

**A STUDY TO INVESTIGATE CURRENT PRACTICES
IN BASIC SKILLS PROGRAMS AS THEY
RELATE TO A MODEL PLAN**

by

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ABSTRACT

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Action needs to be taken to create a workforce that is ready for the new economy. Increased demands are placed on adults and many are not prepared academically. It is no longer acceptable to lack a high school diploma, and those without it are not able to compete for jobs. In today's economy, strong basic skills are essential. Basic skills should include reading, writing, and mathematics, and additional skills such as thinking critically, working collaboratively at problem-solving, and using computers and other technological equipment on the job.

The purpose of this study was to investigate and analyze research regarding what exemplary models exist across the nation and the program strengths that benefit low-level learners. Reading, writing, and math skills for the workplace were researched, as well as civic topics, computer skills for basic skills enhanced learning, and parents' literacy levels effect on

their children. Each of these elements was researched because all are essential to bring the workforce of our new economy to a high level of success. The technical college role is also critical in developing basic skills instruction and partnerships to enhance and strengthen the programs.

In the introduction, a clarification of what is essential to succeed in the new economy was presented. In addition to the elements listed above, the review of literature encompassed eleven exemplary programs that exist across the nation from San Francisco to New York. These exemplary programs were analyzed and patterns emerged regarding their strengths in developing low-level learners to find their place in the workforce. This is not an easy job, because many adults may be uncomfortable with their low-level skill, or because they have never had or held a job. Some of them have been on welfare and are of a low socioeconomic status and need assistance.

The recommendations from this study are directed toward technical colleges and the existing and potential partnerships. Basic skills practitioners and educators will benefit from the exemplary programs researched, as well as the recommendations for their own program enhancement.

The findings of this study revealed that many exemplary basic skills programs are consistent in their characteristics. Successful programs allow hands-on learning experiences by combining basic skills instruction and practical experience in the workplace. Models researched have “job coaches” for the newly employed and “client advocates” who assist participants in dealing with support service needs, including transportation, child care, and housing. A rich array of support services should be utilized, and a cooperative venture between local entities seems to help create successful programs.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Low literacy rates are a real issue across the nation. This becomes more apparent as our economy advances into the information and communications technology age. In the past, an individual without a high school diploma was able to make it on the job. Middle-aged adults and those nearing retirement age entered the workforce at a time when workers with low basic skills and no high school diploma could find well-paid jobs in manufacturing and keep those jobs until they retired. This is no longer true. Those without a high school diploma are not able to compete for good jobs as they were able to 15-20 years ago.

In today's economy, strong basic skills are essential. Basic skills which include reading, writing, math, and additional skills such as thinking critically, working collaboratively at problem-solving, and using computers and other technologically-advanced equipment on the job. Only adults who possess sufficient skills and education are prepared to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the new economy.

Well-developed reading, writing, and math skills will be needed as managing individual and family life becomes more demanding. Dealing effectively with handling health information and benefits, insurance policies, managing credit, and planning for retirement require well-developed basic skills as a foundation of knowledge about these matters.

Civic rights and responsibilities are other areas becoming more demanding. Individuals should have an understanding of possible effects of changes in tax, welfare, education, and other social policies. Do individuals with low literacy rates vote? Every citizen needs to be prepared to play a role in local political and civic arenas. It is important

that all citizens understand how they can improve the quality of life in our country. Trends in our global economy as well as possible threats to our environment should be taught to all adult learners.

Another trend in the economy of the 21st century is the demand placed on children in our school system. Are parents with low literacy levels able to help their children with their schoolwork? Do these same parents have a positive attitude toward school even if they are not able to assist them with their homework? Children will need help and support from educated parents as they advance through the grade levels, and one of the most important ways to do this is by having a positive attitude. Parents who have had a bad experience with school may be less apt to support their children and the school system. Many times parents' horrific experiences will show in their children's lax attitude about attending school, poor grades, and retention rates. This generational issue should be dealt with as a high school diploma and post-secondary education become more essential to compete in today's workplace. School should be considered a friendly environment to all students, not the hub of humiliation.

Low literacy rates are comparable throughout the United States. One factor that changes the rates to a degree is the number of immigrants within each state's population. Immigration has become the determinate factor in population growth (Camorata, 2001). The United States may now be dependent on immigration for future increases in the size of its workforce. It is estimated that 41.8% of adults (ages 18-64) fit into three types of challenges: limited ability to speak English, lack of a high school credential, and insufficient skills for the modern workplace. This information is based on the 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS). This 41.8% is a total of 64 million working-age adults who could potentially

become a national resource. With proper basic skills education and training, these adults could help their employers compete in today's economy (Comings, Reder, & Sum, 2001).

Low literacy rates and high drop out rates are still too high and have remained somewhat consistent for decades. As a nation this problem needs to be addressed. These rates represent our nation in need of educational training and enhanced basic skills.

Many exemplary basic skills programs exist across the nation. These successful programs have common characteristics that make them effective at meeting the needs of their recipients. Criteria such as employment-related goals, hands-on experience, and integration of basic skills components with other welfare-to-work activities are beginning to become addressed as welfare recipients need to succeed as workers, family members, and citizens in the new economy. Workforce preparation can no longer be an isolated objective. Adult basic education programs need to be seen as a process through which participants gain skills and confidence enabling them to be truly productive members of the modern society, as workers, citizens, and family members (Bingman, Ebert, & Smith, 1999).

Statement of the Problem

Do most adults have what it takes to be successful in today's information and communications technology age? The answer is "no." Many adults lack the basic skills and education they need for the modern workplace. Job demands of the new economy now require a higher level of basic skills. Basic skills needed in today's workplace include ability to think critically, to work in collaborative problem-solving groups, and to use computers and other technologically-advanced equipment on the job.

What type of literacy programs can change adults' quality of life by focusing on socio-economic, social, physical, and personal well-being? Examining basic skills programs that currently exist across the nation can bring many insights to the surface. Literacy educators will gain an understanding of what methodologies states with successful programs have been implementing.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate current practices within basic skills programs across the nation in relation to the foundation needed to be successful in today's workplace. Based upon critical analysis of the research and literature, this researcher has made a set of recommendations. These recommendations may be considered in formulating an educational model that will help adults who lack the foundation of basic skills and education needed for today's society and workplace.

Research Questions

1. What type of models exist across the nation to assist adults who lack basic skills necessary for the modern workplace?
2. Are low literacy rates among states across the nation comparable?
3. What should the curriculum look like in relation to reading, writing, and math skills?
4. What type of civic topics should be included?
5. How important is using computers as part of basic skills enhancement?
6. Do parents' educational experiences influence their children's attitude toward school?

Definition of Terms

In order to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research in this study, the following definitions of terms are provided for the reader:

Adult basic skills instruction is service or instruction below the postsecondary level for individuals who lack sufficient mastery of basic educational skills to be able to function effectively in society and who do not have a high school diploma or its equivalent.

CASAS (Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System) is a nonprofit organization that provides competency-based curriculum management, assessment, and evaluation systems to education and training programs. These systems are learner-centered and are designed to meet the needs of adults and youth in today's multicultural society. CASAS has developed system for adult basic skills, employment preparation, workforce learning, special education, and secondary education.

Even Start is a national family literacy program funded by the federal government. The level for 1998 is \$124 million.

Equipped for the Future (EFF) is the National Institute for Literacy's framework for adult education that identifies what adults need to know and be able to do to be literate, compete in a global economy, and be a responsible citizen and parent.

Equipped for the Future's generative skills are skills that are durable over time, in the face of changes in technology, work processes, and societal demands. Generative skills are transferable across the three primary adult roles of parent/family member, citizen/community member, and worker. The four generative skill areas are communication skills, interpersonal skills, decision-making skills, and lifelong learning skills.

SCANS (Secretary's Commission on the Achievement of Necessary Skills). A Department of Labor-led effort to define the knowledge and skills required by high performance work environments and to consider how these attributes might be best assessed.

SCANS Competencies involve five competencies: resources (how to allocate time, money, materials, space, and staff); interpersonal skills (how to work on teams, teach others, serve customers, lead, negotiate, and work well with people from culturally diverse backgrounds); information (how to acquire and evaluate data, organize and maintain files, interpret and communicate, and use computers to process information); systems (how to understand social, organizational, and technological systems; and, technology (how to select equipment and tools, apply technology to specific tasks, and maintain and troubleshoot equipment).

TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) refers to the federal welfare program of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunities Reconciliation Act of 1996, which replaced Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) as the federal government's primary public assistance program.

Limitations

Although the researcher has completed a comprehensive investigation into effective basic skills programs across the nation, this study does not include first-hand quantitative research assessment.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

Introduction

In this chapter the researcher reviewed literature related to successful basic skills programs that exist across the nation. The investigation provided a framework for the type of skill proficiencies necessary for low-level learners to succeed as workers, family members, and citizens in the new economy. The literature included the following components: literacy rates across the nation; basic skills models that currently exist; reading, writing, and math skills for the workplace; civic topics for adults; computer skills for basic skills enhanced learning; and, parents' literacy level effect on their children.

Literacy Rates Across the Nation

Low literacy rates across the nation are overwhelming and need to be addressed. Over the past 50 years, the value of a high school education has changed dramatically. During the 1950s, a high school degree was considered a valued asset in the labor market, and through the 1970s, a high school diploma continued to open doors to many promising career opportunities. In recent years, advances in technology have fueled the demand for a highly skilled labor force, transforming a high school education into a minimum requirement for entry into the labor market. As a result, high school completion has become a requirement for accessing additional education, training, or the labor force; the economic consequences of leaving high school without a diploma are severe.

A large component of low literacy levels are the ever-present dropout rates that have remained consistent for many decades. Five out of every 100 young adults enrolled in high

school in October 1999 left school before October 2000 without successfully completing a high school program. The percentage of young adults who left school each year without successfully completing a high school program decreased from 1972 through 1987. However, despite year-to-year fluctuations, the percentage of students dropping out of school each year has stayed relatively unchanged since 1987. Young adults mentioned are ages 16 through 24 who dropped out of grades 10-12 (NCES, 2002).

In October 2000, some 3.8 million young adults were not enrolled in a high school program and had not completed high school. These youths accounted for 10.9% of the 34.6 million 16- through 24-year-olds in the United States in 2000.

In 2000, dropout rates across four regions of the country did not show wide variation. The South had a rate of 6.2%, the Midwest had a rate of 4.4%, the Northeast had a rate of 3.9%, and the West had a rate of 3.8%. The state level dropout rates for 1998-99 showed considerable variability ranging from 2.4% in North Dakota to 10.0% in Louisiana. In all, there were three states with dropout rates of less than 3%. Apart from North Dakota, Wisconsin had a dropout rate of 2.6%, and Iowa had a dropout rate of 2.5%.

Adult literacy in the state of Wisconsin is higher than other states, but still is problem that needs to be addressed. Wisconsin's population age 16 and over is 3,732,898. Of this 3.7+ million, 8% have an education level of less than 9th grade, and 13% have an education level between 9th and 12 grades. Wisconsin's race/ethnicity is 92% white, 5% black, 1% Native American, 1% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1% other. This translates to 98% of those living in Wisconsin speak English very well. Therefore, at the present time Wisconsin does not have the "language challenge" that other states are faced with regard to insufficient

English-speaking skills. These demographic statistics, however, will be changing as Wisconsin's workforce needs change.

Wisconsin's labor force status is 64% employed, 4% unemployed, and 32% not in the labor force. Again, the unemployment rate in Wisconsin is relatively low, in part because of the state's low percentage of ethnic or non-English speaking citizens at the present time (Portland State University, 1996).

A report titled *New Skills for a New Economy* (Comings, Sum, & Uvin, 2001) looked at the national workforce of adults between the ages of 18 and 64 who are neither studying full-time nor institutionalized. Although some adults who are younger or older than this are active in the workforce, more than 90% of all workers are between the ages of 18 and 64. This report found that these workers fall into three categories, each representing a different educational challenge: limited ability to speak English, lack of a high school credential, and insufficient skills for the modern workplace.

First, the language challenge group includes immigrants who have limited English-speaking skills. Second, the educational credential challenge group includes native-born and immigrant adults who speak English proficiently but who dropped out of school before achieving a high school credential. Third, the new literacy challenge group includes adults who speak English proficiently and have a high school credential but whose basic skills are generally considered insufficient for the modern workplace.

The 1992 national estimate for all three of the above-mentioned challenges include data that was estimated directly from the household sample of the 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) public-use data. Between ages 18-64, the number of U.S. adults who fit into the language challenge group is 6,466,383 (4.7%); adults who fit into the

educational credential group is 23,247,930 (17.0%); and adults who fit into the new literacy challenge group is 34,288,383 (20.1%). The total number of adults that fit into these three categories is 64,002,696 (41.8%).

At the low end of these statistics, in Oregon, Washington, and Iowa, 30% or less of the population age 18-64 faces one or more of these challenges, whereas in Texas and Louisiana, about half or more of the population faces a challenge. This data will be ever-changing, with the biggest growing population will be the language challenge, because of the estimated increase in immigrants added to the U.S. population.

Basic Skills Models That Currently Exist

Changes have occurred in literacy programs as a result of the major welfare reform law passed in 1996. The welfare law provides opportunities to include basic skills instruction as part of welfare recipients' transition to work. Enhancing basic skills of welfare recipients can be a component of effective welfare-to-work programs. Helping welfare recipients acquire the skills needed in today's workplace is the only way to genuinely assist them in preparing for their future without welfare. Adult education and literacy can make a major contribution.

With the 1996 welfare reform law the bottom line is clear: after five years of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) assistance, and less in some states, welfare recipients will have to support themselves. Leaders in the field have begun to adapt their instructional approach accordingly, because when welfare recipients' benefits run out, they need to acquire strong basic skills and workplace skills—the communication, problem-solving, interpersonal, and thinking skills necessary to succeed in today's workplace.

The increased need for literacy services will continue even after recipients have found employment. Many of the jobs found by recipients will be low-paying positions that have limited potential for advancement. In order to move ahead and provide for their families, many adults will want and need literacy and basic skills service even after leaving welfare.

Long-term welfare recipients are generally less well-educated than other recipients and are more likely to need to improve their basic skills in order to find a job and become self-sufficient. For example, Wisconsin, where the welfare caseload has fallen more than in most states, 83% of recipients do not have a high school diploma. In Milwaukee, 38% of recipients determined to be ready for immediate entry into jobs had not completed high school. The majority who found work were placed in low-skilled jobs paying wages at or below the poverty level and did not receive any training in higher-skill occupations.

Employers in the Milwaukee area indicated that even many low-skill jobs require basic reading, math, and computer skills; the majority of employers required that applicants for unskilled jobs have high school diplomas (Hayes, 1999).

States are currently integrating basic skills instruction into their welfare-to-work activities under TANF. Beginning in 1999, this opportunity has expanded because states will have greater latitude in combining education, training, and work for every recipient counted towards the work requirement.

Following are brief overviews of some of the model programs evaluated: (Murphy & Johnson, 1998).

Adult Basic & Literacy Education Program (Cleveland, OH)

This program serves 150 recipients annually, with many of them reading below the sixth grade level at entry, and has a more than 50% success rate with participants gaining

employment. This six- to 12-week program includes basic skills instruction integrated with work experience at a community agency. Keys to success include a curriculum based on the SCANS competencies, job coaches for the newly-employed, and an innovative use of “client advocates,” who meet regularly with participants to help them deal with support service needs, including transportation, child care, and housing, as soon as they arise.

Brooklyn College Child Care Provider Program (Brooklyn, NY)

This literacy-based vocational training program prepares parents on public assistance for employment in the childcare field, and has a job placement rate of 88%. The five-month program provides basic and job skills training and work experience in child care in alternating weeks. The instructional approach tightly interweaves basic education and vocational curriculum elements. In addition, education and training specialists work together as a team in the same classroom, and interact regularly with participants’ internship supervisors.

Canton City Schools Even Start Program (Canton, OH)

This family literacy program provides 20 hours of work experience and 10 hours of academic and life skills education weekly for parents at their children’s schools. It targets hard-to-serve families, including some recruited from local public housing sites. Participants have the opportunity to do job shadowing, meet with a mentor, and receive comprehensive vocational assessment. Academic skills are taught in real-life contexts using the National Institute for Literacy’s *Equipped for the Future* as a model. The Canton program has established linkages with school-based Title I programs for child development services. It also collaborates closely with school-to-work programs in order to identify skills in demand by local businesses.

CAP Services' Family Literacy Program (Wautoma, WI)

This family literacy program, operated by a community action agency, stresses both economic and emotional self-sufficiency. The job placement rate is high, with 78% of participants getting jobs. This program develops a “self-sufficiency” plan for each family that includes education, training, work experience, and other services. Computer skills training (with Internet access) and one-to-one tutoring are available to clients in addition to their basic skills and family literacy classes. The program is a cooperative venture between local entities that include the following: community college, private industry council, school district, local public assistance administrative agency, and domestic abuse outreach program.

Chicago Commons Employment Training Center (Chicago, IL)

This employment training center serves long-term welfare recipients who face numerous obstacles to self-sufficiency, including domestic violence and learning disabilities. The curriculum focuses on skills needed to enter and succeed in one of several local vocational training programs identified as effective and accessible to people without a high school diploma. The center provides a rich array of support services (many provided by partnering agencies) including child care, health clinic, case management and counseling services, support groups for domestic violence and depression, career counseling, and transportation stipends.

Learning Elevator Program (Hammond, IN)

This adult education program is notable for accepting all applicants regardless of educational level—approximately 40% of high-risk, low-skill participants (reading below the seventh grade level upon entry) have secured jobs. The following factors contribute to the

program's success: work-oriented curriculum in which all academic instruction is connected to the workplace; comprehensive assessment and goal-setting processes; work experience located in the same building as classes; and, extensive collaboration with other community organizations. Participants engage in only the components of the program deemed necessary for them individually.

Education for Gainful Employment Program (Albany, NY)

The EDGE project operated by the New York State Education Department combined unpaid work experience with basic education services and, at times, job training. Strengths include the following: contextualization of academic instruction around work, a close working relationship with state welfare and labor agencies, precise delineation of project expectations, and attention to both youth and adult recipients. Program funding is performance-based.

South Bay GAIN Employability Center/Sweetwater Union

High School District (San Diego, CA)

This program offers an integrated academic-vocational program to welfare recipients who did not succeed in finding a job during a month-long job search. Eighty percent of participants completed training and approximately 70% get jobs. Those without the basic skills necessary to qualify for vocational programs are provided with basic education services to help them qualify. Others are assisted with GED preparation or vocational training in business office technologies, health occupations, or industrial technologies. An on-site "job developer" assists each participant with job search and placement activities. The goal of job placement is reinforced throughout the education and training.

* * * * *

Characteristics of these successful programs seem to be consistent. Examples of successful programs include the following criteria:

- focus on employment-related goals
- hands-on work experience
- integration of basic skills components with other welfare-to-work activities
- involvement of private sector employers
- early intervention and personal attention in addressing potential problems
- use of “job coaches” to assist clients in making transition to work
- use of “job developers” who know of existing employment opportunities
- extensive support services including child care and transportation
- commitment to continuous staff development

Successful programs focus on employment-related goals. They restructured their services to help recipients succeed when benefits expire. One example is the Brooklyn College program, which teaches basic skills entirely within the context of child care. Another example is the Canton Even Start program, which makes it simple and convenient for participants to gain work experience by using one site for both classes and work experience.

Another effective approach is organizing basic skills instruction around more general work requirements, such as the Secretary’s Commission on the Achievement of Necessary Skills (SCANS) Competencies or *Equipped for the Future’s* (EFF) generative skills. Many of the exemplary programs seek input from private sector employers about both the local job market and skills needed for specific jobs. They often provide computer training and certification programs that help participants meet requirements for specific jobs that are available in the community (U.S. Department of Labor, 1991).

The best way to familiarize a person without work experience with the world of work and to demonstrate the utility and relevance of skills taught in the classroom is to provide hands-on work experience. This practical experience may take the form of internship, job shadowing, or actual employment. The exemplary programs have found that it is important for students to have the opportunity to apply material learned in the classroom in a hands-on working environment on a continual basis. As an example, students in some of the programs alternate weekly between the classroom and the worksite, while other programs incorporate both classroom and work experience into their schedule every week.

A close working relationship with appropriate welfare agencies is an important component to a successful program. Confusion over what services are to be provided, how long participants are to remain enrolled, and what outcomes are to be expected can be avoided by mutual pre-planning and agreement. For example, the South Bay GAIN Employability Center sets its goals for successful outcomes through contract negotiations with the San Diego Workforce Partnerships (Murphy & Johnson, 1998).

The needs of welfare-to-work participants often extend well beyond the services normally available in an educational institution or volunteer agency. Participants may need assistance in such areas as life skills, child care, education counseling, health, housing, domestic violence, alcohol and drug abuse, transportation, income maintenance, job placement, and clothing. Exemplary programs look beyond the basic instructional needs of their participants and find a way to connect with other organizations and agencies that can provide the wide array of services that are needed. A good example is the Chicago Commons program, which helps families meet their basic needs with on-site support services—including

counseling, a health clinic, domestic violence and depression support groups, career counseling, and transportation and child care stipends.

Several exemplary programs have a particular staff member who is responsible for orchestrating the many separate components into a well-integrated total program. Whether called counselor, case manager, or client advocate, the distinguishing feature of this position is responsibility for coordinating a number of support services that ensure participants' job readiness and job retention. This includes promptly addressing problems that could interfere with participant's progress through each stage of the welfare-to-work process, including initial employment.

The Cleveland Adult Education program uses client advocates successfully. New workers and employers have testified that continued employment would not have been possible without client advocate intervention. Another good example of this is the Canton Even Start Program which provides each student with a mentor who assists with needs as they arise.

Exemplary programs emphasize the importance of well-trained staff. Often the staff are specialized and have clearly defined areas of authority and expertise. For instance, one staff person will work only in the classroom, while another works only on job search activities. Well-trained staff includes instructors that are certified by the state they are working in, and client advocates are all social workers or counselors with experience with adults. Teachers also participate in special training utilizing SCANS, as an example.

The Cleveland Adult Education staff developed a six-week training utilizing SCANS skills to prepare teachers for the project-based approach. New York State's EDGE program has a best practices clearinghouse that can be used by instructors across the state. The

Hammond City Schools Adult Education program staff routinely attend staff development conferences on issues that include cognitive strategies, learning styles, learning disabilities, and employer-educator dialogues on workplace needs (Murphy & Johnson, 1998).

Other national programs have been evaluated in relation to various strengths of adult literacy programs. Brief overviews of these additional programs that have been evaluated are provided.

A major question exists: How do we train current and former welfare recipients to find and keep jobs that meet the educational requirements of a 21st century business? C.J. Heinrich at the University of Chicago, examined a successful job training program for the residents of Ford Heights, Chicago's most depressed suburban community. She found that there were five major factors that contributed to people's losing their new jobs: limited work histories or no prior job experience, poor technical skills, child-care problems, a view of work as an unknown or threatening experience, and few role models to teach the behavior patterns necessary to succeed in jobs (Heinrich, 1996).

Welfare-to-work programs need to take a holistic service approach that concurrently provides for all necessary employment, training, and support services. The intent of this holistic service approach is to emphasize longer-term education, intensive personal coaching, and job specific, customized training that promotes long-term job retention. The main objective of the coaching activity is to help each job trainee identify and work through any problems he or she may encounter during the training period. This means frequent contacts and a very hands-on approach, with coaches making phone calls or house calls after hours to ensure trainees are attending class or fulfilling job responsibilities.

Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce (CCC), a non-profit economic enhancement organization, partnered with one of the authors of this chapter (Askov & Gordon) to provide a workforce education, welfare-to-work training program. The CCC trains groups of workers and companies through its on-the-job training programs funded by the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). With the Marriott organization, the CCC trained workers in CCC's Future Tech program for basic reading and math skills needed in the hotel chain's housekeeping positions. Another group of maids was enrolled in an English as a Second Language (ESL) program.

As the first step taken, they provided small-class instruction on workplace culture and appropriate behavior on the job. Once an employee began working, he or she participated in small-group tutorial classes on site twice each week for ten weeks. A specific learning curriculum was used and individualized for the tutoring. This approach emphasized a coaching or mentoring relationship with the trainee that reinforced consistent attendance in class and on the job as well as the long-term position consequences of "learning to earn."

The basic skills training characterized some of the training work by stating that the use of newspapers increased knowledge of current events and job responsibilities helped reinforce good basic living and job skills. These adults eagerly learned general information that is taken for granted by many of us. They had never been exposed to or taught such knowledge.

The fact that their employer offered training that improved their quality of life had a major motivational impact on these employees. It is believed that welfare-to-work education programs have considerable potential for teaching such lifestyle and work anchors, and thereby building a more stable, dedicated national workforce.

The CCC has learned through experience that training must be scheduled at least partially during work hours. When classes were scheduled at the end of the day, attendance was poor. The company designated a permanent training classroom, so everyone knew where to report and became acclimated to the setting.

The CCC and the participating hotels recognize the value of one-to-one tutoring or small-group instruction. They offered a prescriptive learning method that tailored the program content to each individual student's ability. These tutorial classes required a greater investment than traditional classroom instruction would have, but the learning outcomes were far better. Contractual work with business and industry is becoming an important source of revenue for adult education, especially in the new arena of welfare-to-work programs. Educators are realizing that they can no longer teach basic skills in isolation—they must also ensure the transfer of those basic skills to the workplace (Askov & Gordon, 1999).

The most successful welfare-to-work programs nationwide have integrated education with skills training. They have identified market niches in local industry and geared educational programs to support them. Often, industry leaders have been involved in the program design to guarantee employment for the graduates. Providers have established strong partnerships within their community to obtain the necessary support services identified at the onset of the program. Employers have specific needs and expectations from these graduates, too. Employers want workers who are ready for the world of work, who have the skills to maintain appropriate work behavior, and are equipped with the “soft skills” that are often viewed as more important than the technical skills that can be learned on the job. Post-employment services such as intensive case management, mentoring, and continued

collaboration with involved agencies will further ensure the participant's successful transition to independence (Pappalardo, 1999).

Soft skills are basic people skills, and these people skills are the foundation of good customer service skills. They include interpersonal relations, problem solving, teamwork, and leadership. People skills foster a positive attitude, effective communication, courteous and respectful interaction, and the ability to remain calm and in control in difficult situations. Equipping students with soft skills could make the difference in whether they can get a job they are prepared for and keep it (Evenson, 1999).

Oklahoma's TANF literacy initiative has been researched. Oklahoma's literacy office collaborated with the Department of Human Services (DHS) to address the welfare reform. This program serves the literacy needs of clients with reading levels below sixth grade. Their participation rate is 42%, and they determine this rate by clients turning in activity time sheets to their case manager. Activities include basic skills, General Education Development (GED) class, vocational training, job search, or life skills training. When welfare reform started there was a 20-hour-a-week participation requirement; in October 1998, it went to 25 hours a week; and, in October 2000, it goes up to 30 hours a week. It stays at the 30-hour-a-week mark from then on.

Oklahoma's TANF program has a collaborative partnership with Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA). This is a cost-share program. VISTAs are considered capacity builders (those who strengthen a program through fund raising, recruiting volunteers and tutors, etc.). At sites across the state, they teach class, tutor students, and administer literacy screenings.

Other literacy program stakeholders include Express Personnel, Consumer Credit Counseling Services, First Book, and Suited for Success. Express Personnel is a statewide employment agency. Representatives from this company come to the classrooms to provide job counseling and a wealth of other job resources. Consumer Credit Counseling Services provides credit counseling and debt management, money management, and anything clients need. The First Book program provides one children's book a month for clients to learn how to read well, and then they can take it home to read to their children. Suited for Success provides work-appropriate attire to individuals getting off welfare and heading into the workforce.

Welfare-to-work legislation is more of an employment program and employment support service. Even when TANF clients' cases are closed, they are still going to be a welfare-to-work client. They will receive employment support services to keep them employed, to help them improve their employment level, and to keep them moving into better jobs (Rynearson & O'Bryan, 1999).

San Antonio, Texas, offers a 25-hour-a-week (GED) class for women receiving TANF benefits. Women in their program typically range in age from their late teens to early thirties and are primarily Hispanic. Students bring a variety of histories to the class. Some have suffered extreme hardships and almost insurmountable obstacles related to abusive relationships, poverty, and sometimes jail, drugs, and gangs. Overwhelmed by violence in their lives, many have a better vision of where they have been rather than where they are going.

A recent study at the University of Michigan reports that up to 65% of all welfare recipients report they are or have been in abusive relationships in the past year (Raphael,

1997). Also, the National Center on Addiction and Drug Abuse reports that 20% of welfare recipients are drug and alcohol addicted (Kramer, 1998).

With numbers like these, the overwhelming effect of domestic violence on daily activities (e.g., going to school, taking care of children, and looking for work) must be one of the greatest concerns for educators and welfare department workers. Women returning to school often find the nurturing environment of the classroom as a place where they can discuss issues related to violence with friends and perhaps the class at large.

A mini-grant awarded by the Texas Education Agency supported the development of a student-generated curriculum focused on workplace transition. The project began by examining a variety of complicated intrinsic and extrinsic barriers learners faced when going to work. Domestic violence factored largely into the themes. Learners were able to share stories about past work experiences.

Throughout the project a Freirean approach to work was adapted. The Freirean approach is striving to always link our reading and writing activities to personal and community awareness and change in addition to placing importance on the role emotions play in personal transformation. Students have strong, personal feelings over past experiences with work—anger, anxiety, fear, mixed with hope and joy. These feelings need to be brought to the surface, so educators can break through the protective “attitude” learners have over learning (Freire, 1970).

The overall objective of the project was to create an interactive forum for learners to work through issues they felt were important to their transition to work. Students have moved from viewing their experiences as individualized, isolated suffering to expressing healing and

reconciliation, as well as the empowering recognition that their work can assist others (Green, 1999).

Reading, Writing, and Math Skills for the Workplace

Around 1900, even John Dewey believed that reading, writing, and arithmetic could be most effectively taught within the context of use, and especially in connection with the basic occupations around which the curriculum revolved. Dewey felt that materials for these subjects must be chosen for their intrinsic value to the student (Kliebard, 1995).

The world of work has changed. Gone are the days when adults were able to enter the workforce with low basic skills and no high school diploma, and continue in the same job until they retire. Now workers must be able to apply reading, writing, and math skills to changing situations that require a higher level of fluency, speed, and accuracy.

In *Teaching the New Basic Skills* (Murnane & Levy, 1996), researchers draw on the work of SCANS of what they call the “new basic skills.” Their list describes the minimum skills needed to secure a middle-class job in the United States today. They are the abilities to:

- Read at the ninth-grade level or higher.
- Use math at the ninth-grade level or higher.
- Solve semi-structured problems when hypotheses must be formed and tested.
- Work in groups with coworkers from different backgrounds.
- Communicate effectively, both orally and in writing.
- Use personal computers to carry out simple tasks, such as word processing.

Recent research on literacy and oral communication skills shows that when speaking, people with higher levels of literacy provide more details listeners need to understand a

complex situation (Purcell-Gates, 1995). This is why vocabulary is important. Listeners might need to understand a situation that cannot be experienced directly. The modern workplace requires more complicated oral communication, discussion, and group problem solving. Oral language skills needed in today's workplace require vocabulary and communication skills that grow with reading and writing practice.

People in general have four types of vocabulary: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The *listening* vocabulary is the earliest to develop and the largest. This vocabulary is composed of all the words people hear and understand and serves as the foundation for learning other vocabularies. The *speaking* vocabulary is the second to develop, and it includes all the words a person uses appropriately in everyday speech. The *reading* vocabulary consists of the words a person recognizes or can figure out in print. The *writing* vocabulary encompasses those words a person can use appropriately during written communication. Listening and reading vocabularies are receptive; speaking and writing vocabularies are expressive (Irvin, 1998).

Readers negotiate meaning through discussion, exchanges of information, and remembered and anticipated conversations, even if these conversations are only in people's heads; the result is that the meanings constructed are shaped and changed by others' interpretations of text as well as our own. This is why collaborative learning is a functional, receptive tool.

Writing is a way of knowing, a way of working through confusion and fuzzy ideas, and a way of moving toward clarification and articulation of knowledge—writing becomes a way of working through the process and moving toward insight. As with reading, writing is

influenced by social interaction with other thinkers and writers. Writing is usually done with an audience in mind—even if it is only ourselves.

Writing is the act of constructing meaning while transacting with text. The writer makes meaning through the combination of prior knowledge and previous experience; information emerging from text; the stance he or she takes in relationship to the text; and immediate, remembered, or anticipated social interaction and communication. Writing is an expressive tool that is a close, parallel process with reading (Ruddell, 2001).

Math skills are also critical in today's economy. Everyday living is becoming more complicated. People are using credit cards instead of cash and checks. This means people are able to spend money they do not have, and this convenience requires constant monitoring of account balances and interest payments. They need to apply reading and math skills to choose the best credit and then to manage its use.

Thirty years ago, workers had no choice in their retirement plan. Now, people must choose how to invest their employer's and their own retirement dollars. In the near future, people may be asked to manage part of their Social Security funds as well. These decisions require literacy and math skills to acquire information and weigh alternatives.

The economic changes our society is making at a rapid pace require adults to use their literacy and math skills to acquire information and build a base of knowledge for decisions about health care, finances, and retirement. These changes offer workers the opportunity to take more control over their lives. To take full advantage of these changes, adults need high levels of language, literacy, and math skills to understand their choices, and be able to monitor the performance of their choices (Comings, Reder, & Sum, 2001).

Civic Topics for Adults

The workplace in today's economy requires basic skills such as reading, writing, and math in order to succeed. However, another component of being successful today is civic responsibility. The civic vitality of communities depends on the level of basic skills of the people who live in them. More than ever, citizens need strong basic skills to understand school issues, laws and codes, zoning regulations, proposed legislation, and the platforms and qualifications of political candidates. They need to know how to negotiate among themselves and with those in power (policymakers, police, and advocates for change) and to use the power of their vote (Comings, Reder, & Sum, 2001).

Little research has been done on the relationship between literacy skill level and issues of citizenship and community participation. However, NALS found that people with higher levels of literacy were more likely to vote. Only 55% of NALS participants with the lowest level literacy rate (Level 1) voted in a national or state election within the last five years. (Based on the 1992 NALS testing of 26,000 Americans who were 16 years of age and older.)

NALS reports its findings in terms of five levels: Level 1 (lowest proficiency) to Level 5 (highest proficiency). Level 1 adults have almost no skill in literacy and math; most would not qualify as illiterate but are at a severe disadvantage, and those in Level 2 are disadvantaged, in relation to the demands of the 21st century life.

Successful distribution of information on public health, safety, and environmental issues depends on adults' ability to read. Information on these issues is growing more technically complicated. The effects of ingesting lead paint, the safety of household products, and risks of radon in our homes, and the potential impact of a radioactive-waste storage site are difficult matters to present in simple terms. Newspapers are an important source of

information on these topics, but adults with low literacy skills are less likely to read a newspaper. Only 35% of people who scored at NALS Level 1 reported reading a newspaper everyday.

The United States and its many communities need the help and commitment of all their citizens. A lack of basic skills that limits people's range of opportunities for social participation and reduces the likelihood of a good income can lead to disappointment and anger. People with a higher level of basic skills are more likely to develop the future-oriented perspectives that help them invest in constructive activities that can support improvements in social and political systems (Behrman & Stacey, 1997). All citizens should be prepared with the basic skills they need to participate fully in the social and political life of their country.

Computer Skills for Basic Skills Enhanced Learning

One of the basic skills essential in today's new economy is the ability to use computers and other technology tools. Researchers draw on the work of SCANS when they describe one of the skills needed to secure a middle-class job in the United States today to include use of personal computers to carry out simple tasks, such word processing (Murname & Levy, 1996).

One main question comes to mind. Can lower-level adult learners benefit from learning basic skills needed for the workplace by the use of computers? Yes and no. New technologies hold great promise for helping students learn reading, writing, and math, but also challenge some existing beliefs about literacy. As an example, the traditional way of approaching writing has been replaced with a more recursive mode of inserting, editing, and revising text (Irvin, 1998).

One of the advantages of technology for adult learners is the ability to bring “real world” learning experiences into classroom settings. Technology can be used in such a way that it supports instruction where adult learners can use technology to meet information and learning needs as they arise in the course of daily life and work. Technology can make adult learning more robust and provides learners with tools that help them function effectively and reliably in a variety of adult life and work contexts. Technology can also accommodate learning differences so that instruction is available in a variety of modes, suited to a range of learning styles and preferences.

Learners and teachers want technology that can support learning processes that are transformative, enabling and empowering them to become more critically aware, and to pursue individual and collective interests. They also look to technology to help facilitate personal change (Hopey, 1999).

The stakeholders of adult education (policymakers, administrators, teachers, and learners) and their rising expectations for technology, and desire for new solutions to old problems, resulted in the funding and creation of three large innovative technology projects that have the ability to transform adult education over the next decade. These projects represent an investment of more than twenty-five million dollars of public and private money, and have been tested by thousands of learners and educators before they were released publicly. The projects include:

Crossroads Café: A video and print project designed for English as a Second Language for adult learners. Released in 1996, Crossroads offers a complete program for teaching English to speakers of other languages, as well as English-speaking persons with low

literacy skills. The Crossroads Café series depicts adults from diverse cultural backgrounds who face real-life challenges (Crossroads Café, 1998).

PBS LiteracyLink: A significant national initiative that will use video, on-line, and computer technology to help adults earn high school diplomas and GED certificates. PBS LiteracyLink has two video series (GED 2000 and Workplace Essential Skills); both series include workbooks and extensive web-based materials that will help students prepare for the GED exam and develop workplace employability, reading, writing, math, and communication skills (PBS LiteracyLink, 2001).

Adult Literacy Media Alliance (ALMA): A national television and video based adult literacy service designed for adults at the pre-GED level who are in need of reading, writing, and mathematics skills. It shows viewers how to integrate active learning projects such as keeping a journal, filling out an application, creating a budget, doing research, writing a poem, and using a dictionary into daily life. (ALMA, 1998).

In addition to these three large innovative projects referenced, PLATO is a K-Adult curriculum that is widely accepted throughout the United States. PLATO courseware modules contain tutorials, drills, applications, problem-solving activities, reviews, practice, and mastery tests. Courseware consists of reading and writing, mathematics, science, social studies, life skills, career skills, and English as a Second Language (PLATO, 2001).

Four Workplace Essential Skills will be important as many low-level adult learners enter into the workforce and try to retain a well-paying job. First, employment lessons are applicable for the workplace. This covers not only finding a job (matching skills and jobs, resumes, applying, and interviewing), but also when the student is new to the job (reading for

work, workplace safety, and learning at work). Being ready for work includes planning for problem situations, such as car trouble or no-show babysitters.

Second is communication and writing skills. Communication includes the language of work; communicating with co-workers and supervisors; working as a team; and communicating with customers. Writing skills include the process for writing memos and letters, and also supplying information (directions, forms, and charts).

Third are reading skills. This encompasses reading for a purpose (understanding the different ways reading is used on the job); following directions; and reading reports and manuals.

Fourth are mathematics skills. Number sense is considered common sense, and this is a valuable set of skills that help students organize their life at home and at work. Other math skills include fractions, decimals, and percents; measurements and formulas; and graphs and data (PBS LiteracyLink, 2001).

Computers have been used in a variety of manners to enhance education. Drill-and-practice programs were shown to help students in reading and math. The more open-ended software provided students in both subject areas with the ability to more completely develop the concepts essential to understanding (Ellis, 2001).

Software programs for adult literacy have many advantages. Students learn at different speeds, and they also have different gaps in their knowledge. Most software programs are designed to accommodate a range of needs through individualized instruction. A high-quality software program will have the learner always working in a well-defined learning environment. Objectives and tasks must be clear, and feedback should be immediate and effective, with the learners' progress known throughout.

Other forms of non-traditional teaching methods include distance education and correspondence courses. In a study conducted in 2000, an adult student enrolled in a high school diploma by correspondence. She chose the work-at-home route; it was difficult for her to attend the local adult education program because of health reasons. Being able to work at home and the control she has over the pace of instruction are the reasons she gave for preferring correspondence school (Bingman & Ebert, 2000). Much more research needs to be done on distance education in adult basic education. Educators need to think creatively about how to provide at-risk adults with access to distance learning—by including “low-tech” or “no-tech” elements of distance education courses. Well-designed and edited text study guides can be just as useful as some sophisticated media. Not all at-risk adults are going to be disciplined enough to successfully completed a distance education or correspondence course (Grill, 1999).

Parents’ Literacy Level Effect on Their Children

School has become just as demanding as the workplace in the new economy. Children must work harder in school to prepare themselves for life in the 21st century. A child’s chance for success in school is greatly affected by the education level, literacy skills level, attitude toward learning, and economic stability of his or her parents.

Research reveals a significant relationship between mothers’ negative school experiences and those of their children, which is partially mediated by family structure; mothers’ educational attainment; and level of mothers’ involvement in their children’s school activities and interest in the progress at school (Kaplan, Kaplan, & Liu, 2000).

The recent report of the National Research Council, *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*, points out that success in learning to read in school is related to the preparation and support provided by parents before children enter school and while they are students in the first three grades (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). The National Center for Educational Statistics looked at six specific home literacy activities that mothers could do to prepare preschool children to learn to read in school. These activities included reading to children; telling stories; teaching letters, words, and numbers; teaching songs or music; doing arts and crafts; and visiting a library (U.S. Department of Education, 1999).

A necessary part of support for early literacy rests within the family. Shaping a positive home environment that values reading and writing can result in children making measurable academic gains at school. Teacher preparation programs that help teachers foster close family and school relationships regarding literacy are essential. The following are some suggestions for family involvement: read aloud to your children daily to increase their memory, knowledge, and judgment; read and discuss the book your children are reading at school; encourage your children to write to family members; model good reading (newspapers, magazines, books, etc.); and, take children to the library on a regular basis (Jonson, 1999).

If children come into school unprepared to learn, they may have trouble developing the basic skill of reading. As the children who are prepared move forward, the less prepared are always a step behind. If children also have a learning disability, they are even more disadvantaged. As they pass through the first and second grade, underperforming children may become frustrated with their lack of progress in relation to the rest of the class. For

them, reading is less enjoyable, leading them to read less. Therefore, they are more apt to fall further and further behind their age level in school.

Parents must take on the role of helping their children acquire strong basic skills early in school, but many are unprepared to do this. Parents who did not do well in school should be provided with an opportunity to learn how to help their children do better than they did. Adult basic skills classes can provide an opportunity for parents who are struggling to help their children succeed. Educators must take an active role in communicating the actions that will help children thrive and those that will not, especially in the early years of school. A child's most permanent memory of school often comes from the early years (Routman, 1996).

Each child needs to go through the "lap stage" of reading development, ideally at the ages of two, three, and four with a parent. Educators worry about children who come from homes where no academic foundational experiences are known about or practiced. Some parents are so stressed, distracted, or exhausted by their own lives that there is no energy left for reading at home (Zemelman, 1998).

What about those kids whose parents and families, for whatever reason, fail to nurture literacy? In family literacy programs, low-literate adults and their pre-school children are educated together to create a presumably synergistic effect on education gains for both. Even Start, the federally-funded family literacy program, requires programs to offer parent education, adult literacy education, and early childhood education. Support services such as transportation, home visits, and child care are generally offered as well (Beder, 1999).

The Role of the Technical College in Developing Basic Skills

Technical colleges play a critical role toward enhancing adults' basic skills for the workplace. Technical college instructors teach basic skills such as reading, writing, mathematics, and career education at levels ranging from first through twelfth grade. Adult basic education services at technical colleges include Family Literacy, GED/HSED, ESL, and workplace education. The new welfare laws provide opportunities to include basic skills instruction as part of welfare recipients' transition to work, and the technical colleges provide basic skills instruction.

Technical colleges also partner with other agencies to join forces in providing exemplary programs. Partners include JTPA, child care agencies, school districts, and other human and social service agencies. It is these partnerships that assist adults who face greater barriers to employment, including low basic skills (Murphy & Johnson, 1998).

Summary

The researcher covered many different aspects of what it takes for low-level learners to succeed as workers, family members, and citizens in the new economy. Reasons for reading, writing, and mathematics proficiencies were explained, as well as civic topics and computer skills for low-level learners seeking jobs. Research on how parents' literacy level can affect their children's learning was also clarified.

Several successful basic skills programs across the nation were researched. These programs have many common characteristics that enhance adult learning. Technical colleges have a critical role in developing the basic skills adults need to succeed in the new economy.

Chapter 3

Summary, Critique, and Recommendations

Summary

The purpose of this research was to investigate current practices across the nation as they relate basic skills programs in the technical college system. Action needs to be taken to create a workforce that is ready for the new economy. Curriculum should consist of reading, writing, and mathematics skills; civic topics; and, use of computers. Also, researched were the implications of how parents' attitude with regard to learning can instill greater academic strengths within their children. Learning becomes a generational, cyclical process.

Exemplary programs across the nation were reviewed and many similarities came to surface, as well. Many strong points surfaced with regard to creating a more successful program for low-level learners. It is these strengths that educators need to develop even further for low-level learners to adapt to and flourish in the new economy. A high school diploma is extremely valuable. The economic consequences of leaving high school without a diploma are severe in the new economy.

Critique

The researcher found the analysis of literature to be exciting and hopeful. As a nation, we are on the road to taking action in assisting low-level learners to develop the skills they need to succeed in the new economy. Low literacy rates across the nation are still high, but more and more programs are developing to assist workers to "fit" into the workplace. Employers, even in low paying jobs, are requiring a high school diploma, unlike years past.

Eleven programs were researched across the nation from San Francisco to New York. The basic skills models that the researcher reviewed are exemplary in many ways, and they seem to be consistent. These models focus on employment-related goals; hands-on work experience; integration of basic skills components with other welfare-to-work activities; use of “job coaches” to assist clients in making transition to work; use of “job developers” who know of existing employment opportunities; extensive support services including child care and transportation; and commitment to continuous staff development.

Service is provided to the students, or adults, who need to feel they have a place in the workforce, and may be uncomfortable because of their low-level skill, or because they have never had or held a job. Many of them have been on welfare and are of a low socioeconomic status and need assistance. The type of assistance the exemplary programs provide include life skills, child care, educational counseling, health, housing, domestic violence, alcohol and drug abuse, transportation, job placement, and clothing. The exemplary programs researched go beyond the basic instructional needs of their participants and find ways to connect with other organizations to provide a wide array of services that are needed.

Successful programs allow hands-on learning experiences by combining basic skills instruction and practical experience in the workplace. The exemplary programs have found it is important for students to have the opportunity to apply material learned in the classroom in a hands-on working environment. Some programs alternate weeks between the classroom and workplace, and others include both in their schedule each week.

In the new economy, strong basic skills are essential. Basic skills which include reading, writing, math, and additional skills such as thinking critically, working collaboratively at problem-solving, and using computers and other technologically-based

equipment on the job. Recent research shows that oral communication, which includes vocabulary work, assists workers in explaining or understanding a situation. Oral language skills needed in today's workplace require vocabulary and communication skills that grow with reading and writing practice. Math skills are critical because living has become more complicated. The use of credit cards, as well as investing retirement dollars, requires literacy and math skills.

Civic responsibility is critical for today's economy to be successful. The civic vitality of communities depends on the level of basic skills of the people who live in them. Citizens need to know how to negotiate among themselves and with those in power and to use the power of their vote.

Do computer skills enhance basic skills learning? Many programs have been developed (e.g., Crossroads Café, PBS LiteracyLink, ALMA, and PLATO) to assist educators in developing lesson plans for learning. Software programs have their advantages, but may not be for every learner. What may become advantageous would be a mix of applications on the computer and other lessons to be written out. Students will need some computer skill because it will assist them in feeling comfortable using technological systems on the job.

The effect of parents' literacy level on their children was a component of research, because of its importance to our future economy. A child's chance for success in school is greatly affected by the education level, literacy skills level, attitude toward learning, and economic stability of his or her parents. This is a generational and cyclical process. Research has shown that children who are read to by their parents will perform better in school. In family literacy programs, low-literate adults and their pre-school children are educated

together to create a presumably synergistic effect on education gains for both. Parents must be equipped with the ammunition to nurture literacy in their children.

Recommendations

Many exemplary basic skills models exist across the nation. The researcher covered eleven of such programs. Considering the research examined, the following recommendations are made:

1. Practitioners should study the characteristics of these eleven successful programs. Do practitioners' current programs include hands-on work experience and integration of basic skills components with other welfare-to-work activities? The eleven programs researched all included the combination of basic skills instruction and work experience. In this way, they can apply what is learned in the classroom in a hands-on working environment on a continual basis. This practical experience will enable adult learners to become familiar with the world of work.
2. Practitioners need to develop partnerships with outside organizations and welfare agencies in order to develop exemplary programs. These agencies include JTPA, child care agencies, school districts, technical colleges, and human and social service agencies to name a few. Models researched included "job coaches" for the newly employed and "client advocates" who meet regularly with participants to help them deal with support service needs, including transportation, child care, and housing. A rich array of support services need to be utilized, and a cooperative venture between local entities can create a successful program. Establishing volunteer programs within the local community can assist a program's success. For example, the child care component could be soliciting

high school students that need volunteer work experience. Strong volunteer programs could be endless.

3. Integrate job skills and life skills into the curriculum. When welfare recipients' benefits run out, they need to acquire strong basic skills and workplace skills—the communication, problem-solving, interpersonal, and thinking skills necessary to succeed in today's workplace. Reading, writing, and math are the basic skills adults need in the new economy, but equally important are job and life skills. Building curriculum that captures job skills such as thinking critically, working collaboratively at problem-solving, and using computers will better equip adults with the preparation to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the new economy. Life skills such as health, finances, and child care are also critical to adults' success and should be included in basic skills curriculum.
4. Expand the body of research in the field of basic skills. The researcher limited the study to eleven models. Many more exemplary programs exist across the nation. Do they all have the same successful qualities? The researcher for this study found many consistent characteristics that contributed to the programs' success. Additional research could uncover other sources of job skills and life skills curriculum, work experience training ideas, and partnership programs. These are the same type of qualities that made the eleven programs outlined successful.
5. Educators need to continually assess their basic skills programs. Is the basic skills curriculum working? Are the adults finding and keeping jobs? Are the partnerships working and can other partnerships be developed to enhance the programs? Are employers satisfied with the work performance of the adults employed through these programs?

There must be a firm commitment to expand and improve the adult education and literacy system in order for our nation's new economy to prosper. An investment in our economy now, can help adults develop the basic skills necessary to keep a job, help their children succeed in school, play a leadership role in their community, and leave them and their families beyond the reach of opportunity and the margins of civic and social life.

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