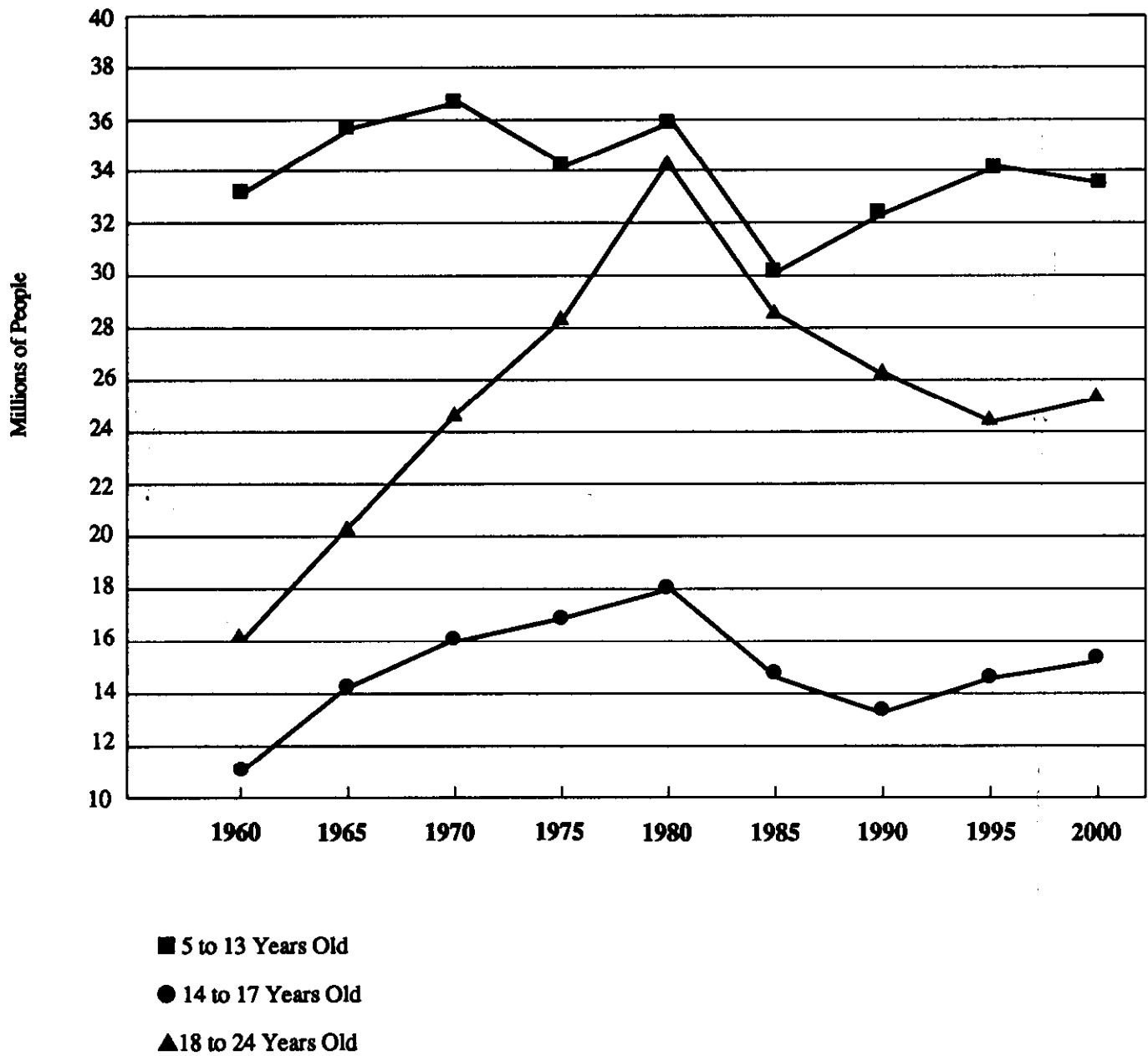
Figure 1
TRENDS IN THE PERCENTAGE OF YOUTH
IN U.S. POPULATION: 1960-2000



- 5 to 13 Years Old
- 14 to 17 Years Old
- ▲ 18 to 24 Years Old

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1989:8.

Figure 2
U.S. YOUTH POPULATION: 1960-2000



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1989:7-8.

Table 1
YOUTH POPULATION TRENDS BY
RACE AND AGE: 1988-1999

	1988	1992	1996	1999	1988-1996	1988-1999
White Youth	Population in Thousands				Percent Change	
12-14	9,774	10,628	11,264	11,512	15.2	17.8
15-17	10,726	10,089	11,058	11,398	3.1	6.3
18-20	11,216	10,313	10,355	11,194	-7.7	-0.2
21-23	11,274	11,296	9,980	10,201	-11.5	-9.5
Black Youth	Population in Thousands				Percent Change	
12-14	1,528	1,705	1,785	1,859	16.8	21.7
15-17	1,693	1,612	1,799	1,836	6.3	8.4
18-20	1,645	1,620	1,640	1,793	-0.3	9.0
21-23	1,635	1,605	1,504	1,551	-8.0	-5.1
Black Youth	Percent of Overall Population by Age				Percent Change	
12-14	13.5	13.8	13.7	13.9	1.2	2.8
15-17	13.6	13.8	14.0	13.9	2.6	1.8
18-20	12.8	13.6	13.7	13.8	6.9	7.9
21-23	12.7	12.4	13.1	13.2	3.4	4.2

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1989:38-60.

Table 2
POPULATION TRENDS OF 14- TO 17-YEAR-OLDS
BY REGION: 1980-2000

	1980	1986	1990	1995	2000	1990-1995	1990-2000	1980-2000
Region	14- to 17-Year-Olds in Thousands					Percent Change		
New England	901	796	637	677	751	6.3	17.9	-16.6
Mid-Atlantic	2,638	2,254	1,893	1,981	2,094	4.6	10.6	-20.6
E. North Central	3,069	2,669	2,309	2,424	2,405	5.0	4.2	-21.6
W. North Central	1,234	1,047	933	1,041	1,038	11.6	11.3	-15.9
South Atlantic	2,627	2,488	2,250	2,493	2,745	10.8	22.0	4.5
E. South Central	1,093	1,006	917	966	942	5.3	2.7	-13.8
W. South Central	1,729	1,724	1,610	1,771	1,874	10.0	16.4	8.4
Mountain	806	795	773	920	980	19.0	26.8	21.6
Pacific	2,150	2,046	1,914	2,236	2,504	16.8	30.8	16.5

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1988:34-42.

the 1980-2000 period. Only some of these regional differences have to do with migration and overall population growth; youth as a proportion of each region's population show the smallest dropoffs in the West and South. All regions have already reached their low and will see considerable growth over the 1990s in the number of 14- to 17-year-olds.

These population trends imply that the absolute number of young people who might require employment and training services will rise even if the typical young person in the 1990s is as well qualified as in earlier decades. All regions have already started to see increases in the 14 to 17 age group.

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS OF YOUTH

The youth entering adulthood in the 1990s will be the product of a dramatic shift in family structure and living arrangements. Today's youth live with a smaller number of immediate family members---both parents and siblings---than did earlier cohorts. The decline in the proportion living in two-parent families is of most importance. Table 3 shows trends among white, black and Hispanic families.

The trend toward one-parent families is present for all groups, with most one-parent families headed by women. Today's reality differs markedly from the situation in the 1960s. Then, two of three black children lived with two parents and only about one of five lived in a one-parent family, though over 10 percent did not live with either parent. By 1989, only a minority (38%) of black children lived in a two-parent household. The majority (62%) lived with one or neither parent. About one of five white youth lived with only one or neither parent in 1989, more than double the 1960 level.

The decline in two-parent families has potentially serious consequences for the academic and social development of young people. The work of McLanahan and others has demonstrated that spending part of childhood in a one-parent family increases the chances of young women giving birth before marriage, having their own marriages break up and failing to complete high school.² And many of these negative outcomes stem from factors other than the economic disadvantage of young people in one-parent families.

The economic disadvantage is considerable. For many children, living in a one-parent family means dependency on welfare programs. In 1989, benefits from Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) were received by nearly 60 percent of black children

² See, for example, McLanahan, 1985a, and Manski, et al., 1990, for solid evidence on the impact of one-parent families on high school completion.

Table 3
TRENDS IN LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
OF CHILDREN UNDER 18: 1960-1989

	1960	1970	1980	1989
White Children Under Age 18 (in thousands)	55,077	58,790	52,242	51,134
Percent of All Children Under 18	NA	81.4	77.9	75.3
Percent With Two Parents	90.1	89.5	82.7	79.6
Percent With Mother Only	6.1	7.8	13.5	16.1
Percent With Father Only	1.0	0.9	1.6	2.7
Percent With Neither Parent	1.9	1.8	2.2	1.5
Black Children Under Age 18 (in thousands)	8,650	9,422	9,375	9,835
Percent of All Children Under 18	NA	13.0	14.0	14.5
Percent With Two Parents	67.0	58.5	42.2	38.0
Percent With Mother Only	19.9	29.5	43.9	51.1
Percent With Father Only	2.0	2.3	1.9	3.4
Percent With Neither Parent	11.1	9.7	12.0	7.5
Hispanic Children Under Age 18 (in thousands)^a	NA	4,006	5,459	6,973
Percent of All Children Under 18	NA	5.5	8.1	10.3
Percent With Two Parents	NA	77.7	75.4	67.0
Percent With Mother Only	NA	NA	19.6	27.8
Percent With Father Only	NA	NA	1.5	2.7
Percent With Neither Parent	NA	NA	3.5	2.4

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990c:3.

^a Hispanics may be of any race.

in one-parent families and about one-third of white children in one-parent families.³ Family type also affects residential status. (See Table 4.) The proportion of all one-parent families of 12- to 17-year-olds living in public housing is more than five times that of two-parent families of this age group.

Today's youth also grow up with fewer siblings. The decline in family size has affected all groups. Smaller families may reduce the financial burden on parents since there are fewer children to feed and clothe; but the reduced number of siblings may place a larger burden on parents to provide advice, help with homework and monitor behavior. Between 1974 and 1990, families with more than two children declined from 31 percent to 20 percent of all families with children (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990c, 1975).

As of March 1990, the number of 12- to 17-year-olds living with siblings varied by race/ethnicity but mostly by family type. Youth in one-parent families were much more likely to live without siblings than youth in two-parent families. Note in Table 4 that two-thirds of 12- to 17-year-olds in white one-parent families had only one or no sibling living with them. Within family types, a greater proportion of Hispanic youth lived with three or more siblings, followed by blacks and whites.

Youth may call on other relatives for support, supervision and even potential job contacts. In many one- and two-parent households, adult relatives--such as grandparents, uncles or older siblings---live with young people. Table 4 reveals that this phenomenon is widespread. Extended families are common among all three racial/ethnic groups. Overall, about 40 percent of youth in one-parent families also live with an unrelated or related adult other than the parent.

Youth live in areas that vary with family type and with the race/ethnicity of the parent. Residence in central city locations in large metropolitan areas is most common for youth in minority one-parent families; over 40 percent of these youth live in large central cities, compared with only 16 percent of youth in white one-parent families. Nearly two of three black youth but only one of three white youth live in central cities. The concentration is so extensive that minority single-parent families contain over 25 percent of 12- to 17-year-olds in central cities, even though they account for only about 10 percent of all 12- to 17-year-olds.

³ About 7.5 million children were on AFDC, nearly all in female-headed families. About 40 percent, or 3 million, of these children were black and a similar number were white. Dividing 3 million by the 5 million black children in one-parent families yields an estimate of 60 percent; for whites, 3 million is divided by 8.2 million children in one-parent families (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1989:3).

Table 4
FAMILY ENVIRONMENT AND LOCATION OF 12- TO 17-YEAR-OLDS
BY FAMILY TYPE: MARCH 1989

	Two-Parent Families			One-Parent Families		
	White	Black	Hispanic ^a	White	Black	Hispanic ^a
Number of 12- to 17-Year-Olds	12,317,000	1,292,000	1,321,000	2,723,000	1,404,000	539,000
Siblings in Household (%)						
None	16.2	12.9	9.3	28.4	19.7	18.9
One	42.8	31.1	28.3	39.4	33.8	30.2
Two	25.7	31.1	26.5	21.0	23.9	23.0
Three	9.5	13.7	18.2	7.6	13.0	19.3
Four	3.0	4.2	8.8	2.3	5.8	5.8
Five or more	2.7	6.9	8.9	1.4	3.8	3.0
Other Adults Present (%)						
Relatives	28.0	32.4	35.8	29.9	32.4	39.5
Nonrelatives	0.5	0.2	0.5	8.8	6.1	5.4
Location (%)						
Large Metro Areas	37.5	48.0	61.2	41.7	54.0	63.2
In Central Cities	9.4	27.2	32.1	16.2	41.7	40.0
Outside Central Cities	28.0	20.8	29.2	25.4	12.3	23.0
Other Metro Areas	36.0	32.1	29.0	36.1	31.1	30.5
In Central Cities	10.9	20.4	15.0	17.5	23.1	19.7
Outside Central Cities	25.0	11.7	14.0	18.6	8.0	10.8
Outside Metro Areas	26.6	19.9	9.8	22.2	14.9	6.5
Residential Status (%)						
Homeowner	84.6	67.4	63.4	49.1	22.7	29.7
Renter, Public Housing	0.7	4.4	2.6	9.3	25.4	17.5
Renter, Private Housing	14.7	28.2	34.1	41.6	51.9	52.8

Source: Calculated from U.S. Bureau of the Census (1990c:37-52) data.

^a Hispanics may be of any race.

These trends have implications relevant to employment and training programs. Access of youth to informal job networks may be declining. Not only are today's youth less likely to live with a parent who can steer them to a job, but fewer youth can turn to brothers or sisters. Recent changes in family patterns may be exacerbating the special difficulties black youth experience in obtaining jobs through friends and relatives (Holzer, 1982). About 25 percent of black youth in one-parent families also live in public housing. Evidence indicates that growing up in a family receiving welfare and living in public housing worsens the employment experience of young workers (Lerman, 1986). Moreover, the general increase in the numbers of youth growing up without fathers has uncertain consequences for the socialization of young workers. All of these trends may increase the need for job search assistance and other formal job finding mechanisms.

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF PARENTS

Young people depend greatly on their parents. They may receive help in doing homework, in finding a job or simply in learning from an adult's experience. Given these realities, one would expect youth to benefit from a parent who is well educated and steadily employed. Table 5 shows the differences in these dimensions among parents of 12- to 17-year-olds in 1990.

Teenage children from different racial/ethnic backgrounds have parents with very different educational backgrounds. As Table 5 shows, heads of white two-parent families have the most formal education: one in four of these families have a parent with a college degree. Hispanic parents of teens are the most likely to have low levels of education, with over half not having completed high school. Black parents of teens are in the middle of the range, with about one-third not having completed high school.

The vast majority of families with teens--over 80 percent of both white and black two-parent families--have at least one employed parent. As of March 1990, the proportion of families with no employed parent ranged from 8.5 percent for white two-parent to almost 50 percent for minority single-parent families with children 12 to 17 years old. But not being employed in one-parent families was largely a matter of not participating in the labor force (not actively looking for a job) rather than unemployment.

The employment differences have expected, if unfortunate, consequences for family incomes. Although incomes are above the poverty level for the vast majority of two-parent families with teenage children, one of three white and most minority single-parent families with teens are poor. Family type is especially consequential for minority youth in terms of family income. For example, among black families with teens, two-parent families have median incomes nearly 3.5 times the median for one-parent families

Table 5
EDUCATION, INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT
OF PARENTS OF 12- TO 17-YEAR-OLDS

	Two-Parent Families			One-Parent Families		
	White	Black	Hispanic ^a	White	Black	Hispanic ^a
Education of Head of Household (%)						
Less than High School	16.6	28.1	51.5	26.6	36.2	58.3
High School Graduate	37.6	40.6	26.9	41.3	41.5	24.1
Some College	19.5	17.1	13.5	19.6	15.3	13.7
College Graduate	13.5	7.7	4.9	7.4	5.7	2.8
Postgraduate Education	12.7	6.5	3.3	5.0	1.4	1.1
Family Income						
Median Income	43,143	35,755	27,575	20,124	10,358	10,443
Percent Poor	6.1	12.9	20.9	31.1	57.2	57.1
Employment of Parent(s) (%)						
One Parent Employed	28.0	19.4	38.1	70.6	55.8	51.5
Two Parents Employed	63.4	63.5	46.8	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Head Unemployed	2.9	5.0	4.6	5.2	9.7	5.9
Head Not in Labor Force	5.6	12.1	10.5	24.2	34.5	42.6
No Parent Employed	8.5	17.1	15.1	29.4	44.2	48.5

Source: Calculated from U.S. Bureau of the Census (1990c:37-52) data.

^a Hispanics may be of any race.

(nearly \$36,000 versus about \$10,000). White single-parent families with teens have median incomes of about \$20,000, or almost twice the median for black families of this type. Median incomes for black two-parent families with teenage children are 83 percent of the median for similar white families.

Although the rates of poverty, low parental education and unemployment are higher among one-parent and minority families with teenage children, the largest proportion of families with these difficulties are white two-parent families. Because the majority of youth (63%) are in white two-parent families, even a low incidence for this group represents a large absolute number of youth.

In sum, the disadvantaged youth in means-tested employment and training programs in the 1990s are more likely to be chronically poor than the low-income youth of earlier periods. This is because poverty is much more likely to be transitory for two-parent than for one-parent families (Ellwood, 1989). Although racial/ethnic differences persist, it is family type that will be most influential in determining eligibility for these programs.

EDUCATION LEVELS AND BASIC SKILLS OF TODAY'S YOUTH

The preceding sections have dealt with the demographics, geographic locations and family backgrounds of youth in the 1990s. It is now appropriate to examine the characteristics of the young people themselves.

We begin with education, one of the most important predictors of economic and social success.⁴ Poorly educated young people are more likely to engage in crime, to create unwanted pregnancies and to experience unemployment and low wages. Falling behind grade level is a good predictor of dropping out.

Over the past two decades, the gap between black and white high school completion rates was virtually eliminated. Between 1970 and 1989, the percentage of black 22- to 24-year-olds who were high school dropouts declined dramatically from 38 percent to only 15 percent (U.S. Department of Education, 1990:Table 98). During the same period, white dropout rates remained about the same, falling slightly from 16 to 13 percent.⁵

⁴ Dryfoos, 1990, is a good source for the statements in this paragraph.

⁵ While black and Hispanic youth have higher dropout rates than white youth, the largest proportion of dropouts in their early 20s are white. Black youth make up only about 13 percent of this group, Hispanic youth about 26 percent and white youth about 61 percent.

Table 6 reveals some remaining differences among black, Hispanic and white youth. Young minority males are most likely to fall behind by two or more years. At age 12, when the typical student is in seventh grade, one of six black males are in fifth grade or below. It is interesting that the proportion of students who are two or more years behind remains about the same until the age of 19.

One would expect that dropout rates would mirror rates of falling behind in school. Although the connection is present, several striking differences between the two measures show up in Table 6. For example, Hispanic males age 16 or older are about as likely as black males to fall behind by two years but are much more likely to have dropped out of high school. Black females do better than black males in not falling behind, yet the proportion who are high school dropouts is the same at age 22: 20 percent.

Despite the high rates at which youth graduate from high school, only 22 percent complete four or more years of college.⁶ The proportion of 25- to 29-year-olds completing at least four years of college has remained about the same for blacks and whites since 1976, though Hispanic youth have made some gains over the period. As of 1988, only about 12 percent of blacks and Hispanics and 25 percent of whites had finished four years of college.

Measuring years of schooling is much easier than assessing the quality of education or competencies achieved. Although a full analysis of educational performance is beyond the scope of this paper, several key trends and patterns contribute to the image of youth in the 1990s.

The main source of national trend data on representative samples of students is the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).⁷ These data reveal serious limitations, but no worsening of student capacities over time. Indeed, groups with the lowest scores have achieved gains. For black and Hispanic youth, nearly all the indicators show considerable absolute improvement as well as narrowing gaps between white and minority youth. The distribution of several test scores has become somewhat more equal, as groups at the bottom improve while those at the top stay the same or decline. Our analysis is based on the NAEP data for 17-year-olds who are in school.⁸

⁶ The data in this paragraph come from the Council of Economic Advisers (1990).

⁷ Reports of the NAEP test scores come from the U.S. Department of Education (1990).

⁸ Dropout rates have declined since the NAEP began testing. Since more students are remaining in school, greater numbers of 17-year-olds who would have dropped out in earlier years are still in school to be tested and may be lowering averages for this age group.

Table 6
YOUTH BEHIND MODAL GRADE AND
HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS: OCTOBER 1988

Percent Two or More Years Behind Modal Grade						
Age	Young Men			Young Women		
	White	Black	Hispanic ^a	White	Black	Hispanic ^a
12	4.4	16.7	8.8	2.8	6.9	7.8
13	4.2	9.7	2.1	3.1	5.6	4.8
14	5.5	18.2	17.6	3.1	8.1	5.3
15	7.3	17.6	9.2	2.5	5.3	0.8
16	5.4	15.9	15.3	4.0	9.9	16.2
17	6.6	14.2	12.4	3.7	9.6	14.1
18	6.9	17.6	14.3	2.8	17.6	5.4
19	10.9	35.9	NA	4.9	28.6	NA
Percent Not Enrolled and Not High School Graduates						
16	4.7	4.7	16.6	6.2	7.7	22.6
17	8.7	5.5	19.5	8.8	6.0	20.4
18	14.2	15.0	30.6	14.3	14.1	27.6
19	17.0	22.2	40.5	11.9	22.4	27.0
20	15.5	23.8	44.6	12.9	16.3	53.8
21	16.6	20.0	42.5	12.0	13.6	33.2
22	16.8	20.9	54.7	14.4	20.3	51.4

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990b:14-18,157-162.

^a Hispanics may be of any race.

Reading comprehension tests provide considerable detail on performance. The defined thresholds for this test are: 200 (basic)--an ability to understand and to combine ideas and make inferences based on short, uncomplicated passages; 250 (intermediate)--an ability to search for specific information, interrelate ideas and make generalizations about literary, science and social studies material; 300 (adept)--an ability to find, understand, summarize and explain relatively complicated literary and informational material; and 350 (advanced)--an ability to understand links between ideas even when such links are not explicit, and to make appropriate generalizations even when texts lack clear introductions or explanations.

Nearly all 17-year-olds are able to read at a basic level, while only 5 percent can read at an advanced level. During the 1970-88 period, the average performance of the bottom 5 percent improved from 208 (just above basic) to 226 (between basic and intermediate) while that of the top 25 percent remained the same or declined. Black youth showed impressive progress, raising their average score from 239 to 274. Hispanic 17-year-olds also became better readers, as indicated by a rise in average score from 261 to 271 between 1980 and 1988. With the average score of white youth advancing only slightly from 291 to 295, the gap between white and minority youth narrowed.

Still, nontrivial racial/ethnic differences remained. Almost half (46%) of white youth but only about one-quarter of minority youth demonstrated the ability to read at the adept level in 1988. About one in four minority 17-year-olds scored below the intermediate level, but only one in ten white youth had similar scores.

Writing test scores indicate similar race/ethnicity differentials, but show modest evidence of narrowing gaps. Between 1979 and 1984, the proportion of black 17-year-olds able to do informative writing at the basic level or better increased from 73 to 80 percent; for whites, the increase was from 89 to 91 percent. During the 1984-88 period, 11th-grade blacks improved their average score slightly (from 204 to 207) as whites showed a slight worsening (from 229 to 225).

The patterns and trends in math proficiency are similar to those in reading, but show modest gains for minorities. Here, the classifications are: 200--considerable understanding of two-digit numbers and some basic multiplication and division; 250--understanding of the four basic operations as well as an ability to compare information from graphs and charts and to analyze simple logical relations; 300--identifying geometric figures, measuring lengths and angles, calculating areas of rectangles, and computing decimals, simple fractions and percents; and 350--applying a range of reasoning skills to solve multistep problems, including those with fractions and percents, exponents and square roots.

Only about half of all 17-year-olds were able to reach the 300 level or above in 1986, virtually the same proportion as in 1978. Overall gains occurred at the 250 level (the proportion rising from 92 to 96 percent), but a slight decline took place at the most advanced level (from 7.4 to 6.4 percent). The gains for black youth were mostly at the lower and middle levels. In 1977, 30 percent of black 17-year-olds did not reach the 250 level (which includes the four basic math operations); by 1986, only 14 percent fell short of this level.

While the proportion of black youth performing at the 300 level (moderately complex procedures) rose from only 18 to 21.7 percent, 58 percent of white youth passed this level. Racial/ethnic differences also are striking at the 350 level: 7.6 percent of whites, 0.3 percent of blacks, and 1.2 percent of Hispanics were proficient in doing multistep problems and algebra.

Science proficiency tests also indicate race/ethnicity differentials. The 1986 results for 17-year-olds show an average score of 298 for white students compared with 259 and 253 for Hispanic and black students, respectively. The disparities are greater at the 300 level (some detailed scientific knowledge and the ability to evaluate scientific procedures). About 50 percent of whites scored at this level while the rates for minorities were less than 20 percent.

However, the proportion of blacks scoring at the 300 and 350 levels increased by 48 and 67 percent, respectively, over the 1982 to 1986 period. Considering the overall decline in science proficiency scores from 1973 to 1982, these improvements are encouraging. Yet, overall performance on science tests remained below levels for the 1970 to 1973 period.

The lack of overall improvement in the capabilities of American students is one reason for their weak performance on tests conducted in several countries around the world. One particularly disappointing assessment of math competencies showed 13-year-old students in the United States scoring well below students in several Canadian provinces, Korea, the United Kingdom, Ireland and Spain. In general, American high school students earned test scores in the middle or lower range of scores earned by students in other countries.

Four conclusions stand out about the academic performance of young people: (1) American students generally score below students in other countries; (2) reading, writing, math and science capabilities for American youth as a whole have neither improved nor deteriorated over the last 15 to 20 years; (3) while test scores have improved among blacks and Hispanics, these youth still score much lower than whites on tests of reading comprehension and math and science proficiency; and (4) the dropout rate among blacks has declined dramatically.

While the lowest test scores in reading and math have improved, the expectations of employers also have increased. By implication, teaching the most basic skills is unlikely to be enough to promote the employability of disadvantaged youth. Instead, employment and training programs will have to undertake more complex approaches to promote the higher skills needed for employment.

MARRIAGE, SEXUAL ACTIVITY AND EARLY PARENTHOOD

Over the last two decades, men and women have begun sexual activity at younger ages. At the same time, a declining percentage of young people are married. Between 1970 and 1988, the married proportion of 18- to 19-year-old women declined from 24 to 11 percent (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990a:44). These two trends have contributed to a substantial rise in the prevalence of sexual activity before marriage. In the early 1960s, about 8 to 9 percent of white unmarried 17-year-olds had initiated sexual activity; by the early 1980s, the proportion had reached about 22 percent (Hofferth, et al., 1987).

The rate of sexual activity among unmarried young men and women continued upward during the 1980s. Between 1982 and 1988, the percentage of 15- to 19-year-old women who engaged in sexual activity rose from 42.1 to 49.5 (Forrest and Singh, 1990). Young men also became more sexually active over the 1980s; the percent of never-married 17- to 19-year-old men who had had sexual intercourse increased from 65.7 to 75.5 (Sonenstein, et al., 1989). Although use of contraception has increased and about two-thirds of sexually active teens frequently use one of several contraceptive methods, the number of young women unprotected from the risk of unintended pregnancy also has increased.

Not surprisingly, the results are more unmarried young women becoming pregnant, more obtaining abortions and more becoming unmarried mothers. In 1960, there were only about 1.5 births to every 100 unmarried women age 15 to 19; by 1987, the figure reached 3.4 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1981, 1990a). Since about 50 percent of pregnancies are aborted, compared with about 20 percent in 1960, the number of pregnancies is much greater than what is reflected in the birth rate. The marriage, sex and pregnancy trends have meant a sharp decline in the proportion of children born to married (as opposed to unmarried) teenage women. Between the early 1950s and the early 1980s, this proportion dropped from 86 to 48 percent.

By 1985, pregnancy and abortion rates of teenage women appeared to have levelled off at extremely high levels. For every 1,000 women age 18 or 19, there were 166 pregnan-

cies, 63 abortions and 81 births; among black young women, the rates per 1,000 were 261 pregnancies, 97 abortions and 129 births (Henshaw and Van Vort, 1989:85-86).⁹

We can examine the marital and parental status of young women by tabulating data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY). Note in Table 7 that rates of motherhood and marriage vary substantially by race/ethnicity. As of 1985, fewer than 4 percent of white 20- to 21-year-old women were unmarried mothers compared with 10 percent of Hispanic and 33 percent of black young women. Overall rates of motherhood also were much higher among minority women. Nearly half of black and over one-third of Hispanic 20- to 21-year-old women had parental obligations compared with about one in five white young women. About 10 percent of black women, 21 percent of Hispanic women and about 14 percent of white women age 20 or 21 were married mothers. The proportion of 20- to 21-year-old women (mothers and not mothers) who were married was highest among Hispanics (31.8%), almost as high among whites (29.3%) and lowest among blacks (15.6%).

The majority of unmarried teen mothers reside with at least one adult relative. Trent and Harlan (1990) report that, in 1980, about 60 percent of never-married 18- to 19-year-old mothers lived with at least one parent and another 11 percent lived with other relatives.

Young men begin sexual activity at even earlier ages than young women. For white and Hispanic young men, 16 and 17 are the ages when the largest increases in initial sexual activity take place. Black young men begin much earlier. Still, the incidence of early fatherhood is lower than the incidence of early motherhood. For example, in 1985, only about 20 percent of black 20- to 21-year-old men had become fathers, well below the 45 percent of black 20- to 21-year-old women who had become mothers. Of those who reached age 20 in the late 1970s, the proportions who had become unwed teen parents were about 11 percent of black men, 26 percent of black women, 1 percent of white men and 3.4 percent of white women (author's unpublished tabulations from NLSY).

The decline in marriage has probably weakened the labor force involvement of young men. Marriage appears to be associated with higher employment and earnings of fathers as well as nonfathers. A careful study by Korenman and Neumark (1991) demonstrates that wage growth is higher among married young men than among unmarried young men. An analysis of 22- to 30-year-old men revealed that, in 1987, the earnings of

⁹ The reason abortions plus births do not virtually equal pregnancies in this calculation is that a woman may suffer a miscarriage or be older than 19 when a birth occurs.

Table 7
YOUNG WOMEN BY AGE AND MARITAL/PARENTAL STATUS:
1979, 1983 AND 1985

	Never-Married Mothers	Married Mothers	Separated/Divorced/ Widowed Mothers	Married Not Mothers	Other
Age (Year)	Percent in Each Marital/Parental Status				
Black					
18-19 (1979)	26.0	4.9	0.7	2.0	66.5
18-19 (1983)	25.4	2.0	0.0	4.5	68.1
20-21 (1979)	31.0	11.9	7.5	4.4	45.3
20-21 (1983)	31.5	8.0	2.1	7.9	50.5
20-21 (1985)	32.7	10.4	1.6	5.2	50.1
Hispanic					
18-19 (1979)	6.3	17.0	1.1	9.3	66.2
18-19 (1983)	8.2	12.6	2.1	6.1	71.0
20-21 (1979)	7.8	23.6	5.3	12.3	50.9
20-21 (1983)	10.6	24.2	2.4	8.9	53.8
20-21 (1985)	10.2	21.1	4.7	10.7	53.3
White					
18-19 (1979)	1.6	8.4	1.1	0.8	88.1
18-19 (1983)	2.7	8.1	1.0	8.6	79.7
20-21 (1979)	2.7	17.4	2.5	1.7	75.7
20-21 (1983)	3.5	13.9	2.3	14.7	65.7
20-21 (1985)	3.6	14.4	3.6	14.9	63.5

Source: author's unpublished tabulations from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth.

married men were about \$4,000 higher than those of unmarried men who were not fathers (Lerman, 1990).

The higher rates of early parenthood, especially among young women and minorities, may require employment and training programs to take into account the needs of young parents. Among young men, lack of interest in marriage may be associated with a lack of commitment to employment. At the same time, young fathers may have to accept financial responsibility for child support. Thus, many of the youth in employment and training programs will have needs associated with early childbearing and parenting.

CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

Young people under age 24 commit over half of all crimes and over two-thirds of all violent crimes.¹⁰ The early teenage years are critical for current and future involvement in crime. In 1986, young people under age 18 accounted for about 30 percent of all arrests and 15.4 percent of all arrests for violent crime. Wolfgang, Thornberry and Figlio (1987), who followed a cohort of Philadelphia youth from age 11 through age 30, find that criminal offenses peak at age 16 and decline gradually as young people age. This peak is also the modal age for initial criminal activity. Thus, if young people can be prevented from entering criminal activity by age 16, there is a good chance their overall involvement with crime can be sharply reduced.

Only a minority of young people are arrested. Dryfoos (1990) estimates that 11 percent of 15- to 17-year-olds were arrested for nontraffic offenses in 1986. However, the proportion ever arrested is double this figure if self-reports of arrests are relatively accurate. The rates are much higher for males and for blacks. In 1986, nearly 80 percent of youth arrested were males; about 23 percent of all juvenile arrests and about 50 percent of juvenile arrests for violent crime were among blacks. Using data from the NLSY (from 1979 through 1987), Hill and O'Neill (1990) have estimated the criminal involvement of men age 19 to 21 in 1979. They report that one in ten black young men and one in forty white young men had spent time in jail by 1987. But overall, a relatively small proportion of youth commit a large proportion of crimes. According to Dryfoos (citing Elliot), about 15 percent of adolescents account for 66 percent of all offenses, including 87 percent of all crimes against persons.

The number of crimes against people increased from 1973 to 1979, levelled off through 1982, declined from 1982 to 1987, then increased again through 1990. Total crimes were

¹⁰ Unless otherwise noted, the crime data in this section come from FBI reports and National Crime Survey household data (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990b).

lower in 1990 than in the early 1980s. However, the number of violent crimes in 1990 returned to the level in 1983, though not quite to the levels of 1980-82. Murder is the one crime that has reached record levels, rising from a low (post-1973) of 18,751 in 1986 to a high of 23,000 in 1990. The decline over the 1980s in overall crimes approximately matched the 12 percent decline in the youth population. These figures imply that young people in the late 1980s were about as prone to commit crime as youth in the early 1980s and were actually more likely to commit murder.

Murders are concentrated in large cities and among young males. Just seven cities--New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia, Houston, Detroit and Washington--account for one-fourth of all murders. In 1988, over 1,000 black 15- to 19-year-olds and about 550 white 15- to 19-year-olds died in homicides. Homicide was the leading cause of death of black young men. The rate among black men age 15 to 24 jumped from 60.6 per 100,000 in 1984 to 85.6 in 1988.¹¹ Since 1988, the homicide rate has continued to skyrocket.

One result is the fear of crime many young people experience. Mental health workers, teachers and other professionals who work with young people report serious emotional problems related to fear of violence, which psychiatrist Dr. Carl Bell has compared to the posttraumatic stress experienced by Vietnam veterans (Harris, 1991). The fear is often well grounded. For example, a teacher's survey of 26 10th-graders in Laurel, Maryland, found that 16 knew of a person under 19 who had been killed, 13 knew of someone who had been stabbed, 4 knew of a suicide and 11 knew of someone who had attempted suicide (Harris, 1991).

The increasing violence has extended to schools. In Los Angeles schools, weapons seizures jumped nearly 30 percent over the 1988-90 school years and weapons-related incidents went from 469 to 1,076 between 1985 and 1987. In 1988, 18 percent of black and about 9 percent of white eighth-graders in a national sample reported they did not feel safe in their schools (U.S. Department of Education, 1990:Table 132).

The combination of high numbers of violent crimes and a reduced youth population indicates that young people were committing more of these crimes in 1988 than in 1980. However, the concentration of crime among a small group of offenders suggests that the number of violent criminals may not have significantly increased. It is uncertain whether employment and training programs are more likely to encounter youth with records of violent offenses.

¹¹ The death rate of black young men from homicide was even higher in 1970, at 102.5 per 100,000 (U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Ways and Means, 1990:1008).

DRUG AND ALCOHOL USAGE

Surveys of households and high school seniors indicate that drug use has been declining at least since 1985 and that the prevalence of drug use is higher among white than among black youth (U.S. General Accounting Office, 1991). But drug problems remain serious. Many attribute increased violence to turf battles over the drug trade (Skorneck, 1991). Certainly, drug arrests jumped dramatically over the 1980s, with arrests for the sale or manufacture of drugs rising from 58,000 in 1980 to 217,000 in 1988.

The prevalence of drug use is hard to estimate. However, information from self-reported drug use is available. Data from self-reports in the NLSY indicate that about 12 to 13 percent of young men and about 5 to 6 percent of young women use drugs heavily (Hill and O'Neill, 1990). Some use, as opposed to heavy use, is much higher. The proportion of high school seniors that used marijuana or another illicit drug (cocaine, hallucinogens, heroin or unprescribed psychotherapeutics) was over 20 percent in 1988, a high figure but down from the 40 percent reported in 1979. Use of illicit drugs other than marijuana rose from 15 percent in 1975 to a high of 22 percent in 1981, then fell to 9 percent in 1989. Household survey data indicate the extent of drug use by 12- to 17-year-olds is lower among Hispanics and blacks than among whites (U.S. Department of Education, 1990).

EMPLOYMENT AND EARNINGS

As young people age from 16 to 24, they move from the part-time to the full-time job market. In 1990, the proportion of young men working full time was 15 percent of 16- to 17-year-olds, 50 percent of 18- to 19-year-olds and about 80 percent of 20- to 24-year-olds (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1991:171).

Young people earn much less than older workers even when they work full time. The differentials vary by sex. In 1990, young men (age 16 to 24) had weekly earnings only about 55 percent of those received by adult men workers, while young women received about 68 percent of the earnings of adult women workers (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1991:221-222). Young women in part-time or full-time jobs have about the same (97 percent and 90 percent, respectively) weekly earnings as young men in comparable jobs.

In describing their work experience, we should be cognizant of the limitations of official data. First, official labor force statistics typically do not include informal work, such as helping with a family business, babysitting or summer jobs. The Bureau of Labor Statistics describes youth labor force activity in the same simple categories as adult work. Second, it is typically the parent, not the youth, who provides Census interviewers with

information on the work behavior of young people. In general, parents are less likely to report their children working or looking for work than are the young people themselves (Freeman and Medoff, 1982).

Several broad trends characterize the changes in the youth labor market over the last four decades. First, an increase in schooling dramatically reduced the supply of young people interested in full-time jobs. Between 1955 and 1990, the proportion of 16- to 19-year-olds enrolled in school in the fall increased from 64 to 74 percent among males and from 49 to 73 percent among females. (See Table 8.) Second, young women, especially white young women, moved into the labor force at a rapid pace. Third, an increasing proportion of high school students, particularly females, were employed part time while enrolled in school. And finally, minority youth suffered extraordinary increases in unemployment rates, partly as a result of a shift from rural to urban labor markets (Freeman and Medoff, 1982; Kogan, 1982).

A look at the 1990 employment situation for out-of-school males age 16 to 24 reveals that many are either not in the labor force or unemployed. A strikingly high 40 percent of out-of-school black males were not employed; 25 percent were unemployed, even though the national rate was only 5.5 percent. The proportions of white and Hispanic males not working (about 20%) also were high, though half that of black males.

Youth unemployment rates are highly sensitive to aggregate economic conditions. For each one percentage increase in the total unemployment rate, the youth unemployment rate rises by 1.7 points and the black youth unemployment rate by 3.5 points.¹² In the recent recession, the unemployment rate of 16- to 19-year-olds rose from 15 percent (the lowest since 1973) in 1989 to 18 percent in the first quarter of 1991. For black youth, the increase was from about 32 percent to 36 percent.

A large body of literature has examined the determinants of unemployment among disadvantaged youth.¹³ In general, a combination of factors may influence employment outcomes for young people, including local employment conditions, the employment status of parents, high school completion, grades and performance on skills tests.

¹² These results come from ordinary least squares regression analyses conducted by the author. Both youth unemployment rates were treated separately as a dependent variable, with overall unemployment and time as the independent variables.

¹³ See, especially, Freeman and Wise, 1982, and Freeman and Holzer, 1986.

Table 8
TRENDS IN ENROLLMENT OF 16- TO 19-YEAR-OLDS:
1955-1990

	1955	1960	1965	1970	1975	1980	1990
Males							
Percent Enrolled	64.0	68.3	72.9	74.2	71.1	68.4	74.2
E/P of Enrolled	36.3	30.6	32.3	33.3	35.0	36.4	34.2
E/P of Not Enrolled	84.2	74.6	78.5	70.8	69.9	68.6	67.4
Enrolled Share of Employment	43.4	46.9	52.5	57.5	55.2	53.5	59.3
Not Employed, Not Enrolled	5.7	8.0	5.8	7.5	8.7	9.9	8.4
Females							
Percent Enrolled	48.7	57.9	63.9	65.8	65.7	66.9	72.8
E/P of Enrolled	21.6	22.0	24.5	29.5	32.5	36.1	36.5
E/P of Not Enrolled	53.6	52.7	54.3	49.1	49.6	56.2	52.7
Enrolled Share of Employment	27.7	36.5	44.4	53.6	55.7	56.5	64.9
Not Employed, Not Enrolled	23.8	19.9	16.5	17.4	17.3	14.5	12.9

Note: The E/P ratio is the number employed divided by the population.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1971, 1981, 1991.

CONCENTRATION OF YOUTH PROBLEMS

One key question is the extent to which the problems experienced by youth overlap. This is difficult to answer, partly because of the many possible combinations among five behaviors: early sexual activity, heavy drug use, poor school performance, leaving school and criminal activity. Further, the data needed to examine these overlaps often are not available. Still, several analyses of this question are worth citing for their attempts to address the questions: Are negative behaviors correlated? What is the extent of correlation? What evidence exists of any causal connections?

Dryfoos (1990) finds a considerable degree of overlap of "high-risk" behaviors (delinquency, heavy drinking, use of marijuana and cigarettes, and weak school performance) in her review of literature on this subject.¹⁴ For example, Jessor, based on a sample of white 10th- to 12th-graders in the early 1970s, shows that problem drinkers were much more likely to use marijuana, engage in shoplifting, skip school and be sexually active. More recent research by Donovan and Jessor also demonstrates clear associations. Based on a sample of 7th- through 12th-graders in a Colorado school district, Table 9 illustrates the overlap of problem behaviors and their close relationship with school grades. Note, for example, that over one in four students with Ds engage in four or five problem behaviors, six times the rate among those with As and Bs.

Elliot has used NLSY data to document the links among delinquency, drug use and early sexual activity. In 1980, the 5 percent of 15- to 21-year-olds classified as serious delinquents committed about 80 percent of all serious offenses. The overwhelming majority of this group used alcohol, marijuana and other drugs. Among younger serious delinquents (11- to 17-year-olds), the rate of sexual activity was seven to nine times the rate among nonoffenders.

Some behaviors involve less overlap than others. For example, Mott and Haurin (1988) report on whether initial alcohol or marijuana use precedes initial sexual activity. While the rates of initial sexual activity are higher for those already using alcohol or marijuana, the differences are not always large.¹⁵

¹⁴ The material in this and the following paragraph is drawn from Chapter 7 of Dryfoos, 1990.

¹⁵ The proportion of male 15-year-olds becoming sexually active was 11.8 percent among nonusers and 12.5 percent among those using both marijuana and alcohol. For females, the rates were 8.6 percent for nonusers, 6.8 percent for those using only alcohol and 26.2 percent for those using both marijuana and alcohol.

Table 9
OVERLAP OF PROBLEM BEHAVIORS AND SCHOOL GRADES OF
7TH- TO 12TH-GRADERS IN A COLORADO SCHOOL DISTRICT

		Percent Distribution by School Grades		
Number of Problem Behaviors	Percent of Total	As and Bs	Cs	Ds
0	51	61	40	19
1	23	23	23	23
2-3	18	12	25	31
4-5	8	4	12	27

Source: Dryfoos, 1990:98.

Another plausible connection is between teenage childbearing and the completion of high school. Until recent years, schools themselves prevented teenage mothers from finishing high school. Today, while child care and other constraints still make school attendance difficult, there are programs for these mothers and laws against expelling pregnant students. As a result, the overlap between early pregnancy and dropping out of high school has become less pronounced. In 1955, according to a study by Upchurch and McCarthy (1989), only 51 percent of women having a child at age 18 or 19 graduated from high school, compared with 81 percent of mothers having their first child in their early 20s. By 1986, three-fourths of mothers having their first child at 18 or 19 graduated from high school, only 15 percentage points lower than the rate among women waiting until their early 20s.

The studies of multiple problem behaviors demonstrate that overlaps are much larger than would occur if each behavior were statistically independent. Extrapolating from a variety of studies, Dryfoos (1990) has estimated the distribution of youth by risk status: very high, high, moderate and low risk. Of the 28 million 10- to 17-year-olds, she estimates that 10 percent (2.8 million) are very high-risk youth. Over 50 percent of this group have been arrested, 70 percent have engaged in unprotected sex, 75 percent have dropped out or are two years behind in school, and most smoke cigarettes, drink and/or use marijuana. Dryfoos places another 15 percent (4.2 million) in the high-risk category. All of these youth have engaged in some delinquency, about three-quarters are one year behind in school and nearly half have had unprotected sex. Another 25 percent are what Dryfoos considers moderate-risk youth; these have engaged in only one of the risk behaviors. Finally, about half appear at low risk; they have not abused substances, engaged in unprotected sex or done poorly in school.

Although black and Hispanic youth are overrepresented in the higher-risk groups, the majority are white. Dryfoos estimates that within the very high-risk group, 44 percent are white males, 25 percent white females, 20 percent black males and 11 percent black females.

The substantial overlap among youth problems does not imply that one problem causes an array of other problems. Indeed, the U.S. General Accounting Office (1991) contends that studies to date have failed to prove any causal linkage between drug use and either teenage pregnancy or dropping out of high school. However, the high degree of overlap suggests some outside factor (e.g., growing up in a poor one-parent family) may cause several of these problems.

III. CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF PROBLEM BEHAVIORS

A large body of current social science has considered the causes and consequences of problem behaviors among youth. A major review of this work goes well beyond the scope of this paper. However, it is possible to gain some interesting insights by examining selected recent analyses.

CONSEQUENCES

Hill and O'Neill (1990) have studied the influences of early problem behaviors (and other factors) on the incidence of young women averaging at least two months of AFDC per year and of young men and women working less than 26 weeks per year from 1979 to 1987. Hill and O'Neill find that neither heavy drug use nor alcohol use had much impact on the outcomes for young women, but that heavy drug use significantly reduced the employment of young men. A high association also was evident between early criminal involvement and highly negative employment outcomes for young men. Poor achievement scores on national tests and not completing high school were significant predictors of negative outcomes for both young men and women.

Recent studies have found significant impacts of drug use and delinquency on high school completion. Fagan and Pabon (1990) find strong evidence that drug use and delinquency significantly increase the chances of inner-city youth dropping out of high school. The impact of drug use and delinquency persists even after taking account of other significant influences, including the family and school environments.

Using the NLSY data, Mensch and Kandel (1988) have documented that early use of cigarettes, marijuana and other illicit drugs significantly increased the rate of dropping out of high school. They find that early sexual activity and early pregnancy also were important predictors of dropping out. Low test scores on the Armed Forces Qualifying Test (AFQT) had the most substantial association with dropping out of school; a one standard deviation decrease in AFQT score was associated with a 9 to 10 percent increase in the annual dropout rate. By comparison, the impacts from standard deviation changes in other behaviors were 2 to 3 percent for drug use and about 4 percent each for sexual activity and pregnancy.

On the basis of the research, we can draw simple, well-documented conclusions: (1) problem behaviors of young people are strong predictors of women's receipt of welfare and men's unemployment; (2) drug use and criminal behavior worsen a young person's schooling and men's employment outcomes; and (3) the relationship between various youth problems is not one for one. A particular negative behavior does not always imply another.

These conclusions leave open the questions: Why is problem behavior more concentrated among some groups? What accounts for the trends over time in various problem behaviors?

CAUSES

Wilson (1987) has explained some of these social trends and variations in terms of the interaction among employment trends, family patterns and neighborhood change. A short summary of Wilson's view includes the following: (1) good jobs for less-educated workers have been declining in many urban areas, thereby increasing the unemployment of young black men; (2) this, in turn, has reduced the marriage rate of young blacks and led to high rates of poverty and welfare dependency; (3) the ability of middle-class blacks to leave urban ghettos has increased the concentration of urban black poor; (4) the concentration of poverty and families headed by women has left neighborhood youth with weakened social institutions, few links to jobs, and a shortage of male and employed role models; and (5) the combined impact of these forces has created a chronic, potentially self-perpetuating set of problems affecting the development of young people.

Research clarifying the strengths and weaknesses of this view is in its early stages. However, some recent studies are specifically relevant to our understanding of youth behavior. Of particular interest are studies examining the effects of neighborhood and school characteristics. These studies ask to what extent living in a particular area or going to a particular school worsens a young person's life chances. As Crane (1991) points out, the role of neighborhoods would seem to have obvious and important impacts, but until recently, few researchers have been able to document highly significant neighborhood effects, net of individual or family characteristics.

Since this paper's focus is on youth, the most relevant studies of neighborhood effects are those concentrating on dropping out of high school and unwed teen pregnancy. Research by Crane (1991) and by Mayer (1991) demonstrates highly significant effects on both behaviors. Crane's analysis of urban neighborhoods in 1970 shows that the percentage of professional and managerial workers in a neighborhood was associated with the likelihood of dropping out of high school. To Crane, this does not mean that professionals or managers were directly affecting dropping out but that such workers choose better neighborhoods. The absence of such workers may simply be a proxy for a relatively undesirable neighborhood.

Mayer (1991) has examined how the behavior of high school sophomores in 1980 was affected by the racial and socioeconomic composition of their school. She finds that a school's mix of students had a major influence on the likelihood of youth dropping out of high school and of young women having a child within two years after their sophomore

year. The estimates indicate that, by moving from a school with a low socioeconomic mix to one with a high socioeconomic mix, a white student from a low-income family would reduce his or her dropout rate from 28.5 to 18.4 percent. The same type of move would lessen a young white woman's probability of having a child from 10.5 to 5 percent. The impact of the school's composition was largest for whites but also was important for dropout rates for blacks. The effect on childbearing by young black women was relatively small.

Ethnographic evidence on the role of neighborhoods in negative youth behaviors comes from the work of Anderson (1991). He describes the importance of peer groups in influencing young men to engage in unprotected sex and become unmarried fathers. Anderson argues that job opportunities might encourage some young men to marry and become heads of families, but that existing jobs do not.

Policymakers can begin to focus on the facts that neighborhood environments and the composition of schools exert significant influences on youth outcomes. One possibility is to emphasize more neighborhood targeting on the grounds that improving neighborhoods will have secondary effects. Another possibility is to promote experience outside the neighborhood or local school. However, while recent studies highlight significant and strong neighborhood and school influences, policymakers should not conclude that only these matter. The roles of other peer groups and the family should remain important considerations in developing youth policies.

IV. JOBS AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

At least since the early 1960s, policymakers have worried about high rates of youth unemployment and its social consequences. By the late 1970s, congressional alarm over the 40 percent unemployment rate experienced by black teens stimulated renewed federal initiatives to provide jobs and training for young workers. The largest experimental component of the Youth Employment and Demonstration Projects Act (YEDPA) of 1977 was the Youth Incentive Entitlement Pilot Projects (YIEPP), a demonstration to guarantee part-time and summer jobs to all poor youth remaining in or returning to high school.

Even at that time, the relationship between measured youth unemployment and economic hardship was unclear. The earnings of young workers were rarely critical to the family, and the tendency of youth to move in and out of jobs meant some youth unemployment was frictional and short-term. Still, the goal was that all young people wanting jobs would be able to find them. While some favored only market mechanisms and others were willing to use government subsidies, virtually no one took issue with the objective of reducing youth unemployment rates. For example, those on both sides of the debate over raising the minimum wage saw the reduced demand for young workers as a clearly negative by-product of the effort to help low-wage workers.

People also recognized that abundant job opportunities might draw young people out of high school and into the full-time job market. Some empirical evidence supports the view that young people stay in school longer in bad economic times or in areas experiencing high unemployment.¹⁶ In fact, it was partly this worry that caused Congress to authorize pilot projects that made school attendance a condition for receiving jobs.

Today, some sociologists, psychologists and social psychologists are questioning the desirability of having teens work, even when they stay in school. Their worry is that employment of young people, especially junior high and high school students, may hamper rather than foster their psychological and social development. Greenberger and Steinberg (1986) are the most articulate advocates of the view that work experience in high school is harmful to the development of young people. They argue that such work reduces learning in school, fosters cynicism, and weakens close social and family bonds.

The most damaging arguments put forward by Greenberger and Steinberg are that work can have harmful long-run impacts--on learning, socialization, use of alcohol and cigarettes, and work attitudes. This conclusion is precisely the opposite of what other

¹⁶ See Duncan, 1965; Lerman, 1972; Gustman and Steinmeier, 1981.

experts have long argued. In general, empirical evidence has demonstrated that early work experience raises earnings in the post-school period.¹⁷

The focus of the Greenberger and Steinberg critique is on summer and school-year jobs held by young people attending high school. Their sample primarily is limited to white middle-class youth, and they say little about the employment of out-of-school youth, or about the role of work in dropping out of school. Still, since the Greenberger and Steinberg research has been so influential, it is worth examining their case against youth employment in some detail.

They begin by placing the employment of young people in historical context. Until the 1940s and 1950s, most 16-year-olds left school for jobs in order to help support their families. However, by the 1960s, school attendance had expanded dramatically. Yet, while fewer 16- to 17-year-olds were leaving school to enter the full-time job market, more students were beginning to combine their schooling with part-time work. Unfortunately, the increase in students holding jobs coincided with and perhaps was eased by the changing character of the job market. In particular, jobs in agriculture, construction, skilled trades and manufacturing were replaced by jobs in the service and trade sectors. For young workers, this meant a concentration of jobs in fast food restaurants and as store clerks.

Greenberger and Steinberg contrast these jobs with the apprenticeship positions many young people entered in the 19th century. By comparison, they see today's jobs as providing little in the way of on-the-job learning or training, adult supervision, involvement with adults, scope for developing responsibility, or linkage between job and career. In their sample of 100 young workers (with each of whom they spent two hours), they found that only 10 percent of work time was spent on reading, writing and arithmetic; that the jobs largely involved repetitive and highly routinized tasks; and that adult contact and supervision was minimal.

According to Greenberger and Steinberg, students work primarily to support nonessential consumption. They cite figures from a report by Lewin-Epstein showing that employment among high school sophomores and seniors rises with family income (Greenberger and Steinberg, 1986:19). And most spend from half to all of their income on their own purchases. Increasing materialism of young people explains the apparent anomaly of a rising proportion of relatively affluent students working alongside the smaller proportion of students whose family circumstances require that they work for essentials.

¹⁷ See, for example, Meyer and Wise, 1982.

The evidence for the harmful effects of work are far from conclusive. One frequently cited study by D'Amico (1984) finds that working while in high school did not lower class ranking for any of four race-sex groupings (black males, black females, white males and white females). In fact, working was associated with improved class rankings for white males. It is striking that Greenberger and Steinberg ignore these findings but instead stress the D'Amico finding that work may reduce the amount of time spent studying. While working long hours had a statistically significant negative impact on white youth (and a nonsignificant negative effect on black youth), less than 20 hours of work per week did not have any significant negative effects. Moreover, for some groups, work reduced free time at school more than it reduced time spent studying. Finally, D'Amico's estimates indicate that moderate amounts (less than 20 hours per week) of work can reduce the chances of dropping out.

Greenberger and Steinberg attempt to use the D'Amico results to show that the long-run effects may be negative, since working tends to reduce time spent on homework. Yet, neither the D'Amico study nor the Lewin-Epstein study provides evidence that working harms long-term school performance. Only Mortimer and Finch (1986) report that longer work hours (among males) were associated with lower grades and fewer years of schooling after high school.

Mortimer and colleagues at the University of Minnesota have conducted detailed studies of the impact of working in high school on behavioral adjustment, on relations with peers and on orientations to the future. This group surveyed over 1,000 ninth-graders in St. Paul public schools and their parents to examine the effects of weeks worked, hours worked per week and job characteristics. Their studies (1990, 1991) have produced a vast array of findings that yield mixed evidence on the effects of working.

Greenberger and Steinberg have raised concerns that working tends to increase the time spent around other youth (and away from family and other adults) and to weaken relationships with close friends. Such concerns seem ill-founded, at least for the Minnesota sample. Mortimer and Shanahan (1990) report that employed young men spent less time with their peers (but did not feel less close to best friends) and that employed young women felt closer to best friends and perceived more peer support.

One group of adults who can observe whether the effects of work are positive or negative are parents. Of course, parents may not be the most reliable guides. On the one hand, they may be too uncritical of their children's behavior and wish to rationalize their acceptance of youth holding jobs. On the other hand, they may be quick to attribute any negative behavior to a child's job or employment, even if the work is unrelated to the behavior. Despite potential biases, parents are able to see specific

changes associated with working and have a stake in avoiding negative influences on their children.

Using data from the Minnesota sample, Phillips and Sandstrom (1990) find parental attitudes toward their children's work experience generally supportive. While about one in four parents believed too many teens were employed, only nine of nearly 1,000 parents disapproved of their own children's employment. Over 40 percent of parents strongly approved and another 50 percent approved, with about 8 percent reporting neutral feelings. Parents generally reported their children spending about the same time with their families, becoming more financially independent and, most of all, becoming more independent in other ways.

Most parents were entirely satisfied with their children's jobs. When asked, ". . . what, if anything, would you like to change about your child's job?" two-thirds did not want any change at all. And, of those wanting changes in hours, a much higher proportion of parents wanted their children to work more hours than fewer hours. They were especially interested in more steady work in the summer. Perhaps the added family income from a youth who works--even if spent entirely by the young person--reduces financial pressure on parents.

Overall, the weight of the evidence is that high school students gain something from work experience beyond the immediate cash rewards. There appears to be little risk of serious difficulty for students working less than 20 hours per week during the school year. More questionable is the impact of paid work of 20 or more hours per week. Although many studies find positive or neutral effects from longer amounts of work, one can make a theoretical and empirical case against such work experience.

The research on how work affects youth development has several important gaps, some of which analysts have begun to fill. One set of unanswered questions has to do with how various types of jobs influence youth outcomes. So far, only modest evidence is available on the long-term effects of job characteristics. Stern and his colleagues (1990) report that youth able to use and develop skills in their jobs had lower unemployment and higher wages than youth in other jobs. However, Stern, et al., also point to studies showing little, if any, special advantage for jobs in cooperative education programs, despite the efforts in such programs to integrate schooling and work and to provide supervised work experience. Further research on this subject is clearly needed.

A second set of questions concerns more direct efforts to link education and jobs in the vocational education system. Vocational education apparently raises the earnings of students who obtain jobs in the field for which they received training (Campbell, et al., 1986). However, less than half (44 percent) of students have jobs requiring skills

acquired in vocational education by three and one-half years after graduation (Meyer and Horn, 1990). Perhaps combining in-school vocational education with work experience (in or out of the field) might assure greater utilization of skills, improve placement and raise long-term earnings. Until now, researchers have looked only separately at impacts of vocational education and work experience.

A third set of questions involves distinguishing between summer and school-year work experience. Obviously, summer jobs are less likely than school-year jobs to reduce time spent on homework. However, summer jobs appear to have other features of school-year jobs that some analysts and public officials find objectionable. Despite the importance of the issue for public policy, few studies have examined the short- and long-term impacts of summer work on young people. Perhaps the lack of interest in this question is due to a belief that young people have few alternatives during the summer.

The question of alternatives is important to the broader debate, yet analysts rarely address what young people would be doing if they were not working. Studies comparing students with and without jobs provide some estimates based on what those not working (or working fewer hours) report concerning homework and free time at school. However, it is far from clear that young workers would reallocate their time in the same way. Only experimental evidence can ensure that we are comparing similar groups of young people, some who are working and some who are not.

The Youth Incentive Entitlement Pilot Projects (YIEPP) tested the impact of in-school work on school performance, behavior and earnings after high school. The principle behind YIEPP was that providing in-school (and summer) jobs would help poor youth if the jobs were linked to school attendance and minimum school performance. The idea was that jobs, even paying only the minimum wage, would be attractive enough to stimulate poor youth to remain in school or return to high school. Few worried about the impact of part-time work on school performance. In fact, the expectation of program designers was that the school attendance and school performance requirements might improve schooling outcomes. The primary objective was to increase high school graduation rates.

Researchers analyzing the impacts of YIEPP compared four YIEPP sites with four sites that did not operate a YIEPP program.¹⁸ Overall, the demonstration did not generate a statistically discernible impact on school attendance or high school graduation rates. Thus, while part-time jobs linked to school attendance did not promote the educational

¹⁸ The four pilot study sites were Denver, Cincinnati, Baltimore and eight rural counties in Mississippi. The four comparison sites were Phoenix, Louisville, Cleveland and six other rural counties in Mississippi (Farkas, et al., 1984).

gains that program sponsors sought, neither did they worsen the schooling outcomes of poor youth. In principle, the chance to gain work experience under YIEPP might have encouraged poor youth to avoid behaviors that could limit their future careers. Unfortunately, the results clearly show that the added jobs reduced neither self-reported crime among young men nor childbearing among unwed young women.

The one positive outcome was an increase in postprogram earnings associated with the work experience gained from the demonstration. On average, young people in demonstration sites earned about \$10 per week more than young people in comparison sites. While small in absolute terms, the gain was large relative to the approximately \$37 per week in earnings expected in the absence of the demonstration. This low figure represents total earnings divided by all eligible youth, including nonworkers and those who did not participate in a demonstration site.

The YIEPP results are broadly consistent with recent findings indicating (1) little impact on school outcomes from moderate amounts of part-time work and (2) modest gains in earnings in the immediate post-school period. Thus, overall, part-time work exerted modest positive impacts (Farkas, et al., 1984).

But questions remain about a broader range of possibilities: What if schools, workplaces and families limited the amount of work by young people? What if employers provided training for youth? Models observed in other industrial countries offer alternate approaches to youth employment.

Japan and Germany, two competitors who have achieved major success in developing their human resources, operate very different models from the United States and from each other. In Japan, the emphasis is on rigorous school-based learning in secondary schools, with labor market rewards linked to performance in school. The 70 to 75 percent of Japanese high school students in general education as opposed to vocational or technical education is similar to that of American high school students (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 1985). However, as Rosenbaum and Kariya (1991) have recently documented, grades in high school play a much more significant role in finding a good job for Japanese students than for American students. It is thus not surprising that Japanese students concentrate on school and are less likely to engage in part-time work.

For American high school students, grades have much less consequence, except for the few trying to attend a selective college. In this context, work experience may be seen as competing with school performance to provide an advantage in the job market. By implication, efforts to make grades important in the allocation of post-high school jobs

may do much more to encourage students to concentrate on their studies than would efforts to limit the amount of their work.

One problem with such a strategy is the hardship imposed on young people who do not learn well in a classroom environment but are able to become skilled within a hands-on setting. The German approach takes direct account of differences in learning styles. About 80 percent of German high school students are in vocational or technical programs--mostly youth apprenticeships--while only 20 percent are in general education (Hamilton, 1990). The German system also links employment with worksite training and continuing school-based education.

Given the limited success of cooperative education in the United States, efforts to develop constructive bridges between young people and jobs will have to move beyond existing programs and establish training that can lead to successful careers. A youth apprenticeship system would build on the desire of young people to be part of the work force and provide them such training (Lerman and Pouncy, 1990).

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

How should policymakers respond to the changes in the size, composition and behavior of the youth population? What new information about the emerging youth cohort is vital to the formulation of employment and training policies?

CONCLUSIONS

The emerging youth population will increase in absolute numbers over the 1990s but will make up a smaller share of the total population. Young people will come to their late teenage years with less family stability and fewer close family connections; more exposure to drugs, crime and early sexual activity; and more years of schooling. A small minority of the youth population will have grown up in inner-city areas, where neighborhood influences create enormous obstacles for young people.

Many young people will continue to experience poverty and income hardships, but these will increasingly depend more on family status than on race/ethnicity. Fewer young people will marry in their teens or early 20s. However, a large proportion of minority women--43 percent of blacks and 31 percent of Hispanics--will become mothers by age 21. Overall drug use and crime will have peaked, but both will be substantial. Because of the increased seriousness of violent crime and record murder rates, especially among minority young men, fear of crime may well influence many decisions of young people.

Not all the signs are bad. Fewer youth will have dropped out of high school. Many minority youth will come from middle-class families.¹⁹ Test scores of minorities will probably continue to improve. Employers will increasingly be interested in hiring people who have skills, who can learn on the job and who can apply what they have learned.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Department of Labor should attempt to broaden the scope of formal linkages between schools and jobs.

A major challenge for employment and training programs in the 1990s is to reconcile economic and social realities: the economy needs educated and trained workers who require longer preparation before entering the job market, but young people are taking less time to begin quasi-adult activities, such as taking part-time jobs, using alcohol and engaging in sex. The importance of improving educational outcomes is clear, but doing

¹⁹ The median income for black two-parent families of 12- to 17-year-olds was \$35,755 in 1988.

so entirely through school will be difficult at a time when adolescents are more eager than ever to have independent social lives.

The education and the employment and training systems have mirrored the social environment of prolonged adolescence, of avoiding long-term commitments, and of frequent moves into and out of jobs and employment. Although these systems are hardly responsible for this state of affairs, they can foster change in sensible directions.

Some policymakers have already attempted to impose strict limits on the part-time work of students. For example, recommendations of a task force on youth employment formed by the Wisconsin superintendent of schools call for restricting the time students can work, for requiring close involvement of schools in supervising employers and for other actions to increase the time spent on homework. Although the recommendations rely on incomplete research, curtailing long work hours during the school year may be a wise preventive measure. On the other hand, it is unlikely that such restrictions will do much to promote increased learning at school.

Policymakers instead must find a way to provide mechanisms by which students can continue to learn outside of school settings. As argued at the end of Section IV, a youth apprenticeship system would be a vehicle for accomplishing these policy directions, but so are some other emerging initiatives.

2. The Department of Labor should focus program resources on lowering risk factors associated with poor labor market outcomes by attempting early intervention (by the age of 16) with at-risk youth.

The ages 16 and 17 are critical. It is at these ages that many young people succumb to the lures of drug and alcohol use, crime and unprotected sexual activity. Others leave school either mentally or physically. These are the ages when young people begin driving cars, dating extensively and wanting more spending money. In my view, objections to early intervention look weak when we recognize the extraordinary value of strengthening the opportunities of 16- to 17-year-olds who might otherwise end up in jail, as an alcohol-related auto casualty, as an unwed parent and/or as a poorly prepared student.

But what are the best means for achieving results for 16- to 17-year-olds? Work experience and job placement are tempting approaches, given the modest gains from early work experience and the decline of informal job contacts for youth. However, while part-time work might not have the disastrous consequences for youth projected by Greenberger and Steinberg, it might not produce major gains. A second possibility is teaching basic skills. This, too, is unlikely to have a significant impact on most young

people. Their real shortfall is in the medium- and higher-level skills and, in any case, remedial programs often fail to attract participants if they appear to be a continuation of school.

A promising approach, therefore, would be to coordinate summer training and education with entry into a formal job-related and career-related sequence. Such an approach would use career options as incentives to do well in education-related courses. It would also recognize the need to promote a more mature attitude on the part of young people and to expose them to adult responsibilities.

Specifically, I recommend linking training and modest work experience with preparation for an apprenticeship or career internship. The federal government could require that summer program monies, as well as some Title II-A dollars, be used in programs for youth that allow private employers to provide experience, education and training as part of the movement toward a real apprenticeship.

3. Focus early interventions within specific neighborhoods or communities in the service delivery area.

Summer programs might be channelled into particular communities so that local schools and employers could collaborate on apprenticeship or internship programs. Dealing with a target community would recognize the importance of neighborhood influences on youth behavior. Of course, this is a high-risk strategy, but the potential payoff is also high.

RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

The primary research agenda should be to determine what combinations of work and education are most useful and most feasible for moving low-income youth into careers. The effort should focus on the potential implications of a more rigorous school-related approach involving close linkages with employers. A number of projects, listed below, need to be undertaken in order to address this issue.

1. Develop an overall cohort analysis of young people that traces all school, work and program participation during the late high school years and through the mid to late 20s.

Such an analysis can provide information on the uses of school-based training and postsecondary and second-chance education and training, and on the types of jobs and job durations among various groups of young people. One goal would be to identify the most successful types of school-workplace connections. A second goal is to determine the paths pursued by at-risk young people who attain well-paying jobs by their late 20s.

2. Assess efforts to integrate school and supervised work, such as cooperative education programs.

Existing research on the effects of early work experience on youth development points to the importance of job characteristics and adult contact and supervision. Cooperative education and other supervised work programs attempt to address these issues, but existing studies do not allow conclusions to be drawn about the link between favorable job characteristics and longer-term labor market outcomes.

3. Fashion demonstration projects combining in-school vocational education programs with related work experience programs.

Such projects would inform a potential strategy for strengthening school-workplace connections. Prior research has focused separately on the impacts of vocational education and work experience.

4. Develop demonstration projects to examine the employment effects of strengthened in-school job placement. Job counselors could help guide students toward appropriate part-time opportunities, summer jobs and permanent jobs after high school or postsecondary training.

The rise in single-parent families, the decline in the number of siblings and the concentration of minority single-parent families in central cities may well be worsening the informal connections between disadvantaged youth and employers. It is important to determine if making job connections in school can compensate for the lack of connections in the community, and, if so, how best to create them.

5. Examine the differences, across states, in the structure of school-based and work-based training and the likely impact of those differences on the absorption of low-income young people into the job market.

California has an elaborate system of state and community colleges; other states may emphasize work-based training. Some states may utilize proprietary schools more extensively than others. What lessons can be learned from the variety of school- and work-based training combinations across states?

The American job market delays entry into careers until young people are well into their 20s. Unfortunately, by this age, many young people have already made choices that will limit their ability to support themselves and form families. The challenge for the education and the employment and training systems is to reconcile the need to upgrade the skills of the work force with the need to provide attractive workplace options that help youth mature into constructive young adults.

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YOUTH AND THE LABOR MARKET IN THE NINETIES

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I. INTRODUCTION

The labor market of the United States has undergone major structural change since 1970. Because of growing international trade, technological advances and demographic shifts, we have seen major changes in the occupational and industrial mix of the American work force. Changes in industrial relations, union representation and government policy (in such areas as the minimum wage) have accompanied these trends.

All of these forces appear to have resulted in major changes in the level and distribution of employment and earnings among young people, and projections of these forces for the 1990s suggest that the trends may well continue. In particular, overall wage levels (especially for males) have stagnated and the gaps between those of college graduates and other workers have widened dramatically. The employment and/or earnings of young dropouts and of blacks overall have deteriorated most sharply.

This paper evaluates the effects on the employment prospects of young people of labor market changes that have occurred in the past two decades, as well as those that are likely to occur in the coming decade. It focuses in particular on the concept of "skill mismatch"--i.e., the idea that job opportunities are ample for those with adequate skills but that many in the population lack these skills--as it concerns disadvantaged young workers, especially high school dropouts and inner-city blacks from low-income neighborhoods.

The sections are organized as follows: Section II evaluates recent outcomes in the labor market for young people and potential explanations of those outcomes. The section reports on occupational, industrial and demographic trends projected into the 1990s by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (and criticisms of these projections), as well as additional evidence from employer surveys on hiring and training strategies.

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Section III considers particular features of the labor market for disadvantaged youth, especially blacks. The section presents evidence both for and against a variety of other hypotheses regarding their employment disadvantages--e.g., "spatial mismatch," lack of work experience and references (or social networks more generally), deleterious neighborhood effects and the availability of alternative income sources, especially crime.

Section IV includes a summary, a discussion of the general directions youth labor market policy might take, and an agenda for future data collection and research.

II. LABOR MARKET OUTCOMES FOR YOUTH AND THEIR CAUSES

This section presents data on recent and projected outcomes, and employer hiring practices and skill requirements. It concludes with a discussion of the concept of "skill mismatch."

RECENT OUTCOMES

Table 1 presents recent data on labor force participation, employment-to-population ratios and unemployment rates for young people age 16 through 19 and 20 through 24.¹ Data are chosen from 1972, 1978 and 1989 to represent comparable points in the national business cycle (all are roughly peak years). Separate data are presented for whites and blacks by sex (no separate data are available for Hispanics in published summaries from the 1970s).

These data show several important outcomes in the labor market over the past two decades:

- Participation and employment among young women (especially whites) rose rapidly in the 1970s and 1980s.
- Participation fell and unemployment rose sharply for young black males in the 1970s, though there was partial recovery in these figures in the 1980s; still, their employment figures lag far behind those of young white males and are especially low among less-educated blacks and those living in poor, inner-city areas.²

In data not presented in this table, it is also clear that labor force activity of young males (either white or black) without high school diplomas has fallen sharply in recent years.³

¹ Employment-to-population ratios capture movements in participation rates as well as unemployment, while unemployment rates are defined only for those already in the labor force.

² Participation rates and employment-to-population ratios for black dropouts (males and females together) age 16 through 24 in 1989 were .523 and .395, respectively. Comparable numbers for whites were .680 and .565. Employment rates for blacks in poor, inner-city areas are even worse (Freeman and Holzer, 1986).

³ Participation rates for young male dropouts age 16 through 24 were 87.6 percent and 79.0 percent in 1977 and 1989, respectively (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1989; U.S. Department of Labor, 1990).

Table 1
KEY LABOR FORCE MEASURES FOR YOUTH
1972-1989

Year	White Males			Black Males			White Females			Black Females		
	Labor Force Participation Rate	Employment to Population Ratio	Unemployment Rate	Labor Force Participation Rate	Employment to Population Ratio	Unemployment Rate	Labor Force Participation Rate	Employment to Population Ratio	Unemployment Rate	Labor Force Participation Rate	Employment to Population Ratio	Unemployment Rate
	Ages 16 to 19											
1972	.601	.515	.142	.463	.316	.317	.481	.413	.142	.322	.192	.405
1978	.650	.563	.135	.449	.285	.367	.567	.485	.144	.373	.221	.408
1989	.610	.526	.137	.446	.304	.319	.571	.505	.115	.404	.271	.330
	Ages 20 to 24											
1972	.843	.771	.085	.827	.704	.149	.594	.546	.082	.570	.469	.179
1978	.873	.806	.077	.788	.622	.210	.693	.636	.083	.627	.486	.227
1989	.868	.802	.075	.802	.658	.179	.740	.690	.068	.655	.537	.181

Sources: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1989; U.S. Department of Labor, 1990.

Table 2 presents data on median annual income for various groups in 1972 and 1989.⁴ All numbers are expressed in 1989 dollars (and are thus unaffected by inflation). The following developments are apparent from this table:

- The incomes of females rose during this period, while those of males fell.
- The declines among males were especially dramatic among high school dropouts, whose incomes fell approximately 25 to 30 percent.⁵
- Even among young male high school graduates, annual incomes declined quite substantially (about 20 percent for those with no college and 12 percent for those with some college).
- The only group of males for whom there was very little income loss in this period was college graduates.

Overall, the data indicate that, for young males, average earnings fell and inequality among education-attainment groups rose in the past two decades. The deterioration in income and labor force activity for high school dropouts has been very sharp, as it has been for blacks overall. For blacks, the deterioration comes after strong progress in earnings (though not in employment) in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Freeman, 1981).

What factors can explain this set of trends? The most easily observable factors fall into the following categories: (1) demographic changes, which reflect shifts in labor supply; (2) occupational and industrial shifts, which reflect shifts in labor demand; (3) declining productivity growth; and (4) other factors (e.g., declines in union membership or in the inflation-adjusted value of the minimum wage).

These factors have been extensively studied in a group of recent papers on growing wage inequality among younger workers (Murphy and Welch, 1988; Blackburn, et al., 1989; Bound and Johnson, 1989; Bound and Holzer, 1991; Katz and Murphy, 1992; Acs and Danziger, 1990; the best review of the literature to date is Levy and Murnane, 1992). Each category is explained in greater detail below.

⁴ Trends in annual income primarily reflect trends in annual earnings, especially for males, among those below retirement age. Annual earnings, in turn, reflect both wage and employment changes.

⁵ Several studies (e.g., Bound and Freeman, 1990; Juhn, et al., 1989) show a greater deterioration in earnings for blacks (of all education levels) than for whites during the late 1970s and 1980s.

Table 2
MEDIAN ANNUAL INCOME OF YOUNG PEOPLE
BY SEX, AGE, EDUCATION AND RACE

	Males		Females	
	1972	1989	1972	1989
Ages 15 and Above, by Race				
All	\$20,339	\$19,893	\$7,095	\$9,624
Whites	21,332	20,863	7,142	9,812
Blacks	12,921	12,609	6,672	7,875
Ages 25 and Above, by Education				
All	24,540	22,860	8,275	10,814
≤ 8 Years	13,358	10,033	4,960	5,627
9-11 Years	21,774	14,439	7,349	6,752
12 Years	27,041	21,650	10,257	10,439
13-15 Years	29,951	26,402	11,253	14,244
16+ Years	38,561	37,553	18,829	21,659
Ages 15-24	7,830	6,313	4,990	4,739
Ages 25-34	25,165	21,367	10,388	12,231

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce (1973, 1991).

Note: All numbers are in 1989 dollars and are calculated using the Fixed-Weight GNP Deflator for Personal Consumption Expenditures.

Demographics

The primary forces here are:

- The baby boom and baby bust;
- Changing school enrollment patterns; and
- A growing presence of females (and immigrants) in the labor force.

The baby boom cohort entered the labor market in the late 1960s and especially in the 1970s. This was widely believed to have depressed earnings of young people in the latter decade (Welch, 1979; Freeman, 1979) and raised their unemployment rates as well. As the much lower birth rates of the baby bust cohort of the 1960s and 1970s became reflected in the labor market entrants of the 1980s, the earnings and employment of young people generally recovered. This was especially true in such areas as the Northeast, where labor markets were especially tight for young people (Freeman, 1990).

College enrollment rates generally respond to the differential observed in wages between college and high school graduates at any point in time (Freeman, 1971). Thus, the depressed wage differentials observed in the 1960s and early 1970s led to declining enrollments in the latter decade. On top of the baby bust, this led to a relatively small cohort of young college graduates in the 1980s, which contributed to the higher wages that they earned. The high school dropout rate also levelled off at about 15 percent during the decade.

Only among blacks did college attainment continue to rise and dropout rates continue to fall, though substantial gaps in educational attainment between blacks and whites remain. Dropout rates for young whites and blacks, respectively, were about 15 percent and 29 percent in 1979, 16 percent and 21.5 percent in 1987; college graduation rates were 24 percent and 10.5 percent in 1979, 25 percent and 13 percent in 1987 (Bound and Freeman, 1990).

Female labor force participation grew dramatically in the 1960s and 1970s, though at slowing rates afterward. This rapid growth appeared to adversely affect their relative wage rates in the 1960s (since supply was shifting more rapidly than demand), though their relative wages began to improve thereafter. Female participation may also have contributed to the employment problems of males, especially black males (Borjas, 1986), as some women moved into jobs that had been male-dominated (as in manufacturing).

The effect of the growing immigrant presence in the labor force, mostly from Latin America and Asia, does not appear to have adversely affected the earnings and employment of the average worker (Altonji and Card, 1989; Lalonde and Topel, 1989). But Freeman, et al., (1991) show that the large number of workers without a high school degree among recent immigrant groups is another factor limiting employment opportunities for young dropouts.

Occupational and Industrial Shifts

Occupational shifts toward professional, technical and managerial jobs, which generally require greater educational preparation, have occurred at an increasing rate in recent decades. Growth of sales jobs has also been strong, and some of these require greater educational background as well.

The shift of employment away from manufacturing toward the trade and service sectors, and especially the decline of operative and laborer jobs within the manufacturing sector (as opposed to professional, managerial and clerical ones) was particularly strong in the 1980s. These trends have eliminated many jobs in which less-skilled workers could earn fairly high wages. These shifts result not only in lower wages but also in lower employment rates for less-educated workers in industrial areas, if they are not willing to accept the lower wages of newly emerging jobs. The effects on employment and/or earnings of young male dropouts, especially among blacks, have been particularly strong (Bound and Holzer, 1991).

A few studies have linked data on occupational and industrial employment distributions with skill variables from the Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT) in order to analyze how changes in these distributions have affected demand for skills. The most recent of these, by Howell and Wolff (1991), finds increases in demand between 1960 and 1985 for cognitive and interactive skills associated with occupational and industrial shifts, though it finds some slowdown in the rate of shift. Whether this slowdown reflects changes on the demand or the supply side of the labor market is unclear. Shifts from goods-producing to service-producing employment raised overall skill demands while they lowered overall earnings.

The most likely causes of these shifts in the occupational and industrial composition of employment are: (1) shifts in product markets, largely associated with rising import levels of manufactured products; (2) outsourcing of work from high-wage to lower-wage firms and/or plant relocations abroad; and (3) technological changes in the production of goods, which have increased reliance on computerized processes (such as CAD-CAM, robotics, computerized inventory control, etc.).

There have long been two conflicting claims: that new technology leads to "deskilling," and that it leads to "upgrading." Examples of both outcomes can clearly be found (e.g., Zuboff, 1988; Bailey, 1990). Employers can choose how to organize work and production around new technology in ways that can lead to either result. Still, statistical analysis across industries or over time strongly suggests that, on average, technological change tends to raise the demand for educated workers relative to those less educated (e.g., Bartel and Lichtenberg, 1987; Mincer, 1991).

Productivity Growth

The overall decline of real wages in the 1970s and their relatively weak average growth rates in the 1980s also reflect the decline in productivity growth (defined as increased output per hour of labor) experienced since the early 1970s. Productivity growth was virtually nonexistent between 1973 and 1979, and has remained fairly weak (averaging about 1 percent per year or less) (Levy, 1988; Baily and Blair, 1988). Among the many factors held responsible for the slowdown are the OPEC oil shocks, the baby boom, declining educational quality and test scores of youth in the late 1960s and 1970s (Bishop, 1989a), declining savings and investment rates, and the industrial shift from manufacturing to services (though this last factor may partially reflect the greater difficulty of measuring productivity in the service sector). However, a large part of this trend remains unexplained.

Other Factors

The decline in union membership (Freeman, 1989; Farber, 1987), which began in the mid-1950s but accelerated in the 1980s, appears to have contributed to the lower earnings of the less educated.

The inflation-adjusted value of the minimum wage also fell in the 1980s and contributes somewhat to the lower wages of less-skilled young workers (Blackburn, et al., 1989). It should be noted here that rising inequality and declining wages for less-skilled workers within occupations and industrial sectors are not well understood.

Some (e.g., Juhn, et al., 1989) have attributed the growing inequality to different skill levels that are often not measured. The rising wage gap in the 1980s between whites and blacks might reflect the rising value of unobserved skills. For instance, an increase in demand for reading and numerical literacy within traditionally low-skill sectors (due to technological change, import competition, etc.) would tend to increase the wage gap between white and black workers, whose average scores on reading and math tests lag well behind those of whites (Barton and Kirsch, 1990; O'Neill, 1990).

But an alternative explanation for the recent rise of the gap between blacks and whites might involve declining enforcement of affirmative action requirements for federal contractors during the 1980s (Leonard, 1990). An explanation for growing inequality within occupations and sectors might be the growing variance across firms in wage-setting policies, given the more competitive environment of the 1980s (Levy and Murnane, 1992).

PROJECTED OUTCOMES FOR THE 1990s

Given the importance of demographic changes and occupational/industrial shifts in helping to explain labor market developments of the 1970s and 1980s, we might learn something about expected developments in the 1990s from projections of these shifts and changes. These projections are made regularly by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and have been described in various published formats (Fullerton, 1989; Personick, 1989; Silvestri and Lukasiewicz, 1989; Johnston and Packer, 1987).

Population/Labor Force Projections

The following changes are projected for the supply side of the labor market until the year 2000 (Fullerton, 1989):

- Population and labor force annual growth will slow to about 1 percent per year overall and will be about zero for ages 16 to 24.
- Population growth rates for blacks, Hispanics and Asians will exceed the rate for whites and will account for over half of net labor force growth, though these groups will still account for small fractions of the labor force overall (about 12 percent, 10 percent and 4 percent, respectively).

These projections suggest that the supply of youth in the labor market may grow more slowly than the demand for them, as their fraction of the overall labor force will continue to diminish, but that the large fractions of minorities among new entrants may limit the availability of educational and literacy skills among new workers.

Industry/Occupation Projections

The following changes are projected for the demand side of the labor market until the year 2000 (Personick, 1989; Silvestri and Lukasiewicz, 1989):

- Employment in services (especially retail trade, health and business) will continue to grow rapidly while manufacturing employment will remain relatively flat.
- Occupational growth will be strongest in professional, technical and managerial jobs that generally require higher educational attainment, as well as in sales and service jobs that require less.

While the most rapidly growing occupations in percentage terms will be those requiring technical education (e.g., paralegals and medical assistants), absolute job growth will be highest in a more mixed set of occupations--e.g., retail salespeople, janitors, waitresses, general managers, truck drivers and receptionists. The relative shift toward professional, managerial and technical employment is also projected to slow from what it was in the 1970s and 1980s.

The projections on the demand side thus suggest a continuing shift from traditionally high-wage to lower-wage sectors of the economy and the continuing growth of occupations with higher average educational demands, though the service occupations with lower educational qualifications will continue to grow as well. Links between the occupational projections and DOT-type skill measures (e.g., Johnston and Packer, 1987) again suggest growth in average cognitive and literacy skill requirements during the coming decade.

It should be noted that these projections are relevant only for shifts between occupations and industries and tell us nothing about projected changes within these broad groupings (even though much of the recent trends in earnings have occurred there). Furthermore, the projections themselves are highly uncertain. For instance, Bishop (1990) argues that past BLS projections have repeatedly underestimated the shifts toward professional and managerial occupations and that more accurate prediction techniques now predict even larger occupational shifts for the 1990s. While the net job growth in his projections is dominated by professional, managerial and technical jobs, the overall shares of the labor force do not change nearly so dramatically (Mishel and Tuxeira, 1991).

OTHER DATA ON EMPLOYERS AND SKILL REQUIREMENTS

Aside from these studies and projections that focus on traditional occupational, industrial and demographic variables, there have been attempts to analyze demand in terms of employer hiring behavior and skill requirements. While the availability of such data is limited, they provide us with at least a few glimpses of what employers are looking for in new workers and how they are proceeding to find them.

One of the most extensive analyses of job availability in the 1990s was performed by Bendick and Egan (1988) for the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. They used very detailed occupational information from 1980, BLS-type projections for 1990, and a variety of assumptions about occupational skill and education requirements based on DOT and other sources. They estimated job vacancy rates based on assumptions about average employment durations and turnover. Bendick and Egan find that about 30 percent of projected jobs are in occupations that may not require a high school diploma, though employers might prefer applicants with diplomas.

About 30 to 40 percent of these jobs (about 9 to 12 percent of the total) also require minimal language and math skills. These jobs are heavily concentrated in restaurants, cleaning occupations and other services. Bendick and Egan estimate a job vacancy rate of about 2.5 percent among these jobs, which is higher than many previous estimates of overall job vacancies (e.g., Abraham, 1983; Holzer, 1988) but remains far lower than unemployment rates among the relevant groups. Furthermore, employer preferences for workers with such attributes as references and work experience are not gauged in the study, so the effective availability of these jobs for today's less-skilled youth remains questionable.

Bendick and Egan also note the low wages and benefits these jobs generally provide. For 1988, the average starting wage was \$4.57 per hour, and only about 40 percent of these jobs provided such benefits as health insurance. Potential wage growth was judged to be quite limited (two-thirds of the jobs offered wages that were not expected to rise by more than 60 percent) and employee turnover quite high. Thus, the long-term appeal of these jobs (especially relative to such alternative income sources as illegal activities) for unemployed youth appears to be limited.

Another study of employers was done in Chicago by Kirschenman and Neckerman (1990) as part of a larger study on poverty in Chicago under the direction of William J. Wilson. The Kirschenman and Neckerman project is based on a survey of a random (employment-weighted) sample of employers in Cook County that generated about 140 responses. The study finds that employers in Chicago, including black employers, have very negative perceptions of the skills, work preparation and work attitudes among young blacks. Fully 50 percent of these employers claimed that blacks lack basic skills, with the highest fraction (65%) found among employers of customer service workers. Lack of work ethic was cited by 47 percent and lack of dependability and "bad attitudes" by about 35 percent. In contrast, just 13 percent viewed specific occupational skills as lacking.

Kirschenman and Neckerman also find that 40 percent of employers had explicit educational requirements and 40 percent used skills tests (especially for clerical jobs). The total percentage of firms with no explicit educational requirement or skills test was

40 percent, a figure comparable to that of Bendick and Egan (though the numbers from the Chicago study represent firms rather than jobs).

Among those firms using skills tests, the tendency to hire blacks was actually somewhat greater than otherwise, controlling for occupation and proportion of blacks in the neighborhood. This suggests at least some racial bias in the attitudes expressed by employers about blacks' skills. Recruitment was skewed away from neighborhoods and schools in predominantly black areas, and reliance on referrals from current employees was the predominant recruitment method. If young blacks are less likely than whites to have friends and relatives among these current employees, they will be at a disadvantage in the recruiting process. However, three-quarters of the firms also used walk-ins off the street for filling certain jobs.

The possibility that employer perceptions and hiring behavior regarding young blacks show discrimination has also been evaluated in a recent experimental study conducted by the Urban Institute (Turner, et al., 1991). Matched pairs of young black and white men, equipped with identical resumes and trained to behave comparably in job interviews, were sent to a total of 576 employers in the Chicago and Washington, D.C., metropolitan areas, and employer reactions were then monitored. By "controlling" (as much as possible) for the personal skills and traits of applicants, the study could attribute any differences in employer behavior toward whites and blacks to racial discrimination.

The study finds that whites and blacks were treated comparably by employers in about 80 percent of the cases. But of the remaining 20 percent, whites received offers in 15 percent of the cases and blacks in just 5 percent. This 10-percent gap in job offers strongly supports the notion that employer perceptions of blacks are at least partly based on race discrimination. The discrimination may be of a "statistical" nature--i.e., it may be based on accurate employer perceptions of average white and black applicants or employees whose skills, job performance, etc., really differ. Nevertheless, the findings of this study suggest that even highly qualified black applicants may face discriminatory barriers as a result of these employer perceptions. (We also note a comparable study by Urban Institute researchers of whites and Hispanics in Chicago and San Diego in 1989 (Cross, et al., 1989). This study, too, shows more favorable treatment for white applicants, with offers going to whites alone in 22 percent of all cases and to Hispanics alone in just 8 percent.)

The Bendick and Egan (1988) and Kirschenman and Neckerman (1990) studies constitute the only recent and careful evaluations of random samples of firms or jobs in an area with regard to job availability and employer hiring practices that are relevant for the issue of skills demand. An earlier set of papers (e.g., Holzer, 1987a) analyzed data from the Employment Opportunity Pilot Project (EOPP) Survey of Firms. These data

constitute a fairly random national sample of over 3,000 employers in 28 local areas and show similar recruitment patterns to those presented by Kirschenman and Neckerman. They also show that over 80 percent of employees were interviewed at the time of hiring, which may disclose weak speaking or social skills, and that over half of the employers checked references, which are likely to be weak among those with limited employment experience. Unfortunately, the data are from the years 1980 and 1982 only, and little was asked about explicit hiring criteria or job content.

Another source of data on employer hiring is the Bureau of National Affairs Personnel Policies Forum, in which executives of major companies are surveyed about recruitment, hiring and training practices. While the surveys clearly overrepresent large companies, comparisons over time for these companies tell us about recent trends in hiring. For instance, a Bureau of National Affairs (1988) report on recruitment and selection indicates a growing tendency in these companies to test employees, especially for drugs; a growing use of reference and information checks, regarding both personal and employment history; and a tendency to use more structured interviews. All of these trends suggest growing difficulty for individuals with weak skills (both basic and social/verbal) or employment histories.

A number of more casual surveys of employers have been conducted in recent years regarding their perceptions of employee skills and their own skill requirements. These are summarized in Carnevale, et al., (1990) and in Barton and Kirsch (1990). Many of these surveys are not based on random samples of employers and/or do not explicitly measure hiring criteria or selection methods. Most are descriptive accounts of interviews with employers and managers and provide little statistical analysis of data on employment behaviors. Yet they do provide some insight into employer perceptions of their own skill needs and of the adequacy of skills in current or prospective employees.

Carnevale, et al., (1990) summarize the skills employers most frequently emphasize in the following way: (1) basic competency skills--reading, writing and computation; (2) communication skills; (3) adaptability skills--solving problems and thinking creatively; (4) group effectiveness skills; and (5) personal development skills--e.g., self-esteem and motivation. These suggest that employers require at least a minimal level of reading and math literacy and an ability to solve problems, often as part of a team. The same skills have been emphasized by others (e.g., Bailey, 1990) in case studies of firms that are responding to growing competition by providing more worker training and by reorganizing work environments to introduce more flexible production processes with greater worker autonomy.

The authors also cite the complaints of many employers who claim to have great difficulty finding skilled employees, though there is little evidence from which to judge

whether the frequency or severity of such complaints has grown (or whether these complaints have resulted in changed employer hiring, wage or training practices).

Barton and Kirsch (1990) use data from a survey of a large, random sample of young people (age 21 to 25) that was part of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in 1986 to compare their literacy levels (prose, document and quantitative literacy) with those needed on jobs. The literacy levels required on jobs were gauged by taking means on literacy test scores by occupational category for those in the survey who were employed.

Some interesting findings emerge. In particular, the average literacy scores of blacks overall are comparable to the average scores of white dropouts. Average levels for Hispanics are somewhat better but well below those of whites. Furthermore, the medians for both blacks and dropouts are lower than the average scores of young people employed in any major occupational category, including laborers and service workers. Even among whites and high school graduates, literacy above the fairly elementary levels that seem to be needed on many new jobs is not obtained by large fractions.

In sum, the very limited information available to us on the demand side of the labor market suggests that a large number of jobs still exist that require low levels of education and basic skills. But employer hiring practices and perceptions regarding the basic skills, social skills and work attitudes of minorities and the disadvantaged (which may be based on real employee deficiencies) will cause continuing problems for minorities and less-skilled workers in the labor market.

CONCLUSION: A SKILL MISMATCH FOR THE DISADVANTAGED?

Before deciding whether or not a skill mismatch characterizes the labor market for disadvantaged workers in the 1990s, it is important to clarify what most economists mean by this term. For most, "mismatch" implies an imbalance between the demand and supply sides of the labor market--i.e., an inability of available workers to be hired into available jobs. This can be caused by an imbalance in skills, geographic location, or even attitudes or expectations of workers relative to jobs they can obtain.

Some of the confusion over the term derives from the impression that the labor market must be out of equilibrium, or that workers must be unemployed, for mismatch to exist. This is not necessarily the case. The effects of mismatch might show up in low wages for the less skilled, rather than unemployment, until workers gain higher skill levels and wages adjust accordingly. Furthermore, the effects of low wages might be seen in low labor force participation rates for these groups, thereby affecting their employment as

opposed to unemployment rates. This has, in fact, been observed for young male high school dropouts in the 1980s (Holzer, 1990).

By this broader definition, then, it appears quite clear that a serious skill mismatch has developed, as demand has shifted away from the less educated and less skilled. But whether the degree of mismatch will improve or worsen in the 1990s is not obvious, given the limitations of available data and uncertainties about projected changes in skill requirements of jobs and skills obtained by workers.

On the one hand, shifts toward occupations requiring higher levels of education and literacy will clearly continue to occur. The evidence on current employer perceptions and hiring practices, including growing employer emphasis on certain types of skills, and the current weakness in literacy levels for dropouts and minorities all suggest that any current skill imbalances will continue or worsen in the 1990s.

On the other hand, graduation rates and test scores for minorities and the less skilled will likely continue to improve. Furthermore, the expected tightness in the labor market for youth (due to the baby bust and low population growth) should also work in their favor. These factors will interact with local labor market conditions, creating more favorable economic environments in the more rapidly growing metropolitan areas and especially in the suburbs of those areas (Holzer and Vroman, 1991). Finally, a large and growing number of jobs that do not require high levels of education or literacy will continue to be generated in the service sector.

Either way, it is clear that the severe deterioration in earnings for dropouts and minorities observed in the 1980s will not be quickly reversed. Even with a large number of jobs with low skill needs being generated in the service sector, employers may still refuse to hire applicants with weak references and work histories (perhaps preferring immigrants with greater perceived work ethic); or they will hire them at low wages for jobs with few benefits and little opportunity for advancement. Many workers will thus continue to forego such employment, while those who accept it will frequently experience turnover and little long-term improvement.

At this point, we need to take some care in defining exactly which skills are being "mismatched." Is it primarily education levels that need to be raised (or high school dropout rates lowered)? Is it the basic literary skills of both dropouts and high school graduates, and/or their social and communication skills? Is it attitudes, reliability and responsibility that can be inferred from general work experience? Or is it more specific occupational skills?

The evidence of harm for those who drop out of high school is very clear. This is also the one measure of skills--the "signal"--that is easiest for employers to spot when receiving applications and therefore most often used.

As for other skills measures, Meyer and Wise (1982) have found that high school grades are strong predictors of subsequent earnings and employment, though vocational education is not. Bishop (1989b) has found evidence that test scores in mathematics and other areas are fairly good predictors of earnings, productivity or performance in a variety of blue-collar occupational settings. O'Neill (1990) and Ferguson (1990) have found that math and reading scores (from the Armed Forces Qualification Test administered to the full sample of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth) have significant effects on the wages of whites and blacks even after controlling for education; and they account for major portions of observed black/white wage differences.⁶ Furthermore, O'Neill finds that the effects of test scores on wages grew over the 1980s, consistent with the notion of rising demand for math and reading skills in the workplace. Ferguson also finds that these magnitudes rise consistently with age from the teens through the late twenties.

However, we note that most of these studies (except for Meyer and Wise) focus primarily on wages rather than employment; and they do not differentiate educational and occupational categories of workers in measuring these effects. Thus, the effects of reading and math skills on the basic employability of disadvantaged and/or less-educated young people cannot really be inferred here.

We noted above that a sizable minority of employers do their own testing. Heneman, et al., (1986) note that a wide variety of tests are currently administered--basic ability tests, personality and interest tests, and work sample tests (requiring demonstration of knowledge and/or job performance), with the latter more closely tied to needed occupational skills. Validity analyses of the ability and work sample tests generally have been favorable (not so for the personality and interest tests) in terms of their ability to predict subsequent employee performance or "trainability."

But since a majority of employers (at least to date) do not administer such tests, and since grades and test scores are generally not available to most employers when they are

⁶ If the "race norming" of black test scores that has recently received much attention is widely prevalent, then the ability of test scores to explain black/white earnings gaps would be even larger in the absence of this practice. But the large effects of test scores on blacks that we already observe raise questions about whether "race norming" really is very prevalent across firms.

making their hiring decisions, their ability to infer the basic skills of applicants at the time of hiring must be very limited. Some information can presumably be inferred from previous work experience, especially on related jobs, and from references.

But it is quite possible that basic skills do not greatly raise the general employability of disadvantaged individuals at the entry level. Instead, these skills may work primarily by improving individuals' performance on certain jobs (though probably not on all) once they have been hired. This, in turn, would lead to longer employment durations, wage growth and promotions, which also might give individuals the work experience and references to improve their mobility prospects. (This interpretation is clearly consistent with Ferguson's findings of growing effects of basic skills on wages as workers age.) But the fraction of jobs available to the less educated for whom this would be the case is not clear.

In short, the clearest signal currently sent to most employers about prospective job performance and trainability at the time of hiring is high school graduation. Employers of less-educated workers also seem to care a great deal about attitudes and work ethic, which they presumably try to infer from previous work experience and references as well as the personal impressions derived from interviews. Basic skills may improve performance on some jobs and may be a growing prerequisite for employment in many cases, but their effects on employment and earnings will likely be observed over the longer term rather than in entry-level positions. (This, of course, also suggests that impact evaluations of training programs that focus only on short-term effects may understate the long-term impacts of skills remediation for youth.)

Furthermore, we note that imbalances between educational requirements of occupations and the skills of workers should lead to a variety of adjustments in the labor market, of which wage adjustments are just one type. The hiring criteria of firms, the ways they recruit applicants and select employees, the amount of training they invest in their employees and even the general organization of work should all be affected.

For instance, firms may have a choice between a low-wage, high-turnover strategy for reducing costs and a high-wage, high-training, low-turnover strategy that reduces costs by hiring and retaining more productive and autonomous workers. One can imagine that basic skills and evidence of good attitudes and work ethic would receive more consideration in the latter strategy, since employers would be making greater investments in their workers and would want some return on these investments.

Furthermore, there is some evidence that on-the-job training generally increases with education level and is lower for women and minorities than for white males (Lillard and Tan, 1986; Mincer, 1989; Lynch, 1989a). Unless the cost to employers of providing such

training could be lowered (e.g., through government tax breaks or subsidies), their choosing to train more employees could result in even less willingness to hire disadvantaged workers, in whom such training might be a poor investment.

But it is well known that firms in the United States provide less on-the-job training than do those in many other industrial countries (Osterman, 1988), and there is little evidence that many firms have recently changed in the direction of providing more training and worker autonomy (Mishel and Tuxeira, 1991). Even when they do, we know little about the overall implications for how or whom they hire. Clearly, a great deal more needs to be known about employer choices and practices in this area.

In sum, the evidence suggests large and continuing problems for disadvantaged workers with limited skills in the labor market. While there remains a great deal we do not know about future trends, especially in terms of employer policies and procedures, it seems that raising high school graduation rates and enhancing basic literacy and problem-solving skills among minorities and other disadvantaged groups should be top priorities for employment and training policy.

III. MINORITY AND DISADVANTAGED YOUTH: OTHER SOURCES OF PROBLEMS

In the previous section, we noted that limited education and basic skills levels of disadvantaged workers, especially blacks, probably will contribute a good deal to their earnings and employment problems in the 1990s. Negative employer perceptions of black workers, which may be at least partly accurate on average but also create discriminatory barriers for qualified blacks, contribute to these problems.

In this section, we explore additional factors that limit labor market opportunities for the disadvantaged, especially inner-city blacks. These include:

- Suburbanization of jobs and resulting "spatial mismatch,"
- Difficulties obtaining early work experience and job contacts, and
- Negative neighborhood influences and participation in crime.

SUBURBANIZATION AND SPATIAL MISMATCH

The continuing tendency of population and industry in the United States to suburbanize within metropolitan areas leaves inner-city residents increasingly isolated from employment opportunities. Although middle-class blacks have also become more suburbanized in the last decade or two, they continue to live in relatively segregated neighborhoods that are closer to inner-city areas than are predominantly white neighborhoods (Frey, 1985; Massey and Denton, 1988). Furthermore, there is at least some evidence that traditional, goods-producing employment is suburbanizing relatively more rapidly while financial and service sector jobs are becoming more predominant in the central city (Kasarda, 1989), thus further distancing inner-city residents from the best-paying jobs for less-skilled workers.

It has long been suggested that a "spatial mismatch" has been created between inner-city residents and suburbanized jobs. This might be caused by the time and difficulties associated with commuting--especially for lower-income residents of inner cities who do not own cars--or by the difficulties in searching for work that is located far away. The perception of suburban areas as being unknown and hostile to young inner-city residents may also contribute to this problem.

The question has always been whether, and to what extent, the distance from jobs contributes to the employment problems of blacks. Over the past two decades or more, the evidence on this issue has been contradictory (Holzer, 1991). Still, evidence from the 1980 Census suggests that spatial mismatch does contribute to the employment problems

of young blacks, and can explain from 10 to 30 percent of the differences in employment rates between young whites and blacks in metropolitan areas (Ihlanfeldt and Sjoquist, 1990, 1991).

Thus, improving the access of young inner-city blacks to suburbanized jobs, especially those with lower skill requirements, should remain on the agenda for policymakers in the next decade.

EARLY WORK EXPERIENCE AND CONTACTS

There has been at least some evidence that the experience of young blacks in the labor market is often hampered by two related problems: (1) difficulties in the search process, especially in gaining "contacts" and referrals from other employees; and (2) difficulties in obtaining early work experience and employer references. As blacks leave school and search for jobs, their lack of contacts and work experience seems to compound their problems and make the attainment of jobs more difficult.

It has long been known that most employees obtain their jobs at least partly through the help of friends and relatives (e.g., Corcoran, et al., 1980). Furthermore, employers rely heavily on referrals from their current employees, who often provide information employers trust on an applicant's personal abilities (Montgomery, 1989). The lower turnover and absenteeism rates on jobs so obtained (Holzer, 1987a) suggest that these are, indeed, better matches of workers with jobs than are obtained through other methods of recruitment.

Young blacks might be at a disadvantage in obtaining references for several reasons: (1) the older blacks whom they know may themselves be unemployed or employed in less desirable and/or declining sectors of the economy; (2) they are more likely to reside in households where the head and other members are unemployed; and (3) the flight of middle-class blacks from inner-city neighborhoods may have further reduced their contacts with successfully employed members of the community.

While the evidence in favor of these hypotheses remains limited (mostly due to lack of data), there has been at least some support for them. For instance, Holzer (1987b) finds that young blacks are less successful in obtaining jobs through friends and relatives than are young whites, though an even bigger disadvantage occurs in the process of direct application without referral (which, again, suggests a role for discriminatory employer practices). Freeman (1986) also notes that churchgoing is a major determinant of who obtains jobs in poor, inner-city neighborhoods, which suggests a role for neighborhood contacts (as well as for personal characteristics); and Case and Katz (1990) find that

social networks appear to be at least partly based on geography and neighborhood, clearly a disadvantage for young blacks in poorer areas.

On the issue of the effects of early work experience on subsequent labor market outcomes, the evidence seems clear: early work experience contributes positively to the wages of young whites and blacks, and lack of work experience for blacks reduces their subsequent wages and perhaps their employment as well. Meyer and Wise (1982) find that weeks worked during high school increase subsequent wages and weeks worked. For out-of-school youth, Ellwood (1982) finds that weeks worked have small effects on subsequent weeks worked and larger effects on wages.

Becker and Hills (1983) find that short spells of unemployment or job changing do not reduce future wages, but lengthy durations do. Lynch (1989b) and D'Amico and Maxwell (1990) have confirmed the negative effects of low employment for out-of-school youth on their subsequent earnings; the latter study, in particular, finds that differences in early work experience account for a large part of the racial differences in wage growth during the first five years out of school.

Finally, Ballen and Freeman (1986) find that for inner-city black youth, nonemployment rates and durations do not decline with age or after spells of employment, as they do for other young people. Wages are also adversely affected by lengthy spells of nonemployment. Their interviews with a small number of employers in the Roxbury neighborhood of Boston confirm that spotty work histories discourage employers from hiring many of these youths.

Given the evidence from other employer surveys (i.e., the EOPP Survey of Firms and the Personnel Policies Forum of the Bureau of National Affairs) that most employers ask about previous work experience and/or check references when hiring, it is not surprising that the early difficulties of young blacks in the labor market should have negative effects on their earnings in subsequent years.

NEIGHBORHOOD EFFECTS AND CRIME

Many recent discussions of poverty (e.g., Wilson, 1987; Sawhill, 1989) have emphasized the idea of an urban underclass in very low-income neighborhoods where poverty is persistent for a small fraction of families and where individuals engage in behaviors that may limit their future upward mobility. These behaviors include single parenthood for women, criminal activities for men, and dropping out of school for both. Indeed, Wilson (1987) emphasizes that at least some of these activities result from deteriorating opportunities in the mainstream economy for the less skilled (due to skill or spatial

mismatch) and growing social isolation of the poor from middle-class blacks as well as whites.

These discussions raise questions about the extent to which growing up in very low-income neighborhoods *per se* limits future educational and labor market opportunities, and about the consequences of certain behaviors (e.g., participation in crime or drug use) for future employment.

On the question of neighborhood effects, the limited evidence has been reviewed by Jencks and Mayer (1990). In particular, they find very small effects of socioeconomic status on the chances of individuals attending college or on academic achievement, especially for whites. Mayer (1990) finds that little of the total variation in dropping out of school or teen childbearing is explained by socioeconomic status or racial mix of school populations, but that these characteristics contribute somewhat to average racial differences in these activities. Crane (1990) also finds that neighborhood effects on educational attainment and other outcomes are generally small except for the poorest neighborhoods, where they become much more substantial. Thus, the severe social isolation of the poor in the lowest-income neighborhoods of inner cities may contribute substantially to long-term impediments to success.

As for crime, research until recently has found only weak evidence of a negative association between crime and employment in analyzing data over time or across geographic areas (Freeman, 1983). But in recent U.S. survey data, the evidence of a negative association is stronger. For instance, Viscusi (1986) finds less self-reported crime among employed inner-city black youth than among the nonemployed. Furthermore, he finds that criminal participation is related to youth's perceptions of legal versus illegal returns as well as risks of apprehension.

Freeman (1991) finds that the criminal activities of young black males in low-income areas grew during the 1980s, perhaps because of the drug trade. The perceived returns to legitimate activity relative to crime declined, as crime became more lucrative and wages for less-skilled males declined. At this point, up to half of young black male dropouts are either imprisoned or on probation in the criminal justice system.

Although we have no direct evidence on the willingness of youth who have participated in crime to engage in legitimate work, the above evidence is at least somewhat consistent with that of high "reservation wages" (i.e., minimum acceptable wages) relative to what young blacks could obtain in the labor market (Holzer, 1986; Welch, 1990). They may avoid potentially available jobs, causing lengthier durations of unemployment or labor force nonparticipation. The availability of alternative income, especially from crime,

might therefore lessen the willingness of these youths to accept relatively low wages in the labor market.

Furthermore, participation in crime has negative long-term effects on employment prospects, especially for those who are imprisoned. Freeman (1991) finds that employment probabilities as much as eight years later are reduced by 20 percent for those who have ever been arrested. Grogger (1992) finds similarly large effects, especially for black youth. It is not clear whether this is due to employers refusing to hire those whom they know or suspect of having criminal records, or spotty work histories or reduced interest in regular employment among those with such records.

Thus, the growing attractiveness of crime relative to legitimate employment for young high school dropouts and especially black dropouts appears to have led to widespread criminal participation, with very negative consequences for the employment prospects of these young people.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

The labor market for young people changed dramatically in the 1970s and 1980s:

- Labor force participation rates for young high school dropouts fell sharply;
- Real wages for less-educated people fell especially sharply for young high school dropouts--as much as 25 to 30 percent in real terms for male dropouts;
- Wages for high school graduates also declined during this period; and
- The inequality in earnings rose not only between young people of different education levels but also within these educational categories.
- For young blacks, employment and labor force participation dropped dramatically in the 1970s, and the gap in wages between black and white youth widened in the 1980s.

The factors that have caused changes in labor market outcomes for young people include the following:

1. Economic and demographic forces.

- Changes in international trade, technologies and firm production/location decisions have produced major changes in the occupational and industrial structure of employment. Jobs have shifted away from such high-wage sectors as manufacturing, which require less education and/or cognitive skills.
- Union representation has declined.
- The minimum wage in real and relative terms has declined as well.
- Overall productivity growth has fallen, thus lowering wage growth for all workers.
- Demographic changes (e.g., the baby boom and subsequent baby bust, changing school attainment patterns, and growth of females and immigrants in the labor force) have reinforced the changes in the structure of the economy.

Many of these structural changes are projected to continue through the 1990s. The relative decline of the manufacturing sector will proceed, as will the shift toward more-skilled occupations. The exact magnitudes of these projected shifts remain open to debate, but not their directions. Furthermore, the projected service jobs require less skill but pay much less.

2. Employer behavior and skill requirements.

The effects of the economic and demographic changes may be exacerbated by changes in the policies and practices of employers and the skill levels they require when hiring. Although we do not know exactly what skills and personal characteristics employers are seeking or what changes in their personnel policies they are making in response to structural and demographic changes, limited evidence to date suggests:

- A large number of jobs will remain open to high school dropouts with very limited skills, but employers may choose to reject them for other reasons (such as limited work experience or references). The wages, benefits and opportunities for income growth available to such employees are quite modest.
- Employers believe that many workers have inadequate basic skills, especially minorities; and some employers complain about poor work ethic and attitudes among minorities.
- The importance of interviews, references and tests in employer hiring decisions appears to be increasing.
- There is casual and case study support for the growing need for employees to have not only basic literacy skills but also problem-solving and social/communication skills. This may further raise employers' entry-level hiring standards.
- The literacy test scores of minorities and dropouts are rising, but remain below the averages of young workers in any major occupational category.

All of this suggests that a serious "mismatch" exists between the skill levels of disadvantaged employees and those sought by employers. This mismatch may contribute to the low wages and/or employment levels of high school dropouts and minorities, and it could worsen in the 1990s.

3. Discrimination.

Even if employer perceptions of skill or attitude problems of young blacks are accurate on average, they seem to create discriminatory barriers for black candidates who are as qualified as their white counterparts.

4. Lack of access.

There is some evidence of a "spatial mismatch" in which suburbanized jobs are less accessible to inner-city youth, especially for less-skilled positions. In addition, young inner-city blacks have less access to the social contacts that help in entering the labor market.

5. Lack of stable, early work experience among disadvantaged youth.

The evidence suggests that disadvantaged (and particularly black) youth suffer from a lack of solid connections to the labor market, and thus to positive work experience. In view of the link between moderate amounts of work experience during school and later earnings and employment, this lack is an important one.

6. The attractiveness of crime.

Up to half of young black high school dropouts now appear to be participating in illegal activities at some level, and, once incarcerated, their future employability is significantly reduced.

It is clear, then, that a very wide range of social as well as economic forces contribute to the problems of disadvantaged youth in the labor market. Young people growing up and attending school in poor, inner-city areas are lacking not only literacy and communication skills but also social contacts, access to suburban jobs, early work experience and rewarding alternatives to crime. The cumulative disadvantages of these environments are often too great by the time young people enter the labor market for any single program of short duration and specific focus to make a great deal of difference. Accordingly, we need to outline a more long-term, comprehensive strategy for dealing with the problems of disadvantaged youth in the labor market.

Reviews of existing federal employment and training programs illustrate their serious limitations in improving the employment and earnings prospects of these young people.⁷

⁷ See, for example, Smith and Gambone, first volume of this series.

Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) programs are not required to focus on the most severely disadvantaged, are too limited in funding and duration, and provide very limited work experience and frequently no skills remediation. Therefore, most programs to date have shown little ability to improve the postprogram earnings or employment of young, disadvantaged participants. More successful programs, such as the Job Corps, are expensive and reach only a small number of the disadvantaged.

While new programs, such as the Summer Training and Education Program (STEP) and JOBSTART, offer some lessons about how to raise basic skills, lower dropout rates and train dropouts less expensively, it would take substantial increases in funding and a broader orientation for these programs to significantly affect the experiences of disadvantaged youth in larger ways.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This review leads to two groups of recommendations: four to consider in formulating policy and two for planning future research on youth employment issues.

Policy Recommendations

1. The findings underscore the priority need for efforts and programs to reduce high school dropout rates further and to raise basic literacy, problem-solving and communication skills.

Completing high school is clearly an influential factor in wage levels and employment. Youth lacking a high school diploma will be restricted in their short- and long-term employment prospects. Thus, a broad range of financial bonus and other incentive programs for keeping young people in school (and out of trouble with the law) have been suggested (e.g., Sawhill, 1989). The use of work experience (along with skills remediation) in this regard may prove to have real payoffs, especially in view of its long-term effects on employment and earnings.

JTPA funding should continue to be utilized for in-school programs that focus on remediation of basic skills. In view of the modest sum it represents (relative to most school budgets), care should be taken to invest these funds in programs of proven effectiveness. Likewise, JTPA funding for educational components--again, wherever possible, with evidence of effectiveness--should be supported. Here, special emphasis should be considered for programs that provide a high school diploma, a general equivalency diploma (GED) or some other credential.

2. Explore strategies for increasing private sector training of less-skilled young adults.

Both young graduates and school dropouts have experienced major earnings losses in the past two decades; programs that target their needs are thus particularly necessary. In addition to such public sector training as the Job Corps, the Department of Labor should explore avenues to increase the financing of apprenticeship programs and/or on-the-job-training in the private sector (perhaps through the tax system, as recently proposed by the Department's Commission on Workforce Quality).

3. Improve access to employers, particularly in suburban areas, while youth are in school and shortly after leaving.

Improving access to jobs, especially in the suburbs, must take into account the problems of job search/placement as well as transportation for inner-city youth. As noted above, most jobs are found through employee referral and direct walk-in; formal placement mechanisms play a much smaller role. Furthermore, the U.S. Employment Service, the placement service for the disadvantaged, is stigmatized in the eyes of most employers as a source only of very low-skill labor.

Efforts to improve access should therefore focus on the schools. Stronger employer participation in placement services and more widespread job search instruction in inner-city high schools should be encouraged; and transportation should also be provided, perhaps by employer groups.

Efforts to orient inner-city youth to the suburbs may also be necessary to break down informational or psychological barriers. Metropolitanwide coordination of placements through Private Industry Councils has also been suggested as a way to improve job placements in suburban areas (Hughes, 1991).

Since social contacts are such an important part of the job search and appear to be lacking for disadvantaged youth, efforts to enhance contact between community institutions and successful individuals in the community, and between these institutions/individuals and inner-city adolescents might also be encouraged. Recent discussions of the potential usefulness of mentoring programs in inner-city areas (e.g., Mincy and Wiener, 1990) are relevant in this regard.

4. Improve the rewards of regular employment relative to crime.

This should involve raising the appeal of employment and reducing that of crime. Since incarceration of youth appears to have such negative effects on future employability, and since such large numbers are being apprehended (at very large cost) without much

deterrent effect, approaches that emphasize greater enforcement of current laws do not offer much promise of success.

Instead, raising the appeal of legitimate work may be more appropriate. The decline in real and relative wages for the less skilled, especially dropouts, must be halted and at least partially reversed. Raising high school graduation rates and skill levels will help by reducing the relative supply of less-skilled labor. But more direct approaches can involve higher minimum wages, expanded use of Earned Income Tax Credits and/or direct wage subsidies to bolster the earnings of low-wage jobs.

5. Increase federal-level attention to the labor market-related problems of disadvantaged youth.

Although a comprehensive approach to the problems of disadvantaged youth is well beyond the scope of the Employment and Training Administration (ETA), an important role can be played by ETA as part of a broader process.

For one thing, some reorientation of JTPA programs toward longer-term interventions that are more focused on the disadvantaged is clearly in order. Increased funding is also imperative for these efforts to reach a larger number of eligible youth.

Beyond this, ETA could play some role in coordinating efforts and disseminating information among various federal agencies as well as state and local governments. For instance, a large number of states provide their own training programs for youth, and city governments have experimented with linkages between employers and schools (e.g., the Boston and Detroit Compacts) and transportation programs (e.g., the SEPTA program in Philadelphia). Greater federal government support of such efforts, through disseminating information and perhaps additional funding as well, might be useful to encourage similar initiatives.

Research Recommendations

ETA can also play an important role in generating more knowledge about the problems of disadvantaged youth in the labor market and successful approaches to dealing with them. This can take two forms:

1. Conduct comprehensive demonstration projects and evaluations.

Demonstration projects and evaluations would be useful in a variety of contexts, including: programs that rely on different kinds of skills remediation (e.g., basic literacy,

problem-solving, teamwork or specific job skills); employer-school linkages; transportation and orientation programs to suburbs; and bonus programs for schooling.

2. Sponsor basic data collection efforts.

Beyond these, we need more basic data on both employers and disadvantaged youth. On the employer side, we need much more direct evidence on the following:

- The location of vacant jobs (or overall employment growth) that are accessible to less-educated youth, by geographic location and industry;
- The hiring criteria employers use for these jobs;
- How the hiring criteria interact with employer decisions about training, wage rates and promotions;
- How all of these employer decisions interact with the tightness of the local labor market--i.e., how employers respond to perceived worker shortages and high vacancy rates; and
- The skills employers need and how they gauge these skills in prospective employees.

Regarding disadvantaged youth, any new survey data that might be gathered should focus on how they perceive the relative rewards to educational and skills attainment and to legal versus illegal work; on how these perceptions influence their investment decisions and job search behavior; and on their general perceptions of job availability and employer behavior (hiring, pay, etc.) and locations (cities versus suburbs).

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