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CHAPTER IX

CityWorks: Redefining Vocational Education

ADRIA STEINBERG AND LARRY ROSENSTOCK

Some people seem to have a problem with the Rindge School of Technical Arts. They are always putting RSTA down and stereotyping us. . . . the students in RSTA are dumb; they will not go to college; they are going to drop out. Well, I will not take this any more. . . . Being a freshman in RSTA, I am positive that I will go to college, and a lot of my confidence has come from my teachers. RSTA students have worked hard, demonstrated enthusiasm and displayed some great exhibits. We are smart, not only in mind, but also with our hands. We have, or will have shortly, an advanced technological mind as well as an academic mind. . . . We give respect, so we expect respect. Success demands it!

In March, 1993, Paulina Mauras published this statement in the newspaper of the Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School. Her anger is not surprising. Why would anyone want to be labeled "non-college-bound"—especially in Cambridge, Massachusetts, the premier college town in the United States? As a ninth grader in the Rindge School of Technical Arts, the vocational wing of Cambridge's comprehensive high school, Paulina suffers from the low status accorded to vocational education and all who enter it.

What is worth noting is that this fourteen-year-old is ready to do something about it. She knows she is smart; she feels ready to tackle anything or anybody at the high school; and she believes that she has the right to voice her thoughts and feelings in a public forum. Perhaps most striking, Paulina has become an articulate spokesperson for a new definition of vocational education—one that is not based on a prediction about a child's future (for example, non-college-bound) but rather on challenging the conventional conceptions of ability.

The authors of this chapter are associated with the Rindge School of Technical Arts in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where Adria Steinberg is the Academic Coordinator and Larry Rosenstock is the Executive Director.

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Not surprisingly, this reconceptualization is difficult to achieve in daily practice. Paulina puts particular blame on the "put downs" of those outside her school program. Certainly she is right that old stereotypes must be attacked. But in this chapter we focus on another more subtle and difficult challenge: how to help a veteran vocational faculty to move outside the century-old paradigm of training workers for industrialization and to embrace new curricular priorities and instructional policies and practices.

Like Paulina, the authors of this chapter are writing "from the inside." In 1990, Larry Rosenstock became the executive director of the Rindge School of Technical Arts (RSTA), where he had previously worked for eight years as a carpentry teacher. He entered this new role with the explicit goal of tearing down the walls between academic and vocational education—a goal he had just spent two years helping to embed in federal law as a staff attorney for the Center for Law and Education. Adria Steinberg, then editor of the *Harvard Education Letter*, entered first as a consultant to the process and then stayed on as the full-time academic coordinator. Combining an intimate knowledge of "business as usual" with a strong vision of a very different kind of vocational education, the authors have worked with a veteran faculty to put the rhetoric of academic and vocational integration into daily practice.

We decided to begin with the ninth grade program, the entry point for students into our vocational school. In the spring of 1991, a small design team of faculty created the framework for a new program called "CityWorks." The idea was to replace the traditional ninth grade exploration of different shops and trades offered at the school with an exploration of local community needs and resources. Although we began without a blueprint of what we hoped to accomplish, we were guided by a key assumption about school change: if we wanted a school where all students could be smart, we would have to restructure it in ways that would call upon all teachers to be smart. While this statement seems almost a truism, teachers have a very hard time believing that anyone really wants them to think or will listen to their ideas.

Acutely aware of their low status within the comprehensive high school, Rindge teachers were especially cynical. They had seen reforms and reformers come and go. What they had never experienced was a change effort in which they would be encouraged to use everything they knew and understood, not just about students, learn-

ing, and schools, but about the world outside of school, where they had developed considerable expertise as parents, community members, and, in many cases, as entrepreneurs and independent contractors.

The pages that follow provide an account of what happened when teachers at Rindge became engaged in redesigning the ninth grade program. In the first section we focus on the technical aspects of this innovation, the curricular projects, activities, and content that give CityWorks its definition and that differentiate it from the model of vocational training it replaced. The second section provides a sketch of how political and economic events have shaped vocational education, and how recent changes at the federal level are helping to create fertile ground for "growing" this local innovation. In the remainder of the chapter we focus on the process of change, outlining both the strategies we used to try to create a professional culture within a vocational school and the lessons we learned about the dynamics of political and normative change.

Beyond Shop Class: Reinventing Curriculum

THE CITY IS THE TEXT

Paulina's notion of combining hands and minds comes directly from her experiences in CityWorks, the centerpiece of the ninth grade program at the Rindge School of Technical Arts (Rindge). Cambridge is the "text" as students investigate the neighborhoods, the systems, the people, and the needs that comprise an urban community. Students work on individual and group projects, bringing aspects of their community into the classroom by creating numerous "artifacts" of Cambridge—maps, photographs, tapes, oral histories, and three-dimensional models.

Several features make this program unusual. First, CityWorks combines key characteristics of vocational programs—a project approach, apprentice-master relationships, and real clients—with the broader content and essential skills of academic education. Projects involve "hands on" work, like making a wall-sized map of the city and wiring it to light up selected landmarks. At the same time, students engage in problem solving, like deciding where on the map to locate a new teen center that would attract youth from all ethnic and racial communities of the city.

Second, CityWorks is taught in a space designed for collaborative learning projects. Looking for an alternative to both shops and classrooms, we borrowed the notion of "studios" from design schools. An

open area at one end of the room is used for large-group activities such as demonstrations and exhibitions, but most of the room is subdivided into studios where teachers work on projects with small groups of students. This arrangement gives participants the flexibility to regroup, team up, or borrow tools and materials as the project necessitates.

Third, community representatives are invited to help create a context for students' efforts. Staff members from city agencies and programs identify unmet community needs that students could address and also serve as an authentic audience for students' finished products and presentations. For example, at a recent exhibition of students' work, several teams of students displayed drawings and scale models of a heritage museum they had designed for Cambridge. Each group had a different conception of where the museum might be located and how it should be designed. The museum builders sat with their models to explain their ideas as audiences of parents, city officials, and local businesspeople wandered through the exhibit.

In making the models, the museum builders were responding to a request from the city's tourist agency that is actually in the process of raising funds for a museum. Six weeks before the exhibit, the agency director had come to speak to CityWorks students and ask for their help in this effort. With thousands of people visiting the city each year, it was important for students to understand the tourism industry and to help plan its development in a way that would take the needs of residents into account.

In addition to the museum builders, several other groups of students involved themselves in the question of what visitors to the city should see and do. Rejecting existing brochures featuring "Old Cambridge" and Harvard University, one group designed a tour featuring places of interest to visiting teens, while another created a "Sweet Tour" for visitors seeking the best desserts in town.

A third group of students liked the idea of highlighting the efforts of a "local hero." They videotaped an interview with John E. Gittens, a founder of the Cambridge National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and learned that he had led a neighborhood organizing effort to get the city to open a new playground named after a child who was struck by a car because he was playing in the street. Their brochure featured a map locating the playground as well as the story of its creation. All three brochures, along with a T-shirt that another group of CityWorks students designed, have since been

adopted by the board of the tourist agency as products they will distribute and market.

The goal of CityWorks projects is to help students understand their community and its needs, and ultimately to see themselves as people who can affect that community and create new opportunities for themselves and others who live or work there. Through the lens of community development, students arrive at a very different and more positive vision of what it means to be a vocational student. The point is not just to make things, learn some skills and get a job, but rather to become thinkers and solvers of problems, who work well together in teams and communicate well with various audiences.

WRITE IT DOWN; WRITE IT UP

The work that Paulina and her classmates do in CityWorks is complemented and reinforced by two other multidisciplinary courses: CityLife (humanities) and CitySystems (integrated mathematics and science). This means that freshmen at RSTA spend five of their seven periods each day in ^{integrated} ~~related~~ study.

In CityWorks, students explore the dynamic ^S by which ^{affect} ~~they are~~ ~~affected and which, in turn, can affect~~ their community. In CityLife, a double-period humanities course, they read texts describing how young people in other times and places have thought about and fashioned their lives and futures—from Benjamin Franklin's "Advice to a Young Tradesman" to Jay MacLeod's ethnographic portrayal of the "Hallway Hangers" in a housing project in Cambridge. The model building and other hands-on skills emphasized in CityWorks are reinforced in CityLife through group projects in which students are required to combine library research, construction, and public presentation. For example, in one project students investigate cities in other countries and time periods, building models to illustrate what they have learned. These, too, become part of the CityWorks exhibitions.

Because many students entering Rindge are reluctant writers, emphasis is also placed on giving them a new way to think about what is involved in putting pencil to paper. The approach is two-pronged: "Write it down" and "Write it up." Students learn the habit and value of reflection and thinking on paper through keeping journals and work logs (write it down) and they also learn what is involved in preparing their writings for public presentation (write it up). The work logs students keep in CityWorks can also be brought to the humanities class if they want to "write up" any of the entries in more

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finished form for either an exhibition or inclusion in a final portfolio.

CitySystems is ambitious not only in its integration of academic with vocational education, but also as the only course in the high school to attempt a full integration of mathematics and science. Studying many of the same concepts covered in the schoolwide freshman course, Scientific Principles, students learn to use mathematical reasoning, patterns, and equations as a quantitatively accurate "language" for describing these principles. Whenever possible, the vocational shops are used as the laboratories for this learning.

For example, the voltage meter in the electrical shop becomes a tool for teaching positive and negative numbers. Visits to this shop also feed into a study of mechanics: students build small electric motors, using only wire, batteries, cups, rubber bands, and copper wire. The autobody shop is a place to begin the study of the principles of force. Students puzzle over why it is easier to break the window of a car than the fender. ("We took a beat-up car and started hitting it with a sledge hammer to see how force works," explains one delighted student in his photo essay of this trip). Visits to the autobody shop also afford an opportunity to compare the structure (skeleton) and organic systems of a human body to the frame and systems of a car.

Such visits are intended to serve a dual purpose. By exposing students to "real world" applications, lessons taught in the shops help them to understand scientific theories and concepts as well as the importance of quantitative accuracy. At the same time, investigations in the shops help students to see the high level of academic skills required in technical work.

The Dual System: Changing the Rules

THE OLD RINDGE

If Paulina had entered Rindge several years ago, her experience would have been almost totally different. She and her classmates would have been placed in an "exploratory," spending two periods per day, for two to three weeks at a time, rotating through each of the shops offered in the school. The rest of the day would have been spent in the typical fragmented, academic schedule of a high school freshman. At the end of the year Paulina would have chosen a "major"—the shop in which she would spend half of her school time for the next three years in narrow skill training for a specific occupation.

There was virtually no integration of the exploratory with academic subjects. In fact, Rindge students "went out" to the other parts

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of the high school for academics. Although this was supposed to eliminate social isolation and bring vocational students into contact with a wide range of peers, the reality was that they were mixed primarily with other low-income students in low-level academic classes. Rindge students faced all the problems associated with the bottom track in high school: watered down curriculum with minimal academic content, teachers who would rather be working with a more motivated set of students, and negative labeling (such as Paulina describes) by other students and teachers.

The traditional Rindge program was justified in terms of appropriateness for its clientele. Since they were considered non-college-bound, Rindge students had to choose—at age fifteen—what they were “going to be” for the rest of their lives so that they could work on the skills necessary to their chosen occupation. The justification harked back to 1888 when Frederick Rindge bequeathed money and land to the city with the stipulation that it be used for a manual training school for boys. The sons of the city’s merchants, businessmen, and professors already had their school (Cambridge High and Latin). The philanthropist Rindge wanted to ensure that a broader base of young men would be prepared to work in the rapidly growing manufacturing industries of New England. The now merged comprehensive high school (Cambridge Rindge and Latin) still displays his sentiments, carved in granite over the front door: “Work is one of our greatest blessings. Everyone should have an honest occupation.”

ORIGINS OF THE DUAL SYSTEM

Massachusetts was one of the first states to institutionalize two separate curricula: one to educate middle and upper level managers for the new industrial firms, the other to train laborers and clerical workers. But the early history of vocational education also contained a more democratic impulse. Seeking to realize Horace Mann’s vision of a common school system that included children from all backgrounds, local school boards found that they could attract Irish immigrant and rural families by introducing vocational programs focusing on agriculture and mechanical trades.

By the late nineteenth century the fundamental contradiction of vocational education was evident. On the one hand, it was and remains a means of providing an education to students who would not otherwise attend school. The Massachusetts Commission on Industrial and Technical Education reported that high school enrollment in Massa-

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Massachusetts rose from 6.7 percent of those fourteen to seventeen years old in 1888 to 32.3 percent of that population by 1906.¹ On the other hand, it created a dual system in which lower-income students were tracked into vocational classes and away from the academic courses which prepared others for future education and higher income, white-collar jobs.

A 1906 report by the Massachusetts Commission on Industrial and Technical Education triggered a debate between John Dewey and David Snedden, the Commissioner of Education in Massachusetts. Believing that vocational education could "do more to make public education truly democratic than any other agency now under consideration," Dewey argued vehemently against Snedden's defense of the efficiency of a dual system.² As Dewey noted: "Nothing in the history of education is more touching than to hear some successful leaders denounce as undemocratic the attempt to give all the children at public expense the fuller education which their own children enjoy as a matter of course."³

Despite such deep disagreement about the direction of vocational education, it garnered wide support. A powerful lobbying organization, the National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education, was supported by a broad range of groups, including educators, the Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers, major farm organizations, and settlement workers. After initial suspicions about vocational education, even organized labor jumped on the bandwagon. Sensing the inevitability of vocational education, the American Federation of Labor wanted a voice in redirecting its antiunion bias.

The campaign culminated in the passage of the Smith-Hughes Act in 1917. For the first time, federal money was available for high schools to use in preparing students for employment in the major occupations of an emerging industrial society. In addition to the availability of federal money, two other factors assured the growth of vocational education. First, the compulsory education laws of 1923 captured into vocational programs many students who were now required to go to school. Second, intelligence tests such as the Stanford-Binet were developed and used to justify relegating some students to "work with their hands," separated from those who would presumably benefit from academic pursuits.

THE PERKINS ACT OF 1990

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act of 1990 created a federal legislative mandate to reopen the

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conversation about the purposes and content of vocational education. As recently as the previous reauthorization hearings in 1984, it was practically blasphemous to suggest that schools integrate vocational and academic education. But by 1990 some disturbing facts had begun to emerge. The job entrance rates and wage rates of vocational school graduates were only marginally better than those of students graduating from the high school's general track; only 27 percent of all secondary students in the United States who were majoring in a technical area ever worked in a related field. Widespread dissatisfaction with the outcomes of vocational education, combined with strong pressure from a coalition of national advocacy groups led by the Center for Law and Education, galvanized support for change.⁶

In its final form the Perkins Act requires that vocational and academic education be broadly integrated and that vocational programs move from occupationally specific, narrow, skill-based training to offer instruction in "all aspects of an industry." Through its participatory planning mechanisms the Act also increases the opportunity for vocational education to forge links with community economic development efforts.

In theory, the Perkins Act makes available federal money that could potentially affect the direction of schooling for 4.3 million vocational students. CityWorks is one of the first efforts to work out the ideas embodied in the Perkins Act in a real school setting. As the mandates of the Perkins Act trickle down to the local level, educators call and write, asking us to please "send CityWorks." Although we oblige such requests by mailing out curriculum packets, we suspect that these materials by themselves will do little to help our colleagues.

What is important about CityWorks is not the lesson plans or the specific projects that each group of teachers and students does. At best, these represent a way to bring technical improvements to a school. The process of detracking, staff development, and restructuring that CityWorks exemplifies and necessitates is much more at the heart of what it means to put the Perkins Act into practice. Vocational programs supposedly exist for the benefit of those who wish to enter the skilled labor market. But in too many cases, such programs have become dumping grounds, barely distinguishable from the "general track." The Perkins Act could be a powerful tool, not just for improving vocational education, but for challenging the social class biases and assumptions about intelligence that lie behind the sorting itself.

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Changing the Norms

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FOR EVERYONE

In Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School, as in most urban comprehensive high schools, the measure of quality is in the percentage of students going on to higher education. Cambridge Schools prides itself on having eliminated its general track and having achieved a 75 to 80 percent college-going rate. Basically, it is assumed that the non-college-bound go into the vocational track, and everyone else is preparing for college.

But these statistics are deceiving. What happens to the students who are supposedly college bound? How many leave high school really prepared to succeed in college and how many ever attain a degree? Although not collected on a local level, the national data tell a depressing story. Of those entering two-year colleges, the majority leave within the first six months. Only about half of those entering a four-year college or university graduate within a six-year period.

As we thought about who would benefit from a redefinition of vocational education, we looked not just at the students coming into our program but at the much larger group of young people who could benefit from broadly integrated academic and vocational education, from the creation of new career pathways and apprenticeships, from opportunities to contribute to the revitalization of their own depressed communities. In a very real sense, we saw our potential clientele as encompassing the whole student body, rather than the 15 to 20 percent willing to identify themselves with a program for the "non-college-bound."

We began with the ninth grade, not simply because it is the entry point for students into the social sorting mechanism of the high school, but also because changes in the ninth grade program would, of necessity, involve most of the vocational teachers. Although they taught the "exploratory" course in the autonomous isolation of their own shops, these teachers each had a strong interest in getting to know all of the freshmen. The exploratory course had long been the recruiting ground for future shop "majors."

The system functioned rather like a series of blind dates: students went from shop to shop trying to decide with which teacher (and technical area) they would enter into a relationship. Not surprisingly, this bred competition among the areas. Teachers in each area suspected the other areas of "courting" students too vigorously and of making unrealistic promises. Although teachers did not propose a change, there was a recognition that a competitive norm was not particularly

healthy. There was also a growing feeling of futility and desperation as the total enrollment continued to drop, and students who entered seemed less and less interested in vocational pursuits.

SETTING GROUND RULES

In January, 1991, we took our first step: informing the staff about key provisions of the Perkins Act and explaining a proposed strategy for addressing these at Rindge. We would begin by undertaking a complete overhaul of the ninth grade program, and then, as the first group of freshmen proceeded through the school, revamp the program offerings in each successive grade level. It was, we hoped, a suitably ambitious, but not totally overwhelming way to proceed. The superintendent supported us by publicly declaring her desire for Rindge to be "turned on its head."

According to our timetable, the staff had the spring and summer of 1991 to design a new ninth grade program for the fall of 1991. For the plan to succeed, the new ninth grade program not only had to work for students but also function as effective staff development for teachers. A curriculum had to be designed that would introduce the whole staff to what we envisioned as the core idea of a revamped four-year program: academic-vocational integration within a community development framework. As soon as possible, staff needed not just to talk about but to *experience* what it was like to work together across trades and to combine methods that they used regularly in their shop with content that was less familiar.

In embarking on program redesign, we set ourselves three ground rules. The first was to keep everyone in the department informed of all that we were doing. The second was that no one would have to participate who did not want to. And the third was that those who did not want to participate would not be allowed to interfere with the efforts of those who did. When the first call went out for teachers to join a design team, six volunteered.

By the fall of 1991, the team had come up with an overall conceptual framework for CityWorks, had fiddled with the schedule to create unprecedented daily meeting time for teachers, and had begun the construction of a space that would house the new program. Although our goal had been to establish a full academic program, in the first year students continued to go to the main campus for most of their academic subjects. It took us until the fall of 1992 to find a way to fund and schedule the CityLife and CitySystems components.

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RELYING ON TEACHERS

In all, we began the school year in 1992 with enough classroom activities to last only about one month. The rest would have to come from the CityTeam meetings in which everyone teaching the course would participate. Although it was a bit terrifying not to have all of CityWorks plotted out, we also knew it would be a mistake to hand teachers a finished curriculum. Teachers, like students, are not empty vessels into which the current wisdom can be poured.

For years vocational teachers at Rindge had spent virtually all of their time at school teaching narrow technical skills that were occupationally specific. Most believed that this is what it meant to be a vocational teacher. State mandated curricula reinforced this notion. Vocational teachers received manuals for their shop areas listing duties and tasks that students in that area were expected to undertake. If we wanted our school to be a place where all students could be smart, we would have to structure a program where all teachers could be smart. This meant encouraging teachers to unearth the reasons behind their current practice, and to reconsider that practice in the light of changing economic and social realities. In other words, it was important to respect and make room for them as thinkers as well as doers.

We suspected that Rindge teachers were experiencing a kind of cognitive dissonance. Certainly the curriculum they were teaching at school left out much of what they knew to be important in their own work and lives outside of school. This was brought home to us early on in our reform efforts in a conversation with a teacher who had taught carpentry at Rindge for many years. Like many vocational teachers, he was an independent contractor outside of school. He explained that he would very much like to turn his business over to his sons, both of whom were skilled carpenters. The problem was that neither seemed to be good at most of the other tasks associated with running a successful contracting business, for example, making good estimates, writing contracts, dealing with clients and subcontractors, and getting variances from the local zoning board.

This teacher held within his own experiences the seeds of a new approach to practice. The challenge for us has been to create a professional culture which encourages teachers to share their experiences and reflect on their practice. Three strategies have been particularly critical to that effort. These are described below, with further discussion of the political and normative dimensions of such strategies in the sections that follow:

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1. *Carving out time and space for teachers to meet.* The most basic thing that we have done is to give teachers both informal and formal opportunities to work together. Their close physical proximity in the CityWorks room opens up the possibility of joint projects. Required daily CityTeam meetings ensure that such possibilities will be discussed.

To create a meeting time in the daily schedule necessitated closing the shops for a period, not a popular move either with our own teachers or counselors who signed students up for shops as personal-interest electives. But it is critical to what we are trying to accomplish. The meetings are a time to reflect on what is happening in CityWorks, to review, revise and propose curriculum activities, and more generally, to get to know one another and explore the possibilities for collaboration. As the facilitators of the daily meetings, the authors have played a key role in steering the meetings away from gripe sessions and a focus on logistical concerns to a broader conversation about teaching and learning.

2. *Including people from outside the department and the school.* From the beginning, the vocational teachers who staffed CityWorks have been joined by a variety of people from very different backgrounds who bring other perspectives and experiences to the task. The "others" have included several academic teachers, a loaned employee from the Polaroid Corporation, bilingual technical assistants, and, as needed, consultants to assist staff, first in their work on curriculum, later on group dynamics and issues of organizational development.

This mixture creates a forum for reexamining assumptions and for moving beyond the specific skills involved in particular trades or subjects to what it is important for all students to know and be able to do by the time they leave the program. At one critical juncture, for example, when vocational teachers were resisting collaborative projects in the name of craft specialization, the Polaroid employee talked about the multicraft perspective at his company and at other high-performance workplaces.

3. *Creating a situation of genuine interdependence.* The meetings are productive because they have to be. Everyone knows that they are about to go in and teach CityWorks the next day (or the next hour). In a very real sense, they sink or swim together. If the program works, it will eventually increase enrollments and attract a broader clientele of students. If it does not, Rindge will suffer the kinds of staff cutbacks of other vocational programs. The competitive ethic of the old explor-

(As of this writing, it has worked. Freshman enrollments at Rindge for 1994-1995 have doubled.)

story does not die easily, but it really is counterproductive in the new structure. It makes much more sense to collaborate, to nurture and support new ideas, and to look to one another for project ideas and strategies.

Learning the Politics of Change

NOT A SECRET

There is a tendency in school reform efforts to build a protective wall around what you are doing. If you do not, you might get accused by parents, or worse, by school board members of "experimenting with our children." Although it is possible to hide for a while, in the long run the only real protection is in convincing key stakeholders of the value and perhaps the inevitability of what you are doing.

CityWorks has never been a secret. Staff members and students have made presentations at parents' nights, spoken at each of the junior high schools, and hosted hundreds of people at the exhibitions of student work. The interest in CityWorks expressed by the larger community has given an added impetus to the staff both to make the new program work well and to be able to describe it well to others.

The "publicness" of what we are doing has caused political problems locally. Speaking for a small but vocal constituency of parents, one school board member accused Rindge of misdirecting working-class students by offering them liberal arts rather than the manual training that they need. One critic noted that Rindge is preparing "Renaissance people, not plumbers." There has also been an attempt to get the state to decertify our program.

Thus far, such attacks have tied up time and energy, but they have also solidified the staff, students, and parents behind the new program. Fortunately, we also receive very positive feedback about what we are doing, both from within the district and around the country. As awareness of the Perkins Act has grown, so have requests to visit our program or to send our teachers out as workshop leaders and presenters. In fact, the requests became so great that we set up our own formal mechanism for handling them: the Hands and Minds Collaborative—a joint effort of Rindge and the Center for Law and Education.

YARDSTICK FOR MEASURING CHANGE

Contact with "outsiders" has brought major benefits to our staff. The attitudes, questions and comments of teachers from other districts become a yardstick against which Rindge teachers can measure

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the distance they have come. In June of 1993, a dozen Rindge teachers served as workshop leaders at a national conference cosponsored by the Center for Law and Education, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the Hands and Minds Collaborative. It was the job of the workshop leaders to assist the nearly two hundred participants in developing projects that would help them implement the Perkins Act in their own schools.

At the last session, after listening to a number of teachers express concerns about the loss of time for trade-specific training, Tom Lividoti, the electrical teacher at Rindge, spoke up: "I used to sound just like that. I was the loudest one complaining about fewer hours in the electrical shop. But what we're doing now brings out creative juices I didn't know kids had; I see developments on the academic end that I never dreamed were possible. I may not be able to turn out second-year apprentice electricians, but I know we are turning out better all-round students."

Academic teachers working with the CityWorks program have also found that they have important messages to share with their colleagues. Alif Muhammad, the CitySystems teacher, convened a workshop series for Cambridge teachers called: "Put the action back into math and science." In these sessions mathematics and science teachers learned to use new tabletop physics equipment being constructed by students in the woodshop. Rob Riordan, a member of the Rindge humanities team, echoed Dewey last year when he addressed teachers and scholars at a national meeting sponsored by the American Council of Learned Societies: "I started the year thinking it was my mission to bring humanities into vocational education. Now I believe we must bring vocational methodologies into the humanities."

TOWARD INTERDEPENDENCE

During the first few months of CityWorks team meetings, teachers would almost never comment on a teaching or learning issue without prefacing it with a disclaimer: "I would never say what's right for anyone else" or "This is just the way I do things" or "I know that everyone has his or her own way of doing things and that's fine." The frequency of such statements provided clues to an underlying group norm that can best be characterized as "noninterference" (that is, I won't look too closely at what you're up to or tell you what to do; and you won't scrutinize me).⁸ The conditions of teaching make teachers view their work with the sometimes fierce independence of artisans.⁹

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For vocational teachers, this perspective is reinforced by their highly specialized work within the school (and outside) as trade artisans.

In the past, Rindge teachers defended the separateness of their shops in terms of the differences among their trades, each with its own specific skill requirements. Shop autonomy seemed a natural and even necessary condition of vocational education. The most obvious negative side effect was the competition for students noted earlier. But perhaps an even more serious problem was that teachers had no reason to identify the broader educational needs of their students, nor any real way to address those needs. They focused on finding ways to interest students in a specific technical area, but did not feel responsible for ensuring that all students become better problem solvers or communicators, or gain a good solid basis of reading, writing, and quantitative and scientific reasoning skills.

It is impossible to pinpoint a moment when the focus changed, but after two years of team meetings a sense of broader responsibility is now evident within the group. It can be seen in an increased sharing of information and in a willingness to identify competencies that students need regardless of their schooling or career choices. Staff members are more likely to team up for multicraft projects, and, sometimes even design classroom projects that do not involve their trade specialty at all.

In early planning stages for CityWorks there was a tendency to swing from cynical skepticism ("This will never work") to unrealistic enthusiasm ("We're almost done"). Now teachers approach the task of restructuring with a kind of rolling up of the collective sleeve. There is a noticeably greater tolerance for ambiguity. People are more willing to bring issues to the team for group problem solving and have found ways to deal constructively with disagreements. Teachers are evolving a shared language for talking about how they work together and for getting through the inevitable crises. Perhaps more important, we now have a picture of what we could and should become: a high performance workplace where staff members are highly interdependent yet each is an active participant, focusing energy on the tasks at hand.

WHEN TEACHERS CARE

The amount of time devoted to meetings and the intensity of the staff work have, at times, created a worry that we might become too adult-focused. Fortunately, this is not what students seem to feel.

When freshmen are asked what is most noticeable or important to them about Rindge, most students begin with the simple statement: "The teachers here really care about you."

Of course, the teachers cared about students before too, but the scope of what they care about has broadened considerably and hence is more evident to the students. In the old way of doing business, teachers had little patience with students who were not ready to make a choice about what they wanted to be and were not motivated to learn all of the skills of that particular trade. They felt their identities as skilled craftspeople slipping away, to be replaced by a much less desirable identity as "caretakers of marginal students."¹⁰

CityWorks gives teachers a new identity. Even if students do not express interest in particular trades, teachers no longer feel like mere caretakers. They know that they can help students develop competencies, interests, and attitudes that will serve them well in future schooling or work. This feeling of self-efficacy on the part of their teachers is evident to students. Several freshmen recently surprised a visiting reporter by telling her that what makes CityWorks teachers different is that they *like* what they are doing.

Not surprisingly, students respond by becoming more engaged with school; their "creative juices" get going and teachers see them at their best. The caring and mutual respect go beyond the classroom walls. For example, during the summer a group of students who had just completed their CityWorks year responded to the invitation from one of their teachers to come up with ways to smooth the entry of incoming freshmen. Using the acronym R.S.T.A. (the abbreviation for the Rindge School of Technical Arts), they named themselves "Responsible Students Take Action."

When Paulina and her cohort entered Rindge, they received a new student handbook, covering all of the things the older students wished someone had told them, and they found immediate support in the form of R.S.T.A. student mentors who had set up a table in the hall to help freshmen with everything from coping with sticky locks on lockers to dealing with hazing.

Impressed by such efforts, staff members have become willing to carve out even more unusual forums for student participation and input. Rindge is probably the only vocational school in the United States to have its own Innovations Board, with equal membership (and votes) of students and staff. The Board was created in late 1991, soon after CityWorks received an Innovations Award from the Ford Foun-

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dition. One of ten innovations in state and local government selected nationally from over 1,700 applicants, CityWorks was given \$100,000 to "broaden and deepen" the work.

The staff agreed to set aside one third of this award to be given out over three years in small grants to other innovations in the Cambridge Schools that would further the CityWorks mission. The process would be overseen by a board with equal representation of students and staff, and several slots reserved for community representatives. At its first few meetings, the board hammered out a mission statement and a set of priorities. Student members were outspoken in these discussions, insisting, for example, that all proposals be submitted by at least one teacher and one student, and that proposals specify the ways in which students would be involved in carrying out the program.

By the spring, board members were reading and evaluating nearly two dozen proposals from all over the school district. After selecting and interviewing the finalists, the board selected nine winners, with proposals ranging from a new student-run radio program to a special summer school for bilingual students. Questioned by teachers and classmates as to why they did not use more of the money internally for Rindge projects and programs, several students spoke passionately of the need to end the isolation of the vocational program. They want the Innovations fund to encourage teachers and students throughout the school district to try new ways to join hands and minds. Their hope echoes the note sounded by Paulina at the end of her statement to the school: "We give respect, so we expect respect. Success demands it!"

NOTES

1. Jay MacLeod, *Ain't No Making It* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1987).
2. Rob Riordan, English Department Coordinator of the Cambridge public schools, coined this phrase.
3. Edward Krug, *The Shaping of the American High School, 1880-1920* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), p. 220.
4. John Dewey, "Some Dangers in the Present Movement for Industrial Education," *Middle Works* 7 (1913): 99, 102.
5. Robert Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 178.
6. The Center for Law and Education, based in Cambridge, Massachusetts and Washington, D.C., provides support services on education issues to advocates working on behalf of low-income students and parents. Paul Weckstein of the Center played a lead role in advocating academic and vocational integration in the 1990 reauthorization of the Perkins Act.
7. The Hands and Minds Collaborative is open to educators and community partners interested in redefining vocational education. It is based at the Rindge School of

Technical Arts, and is funded by the Dewitt Wallace-Readers Digest Fund and the Stewart Mott Foundation.

8. Judith Warren Little, "The Persistence of Privacy: Autonomy and Initiative in Teachers' Professional Relations," *Teachers College Record* 91, no. 4 (Summer 1990): 509-535.

9. Michael Huberman, "The Social Construct of Instruction in Schools," *Teachers College Record* 91, no. 1 (Fall 1989): 32-58.

10. Judith Warren Little, "Two Worlds: Vocational and Academic Teachers in Comprehensive High Schools," National Center for Research on Vocational Education, University of California at Berkeley, June 1992.



The Vocational Education Project
Hands Minds Collaborative

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Hands and Minds Collaborative

Mission Statement

The Hands and Minds Collaborative is a school-based center dedicated to helping schools and school districts break down the barriers separating academic and vocational education and the barriers separating school and community. Housed at the Rindge School of Technical Arts, the Collaborative facilitates training, assistance, and communication among programs and teachers as they seek to redefine the content and purpose of vocational education in their local settings. The Collaborative maintains a sharing and information network for school programs, offers a summer institute cosponsored by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and provides on-site training and assistance for schools throughout the country.

Origins and Functions

The Hands and Minds Collaborative was established by the Rindge School of Technical Arts (Rindge) and the Vocational Education Project (VOCED) of the Center for Law and Education. With the passage of the 1990 Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education and Applied Technology Act, the VOCED project began to work closely with sites across the United States to assist them in implementing key provisions of the Perkins Act. The law calls for giving students strong experience in and understanding of "all aspects of the industry," not just limited training for specific occupations. It also calls upon schools to integrate academic and problem-solving skills into vocational settings. Because some of the most promising ways to reach these goals involve students in understanding and rebuilding their communities, the VOCED project works to link schools and community development organizations.

As the lead demonstration site for the Center's VOCED project, Rindge has transformed itself from a wing of a comprehensive urban high school to a highly visible model program -- attracting the attention of numerous reporters, federal and state policymakers and researchers, as well as practitioners from other school systems. The ninth grade program at Rindge, CityWorks, won the 1992 Ford Foundation "Innovations in State and Local Government Award." From CityWorks to the senior apprenticeship programs, Rindge is inventing ways to integrate vocational and academic learning through community economic development activities, and ways to

ensure that students have opportunities to engage in both school-based and work-based learning.

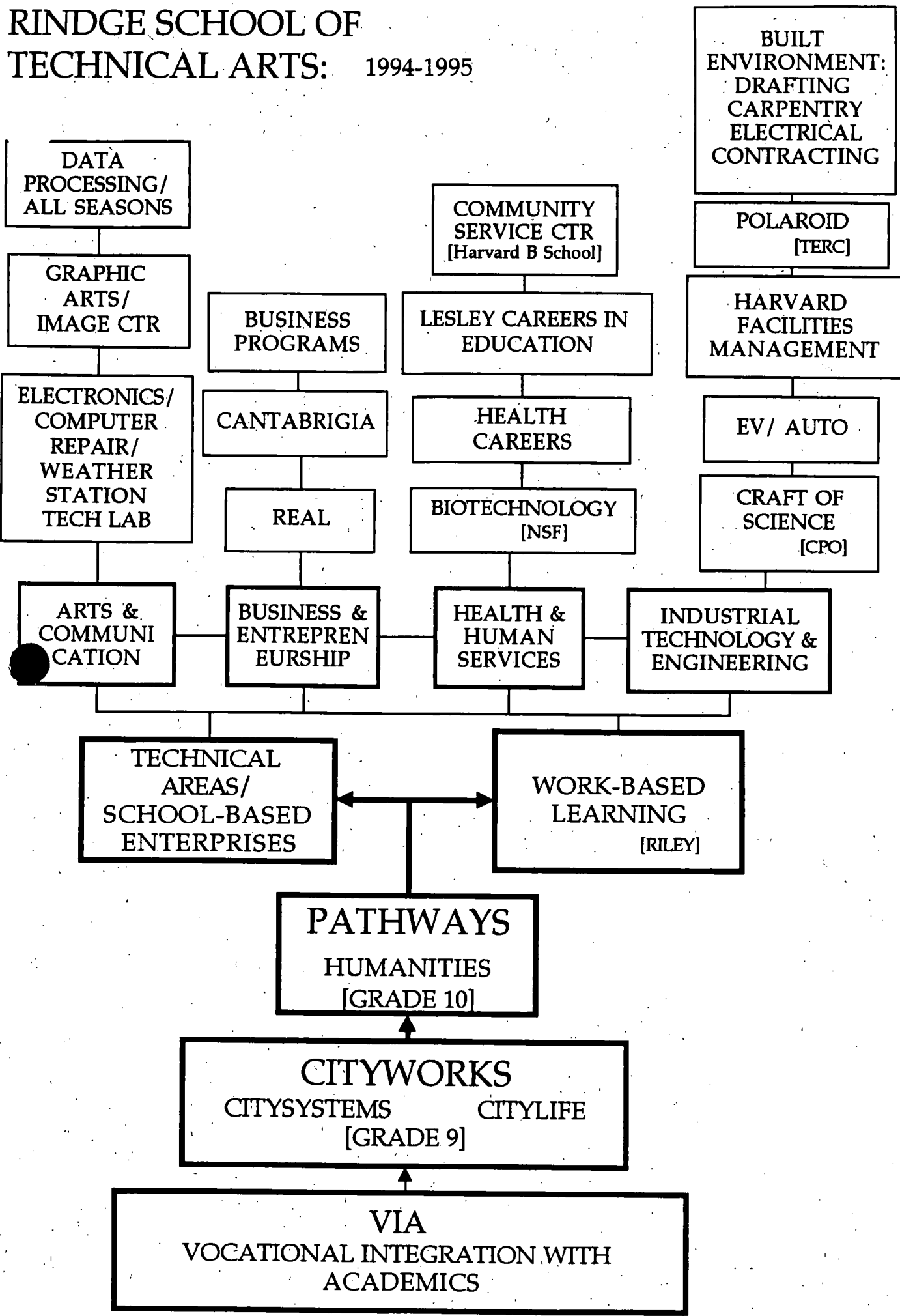
The Hands and Minds Collaborative was established by the Center and Rindge as a school-based resource for those schools and districts that are seeking to work out the ideas embodied in the Act in real school settings. The Collaborative facilitates training, assistance, and communication among programs and teachers that are seeking to integrate academic and vocational education and teach all aspects of the industry through community economic development activities.

The Collaborative brings practitioners to Cambridge for professional development activities, and depending on the nature of the request, provides technical assistance to sites throughout the country - both at their locations and in Cambridge. It publishes teacher-based material which address integration with academics and all aspects of the industry instruction issues, and which address the linkage of school-based learning to work-based learning and to community economic development.

The Collaborative maintains a national computer network which facilitates communication among participating teachers and vocational programs. It will serve as a clearinghouse of useable information about programs, issues, and resources.

The Collaborative works with other national school reform efforts, including those of Jobs for the Future, the National Center for Research in Vocational Education, REAL, and the Coalition of Essential Schools.

RINDGE SCHOOL OF
TECHNICAL ARTS: 1994-1995



Perkins III and Other Reptiles

Larry Rosenstock 16 Nov 1994

1. Neither vocational-academic integration (Perkins), nor work-based and school-based learning integration (STW), can be achieved or institutionalized without substantial school change.
 - a. We cannot adequately prepare students for high-performance work organizations unless we transform schools into such organizations. We must move from the typical factory-like scale to smaller, more flexible units with greater autonomy, diversification of staff roles, flatter organizational chart, substantial resources for staff development, project-based curricula, etc.
 - b. Carnegie-unit, time-based secondary exit (and post-secondary entrance) requirements maintain a subject-status hierarchy which inevitably relegates vocational education, STW, etc. to second class status. Integrated learning experiences (within school through Perkins, and connected to work-based learning through STW) must be imbedded in exit/entrance requirements.
2. Vocational and academic integration must be deepened.
 - a. Integration employs best of each (vocational methods and academic content) to restructure and detrack high schools.
 - b. Staff development (and new teacher training) should cultivate technical and academic proficiency for all teachers (whether formerly vocational or academic).
 - c. Intra-discipline academic (and occupationally-specific skill) standards setting efforts risk working against cross-disciplinary integration.
3. Industry-based teaching and learning must be pursued as an antidote to narrow-skill training for specific occupations.
 - a. Low rates of employment related to high school occupationally-specific training, and increasing rates of labor market churning, indicate substantially reduced utility of narrow, technical skills.
 - b. Broad, industry-based learning is more transferable (portable) to multiple work environments.
 - c. School-based enterprises (currently in 22% of high schools) are a more effective platform for "all aspects" instruction than a typical shop (with decontextualized, technical skill training).
4. Vocational education should be seen as an education - rather than a training - program.
 - a. Industry wants graduates who are educated, not trained (industry can train, if graduate has literacy, numeracy, communication skills).
 - b. "Second chance" programs typically lack longer-term exposure to academics and counselling of "first chance" programs.
 - c. 3a (above), and lower wage and job placement rates of vocational graduates (compared to their academic counterparts), indict vocational education as a training program. Cognitive research (Berryman, Gardner) affirms strength

of prominent vocational pedagogy (e.g. master-apprentice, experiential, applied, expeditionary, multiple intelligences addressed, team taught, cooperatively learned, performance assessed). [The strength of vocational pedagogy is underappreciated - even by vocational educators, especially when they focus on entry-level job outcomes.]

d. No programs for the "non-college bound!" Vocational education and STW are not a path to a different place, but a different way to learn the same things that all students need to learn. We cannot predict who is going on to further education, and when we do we institutionalize self-fulfilling prophecies (by income level) of certain students' supposed limited potential [note STW graduates' high college-going rates!].

5. New teacher training and certification must be reexamined to take advantage of the large, upcoming turnover of the teacher work force.

a. Teacher education and certification tend to remodel what went before, and don't benefit from recent cognitive research about understanding.

b. Master-apprentice pedagogy (which predates schools, is universal, and effective) is missing from most school of education curricula and teacher certification requirements. Also missing are elements relating to teachers' collaborating with "outsiders" (community partners), and to cross-disciplinary teaching and assessment.

Youth, Employment and Education

by Paul Weckstein

A society which fails to develop and engage the full range of human capacities of all its members is a society built on waste. Now that the overwhelming and unchallenged post-war economic and political dominance of this country has eroded, there is a growing sense that such waste is no longer affordable.

Heightened concern about our schools is thus resulting from a confluence of factors. First, there is a widespread belief that the economic imperatives of a high-tech, internationalized economy are forcing the restructuring of employment in ways that demand high skill levels from virtually all workers. Second, a sharply declining youth population, together with a growing minority share of that youth population, means that employers will no longer have the luxury of picking those who appear most qualified or best skilled and rejecting the rest. Together, these factors have created a concern that schools provide higher levels of educational skills to all students, including those students whose talents were previously viewed as either absent or unneeded.

Thus, our educational system is very properly receiving attention about its wasteful failure to develop the full range of creative capacities of our youth, particularly those labeled "at-risk youth," who have traditionally fared least well in our schools, as in our other institutions. Statistics demonstrating the magnitude of the problems are cited with increasing frequency.

Although the dropout rate has generally declined over the last few years, and black students now complete high school at close to the rate of white students, dropout rates of

over 40 percent are common in cities such as Chicago, Los Angeles, and Boston. Furthermore, regardless of race, students from poor families are 3 to 4 times as likely to drop out of school as other students.

While the National Assessment of Educational Progress shows that black students have made achievement gains which narrow their gap with white students, they are still far behind, and their average reading level at 17 years of age is still comparable to the average reading achievement of white 13-year-olds. Other studies reveal that while virtually all 17-year-olds have successfully mastered all basic or rudimentary skills, most have big deficits in higher order skills requiring more advanced levels of comprehension, analysis, problem solving, and decision-making. Recent federal evaluations of compensatory education similarly reveal a general failure to expose students to these skills even at the simplest level of having them read whole paragraphs or stories, construe meaning from the text, or apply arithmetic skills to real world problems. Yet these "higher order" skills are increasingly being touted as critical to our economic future. Similarly, while the percentage of people aged 25 to 29 who completed college nearly doubled in the last 50 years, and while black high school graduates in 1977 were almost as likely to enroll in college as white high school graduates, the proportion of black high school graduates enrolling in college dropped sharply thereafter. These education statistics unfortunately are complemented by high youth unemployment figures and low wages, particularly for blacks and Hispanics.

Yet, the current focus on "at-risk" youth often becomes a vehicle for harmful labeling of children, ungrounded assumptions

about individual, familial or cultural pathology, and new forms of segregation. By locating the problem in youth, attention is diverted from the fundamental problems in the basic structures of both the schools and the economy which put these youth at-risk.

The troubling statistical indicators are consistent with more descriptive analyses of life within the schools. Like many other institutions, the schools serve low-income students and families less well than others. Lower quality curriculum, staff, and faculties; lower expectations; assignment to lower "ability groups" or tracks where academic content is watered down; less responsiveness to student, parent, and community input; and harsher discipline are only the more obvious hallmarks.

We cannot assume that the problem is just a failure of our educational system to develop the full creative capacities of all our youth. It is also a failure of our economic system to utilize those capacities. When low-income young people look at their communities, they do not see high-skill, high-wage jobs ready and waiting, if only they stay in school long enough to qualify. Instead, they see high levels of youth unemployment and, for those youth and adults who can find work, the jobs are most often low-skill and low-wage.

This is not a misperception on their part. For example, despite the fact that many of the "fastest growing occupations" in terms of percentage growth are relatively high-skill and high-wage, they still provide very small numbers of jobs, while the fastest growing occupations in terms of sheer numbers are mostly of a different sort, with much lower wages and skill levels. This is consistent with other data indicating that almost three-fifths of net gain in new jobs generated in this decade have jobs paying under \$11,104 in 1986 dollars. Further, despite the continued links between educational attainment and employment, economic prospects have worsened for youth at all levels of educational attainment, and the unemployment rate for black high school graduates is actually one-fifth higher than the rate for high school dropouts.

These statistics are in turn confirmed by a closer analysis of the data being cited to describe "at-risk" youth. Many of the purported indicators of "at-risk" status seem to

take a back seat to poverty as the key factor. For example, the dropout rate for poor whites is actually higher than the dropout rate for poor blacks. Also, once you control for economic status, being from a single-parent home (a popular risk category) or having a working mother is not associated with falling behind in school.

If poverty is therefore a—if not the—predominant "at-risk" factor, then there is something odd about industry's concern with "at-risk" students. Children are poor because their parents are not employed in jobs that pay above-poverty-level wages. If companies are not providing the parents with jobs that pay living wages, then where are the high-skill, high-wage jobs for the children?

Thus, rather than an educational system out of sync with an economy that is generating jobs requiring high skills which the schools are failing to impart, both the educational system and the employment system are out of sync with our real social and economic needs. We have both an educational system which fails to develop and an economy which fails to utilize the full set of capacities of our youth. As the William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship recently concluded, "The primary problem lies with the economy, and the paths for youth to enter it, rather than with the youth themselves. Education can certainly help, but it is no cure-all for massive changes in the labor market."

In fact, without an economy that creates enough high wage jobs which actually demand the full utilization of all our human capacities, it becomes much harder to get the schools to provide that kind of high quality education in the first place—just as virtually all our current social problems are made much more difficult by the absence of a high-skill, high-wage economy. For example:

- **Health Care:** A large portion of the roughly 37 million people without any health insurance are workers and their families, and movement toward universal coverage will add to the real wage bill (whether through requiring employers to bear the cost, as in Massachusetts, or through taxing workers' incomes), thus posing a problem for low-wage, low-skill sectors of the economy.

• **Child Care:** Again, given the costs of high quality care, even beginning to meet the unmet needs would greatly add to the real wage bill, regardless of how it is funded (particularly if at the same time, the appallingly low wages of child care workers themselves are to be improved). Moreover, the decline in real wages has in part been responsible for the increased need for child care in the first place, by forcing two-parent families to have two full-time incomes in order to maintain a living standard previously affordable on one.

• **Welfare:** Problems with the current welfare reform movement arise in part because the predominance of low-wage, low-skill jobs means that welfare-to-work transition too often results in substituting one form of poverty for another. Further, the economy's reliance on sub-poverty-wage jobs creates a political and economic barrier to raising welfare levels to the point where they provide a decent standard of living.

• **Minimum Wage:** Resistance to raising the minimum wage in order to compensate for its eroded value is directly related to the degree to which the economy continues to include businesses which rely on low-skill, low-wage employment in order to survive and profit.

In education, it is also a wage issue—will the economy generate enough income for our communities to afford high quality education for all? But the issues in some sense go deeper than in the other areas—since education plays a major role in preparing people for work, the issues go also to the nature of the jobs and the organization of work and whether higher education skills are indeed called for by our jobs. (But so do the other areas, since capacity to afford high wages depends on how the work and the economy are structured—in part a productivity issue.)

Even the most recalcitrant of current problems in education would become immeasurably more resolvable if the local economy were being restructured to assure that good jobs, providing good income and demanding the full utilization of each person's creative capacities, were indeed available for all—thereby creating a real, and not just rhetorical,

demand for the schools to help students fully develop those capacities and a real, not just rhetorical, reason for youth to feel that both they and their education were valued and needed.

It is true that in both economic and human terms we cannot afford this waste of human capacity. To change it, however, we have to work on changing both the educational system and the workplace in tandem. Contrary to much current rhetoric, we cannot simply assure that the economy will improve.

Whether we move to a high-skill, high wage economy is not primarily a question to be answered with projections or predictions about the labor market of the future. It is primarily a question of economic and political choices.

First, the answer is not dictated by technology itself—high tech can be used to expand and enrich jobs, or it can be used to further routinize them. In both manufacturing and the service sector, there are plenty of examples, such as fast food service, where companies have found ways to take complexity and thinking skills out of the jobs and put them into the computers—"fool-proof" technology.

Second, the answer cannot be based on assuming that our economy will automatically move in the healthiest direction. Our long-term economic interests do lie in a high-skill, high-wage economy—how could it be efficient or wise to develop and utilize only a small portion of people's capacities to work at meeting human and economic needs? Yet, short-term economic interests often create pressure to go the low-skill route; if technology can be used to routinize work, then several things happen: a) it is easier for companies to control the work process; b) lower skills levels command lower wages because a larger share of the labor pool is eligible; and c) companies have less need to be concerned about workers' technical and academic preparation and have less need to pay for workers' retraining.

Third, although we can and should choose to move toward a high-skill, high-wage economy which demands that schools help all youth develop the full range of their human capacities for creative work, we should not assume that this will happen simply by providing the economy with highly educated workers and magically expecting it to make use of their talents, when even the capacities that have

been nurtured by the current, far from perfect educational system go unutilized. Sole reliance on such a "supply-side" approach will not work anymore than we could have expected supply-side economics to work when we simply provided corporations with additional capital in the form of big tax breaks so that they would use it to build new productive capacity, when their existing plant capacities were underutilized. In both cases, supply-side increases, whether of human potential or financial capital, cannot substitute for increased demand. We must ensure that we have an economy which is there to demand and utilize that potential.

Thus, we must move beyond a passive-dependent notion of the link between education and the economy. If we assume that we link education to employment and economic development by accepting the latter as givens, we end up with a passive-dependent form of education linked to a passive-dependent form of economic development: too few jobs; too few skills demanded by those jobs; and too little connection between that work that gets done and unmet community needs.

To link the education system to that economic reality is to create schools which are fundamentally designed to stunt human capacities and prepare people for unemployment and underemployment. Yet to ignore that reality is to constantly cut against the grain, a process which eventually wears down all but the most dedicated. The task instead is to seek to change the schools as one part of a larger strategy for changing that reality.

The fact that, in low-income communities in particular, huge unmet social needs coexist with the undeveloped (in the schools) and unutilized (in the workplace) human resources to meet those needs is itself a reflection of the extent to which the communities do not control the decisions about how those resources get developed and deployed.

While the waste of human capacity has become intolerable at a national level only recently because of growing international competition, its impact on communities has long been devastating. In low-income communities we see, on one side, a host of unmet social needs—for better housing, transportation, health care, recreation, education, etc.—

and, on the other side, the human capacity to produce the goods to meet those needs. That the latter is not being effectively applied to the former is a measure of the wastefulness of our system.

It is the result of a passive-dependent approach to development which leaves the people of these communities dependent on more powerful outside entities to provide jobs. The jobs which become available through this process are too few to begin with, utilize too few of the full range of skills which the community either has or could develop, and fail to produce the goods and services most needed by the community. Obviously, if the community were in control of its own resources, it would be using those resources to meet its own perceived needs.

Thus, we need a positive, non-dependency approach to the link between education and employment/economic development, based on the recognition that:

- a) Long-term economic well-being does depend upon an educational system which develops the full human capacities of all our youth and an employment system which utilizes and properly remunerates those full capacities, and we should work on both areas in tandem.
- b) The shape of the economy, to which our educational system is linked, should be viewed as the product of choices, not a given to which we passively adapt.
- c) Human development as the focus of education and economic development should be viewed as long-range capacity-building to allow communities to meet their needs, rather than quick-fix remedial work, or a dependency model of social services, or a dependency approach to economic growth and job attraction.
- d) The unit of analysis must ultimately be the local community. Improvements in national employment trends are small consolation if you are living in a community which remains a pocket of unemployment or underemployment.

This recognition thus suggests some broad criteria for programs which link education and economic development:

- a) Emphasis on programs which do not simply provide services to people and communities,

but also help them to exercise more control over their own individual and community lives through problem-solving and long-term capacity-building.

b) A major role for community residents and workers, together with individuals who truly represent them, in designing and providing services.

c) Education components, even when linked directly to economic goals, which are broad-based so that students emerge with lasting skills, a sense of their ability to shape their own destinies and the destiny of their communities, and the perspective and knowledge to do so—i.e. so that their full human capacities are fully developed and they are able to find/create work which fully utilizes those capacities.

d) Targeting to those most in need—i.e., low-income individuals, families and communities.

Any administration which moved seriously to create the kinds of programs, rooted in communities, which help push the economy in the direction of high-skill, high-wage employment, could count on a broad base of popular support—particularly if it links education and other human service issues and programs to that push.

Indeed, a large portion of our population would have a very direct financial and human interest in such a program in terms of what it would do for their work and income. For the reasons above, such a program should also speak to those who want to see real progress in education, health care and child care, to name but some of the areas whose fate is linked to such an economy.

Ensuring that the program is heavily rooted in action at the community level is critical. First, improvements in economic and social futures must begin at the community level, in order to remedy our past patterns of spotty development which left many communities in the cold. Second, the attempt of the early 1980s to create support for "industrial policy" probably failed in large part because people understandably were suspicious that their lives were going to be affected by plans made at a higher level by "big shots" removed from the reality of their own community and over whom they had little control. The fact that existing, private economic decision-making is

often done on the same basis is also critical, but in no way negates the concern. National policies for economic improvement are unlikely to gather enough support to get implemented, and if implemented are unlikely to work, unless such policies are accurately perceived to increase communities' control over the decisions which affect them.

Although it is not for me to lay out a definitive blueprint for moving toward the kind of high-wage, high-skill economy that would call forth the full creative potential of our people and demand that the schools develop that potential, a new range of new and redirected federal programs could assist in that effort. For example:

a) Research, demonstration and technical assistance centers, and financial incentives to restructure work settings to provide more worker involvement in decision-making and tap a fuller range of workers' skills and creative capacities;

b) Renovation of infrastructure, housing, mass transit;

c) Economic conversion to deal with plant closings and other dislocations, and to create more productive investment—using community planning, worker retraining, and income and employment guarantees;

d) Encouragement of worker and community ownership to make communities less vulnerable to closing of viable plants;

e) An anti-inflation policy that does not depend upon tight money and the accompanying high interest rates and recession, by instead expanding alternative sources of supply (e.g., safe energy alternatives, publicly funded housing), reducing real costs (e.g., through conservation, preventive health care), discouraging inflationary speculation (e.g., removing tax incentives for speculation), and enforcing anti-trust and price containment programs where necessary;

f) Systems for better allocating credit and directing investment through community banks, more employee control over pension funds (which also help to conserve needed credit and reduce interest rates for needed investments, promote recovery, and divert investment away from inflationary speculation).

Especially important is coordination of all these efforts at the local level through demo-

cratic decision-making—and federal assistance in creating the structures to do so.

Once economic development is seen as a process whereby communities utilize their resources, human and otherwise, to define and solve their social and economic problems and gain greater control over their destinies, then it becomes easier to stake out a role for the schools in that process which is consistent with their broad educational role. As the community begins to better assess various needs which are not being met (e.g., health care, housing and transportation), to assess the resources available and to develop strategies to begin to act on those needs, it becomes more natural for those in community who are oriented toward this larger agenda to recognize the schools as a key community source. Schools can, for example:

- involve teachers and students in the community needs and assessment processes as a part of the math/ science/social studies/ vocational curriculum.

- provide underutilized school space and facilities for activities in support of this agenda.

- provide children and adults with the kinds of basic and complex academic and problem solving skills along with the economic and social science education they will need if they are to make these community institutions work. In this manner, schools can help people understand and meet community needs as well as control the local and national forces that destroy community.

Again, local, democratically-controlled structures are needed to make this linkage a reality. Assume, for example, the establishment of neighborhood- or community-based, representative community planning councils with significant authority and responsibility for planning and overseeing coordinated programs. These councils could have some responsibility for implementing new and existing job creation programs, identifying public employment opportunities as well as channeling capital resources, infrastructure repairs, social services, and other aspects of community development. Linkages to education programs could then be built in through a community education council with shared membership, which could ensure that all employment and community development activities have an

appropriate education component using both new and existing education programs. Some examples are vocational education for high school students and education programs for displaced workers. Other types of educational programs could be coordinated through the schools, including educational programs for worker-owned firms and traditional education activities oriented to complement effective community development.

The community could also play a coordinating role in helping schools with neighborhood organizations to meet a variety of other local needs such as literacy and language skills programs for adults with limited proficiency in English. Other types of adult education programs, including career counseling and programs for the elderly, could also benefit the community. Some of these programs could be intergenerational and involve students. Besides student/community newspapers, action research programs could bring together students, teachers and members of the community to help identify and analyze various local problems such as crime, drug abuse and housing. Just as the problems faced by communities are interrelated, the response can and must be as well. A clearer agenda for meeting community needs can help create the kind of demand that could turn the rhetoric about the need for high-quality education into a reality for all.

A version of this article originally appeared in Youth Policy, June 1988, as the introduction to a much longer essay which offered a comprehensive alternative to current public policy.

21. See Note 11.
22. For sixth-grade reading, the minimum was changed in 1980, 1982, and 1986; for sixth-grade math, the minimum was changed in 1983 and 1986. For third-grade reading, the minimum was changed in 1983; for third-grade math, the minimum was changed in 1983 and 1986.
23. New York City Board of Education, Office of Educational Assessment, "Pupil Reading Achievement: A Summary of the April 1985 Citywide Reading Test Results," January 1986, p. 6.
24. Andrew Hahn, Jacqueline Danzberger and Bernard Lefkowitz. *Dropouts in America: Enough is Known for Action* (Washington, DC: Institute for Educational Leadership, March 1987), p. 9.
25. The actual calculation begins with the yearly dropout rate (expressed as a fraction), subtracts this rate from 1 to yield a yearly "survival" rate, then multiplies this yearly survival rate four times to get a 4-year survival rate, and finally subtracts this 4-year survival rate from 1 to obtain the 4-year dropout rate. Thus, if the yearly dropout rate is .10, the yearly survival rate is .90, and the estimated 4-year survival rate is $.90 \times .90 \times .90 \times .90 = .656$, and the 4-year dropout rate is $1 - .656 = .344$, or 34.4 percent.
26. State of New York. Office of the State Comptroller, Office of the Special Deputy Comptroller for the City of New York, "Calculating and Presenting the Dropout Rate in New York City's Public Schools," Report 5-88, June 11, 1987, pp. 4-7.
27. "Testimony of Dr. Bonnie Nuzum, Coordinator of Educational Priorities Panel," before New York State Assembly, Standing Committee on Education, Public Hearing, Attendance Improvement and Dropout Prevention, March 5, 1987.
28. Trends in the survival and dropout rates are similar throughout the period for the rest of the state, focusing the explanation for the recent divergence on New York City alone.
29. Between 1984 and 1986, the number of GEDs awarded rose from 4,221 to 8,158, but many GED recipients are too old to be in any relevant cohort for computing dropout rates. See New York City Board of Education, Office of Educational Assessment, "The 1985-86 Dropout Report," January 1987, p. 12.
30. Data for 1977-78 from the New York City Bureau of Attendance show that the high school immigration from outside New York City (10,398) exceeded outmigration from New York City (9,003).

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 6

Employment and Training Programs

THOMAS BAILEY

Although New York City's economic recovery has lasted a decade, it still has not reached large segments of the population. Poverty, minority unemployment, especially for youth, and welfare dependency have resisted the effects of local employment growth. Moreover, national and regional economic growth are unlikely to be strong enough over the next few years to reduce significantly poverty and its associated problems.

This chapter assesses the role that employment and training programs in New York City can and do play in reducing poverty, unemployment and welfare dependency. The first section places employment and training programs within a general antipoverty strategy appropriate for current economic conditions. The second section describes the dimensions of employment-related poverty in New York City. Next, the current programs in New York City are described in terms of the general framework presented earlier. The fourth section assesses the programs' impacts, and the last section suggests ways to improve employment and training programs in New York City.

The chapter's general theme is that employment and training programs are at a crossroads. They are emerging from a period of minimal support from the public, abysmal morale among their staff, and widespread skepticism about their effectiveness among analysts. Recently, State and local funding increased slightly, but just as important, there is growing political support for the primary goal of employment and training programs—reducing poverty and welfare dependency through providing assistance in acquiring the skills and other resources necessary to achieve stable and adequate employment. Although public policy is moving in the right direction, New York City's employment and training efforts are constrained by methods, organizational principles, and role conceptions more appropriate for the past than the future.

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING AS AN ANTIPOVERTY STRATEGY

The goal of an employment and training program is to prepare participants for and place them in a job that provides stable and adequate income. To accomplish this goal, a typical program includes one or more of the following services: outreach and recruitment; intake assessment; career counseling; day care; work experience; stipends for transportation, lunches, and other expenses; instruction in basic skills such as reading and arithmetic; training in specific occupational skills; instruction in looking for employment and other job search assistance; and post-employment counseling.

How do these services fit into an overall antipoverty program? For the past 50 years, there has been a recurring debate among economists about how public policy can reduce unemployment best. The alternative policy prescriptions are derived from fundamentally different diagnoses of the causes of the problem. Stated simply, the issue is whether unemployment results primarily from the absence of jobs (that is, insufficient demand) or from the lack of skills among the unemployed (that is, an unprepared labor supply).

If the basic problem is the lack of jobs, then employment-creation policies are most appropriate. These include national economic policies to stimulate growth and regional economic development programs. In addition, during the 1930s and 1970s, the federal

government had large-scale programs which put the unemployed directly to work either in government agencies or in government-funded jobs carrying out socially useful tasks.

In contrast, employment and training programs focus on the supply side of the labor market. They are designed to better prepare unemployed individuals for already existing, usually private sector, jobs. They include no explicit strategy for generating jobs.

The employment and training strategy recognizes that there are different types of individual problems that prevent people from obtaining jobs. The function of these programs is to overcome deficiencies in one or more of three types of skills or resources necessary to acquire stable employment. The first is social skills and resources. Social skills include knowledge about what to expect from a job and how to behave at work. Social resources include contacts through which people find training, education and employment opportunities, and those resources needed to acquire education and to obtain work. The ability to support oneself while studying and the availability of child care are particularly important social resources.

The second set of skills is basic academic skills. These include literacy and numeracy, as well as the ability to think abstractly and to solve problems. The third group is job-related skills. These include particular skills necessary to carry out specific jobs.

In American society, each of these sets of skills is taught primarily by a different institution or set of institutions. Social skills and resources are provided primarily by the family. Basic skills are primarily the responsibility of primary and secondary schools, although colleges and universities teach them at higher levels. A wide range of institutions teach job-related skills, including some high school programs, community colleges, professional schools, and, most importantly, employers themselves.

For most people, these institutions provide the resources and skills necessary to earn a living. The need for employment and training programs arises when these institutions do not carry out their expected roles. Consequently, individuals fall out of a "normal" developmental progression that should lead to eventual self-sufficiency through employment. Thus, employment and training programs are frequently, and aptly, referred to as "second chance" programs.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS

Modern employment and training programs in the United States date from passage of the federal Manpower Development and Training Act of 1962 (MDTA). This initiative was designed to combat structural unemployment by providing workers with skills necessary for employment in an increasingly automated and technologically oriented economy. It was a program designed to provide modern work-related skills to unemployed miners of Appalachia and other similarly displaced workers.

During the "War on Poverty" at the time of President Lyndon Johnson's administration, the orientation of MDTA shifted to aid minority groups in urban centers. In addition, numerous additional training programs were established under the auspices of the federal Labor Department, the newly established Office of Economic Opportunity, and the then Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Each of the multiple programs was typically distinguished by a particular clientele towards which it was targeted, a particular type of training which it provided, and/or a particular type of public or community-based agency which administered the program.

The expanded and highly fragmented network of employment and training programs was reformed under the administration of President Richard Nixon with passage of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act of 1973 (CETA). This legislation involved two fundamental changes. First, the numerous specialized programs were combined into a comprehensive program, and primary responsibility for administering the programs was given to local governments. In New York City, the municipal Department of Employment became the responsible CETA agency.

Second, CETA expanded the character of federal policy to include a major "demand side" or employment-creation program. The new legislation authorized a public service employment (PSE) program which made available public service jobs to the unemployed poor. Indeed, more than one-half of the CETA budget was devoted to the PSE program. At its peak in 1978, CETA spent \$9.5 billion nationally and over \$455 million in New York City. Of these totals, fully \$5.8 billion and \$266 million, respectively, were for PSE. Thus during the 1970s, CETA was primarily a demand-side program.

Political support for CETA evaporated during the late 1970s. This was due partly to a general public disillusionment with federal social

programs, but the PSE component of CETA drew especially strong opposition. It was criticized as a "make work" income-transfer program that gave participants little incentive to find unsubsidized work. To the extent that participants performed useful functions, they were believed to displace regular municipal workers. Thus, both conservative private employer groups and liberal public sector unions found problems with PSE.

In response to these criticisms, funding for PSE was cut dramatically under the administration of President Jimmy Carter, falling to \$100 million in New York City in fiscal year 1981. The election of President Ronald Reagan led to full implementation of the scheduled end of PSE, as well as structural reform in the remaining employment and training programs. In 1983, CETA was replaced with the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) which removed statutory authority for PSE and gave a greater role to private employers in the administration of the remaining supply-side programs. The JTPA also continued the decline of training funds, which fell from \$3.9 billion nationally in 1980 to \$2.6 billion in 1985.¹ By 1985, the JTPA budget for New York City was about \$90 million. In constant dollars, this represented more than an 80 percent cut in federal employment and training funds since the late 1970s.

RECENT ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL TRENDS

Social and economic developments again are shifting the role of employment and training programs within an overall antipoverty strategy. The assault on social policy at the federal level appears to have run its course. Although JTPA funding is unlikely to grow, it is not immediately threatened. Moreover, in New York and elsewhere, state and local governments have increased, at least moderately, their commitment to second-chance programs. The underlying philosophy on which employment and training programs are based—that the best way out of poverty is through education leading to employment—is virtually unchallenged.

One crucial development that has bolstered support for employment and training programs is the increased importance of basic skills for employment. There are fewer good job opportunities for people lacking basic academic skills. Skilled craft positions suitable for high school dropouts and high-paying, semi-skilled assembly line jobs are opportunities of the past. Job-related skills increasingly

must be built on a solid foundation of basic skills. Thus a high school diploma has become the minimum credential for all but the most marginal jobs.²

Labor market developments also have increased the importance of social skills for finding employment and attaining occupational mobility. Although low-skilled manufacturing jobs have declined, unskilled jobs such as security guards, fast-food workers, and messengers continue to be plentiful. But these unskilled jobs are increasingly separated from better-paying, more stable positions. In the past there were opportunities to move from entry to higher level jobs within the same institutions, but these chances are now scarce.³ Movement among firms is more likely to be necessary for advancement. Consequently, in order to find better jobs, workers need a more extensive information network outside of the firm in which they are employed. This puts more pressure on social networks and resources.⁴

Moreover, those remaining unskilled jobs that offer their holders a chance to learn skills and to move up are increasingly in the informal sectors of the economy. This means the jobs are acquired primarily through social networks rather than formal recruitment programs. This development is closely associated with the increasing immigrant population and the growing importance of immigrant-owned business. For a variety of reasons, immigrants appear to have advantages in industries such as restaurants and garment manufacturing in which family networks and other informal social resources are particularly important.⁵

In addition to the informal contacts and networks that are needed to find good jobs and to advance occupationally, the increasing need for education and the changing nature of that education also have increased the importance of a supportive family. First, increases in the minimum levels of education for entry-level jobs have lengthened the time during which either families must provide support for the students or during which the students must bear the double burden of simultaneous work and study. Second, as the basic skills become more important, students must spend more time working with abstract material that may not have an obvious link to employment. This makes motivation more difficult.

But families are being called on to provide these additional financial and psychological resources at a time when the family itself is under increasing pressure. These strains result from the dramatic

increase in the number and share of single-parent families and of families in which both parents work. And since the strength of social supports is itself partly a product of the state of the economy, the strain on families is further exacerbated by the high levels of unemployment in many communities. When fewer people are employed, fewer resources are available from family and acquaintances. In other words, social networks and resources are weakest when they are needed most.

Thus, the shrinking number of low-skilled jobs and the greater need for social skills have made it more difficult for youth to become established in the labor market. It simply takes more time, education, and social and financial resources to achieve the first steps of employment-based self-sufficiency. This has led to an increased number of people who have lost contact with the labor market, which can be seen in the sharp increases in the number of young black men who are homeless and who have no attachment to any particular dwelling, much less a specific job.

Despite the reduction in the overall demand for unskilled workers, many employers have difficulty finding workers for entry-level positions, such as janitors, low-level clerical positions, retail clerks and fast-food workers, which require only rudimentary work-related skills. Moreover, while employers are having trouble filling these slots, minority unemployment, especially among teenagers and young adults, remains extremely high. In 1986, fewer than 20 of every 100 teenagers in New York City were employed.⁶ To some extent, this is a geographic problem—demand grows in the suburbs, while inner-city residents are unemployed—but this seeming paradox also reflects the seriousness of the social problems that confront many potential applicants. In order to fill their entry-level positions, employers increasingly will have to accept recruits who must resolve a variety of social problems in order to become effective workers.

CURRENT PROGRAM TRENDS

How have these economic and social developments influenced the design of employment and training programs? The increased importance of basic skills for employment is reflected clearly in recent activities. Many of the new initiatives in New York City and elsewhere are literacy remediation or dropout-prevention efforts. And in contrast to public service employment, there is strong political

The social and economic trends also have influenced employment and training programs through their effect on welfare dependency. The increased cost of public assistance again has put welfare reform high on the national social policy agenda, and the most important policy proposals involve employment and training programs—initiatives to help (and in some cases to require) welfare clients to work.⁷ The employment reforms combine the conservative impulse to purge the welfare roles with the liberal impulse to help individuals achieve self-sufficiency. Two states have been in the forefront of this reform movement. One, Massachusetts, has a liberal Democratic governor; the other, California, has a conservative Republican governor. Both states have received favorable national publicity for these efforts, and other states plan to follow their lead.

Employer recruitment problems have led to an increased emphasis on employment and training programs as a source of needed workers. It is argued that through these programs employers will be able to tap a labor supply that might otherwise never be reached. For example, a report released in early 1987 by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey asserted that this type of training is essential to the continued growth of the region's economy.⁸ Such links appear sensible, but they have not received enthusiastic support from most employers. Although the JTPA encourages private sector involvement, the employers' role in most areas is marginal, and the link between regional economic development efforts and employment and training programs remains sporadic.⁹

Overall, these economic and social developments have accentuated the role of employment and training programs in strengthening social skills and resources. Indeed, it is this role that distinguishes employment and training programs from other educational services. Vocational and basic skills could be learned in the public schools and community colleges. What sets employment and training programs apart are their support services, including counseling, work preparation, information on available day care, and financial assistance to allow program attendance.

At the same time, the growing importance of basic and social skills has blurred distinctions between employment and training programs, on the one hand, and the broader educational system, on the other. Earlier, employment and training programs focused primarily on skills-training (and, at times, public sector employment). Federally funded programs now emphasize the basic skills that were

previously left to the public schools; simultaneously, the schools have placed greater emphasis on job search and other support services that previously characterized employment and training programs. Thus, employment and training programs are moving towards greater integration with the broader educational system, however implicit and unplanned.

Employment and training programs moved from a focus on job-related skills in the 1960s to a demand-side focus through public service employment in the 1970s. They now are entering a period in which the focus is on providing basic academic skills and strengthening social skills and resources. The new emphasis permits potentially greater integration with the broader education system.

THE DIMENSIONS OF THE PROBLEM

The need for employment and training programs arises when educational and social institutions fail to provide the skills and resources necessary to enable individuals to find stable and adequate employment. How many adult New York City residents are in this position? The question is impossible to answer precisely, but a first approximation is the number of persons over age 16 whose income falls below the federal poverty threshold. An inability to earn this minimally adequate level of income suggests severe labor market problems.¹⁰ Indeed, Congress uses the federal poverty threshold as the primary basis for determining eligibility for JTPA programs.¹¹

Of the 5.4 million adult New York City residents, fully 1.4 million or 26 percent were eligible for the Act's programs (Table 6.1).¹² The rates of eligibility were highest among teenagers (40 percent of the teenage population) and young adults age 20-24 (31 percent).¹³ Eligible females significantly outnumbered eligible males—863,000 versus 537,000. Blacks and Hispanics together comprised nearly two-thirds of all eligibles, and the shares of all adult blacks (38 percent) and Hispanics (45 percent) who were eligible was well above the proportion of non-Hispanic whites (15 percent).

Q5 Although the above data convey the broad outlines of the problem, they do not reveal the causes of poverty or how poverty is linked to deficiencies in social, basic, or work-related skills. Many circum-

TABLE 6.1
*Characteristics of the New York City
 JTPA-Eligible Population, 1980*

Age	Total	Male	Female	Black	White	Hispanic
Number of Eligibles in Thousands						
Total	1,399	537	863	451	463	432
16-19	174	81	93	67	35	67
20-24	179	76	104	62	51	60
25-54	663	252	411	223	176	235
55-64	147	53	94	46	61	36
65+	236	75	161	53	140	34

Eligibles as a Percentage of Population Group

Total	25.8%	22.0%	28.9%	38.3%	14.9%	45.3%
16-19	39.9	37.5	42.3	50.4	19.9	58.3
20-24	31.2	28.7	33.7	43.4	17.9	47.2
25-54	23.9	19.6	27.6	34.3	12.3	41.5
55-64	19.9	16.3	22.7	34.1	12.1	42.9
65+	26.2	21.7	29.0	45.7	19.8	54.8

SOURCE: New York State Department of Labor, JTPA Services Office, Bureau of Labor Market Information, Division of Research and Statistics, "Planning Package for Employment and Training Programs in the New York City SIDA," March 1985, Tables 1 and 2. The data are from the Public Use Sample of the 1980 Census of Population (A Sample).

stances preventing employment are not directly related to skill-acquisition. These include physical disabilities, mental illness, and drug abuse. To illustrate, Table 6.2 presents the employment status of the almost 415,000 adult public assistance recipients in New York City. Only 38 percent were considered "employable." Of the "unemployables," over one-half were "needed in the home," the rest could not work because of problems such as "incapacitation," "awaiting disability determination," or "pregnancy."

For many individuals, however, basic skill deficiencies are related to their low incomes. Table 6.3 presents data on educational attainment of New York City residents. About 1.8 million or 40 percent of the residents over the age of 21 did not complete high school. This includes many older citizens who were educated when high school graduation was less common. Among those between the ages of 22 and 44, three-fourths are high school graduates. Nevertheless, the dropout problem continues to be serious for the young. The Board of Education estimates that over a four-year period, 35-40 percent of the public high school students will leave school before graduating.¹⁴

TABLE 6.2
*Employability Status of
 Adult Public Assistance Recipients, 1985*

Total Employable	156,400
Percentage of Total	37.7%
Percentage of Employable Recipients:	
Employed	4.6%
Unassigned in Public Work	22.8
Assigned in Public Work	9.7
In Training	6.7
Available and Employable	0.1
Voluntary Employment Applicants	0.6
Mandatory Employment Applicants	55.5
Total Unemployable	258,181
Percentage of Total	62.3%
Percentage of Unemployable Recipients:	
Incapacitated	14.6%
Awaiting Disability Determination	9.0
Substance Abuse	5.7
Temporarily Unavailable	5.7
Needed at Home	52.4
Pregnancy	3.4
Other	3.9
Total Recipients	414,581

SOURCE: City of New York, Human Resources Administration, Office of Policy and Economic Research, *Dependency: Economic and Social Data for New York City, January-June 1985, June 1985*, Table 26.

The seriousness of educational deficiencies becomes more evident when one focuses on the population identified earlier as having severe labor market problems, that is, the JTPA-eligible population (Table 6.4). Fully 59 percent of this group had not completed high school. Moreover, almost three-fifths of those over age 21 and 46 percent in the 22-44 age group had not completed high school. Looked at differently, fully 46 percent of those between the ages of 25 and 44 who had not graduated from high school had labor market difficulties severe enough to qualify them for the JTPA.

Moreover, a high school diploma does not always indicate adequate basic skills. For example, 85 percent of the students entering the City University of New York community colleges and 65 percent of those entering its senior colleges read below the 11th grade level.¹⁵ The 25 percent of the JTPA-eligible population that had

TABLE 6.3
Years of Education of New York City Residents, 1980

Age	Total	11 years or less	12 years	13 years or more
Number of Residents in Thousands				
16-21	657	365	174	119
22-24	353	72	104	177
25-44	2,036	532	630	874
45-64	1,478	654	491	333
65+	901	575	193	134
Total	5,424	2,196	1,592	1,637
Percentage Distribution of Residents by Age				
16-21	100.0%	55.6%	26.5%	18.1%
22-24	100.0	20.4	29.5	50.1
25-44	100.0	26.1	30.9	42.9
45-64	100.0	44.2	33.2	22.5
65+	100.0	63.8	21.4	14.9
Total	100.0%	40.5%	29.4%	30.2%

SOURCE: New York State Department of Labor, JTPA Services Office, Bureau of Labor Market Information, Division of Research and Statistics, "Planning Package for Employment and Training Programs in the New York City SDA," March 1985, Tables 3 and 4.

completed 12 years of schooling, but no more (refer to Table 7.4), therefore, probably also had weak basic skills. In addition, some of the high school graduates attended school in other countries or in Puerto Rico. Thus, only about three or four hundred thousand of the 1.4 million poor adult New Yorkers had adequate basic skills.

Even this number is an overestimate of those whose labor-market difficulties could be overcome by a program that provides only work-related skills. Excluding those with other serious barriers to regular employment—such as physical or emotional disabilities, prison records, drug-abuse problems, small children at home, or advanced age—the number with reasonable basic skills and without other serious barriers to employment falls to perhaps 200,000 or about 15 percent of the JTPA-eligible population.

What about differentiating between deficiencies in social and basic skills? That is, are there significant numbers of people who are illiterate but nevertheless have adequate social skills and resources? Several types of people might fall into this category. One group is older workers with long work histories in declining industries who

TABLE 6.4
Years of Education of the New York City
JTPA-Eligible Population, 1980

Age	Total	11 years or less	12 years	13 years or more
Number of Eligibles in Thousands				
16-21	249	165	52	31
22-24	104	39	29	37
25-44	509	245	157	106
45-64	301	199	70	32
65+	236	177	39	20
Total	1,399	825	347	226
Percentage Distribution of Eligibles by Age				
16-21	100.0%	66.3%	20.9%	12.4%
22-24	100.0	37.5	27.9	35.6
25-44	100.0	48.1	30.8	20.8
45-64	100.0	66.1	23.3	10.6
65+	100.0	75.0	16.5	8.5
Total	100.0%	59.0%	24.8%	16.2%

SOURCE: New York State Department of Labor, JTPA Services Office, Bureau of Labor Market Information, Division of Research and Statistics, "Planning Package for Employment and Training Programs in the New York City SDA," March 1985, Tables 3 and 4.

did not require academic skills. When their jobs disappear, these people need to strengthen their basic skills. Others may be interested in completing school but are discouraged by the poor quality of some high schools. Still others may be ready to finish high school but lack the resources necessary for child care or to support themselves while studying. In general, however, weak basic skills, especially among the young, are accompanied by a combination of social problems and a lack of resources.

In conclusion, of the approximately 1.4 million poor adult New Yorkers, about 15 percent are enrolled in school, 20 percent are "unemployable" public assistance recipients,¹⁶ about 15 percent are high school graduates with adequate basic skills—the group that is most likely to benefit from a work-related skills training program—and perhaps another 10 percent are over 65 and are not accounted for in other categories.¹⁷ The remaining 40 percent—about 500,000 individuals—have both deficient basic academic skills and inadequate social resources.

To serve this large group of needy clients effectively, employment and training programs need to strengthen social support systems through counseling, work experience, day care, stipends and other services. Programs that do not emphasize services to reduce social problems will be relevant only to a small percentage of the population in need of assistance.

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS

Do the current scale and character of employment and training programs in New York City match the magnitude and nature of the labor market problems of local residents? To address this question, each program operating in 1986 is categorized in terms of its primary goal of strengthening either social, basic, or work-related skills.¹⁸ The level of funding and number of participants for each category is estimated. Because programs provide a combination of services in more than one area, the appropriate costs of each program are allocated among the three skill categories. Funds devoted to teaching and associated administrative tasks are allocated either to work-related or basic skills training depending on the content of the instruction. The costs of counseling, job development, day care, and other support services are allocated to social-skills training.

The data presented below provide an indication of the relative orders of magnitude of the services provided.¹⁹ More detailed descriptions of the programs are available in several recently completed compilations by municipal agencies and their contractors.²⁰

SOCIAL SKILLS AND RESOURCES

In fiscal year 1986, about \$56 million was spent on programs devoted entirely to developing social skills and resources. (See Table 6.5.) These programs provide four types of services—counseling, job search, work experience, and supplementary resources. Counseling involves individual or group sessions to encourage participants, to help them with psychological problems, to guide them in deciding what they want to do and where their skills lie, and to teach them what to expect from their jobs and what their employers expect of them. Job search services provide assistance in finding a job,

beginning with workshops on how to look for a job and how to prepare for an interview. Clients then are referred to job openings identified by the program staff through contacts with potential employers. Work experience services place clients in jobs in the public sector or in nonprofit agencies for a limited period of time. The work experience helps the clients learn what it is like to function in a job, provides them experience interacting with superiors and co-workers, and gives them a work record and potential employment references. The last category of services involves the provision of resources that enable the clients to work or attend training. Some programs provide small stipends for lunch and car fare; others provide access to day care and money for living expenses.

The main job-search program for JTPA-eligible clients is operated by 12 Testing, Assessment and Placement (TAP) offices. The TAP centers are located primarily in low-income neighborhoods and are funded by the JTPA.²¹ These centers offer counseling, but many clients are referred to jobs without prior counseling. In fiscal year 1986, the TAP centers served about 36,000 clients, placing over 13,000 in jobs and 6,400 in educational programs. About one-half of the clients are high school dropouts, about one-third are less than 22 years of age, and 86 percent are black or Hispanic. The TAP centers also operate a City-funded program for 16- to 24-year olds (called "City Works") which provides more intensive counseling over a slightly longer period of time.²²

TABLE 6.5
Social Skills and Resources Programs, Fiscal Year 1986
(expenditures in millions of dollars)

Program	Participants	Expenditures
Testing, Assessment and Placement Centers	39,800	\$9.2
Core Program	36,100	7.2
City Works	3,700	2.0
Summer Youth Employment	37,300	23.2
Public Assistance	57,000	22.7
WIN (Employment Opportunities)	42,000	11.7
Community Work Experience and Public Works Program	15,000	11.0
Total	134,100	\$55.2

SOURCES: See text.

Each summer, the City's Department of Employment (DOE) places low-income high school students in part-time (24 hours per week) assignments in municipal government and other public agencies for eight weeks. This is a work-experience program, with little associated counseling, for which funds are provided under JTPA.²³ The 1986 expenditures were \$23 million. While funds were available for 40,500 summer positions, the DOE was able to recruit only 37,300 participants. Since the proportion of the city's teenagers who are employed is close to its lowest point in decades, it is difficult to believe that there is not a sufficient supply of potential participants. The recruitment procedures that brought enough youth to the summer program in earlier years apparently no longer are adequate.

The remaining programs emphasizing social skills and resources are directed to public assistance recipients. The oldest such program, the Work Incentive Program (WIN), was created in 1967. It now functions primarily as a job-search program for recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). Every AFDC client with no children under the age of six must register with the Job Service Division of the New York State Employment Service. This office determines whether the client is "employable." Employable clients either are referred to a job or to a training or work-experience program. Although WIN clients are eligible for counseling and other support services, the program has been limited almost entirely to registration and referral activities because of limited funding. In 1985, 42,000 employable WIN clients were registered at a cost of \$11.6 million, but only about 2,500 were placed in jobs.²⁴ In 1985, the Department of Social Services (DSS) of the City's Human Resources Administration started an additional program—Employment Opportunities—to help improve the job placement for public assistance recipients by providing additional support services, especially day care.²⁵

The DSS also operates two work-experience programs for welfare recipients—the Community Work Experience Program (CWEP) and the Public Works Program (PWP). These placed over 15,000 public assistance recipients in temporary, part-time assignments doing maintenance and clerical work, mostly in municipal agencies. The participants in PWP and CWEP must work a sufficient number of hours each week to "earn" their welfare grants (averaging about \$470 per month for AFDC clients and \$300 per month for Home Relief recipients) at a rate of \$3.35 per hour. Participants who receive

TABLE 6.6
Primarily Basic Skills Programs, Fiscal Year 1986
(expenditures in millions of dollars)

Program	Participants	Expenditures		
		Social Skills	Basic Skills	Total
Adult and Out-of-School Youth	43,200	\$0.7	\$16.9	\$17.6
Adult Education	40,000	—	16.4	16.4
JTPA	3,200	0.7	0.5	1.2
In-School Programs	55,000	27.5	22.5	50.0
High Schools	40,500	11.2	21.3	32.5
Alternative High Schools	18,000	NA	NA	NA
PREP	13,000	—	18.0	18.0
AI/DP and DPP	8,500	9.8	3.3	13.1
STEP	1,000	1.4	—	1.4
CUNY	14,500	16.3	1.2	17.5
SEEK	10,500	11.3	1.2	12.5
College Discovery	4,000	5.0	—	5.0
City Works	1,500	5.2	2.3	7.5
Total	99,700	\$33.4	\$41.7	\$75.1

SOURCES: See text.

NA—Not applicable. Expenditures per student are equivalent to those in regular high schools, so no additional expenditures are shown.

favorable evaluations at their work-sites are referred to the New York State Employment Service or to TAP centers for job placement.²⁶

BASIC SKILLS

Basic skills programs may be divided into two groups. One provides remediation for adults and out-of-school youth; the other is aimed at keeping students in school. (See Table 6.6.)

Adult Remediation. The largest basic skills programs are the adult education programs sponsored by the New York City Board of Education. In general, these programs distinguish between participants reading below the seventh grade level, who receive basic literacy remediation, and those with higher reading levels, who receive special preparation for the General Equivalency Degree. Individuals who are not native English speakers can receive special instruction in "English as a Second Language."

In fiscal year 1986, these programs served about 40,000 clients at a cost of \$16.4 million. Both the expenditure and enrollment levels

have risen rapidly as a result of a 1983 decision to allocate increasing amounts of so-called "MAC surplus" funds to adult education. Annual appropriations of such funds are scheduled to rise from an initial \$7 million in fiscal year 1985 to \$10 million in 1988.

Additional adult education is funded by the federal JTPA. The Act requires that eight percent of available funds be allocated for adult remediation. In New York City, these funds are administered by the Department of Employment which, in turn, allocates them to the Board of Education, the City University system, private colleges, and community-based organizations. In 1986, these contracts amounted to just over \$2 million, which provided for 3,155 slots.²⁷

The service providers are obliged to offer counseling and other support services, as well as basic skills instruction. Thus, as indicated in Table 6.6, over one-half of the available JTPA funds actually purchase support services rather than direct basic skills instruction. However, the funds are not sufficient to provide extensive services (about \$220 per enrollee). For example, in one of the largest "8-percent" programs in the city, students attend only one or two group-counseling sessions a month.

In-School Programs. The programs seeking to keep youth in school include those serving high school students and those serving college students. In general, these programs represent incremental efforts beyond the normal high school or college programs of instruction. Often, the additional effort involves special support services as well as extra basic skills instruction. As indicated in Table 6.6, a large proportion of their funds are devoted to services providing social skills or resources, even though these are designated as primarily basic skills programs.

One of the oldest programs designed to keep students in school is the Board of Education's alternative high schools. These facilities are designed to provide a second chance for students who have not succeeded in the regular high schools. The alternative schools are all different, and usually they are much smaller than other high schools. They emphasize counseling and personal interactions with the students, and some of the schools provide job preparation and placement assistance resembling the services of more traditional employment and training programs.

The alternative system has 16 diploma-granting high schools and runs programs in 100 other schools. It serves about 18,000 students at any one time and 28,000 students over the course of a year.

Although it is a special program, it costs no more per student than the regular high schools.²⁸

The Preparation for Employment Program is a special effort conducted by the Board of Education for entering high school students with basic skills deficiencies. All students entering the high school are given reading tests. Those reading at least two years below their grade level are assigned to special classes in which there are no more than 24 students. Those reading below the fifth grade level are assigned to classes with no more than 18 students. The curricula are oriented towards a vocational or career theme so as to strengthen the students' perceptions of the links between academic skills and employment. This program spent about \$18 million in 1985, serving 13,000 ninth and tenth graders.²⁹

The State and City have established additional drop-out prevention programs in recent years. The State-funded program, launched in 1984, is known as Attendance Improvement/Dropout Prevention; the City-funded program, created in 1985, is called the Dropout Prevention Program. Both are operated by the Board of Education at its regular schools, but some components also make use of community-based organizations that provide service either at their own facilities or at the schools.

Two strategies are used under each program. A "case management" approach focuses on students who are judged to be at risk of dropping out. Counselors work with students to encourage them to stay in school. A "systemic approach" places more emphasis on improving the schools. The idea behind it is that if the schools can be improved, then students will be more likely to complete their instruction. Schools with particularly bad attendance records are chosen to participate in the program. These programs are conducted in 13 high schools and 29 middle schools. In 1985, \$5.1 million was spent by the City and \$8 million by the State for their respective efforts. Together, these programs served about 8,500 students. The extra funds that these programs represent are devoted more to supportive services than to teaching.³⁰

Another Board of Education effort to prevent students from leaving high school is the School to Employment Program. It is based on the assumption that providing students with part-time jobs during the school year will make them less likely to drop out. Indeed, a demonstration program conducted in the late 1970s indicated that guaranteeing high school students a part-time job during the school

year on the condition that they stay in school improved student retention.³¹ None of the funds go to actual remedial instruction; the funds subsidize employers who hire the participants. In 1985, the School to Employment Program served about 1,000 youth at a cost of \$1.4 million.

In addition to the special efforts of the Board of Education, two basic skills programs are operated by the City University of New York (CUNY). The Search for Education, Elevation and Knowledge (SEEK) program is available at the CUNY senior colleges. It offers tutoring, counseling, special courses, and financial assistance for books, fees and related educational expenses for about 10,000 students at an annual cost of about \$12 million. College Discovery, a \$5 million program, offers similar services to 4,000 CUNY community college students. Funding for the programs is divided almost equally between the City and the State. These programs draw on the basic educational resources of the CUNY staff; as a result, only about \$1 million of the SEEK funds and none of the College Discovery funds go to actual remedial instruction. In fact, about one-half of the money spent on these two programs is for student stipends; the remainder funds other social-support services.³²

Finally, the Department of Employment's "City Works" initiative is an intensive basic skills program which combines remediation, counseling, work experience, and job placement assistance for young people between the ages of 16 and 24 who already have dropped out of school. During this nine-month program, the clients spend one-half of their time working in City agencies or nonprofit organizations and the remainder of their time at a special school. In school, they earn \$1 per hour, and on the job they earn \$3.35 per hour. Clients are expected to increase their reading scores by about one grade level for every 100 hours of instruction. Thus, students attending the nine months are expected to increase their reading scores by about two grade levels. The staff helps the participants find jobs at the end of the cycle, so this program places more emphasis on employment than do the other basic skills programs. In 1986, the City Works program cost \$7 million, including about \$5 million from local tax-levy funds and an additional \$2 million for the remediation component from the MAC surplus. These funds paid for about 1,500 slots.³³

TABLE 6.7
Primarily Work-Related Skills Programs, Fiscal Year 1986
(expenditures in millions of dollars)

Program	Participants	Expenditures		
		Social Skills	Work-Related Skills	Total
JTPA	16,000	\$10.0	\$25.5	\$35.5
Supported Work	500	0.5	0.8	1.3
City Works	120	0.2	0.4	0.6
Total	16,620	\$10.7	\$26.7	\$37.4

SOURCES: See text.

WORK-RELATED SKILLS

The large majority of programs designed to teach work-related skills are funded by the JTPA and are administered by the Department of Employment. These programs fall into two basic groups—classroom training and on-the-job training (Table 6.7).

In classroom training or CRT programs, participants are taught skills in a traditional classroom setting but also receive services such as counseling, job preparation, and placement assistance. The JTPA restricts the uses of its funds; cash payments to CRT students are limited to lunch and car fare—usually \$30 a week. A reasonable estimate is that 30 percent of the funds spent on a typical CRT client are devoted to social supports. Clerical occupations account for about one-half of the enrollment in CRT programs, but clients also can take courses in auto mechanics, office machine and appliance repair, commercial cooking, floral design, and other areas.

Less than one-tenth of the JTPA training participants are in on-the-job training or OJT programs. These clients are placed in private sector jobs after a brief period of assessment, counseling and orientation. In exchange for a 50 percent wage subsidy, employers agree to provide training and to retain participants in a regular position if their work is satisfactory after a two- or three-month training period.

In fiscal year 1986, JTPA training programs enrolled about 16,000 participants. Of these, about 3,000 received only job placement services. Less than 1,000 were enrolled in OJT, and the rest were in classroom training programs. The total cost of these services was

about \$35 million.³⁴ At least \$10 million of this total was spent for counseling, job development, and other social support services.

Two smaller programs not funded by the JTPA provide training in construction skills. A "Supported Work" program administered by the City's Department of Housing Preservation and Development uses federal community development funds; a part of the City Works initiative described earlier provides OJT for selected construction trades. In 1985, these programs trained about 600 clients at a cost of \$1.9 million.³⁵ About one-third of these funds were for counseling and social support services, with the remainder paying wages during the OJT.

SUMMARY

Combining the information for the three types of employment and training programs reveals that about \$170 million was spent to serve about 250,000 individuals in 1986. (See Table 6.8.)³⁶ Of the total, almost 60 percent is devoted to enhancing social skills and resources, about one-quarter to developing basic academic skills, and under 16 percent to work-related skills.

In considering the overall effort, three points deserve emphasis. First, the scale of the effort is small relative to the dimensions of the problem outlined earlier. Only about 250,000 people are served

TABLE 6.8

Summary of Employment and Training Programs, 1986
(expenditures in millions of dollars)

	Expenditures		Enrollments	
	Amount	Percentage Distribution	Number	Percentage Distribution
Social Skills and Resources	\$100.3	59.5%	NA	NA
Clients enrolled primarily in:				
Social Programs	\$56.2	33.3%	134,100	53.6%
Basic Programs	33.4	19.8	"	"
Vocational Programs	10.7	6.3	"	"
Basic Skills	41.7	24.7	99,700	39.8%
Work-Related Skills	26.7	15.8	16,620	6.6
Total	\$168.7	100.0%	250,420	100.0%

SOURCES: See Tables 7.5-7.7

NA—Not applicable. Clients receive social skills services in all three types of programs.

Notes: *Clients receiving these services are enrolled in the other program categories.

compared to a JTPA-eligible population of about 1.4 million. Moreover, the services provided typically are not very intense, despite the fact that a large segment of the client population has multiple service needs. While expenditures average \$700 per enrollee, the vast majority of those served received services costing substantially less.

Second, the programs are heavily dependent on intergovernmental, mostly federal, aid. City funds totaled less than \$25 million or 15 percent of the total in 1986. The limited City fiscal commitment is concentrated on enhancing basic skills, mostly in the form of adult education provided by the Board of Education. The City funds about one-third of all basic skills programs, but much smaller shares of other types of programs.

Finally, as will be argued more fully below, the relatively strong priority for social skills and resources may be justified. Although there are serious problems in the particular design of social support services, the emphasis on these activities is appropriate given the needs of the population being served.

PROGRAM IMPACTS

Employment and training programs are meant to reduce poverty and unemployment. However, a distinction should be made between the economy-wide effects on poverty and unemployment rates, on the one hand, and the effects on individual participants, on the other. If graduates of training programs find jobs that non-participants would have filled in the absence of the program, then the overall level of unemployment remains the same. Although more education is associated with higher earnings and a lower chance of unemployment, the conceptual basis for predicting a positive effect of employment and training initiatives on total employment is weak.

OVERALL IMPACTS

In labor market theory, a training program increases overall employment by lowering the costs of labor to businesses. A larger supply of trained workers allows employers to offer lower wages and reduces their recruitment and training costs. With lower costs,

employers will be able to sell more goods or services and, as a result, to hire more workers.

Empirical research indicates that a ten percent drop in the cost of labor results in up to a five percent increase in hours of work.³⁷ Applying this national finding to New York City requires a few assumptions. If each dollar spent on the JTPA results in \$1 saved by employers due to lower labor costs, then the total cost of labor to employers in New York City would fall by less than one-half of one percent under current program appropriations. This would, in turn, lead to an increase in total New York City employment of about 1,600 jobs.³⁸ If all of the \$170 million funding for "second chance" programs is counted, then there would be a net gain of less than 4,000 jobs. Even if the estimates were doubled or quintupled, the increase in jobs due to the programs would reduce unemployment by less than one percentage point.

INDIVIDUAL EFFECTS

While the long-term goal of employment and training programs is to improve the participants' position in the labor market, they do so by strengthening social, basic, and work-related skills. Certainly, the JTPA programs increase the work-related skills of their participants, although lack of standard measures across occupations makes an overall estimate difficult. In contrast, standardized reading scores can be used to measure the effectiveness of basic skills remediation. Several such programs, including the Job Corps, special efforts in the U.S. Army and New York's City Works initiative, have raised the reading scores of disadvantaged students by an average of about one grade level for every 100 hours of instruction.³⁹

But whether enrollees stay in the programs long enough to make important gains and whether these skills can be translated into higher earnings depends significantly on the social support services that the programs provide and the social skills that they teach. Measuring these effects is difficult, and evaluating the impact generally involves making inferences from the overall effects on an individual's employment or wages.

At the end of a program, clients often do, with the help of the staff, find jobs related to their training. The JTPA in particular, places heavy emphasis on outcome measures such as the ratio of job placements to program participants and the cost per placement. For example, the performance standards established under the law for

the Department of Employment's JTPA programs for the year ending June 30, 1985 were 51.7 percent job placements for adult participants at a cost of \$5,741 per placement.⁴⁰ The DOE exceeded these standards.

But achievement of these standards does not guarantee that the programs have an impact, even without regard to the problem that participants might simply displace non-participants. It is difficult to determine if those individuals would have found those jobs without the program. Surely, some participants would find employment on their own.

Many evaluations have tried to measure the progress of program participants.⁴¹ A recent review of research on CETA concluded that the program raised annual earnings by between \$200 and \$600 (about twice that in 1986 dollars).⁴² However, the results of most of the studies are unreliable because they inadequately compare participants to similar non-participants. Only a small number of studies have used appropriate control techniques. One that did, analyzed the Supported Work Program, a program which enrolled clients for up to 18 months and used sheltered workshops to gradually increase the work effort expected of the participants. The earnings of welfare mothers were raised by the program for the 18-month follow-up period, and there was a very small positive impact for ex-addicts.⁴³ No effect was measured for youth and adult ex-offenders. Research on the Job Corps also indicates that the program's positive impacts outweigh its costs.⁴⁴ The Job Corps is unique in that it is a program in which clients live at the training sites, often in rural areas. They also receive intensive remedial education, skill training, health care, and counseling. Both of these successful programs are longer and offer more intensive services than the short-term JTPA programs.

Research on short-term programs is particularly scarce. A recent analysis of the federal Employment Service, which provides short-term job placement assistance but is not restricted to JTPA-eligible clients, found no benefits for men and small benefits for women. Another study measured the effects of federal tax credits for employers who hired disadvantaged applicants. The results indicated that comparable unsubsidized applicants actually did better than those hired with the subsidy. The author of the evaluation suggested that this was because employers took participation in the program to be an indication that there was something wrong with the applicant.⁴⁵

From a different point of view, it would be surprising because of

the limited expenditures if most employment and training programs actually produced anything more than minimal gains. For example, training programs in 1986 in New York City had average expenditures of \$2,984 per participant; the TAP program spent less than \$250 per participant. In contrast, public high schools in New York City in 1986 spent an average of \$4,587 per student and, without counting living costs and other services, a high school education costs almost \$20,000.⁴⁶ Thus, the 6,000 clients enrolled in adult JTPA programs received the equivalent of about two-thirds of a year of high school; TAP clients received just over one-twentieth of a year. To put this in perspective, studies indicate that one year of schooling raises earnings by about eight percent.⁴⁷ The TAP clients able to find a job for \$5 an hour before enrolling thus could expect to earn about three cents an hour more as a result of the service. Adult JTPA clients could expect to raise their hourly wage about 30 cents or six percent. Moreover, while the school system works with a wide range of students, including many with few problems, employment and training programs are designed to serve students with multiple social and work-related problems. But the research on CETA, albeit not very reliable research, suggests that some training programs have resulted in earnings gains of five or six percent; thus, they appear to perform as well as the general educational system.

The effects of employment and training programs on overall unemployment and individual earnings are, therefore, likely to be modest, at best. The aggregate employment effects are small because of the inherent limitations of a supply-side approach to labor market problems. Macro-economic policies to promote full employment are needed to supplement supply-side programs if individuals with multiple labor market problems are to find jobs. The individual effects are small because of the limited resources committed to the programs. The investment in second-chance programs is very modest compared to the cost of mainstream developmental institutions such as the public schools and the private resources (both monetary and non-monetary) made available by families. The fundamental solution to many labor market problems is reform of those basic institutions rather than new employment and training programs.

But municipal officials should not wait for new federal policies and fundamental reforms of basic social institutions before deciding on priorities for local employment and training programs. Approximately \$200 million of public funds are available annually for these

efforts, and more could be appropriated. A suitable strategy for investing this money is discussed below.

POLICY DIRECTION: A SOCIAL SKILLS APPROACH

Changes in the economy and society have simultaneously weakened the development of social skills and resources for some individuals, while increasing their importance for the achievement of employment-based self-sufficiency. The large majority of the poor who are not students, elderly, or "unemployable," have a combination of social, basic, and work-related skill deficiencies. They do not suffer simply from a lack of work-related skills. Thus, employment and training programs should place a heavier emphasis on strengthening social skills and resources. Furthermore, other institutions such as the adult division of the Board of Education and the CUNY community colleges are available for individuals whose primary needs are for occupational or basic skills.

One obstacle to designing an employment and training system with a social skills emphasis is that the public still views the primary role of these programs as strengthening work-related skills. This popular view derives from the programs' historical origins in retraining the structurally unemployed and the traditional notion that youth who are not college-bound should be taught vocational skills. And in the current political environment, employment and training personnel have tried to portray their programs as serving the needs of business rather than playing a social service role. But these programs necessarily have an important social service component; they exist to provide a "second chance" to people who are unemployed because they face a variety of social problems.

How should these programs be designed to reach their potential? First a social skills approach requires relatively long-term and expensive programs rather than short-term interventions. Helping clients overcome multiple skill deficits involves intensive efforts; short-term placement programs have little impact on the fundamental problems. While no reliable evaluation exists on the impact of short-term programs for the JTPA-eligible clients, research cited earlier on the federal Employment Service is discouraging. In contrast, the supported work program for welfare recipients and the Job

Corps have been among the most successful programs; these are costly efforts that include large counseling and support service components.

A social skills emphasis does not imply that the employment and training programs should not teach work-related skills; but it changes the function of skills instruction within the programs. Although specific skills are essential for many occupations, another important role of skills training is to provide an opportunity for the staff to get to know and to work with the participants. The skills classes become vehicles for a larger goal rather than ends in themselves. However, this requires that skills instruction be linked closely to counseling and placement services. Programs that provide classroom instruction and then send students to a separate placement office are less likely to succeed.

This approach also suggests that short-term job placement should be deemphasized. The eventual goal should be a firm attachment to the labor market, which placement in one job does not necessarily indicate. If the objective is to help strengthen or replace social support structures, then that need will remain after the initial job placement. A longer-term approach involving continuing contact between clients and staff is required. The staff should continue to work with clients toward the ultimate objective of long-term employment even if, in the short term, they have enrolled in an educational program or found a job. Training and employment should be considered part of a longer developmental process.

An emphasis on social skills also has implications for the role of employers in these programs. The JTPA in particular has encouraged greater involvement of the private sector in the administration and oversight of employment and training programs. One central role of employment and training programs is to connect participants with jobs, that is, to widen the client's network of contacts to include potential employers. In practice, this is accomplished by the contacts established by the job developers and counselors with the personnel departments or the owners of local firms. If these ties are strong, then counselors can be effective in matching their clients to appropriate jobs; in addition, employers will be able to let trainers know promptly if they believe that the curriculum is inappropriate.

In the type of employment and training effort pictured here, the counselors play a critical role. They are required not only to relate to participants but to potential employers. Unfortunately, counselors

are underpaid; the job also is viewed as a low-status occupation. The past few years have seen increasing concern about the relatively poor position of the teaching profession; employment and training counselors deserve similar attention.

Programs now are administered by many organizations. While some counselors often refer clients to other agencies, they rarely follow up to determine how the participants progressed in the new setting. Thus, programs should be designed to preserve continuity for individual participants among the services that they receive. After initial intake and referral is completed, counseling, remediation, skill training, and job referral should be managed by one organization. This may be done either by having one organization provide a full range of services or by having one counselor coordinate individual clients serviced by several organizations.

In sum, an effective strategy for investing available employment and training funds involves these elements: placing the greatest emphasis on developing social skills and resources rather than occupational skills training; providing services over a relatively long period (which means high costs per enrollee, rather than short, cheap services); viewing initial job placements as one step in the program rather than the goal; developing ongoing relationships with the personnel departments of firms to assure placement contacts and to provide curriculum guidance; and coordinating services.

How closely does the current network of programs in New York City follow this model? The distribution of funds among the three training categories appears to be consistent with an emphasis on strengthening social skills and resources. More than one-half of the available funds are spent on programs and efforts designed to accomplish that purpose. (Refer to Table 6.8.) Nonetheless, an even greater share of money should be spent on developing social skills and resources.

Perhaps the most critical difference between current programs and the more desirable model is the limited intensity and duration of current efforts. As noted earlier, expenditures per participant average only about \$675, and a large proportion of those served receive only one-time placement services. One reason for the current pattern is that the federal JTPA encourages such low-cost, limited interventions. Some efforts have been made to use State and local funds (and small amounts of discretionary JTPA money) to counteract these provisions of the federal program;⁴⁸ nevertheless, short-

term interventions remain the mainstay of the employment and training system.

Even if there were no federal guidelines, the shift to more intensive programs would be hampered by the limited availability of funds. A more comprehensive program designed to reach a large percentage of the eligible population would cost substantially more money. There are about 500,000 individuals in New York City who cannot find employment because of a combination of social and skill problems; an initiative that spent \$5,000 on each would cost \$2.5 billion. Such costs would exceed the CUNY budget and would be more than one-half those of the public school system. To be sure, some public assistance expenditures would be saved and the city's competitive position in national and international markets might improve, but these longer-term benefits are not likely to convince policy makers to make such massive expenditure.

A more realistic strategy is to focus on integrating employment and training programs more closely with mainstream institutions, particularly the public schools and junior colleges. These institutions should provide counseling and employment assistance typically provided by employment and training programs. This also would reduce the stigma attached to employment and training clients.

There are several current efforts to integrate employment and training programs with the activities of other public agencies. The SEEK and College Discovery programs provide support services for CUNY students; the Board of Education's dropout prevention programs use community-based organizations to work with students; the City Works Program has developed partnerships between different agencies, despite initial inter-agency tensions and misunderstandings; some of the alternative high schools combine typical employment and training strategies with more traditional pedagogic approaches.

Nevertheless, these efforts remain at the periphery rather than the core of the employment and training system. The central activities continue to be carried out by diverse organizations with little coordination and interaction. For example, the New York State Job Service has a sophisticated job-matching and referral system, but it puts little emphasis on counseling and personal contact between clients and staff. Similarly, CUNY's community colleges specialize in teaching vocational skills, but they are less effective in job develop-

ment. The Board of Education does not coordinate its remediation programs with job-development and counseling. In each case, the major constituents of these organizations are not the disadvantaged group that faces severe labor market problems. An important role for the Department of Employment is to help other agencies strengthen their programs' effectiveness in confronting the employment problems of the poor.

While recognizing the importance of employment and training policy, it is appropriate to conclude by re-emphasizing the limitations of this strategy. Even the best counseling and remediation will have little impact in a stagnant economy with high unemployment; encouraging students to stay in school has little meaning if the schools do not teach effectively, and a government system of social support never can adequately replace a strong and supportive family. Therefore, the value of employment and training programs should be judged not primarily by their effects on individual participants, but rather on the extent to which these programs help strengthen and reform the mainstream institutions whose initial failures create the need for second-chance programs.

NOTES

1. Gary Walker, *An Independent Sector Assessment of the Job Training Partnership Act, Phase 1: The Initial Transition* (New York: Grinker, Walker and Associates, March 1984).

2. For an extensive analysis of the relationship between poverty and basic skills, see Gordon Berlin and Andrew Sum, "American Standards of Living, Family Welfare and the Basic Skills Crisis," based on a speech delivered by Gordon Berlin in December 1986 at a Conference of School and Employment and Training Officials, sponsored by the National Governors Association and the Chief State School Officers.

3. For the development of this argument, see Thierry Noyelle, *The End of Dualism* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1987).

4. See Thomas Bailey, *Immigrant and Native Workers* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1987), Chapter 3.

5. *Ibid.*, Chapters 2 and 3.

6. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Middle Atlantic Regional Office, "Year-End Report on 1986," *News*, January 6, 1987, p. 18.

7. For a discussion of this trend and the reasons behind it, see Michael Wiseman, "Workfare and Welfare Policy," *Focus* (Newsletter of the University of Wisconsin Institute for Research on Poverty), vol. 9 (Fall-Winter 1986), pp. 1-8.

8. The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, *The Regional Economy: Review 1986, Outlook 1987* (New York: The Port Authority, Planning and Development Department, March 1987).

9. Gary Walker, Thomas Bailey, Katherine Solow and Harvey Shapiro, *An Independent Sector Assessment of the Job Training Partnership Act*, Final Report: Program Year 1985 (Washington, DC: The National Commission for Employment Policy, 1986); Thomas Bailey, "Market Forces and Private Sector Processes in Government Policy: The Job Training Partnership Act," *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, forthcoming; and Michael Timpane, "Corporations and Public Education in the Cities" (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1982).

10. Admittedly, a low income does not always indicate deficient skills. In many cases, poverty is a temporary state reflecting short-term problems. However, it should also be recognized that many individuals just above the poverty level or perhaps young people still living with families of modest means may have serious skill or other labor market deficiencies and yet not be classified as poor.

11. Individuals who meet one of the following criteria are eligible for the JTPA: 1) those with income less than the Office of Management and Budget's poverty level or 70 percent of the lower living standard income level, whichever is higher; 2) federal, state, and local welfare recipients; 3) Food Stamp recipients; 4) foster children for whom state or local payments are made; and 5) handicapped individuals who are economically disadvantaged but whose families are not, as permitted by the Secretary of Labor.

12. The data in Table 6.1 are from the 1980 Census of Population. While the census is unique in its detail, the information is now out of date. Nevertheless, the purpose of this section is to provide some indication of the relative magnitude of the problem, and the 1980 data are adequate for this goal. In any case, as pointed out earlier, changes since 1980 have increased the poverty rate, so the figures presented here should be taken as minimum estimates.

13. These data are based on the five percent Public Use Micro-Sample of the 1980 Census and are presented in JTPA Services Office, Bureau of Labor Market Information, Division of Research and Statistics, N.Y. State Department of Labor, "Planning Package for Employment and Training Programs in the New York City SDA" (Albany, NY: State Department of Labor, March 1985). In these data, individuals are counted as eligible for the JTPA if they (a) receive or are members of families which receive cash welfare payments; or (b) have a total family income which was not in excess of (1) the poverty level, or (2) 70 percent of the lower living standard income level.

14. New York City Board of Education, Office of Educational Assessment, Data Analysis Section, *The 1984-85 Dropout Report*, February 1986.

15. Unpublished information provided by the Office of Institutional Research, City University of New York.

16. In December 1981, there were 232,000 unemployable adult public assistance recipients, but in this definition "adult" means 18 and over: Office of Policy and Economic Research, *Dependency: Economic and Social Data for New York City*, 1984 Supplement, July-December (New York: N.Y. City Human Resources Administration, 1985), Table 26.

17. In 1980, there were about 235,000 JTPA-eligible residents over the age of 64, but many of them already would be counted as public assistance recipients.

18. Programs were included if eligibility is limited to disadvantaged (usually JTPA-eligible) individuals or to high school dropouts, potential dropouts, or adults with low reading levels. Thus, programs open to higher income clients that also serve "second chance" participants have not been included.

19. The analysis combines data from many sources, each of which may use slightly different definitions and accounting concepts. In many cases, data do not include overhead or capital costs. In some cases, budgeted amounts were used rather than actual expenditures.

20. New York City Office of Economic Development, Policy Analysis Division, *A Guide to City, State and Federal Employment and Training Programs in New York City* (New York City Office for Economic Development, June 1986); New York City Department of Employment, *Training Resource Guide for New York City*, June 1986; New York Interface Development Project, Inc., *Employing New Yorkers: An Investment Approach* (New York: Interface, September 1986).

21. The largest job search assistance program in the city is run by the Job Service Division of the New York State Department of Labor. Since this program is open to people of all income levels and serves a clientele that is predominantly non JTPA-eligible, it is not included here.

22. City of New York, *Mayor's Management Report*, (September 17, 1986), p. 462; the New York City Department of Employment, *op. cit.*; and unpublished data provided by the Department of Employment.

23. *Mayor's Management Report*, *op. cit.*, p. 459.

24. *Employing New Yorkers*, *op. cit.*, Part II, Section 5.

25. New York City Human Resources Administration, Bureau of Employment Services, *Comprehensive Employment Plan: July 1986-June 1987* (July 1986).

26. Office of Policy and Economic Research, *op. cit.*, Table 17. The DSS also runs the Temporary Assistance Program (TEAP) in which private employers receive part of a client's welfare grant in return for providing the client a chance at a permanent job. But finding private-sector placements is difficult, and most TEAP participants work in the public sector, as do CWEP and PWP participants.

27. New York City Department of Employment, *op. cit.*, pp. 193-232.

28. Eileen Foley and Peggy Crull, *Educating the At-Risk Adolescent: More Lessons from the Alternative High Schools*, (New York: Public Education Association, 1984). Data on cost and enrollment were provided by the Office of the Commissioner for Alternative Schools of the New York City Board of Education.

29. New York City Office of Economic Development, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-8.

30. Joseph Grannis et al., *Evaluation of the New York City Board of Education Dropout Prevention Program* (New York: Institute on Urban and Minority Education, Teachers College, Columbia University, January 1987), pp. 71-79.

31. George Farkas et al., *Post-Program Impacts of the Youth Incentive Entitlement Pilot Projects* (New York: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, 1984).

32. New York City Office of Economic Development, *op. cit.*, p. 7. Data on the CUNY programs were provided by the Office of Institutional Research, City University of New York.

33. Thomas Bailey and Gary Walker, *Assessment of the New York City Department of Employment's Tax-Levy Youth Initiative* (New York: Grinker, Walker and Associates, October 1985).

34. *Mayor's Management Report*, *op. cit.*, pp. 461-462.

35. Bailey and Walker, *op. cit.*, and Interface, *op. cit.* The total cost for these two programs was about \$4.5 million, but typically, about 60 percent of the cost of this type of construction program is for construction materials which would have been needed if the renovation was not done in conjunction with a training program. Furthermore, it is impossible to separate counseling from skills-training for this program. The data presented in Table 6.7 are based on an estimate that three-fourths of the funds went to skills training. As with the other components of the City Works program, the remediation funds come from the Municipal Assistance Corporation surplus and are included in Table 6.6.

36. The number of individuals served is lower since one person may enroll in more than one program.

37. Kim B. Clark and Richard Freeman, "How Elastic is the Demand for Labor?" *Review of Economics and Statistics*, vol. 62 (November 1980), pp. 509-520.

38. The largest estimate for the elasticity of demand for labor is about -0.45; that is, a 10 percent decrease in the price of labor would result in a 4.5 percent increase in the demand for labor. The \$90 million for JTPA amounts to about 0.1 percent of the total wage bill in the city. Employment in New York City is about 3.5 million. Thus,

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EDITORIAL

OUTSIDER'S CHANCE

The dead-in-the-water campaign for the 1992 Democratic presidential nomination is suddenly lively and animated. It's an alien life form, however, of marginal or unknown creatures who on the face of it have little base and smaller prospects, and are therefore objects of ridicule or scorn.

There's former Governor Jerry Brown, who can't escape his Zenny past and spacey reputation. There is a trio of other "formers": peace activist Larry Agran, a three-term Mayor of Irvine, California; Paul Tsongas, a one-term Senator from Massachusetts; and Lyndon LaRouche, a former Trotskyist and con (for scamming money from fans). Then there's Governor Douglas Wilder of Virginia, whose main attraction seems to be his (slight) potential for drawing black support away from Jesse Jackson, and a few other sitting politicians of medium merit: Senator Tom Harkin, Governor Bill Clinton, Senator Bob Kerrey. And now there's a nascent movement (announced in an ad in this issue) to draft Ralph Nader.

Some of the above are intriguing and progressive politicians, some are merely suffering from bland ambition, LaRouche is a nut case, and here at *The Nation* there's more than a soft spot for brother Nader.

The conventional wisdom is that, lacking a clear front-runner, the Dems should pick a conventional candidate at their party convention. But voters are bored with the smarmy neoliberals touted by party insiders. The quirkiness of the current candidates symbolizes public dissatisfaction with traditional candidacies. What's needed is an unconventional candidate, an outsider who will motivate other outsiders—that 50 percent who have been off and dropped out of the political system with good reason—to go to the polls and vote. Otherwise we face the depressing prospect of four more years of Bush and maybe fourteen or forty more of Reagan, Bush, Quayle, ad infinitum.

WHAT'S NEXT?

E.P. Thompson

Richard J. Barnet

Joanne Landy

Boris

Kagarlitsky

Aleksandr

Tsipko

Zhores A.

Medvedev

Roy Medvedev

WHY WE READ

Katha Pollitt

BLACKS, JEWS AND SURVIVAL

Letty Cottin

Pogrebin

THOMAS, NO!

Bruce Shapiro

ANNE SEXTON

Grace Schulman

UP AGAINST THE SYSTEM

THE LITTLE SCHOOLS THAT COULD

DEBORAH W. MEIER

"Too Good for Its Own Good? Bronx School Backs Quality" ran the front-page August 10 headline of *The New York Times*. The story was about the threatened closure of the Bronx New School, a small, highly innovative elementary school in New York City, on the eve of moving to its larger site. The new District Superintendent, John Reehill, was quoted as saying that the school was too autonomous, that its effort to maintain a racial balance and its insistence on being different made it "elitist," too much like a "private school." He said he intended to dismiss its teacher-director and merge it with another, more traditional school.

All over the country efforts similar to the Bronx New School face or have met similar fates. The question is, Why? What's puzzling is not that such schools make enemies but that their enemies are so successful in today's presumably pro-reform educational climate. Brave groups of parents and teachers stick their necks out, but their work rarely gets off the ground, or if it does get off the ground the schools they invent rarely survive the founding fathers and mothers. They get subtly or not so subtly transformed by bringing in new leadership more "compatible" with the system and less "abrasive," more beholden to the authorities above, not to the school's own constituents. And where they succeed in avoiding all these pitfalls, they know enough to keep a low profile.

Rather than contributing to the reform movement, such schools have quietly gone underground, praying just to sneak through another year. The innovators shun the

(Continued on Page 338)



approve not just Thomas himself but his far-reaching commitment to unravel the fabric of community and social responsibility. □

Little Schools

(Continued From Front Cover)

news media. Fame they don't need. Instead of helping to revitalize public education, their short-lived success stories help breed cynicism about public institutions. The movement to privatize American education, which has gathered considerable momentum in the past decade, thrives on their stories [see Meier, "Choice Can Save Public Education," March 4].

The Bronx New School's record of achievement is not in dispute. It served a largely "at risk" population but also attracted some middle-class families. Begun three years ago by a group of Bronx parents dissatisfied with the local public schools, it operated out of the small cramped basement of a local church while it awaited and helped redesign a larger space that would enable it to expand from under a hundred students to several hundred. It always intended to stay small, at least in comparison with the huge size of the average New York City public school, and envisioned gradually adding a middle or secondary school. But it didn't intend to change its style, roughly modeled after the successful Central Park East schools in East Harlem, to which some parents had earlier bused their children at considerable inconvenience.

The Bronx New School operated on the basis of a close collaboration between school and family, under a teacher-director who had many years of experience as director of a nursery co-op. It was characterized by inter-age grouping and it didn't separate children by academic ability, two currently much-approved reforms. Children learned at their own pace in a classroom community in which depth rather than superficial coverage of material was emphasized, and children were encouraged to work both collectively and individually, depending on the task and their preferences. The curriculum was built around the interests of young people, and the school's small rooms were alive with activity—hands-on use of scientific and mathematical materials and lots of creative writing and art work, which covered the walls. The parents and staff built their own library by collecting used books and buying new ones with private funds—a practice that Superintendent Reehill criticized, charging them with creating a "private" library. They painted their drab space and built or scrounged for "extras." A parent coordinator to help maintain the high level of family participation, a part-time curriculum specialist and additional library materials were the result of the school's skill at seeking private-sector grants. The additional "riches" that offended the Superintendent were thus not taken away from other district schools. The district's per-pupil expenditure on the Bronx New School was approximately the same as it spent on any other school. The school struggled over the appropriate division of labor between parents and professional staff

but didn't give up its belief in the importance of each having a say in the school.

The school's parent body was predominantly low-income; two-thirds were either Latino or African-American. By design, a third were white or "other." Families applied for admission and were selected by lottery; many more than there was space for applied. Both parents and their children loved it. Few students left and none were kicked out. Attendance was nearly perfect. While technically an annex of an existing traditional neighborhood elementary school, in fact its teacher-director reported to the former superintendent and the school had considerable autonomy.

But, as Evelyn Nieves of the *Times* reported, "such success . . . may be the school's downfall." The current plan is to eliminate its leadership, merge it with classes from the nearby neighborhood school and place it under the direct control of that school's principal. That will be the end, parents and staff agree.

The most interesting part of the story is that few school reformers get exercised over such events. The people who kill such schools count on this. The death of the Bronx New School seems a small matter in the larger scheme of things. The reformers find such small-scale, homemade changes of little importance—after all, the Bronx New School affects only a few hundred kids. New York, they say, has a million pupils. What is needed, they claim, are macro reform measures that affect all schools equally and reach desperate millions, rather than highly personalized inventions of a small group of practitioners, parents and kids. Some reformers even agree with Superintendent Reehill that such schools are inherently unfair because they provide for a lucky few a quality education that remains inaccessible to the vast majority. But that's like attacking a low-income housing project because it hasn't solved the housing problems of *all* low-income people.

It's precisely this mindset, not the authoritarianism of a particular superintendent or the political ambitions of a particular school board member, that is killing the Bronx New School, and by extension hundreds of others like it. What Reehill found most offensive may have been the Bronx New School's independent style: hiring a director who hadn't come up through the system, creating the alleged "private library," developing a different form of decision making. "They have to realize that in New York City they have rules and regulations. . . . It is a public school, not a private school," he told the *Times*. That bureaucrats should resent schools that thrive on acting with unauthorized autonomy is understandable. That bureaucrats can get away with dismantling these schools at a time when educational reform is such a popular cause is less understandable. Why so little protest from those education policy-makers busy attending conferences and joining task forces? They are not likely to be sympathetic to Reehill's distaste for autonomy. But when he charges the Bronx New School with being "unfair," he hits a responsive chord.

How else to explain the indifference of educators over the past fifteen years to the kind of reforms that occurred in the now-famous East Harlem District 4, and the mere trickle of efforts to replicate the success of the Central Park East schools, with which I have been intimately involved over the past eight-

Deborah W. Meier is principal of Central Park East Secondary School in New York City.

een years? The lessons of hundreds of successful alternative schools are always dismissed in the same way: "It's really very nice; in fact it's really even remarkable; it's clearly a success story and deserving of praise, but . . ."

What's the but? They aren't reproducible models that can be imposed on unwilling participants. They won't change those who don't want to change. Such schools offer no detailed blueprint for success; they depend too much on idiosyncratic individuals, the right mix of parents and staff, dedicated teachers, unusual families.

What these critics seem to be looking for is a model that mediocre people can carry out, that's standardized and factory-like, that anyone can duplicate by implementing the new curriculum, the latest tests or a new form of governance. "We want reforms that will produce schools like yours," they insist, "but we want ones that are replicable by people who aren't like you."

They're both right and wrong. They're right in saying that the Bronx New Schools of this world are by nature replica-proof. That's the secret of their success. They're wrong, because a good school is by definition unique. The Bronx New School may have been inspired by East Harlem's Central Park

schools, but what people created in the Bronx was not another C.P.E. school but a school that fit their own needs. What the "system" can do is create the structural conditions that encourage people to want to change and give them sufficient autonomy to do so, and that provide support and encouragement even when they blunder in the course of creating their interpretation of the "good school." But in the end the change must be home-grown.

Such a reform agenda won't unleash a massive movement to remake schools overnight. Until we have a sufficiently large number of such different and successful schools we can't and shouldn't win over the skeptics. You can make temporary improvements by decree . . . perhaps. But without substantially increased resources even this is dubious. None of the reforms being touted today in pedagogy, curriculum or governance will in themselves create schools for the future. The essential ingredient for schools that produce intelligent adults is the presence of a community of people exercising their intelligence on a daily basis, coming up with ideas for change and then having the freedom to act on the conclusions they reach. Nothing less than that will work (although more than that is also needed). That's what's so special about the Bronx New School. The people who founded it argued over the design of a new curriculum, the place of rote learning, noncompetitive ways of evaluating student performance, homework that doesn't baffle parents, the difficulties that can arise between parents and teachers when both have more power.

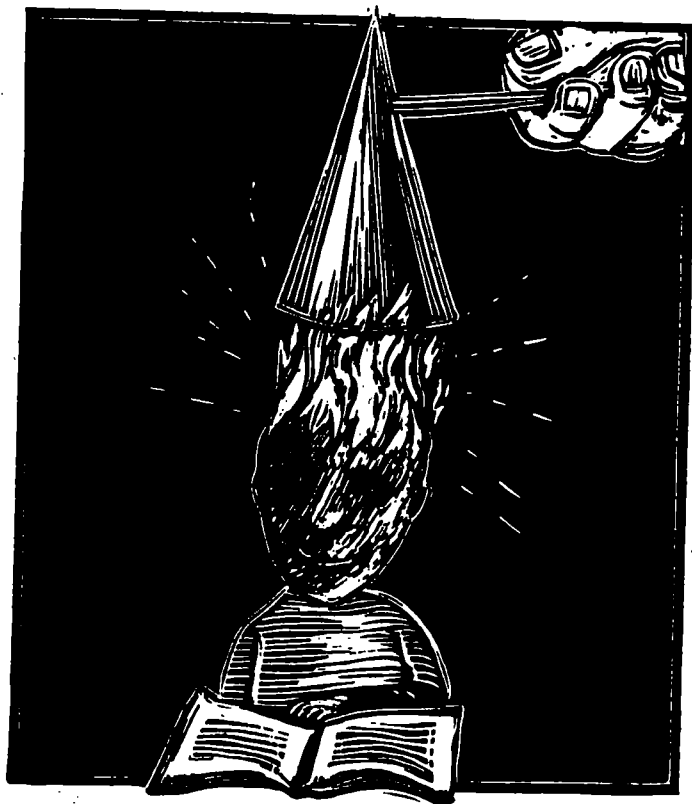
The only way to produce schools like the Bronx New School is to encourage that sense of "specialness," not attack it. It's a specialness that grows out of the fact that the school is the hard-won and carefully crafted creation of a particular group of people: an act of willed intelligence. A good school is always particular.

But there are potential strategies that encourage such

innovations. In New York City, Chancellor Joseph Fernandez's "school-based management/shared decision making" concept is not an end in itself, as critics who have followed its history as a national reform agenda have been quick to point out. But it is intended as a strategy, not a solution. The Chicago plan, which turns schools over to a council of parents and teachers with considerable freedom of action, is another macro strategy that can provide a framework for innovation. What is needed is a legislative strategy designed to nurture such particularity, that offers parents and teachers an incentive to break the mold, and some protection once they get under way. To have national impact the new schools must be open to criticism from without—careful and thoughtful responses to their pedagogy and curriculum, and close attention to how well their students are learning.

A good school is always "experimental," always learning from its own experiences. It's a place in which the "having of wonderful ideas," as educator Eleanor Duckworth noted in a book by that title, becomes the essence of education. Not only does such an environment encourage wonderful ideas by its staff, it creates a community powerful enough to convince young people that having wonderful ideas is at the heart of a good life.

The impact upon young people of such an education is long-range and powerful. This is not conjecture; it has been proved time and again. The latest study of the graduates of the Central Park East elementary schools showed that almost every one of them finished high school and most went on to college. In interviews the students described how much it had meant to them to study in a climate in which their ideas were taken seriously. The success of the C.P.E. secondary school in transforming the lives and hopes of its overwhelmingly low-income African-American and Latino students is equally in-



disputable. What the C.P.E. schools, like the Bronx New School, are about is the creation of powerful communities of people who know one another well and take one another seriously (which involves quarreling).

Above all, what such communities produce is lots of face-to-face exchanges about the meaning of their institutions, and the power and autonomy to change them. They reproduce a powerful public discourse on what it means to be a well-educated person. Weekly staff meetings generate lively discussions over everything from the appropriate dress code to improved ways to report students' performance to their parents. What, if any, common set of facts all students should know is the kind of topic that in the context of a real school setting, focusing on real young people, engenders thoughtful discussion that enriches not only teachers but parents and students. A school community that together looks at samples of student work and argues over its merits, as well as ways to respond, is engaged in the most effective form of staff development. The debate over multiculturalism and Eurocentrism takes place publicly in such schools and can't be side-stepped with generalities. In designing a one-year curriculum around the "peopling of the Americas," the Central Park East school system spent considerable time thinking through the differences between voluntary and forced migrations, ways to tell the Columbus story and so on. It worked out ways to focus on essential "habits of mind" that made it possible to use a wide variety of texts, even many traditional Eurocentric ones, as stimulants to deeper thought on the part of the C.P.E. faculty and students. Such schools are living examples to their students of the power of ideas and the value of education.

For those of us who believe that public education is feasible and essential to democracy, the capacity of public institutions to allow for autonomy is critical. There is no reason that public schools can't be as imaginative and exciting as independent schools. Public doesn't have to mean drab and uniform, standardized and bureaucratic. Let's give reform a chance by letting parents, students and teachers invent their own schools. When critics say "not fair," let's respond by offering them the same deal, rather than taking it away from those who are using it so well. □

EDITORIALS.

(Continued From Page 325)

of the abortive coup—the strong leadership of the Russian Republic coexisting with the powerless leadership of the central government. There is no clear idea of the respective rights of these two centers or the conditions for their coexistence.

The main task of democracy at this stage is to neutralize as quickly as possible the points of stress, the sources of conflict and the possible growth of dissatisfaction of the population in Russia. All resources must be utilized for rapid improvement of the food situation in Moscow, Leningrad, Sverdlovsk and other industrial centers. Privatization and the involvement of millions of people in economic operations must be accelerated. The status of the Russian Republic and its vision for further changes in the country must be finally determined.

The West must know what will remain and what will develop in the territory of the quondam Soviet Union. Yeltsin must broaden the social base of his power, he must use the growth of Russian national consciousness in the interests of democracy and he must stand upon a base of historical legitimacy.

Aleksandr Tsipko, a philosopher, is a leading figure in the democratic movement.

**ZHOES A. MEDVEDEV
AND ROY MEDVEDEV**

Without doubt, it was conservative forces in the Communist Party and the K.G.B., along with some generals in the army, that attempted the coup d'état. The countercoup, under the leadership of Boris Yeltsin, was clearly anti-Communist. But Yeltsin has no constructive democratic program. He has the support not only of democratic reformers but of Russophiles, the Orthodox Church and even monarchists. Signs of a new cult of personality and a tendency toward dictatorial decisions are showing up in Yeltsin's camp.

However, an unquestionable weakening of the central administration and a strengthening of the role of the republics have taken place. The disintegration of the Communist Party in its traditional form will result in the emergence of a parliamentary party (renamed the Socialist Party). Under conditions of increasing financial and economic dislocation, real democratic reforms will be difficult.

The main thing the reformers need to understand is that they are dealing with a complex economy, especially in the area of production. A higher level of productivity in the new union can be achieved only through technical modernization. Up to now, we have seen a struggle for power; the needs of the economy have been secondary. The reformers must understand that in a country as large as this one, changes in productive forces and productive relationships must proceed slowly and gradually in order to avoid chaos.

Zhores A. Medvedev, a biologist, was exiled from the Soviet Union in 1973. Roy Medvedev, a historian, is a member of the Congress of People's Deputies.



SPIES, RECONSIDERED

*The Moscow news has made it quite a strain
To contemplate Guy Burgess and Maclean,
For now their party's over, always will be.
And think of all that spying! Think of Philby!
We have to ask ourselves: 'Twas all for naught
They did those things they really hadn't ought?*

Calvin Trillin

In Education, Small Is Sensible

By Deborah Meier

I love New York. I love Chicago. I love Beethoven's "Ninth Symphony." It's not an antipathy to bigness that makes me a fervent champion of small schools. Rather it's the conviction that unless we start thinking small, none of the recent consensus that has developed around needed school reforms is remotely feasible.

Small schools are not the answer, but without them none of the proposed answers stand a chance.

What teachers need is a direct voice in the decisions they implement. "Teacher empowerment" is on everyone's list of needed reforms.

But what does this mean in a school with 100 faculty members who rarely see each other work, don't share the same students and differ widely in their pedagogical assumptions?

Deborah Meier is principal of Central Park East, a public high school in Manhattan.

We all agree that a good school can't work without greater trust and support from families. But trust comes from parents, teachers and students knowing each other over a period of time. Parental apathy develops as a rational response to large, anonymous schools.

We agree that students fail to use "higher-order thinking skills" — intellectual reasoning, engagement and curiosity. But we still place these neophyte intellects in schools where they rarely witness strong-minded, articulate adults defending ideas, exchanging views or making reasoned decisions. Hugeness works against lively intellectual intercourse.

No one denies that school reform won't get far until we do something about drugs, violence and vandalism. But the solutions appropriate to a large anonymous school — metal detectors, quasimilitary pass systems — increase the depersonalization that contributes to antisocial behavior.

We claim that young people need settings that help them develop strong values and moral vision. But

Big,
anonymous
schools
are self-
defeating.

large schools operate, of necessity, on the basis of bureaucratic values. In a bureaucracy, the worst "crimes" are those that create disorder.

Young people cannot learn democratic values in a setting that does not value individual achievement, that cannot notice triumphs and defeats, has no time to celebrate or mourn, or respond with indignation or recognition as the situation requires.

Small schools offer opportunities to solve every one of these critical issues. School-site empowerment can

be tackled efficiently and naturally. Staff can meet to discuss issues and differences without complex governance structures; understanding the budget does not require an advanced degree in accounting. Looking in on colleagues and, sharing ideas, becomes possible.

In small schools, parents hear about the same teachers, students and families year after year in a variety of formal and informal ways. Trust builds and issues that arise get settled handily. Accountability to parents, as well as to the community, is a less knotty problem.

In a small school, strangers and strange behaviors stick out and can be addressed with dispatch. Troublemaking strangers can be identified and peer pressure has an inhibiting effect on violence or other antisocial behavior. It's hardly surprising that private high schools in New York City have always had student bodies of under 500. That's the right size.

Are small schools economically feasible? Huge school buildings may have been pennywise, but they are

pound foolish. But just as the Empire State Building houses many companies, large school buildings can house many small schools.

That's happening right now. In New York City's District 4 in East Harlem, there are now 51 small schools in the same 19 buildings that contained 19 schools in 1974. Each cluster of small schools can choose how to share equipment and space, based on the trade-offs they want to make. District 4 schools have become nationally known as schools that are good to teach at and good to attend.

Yes, small schools, like small towns, can be small-minded. But they offer the flexibility and structural simplicity needed to tackle the complexity of learning.

Just as language immersion is the best way to learn a foreign language, immersion in a small, caring school community is the best way to learn what is a foreign language to too many of our young: the language of participation, that difficult public language necessary to becoming a member of a democratic society. □

True Reform or Tired Retread?

7 Questions To Ask About School-to-Work Programs

By W. Norton Grubb

School-to-work programs are the most recent reforms to hit the education system, and, with the appeal of novelty, they have entered the lists of changes to be implemented over the next few years. The big question is whether the changes will make much difference to schools and students, or whether in 10 years' time they will have vanished, swept aside by different priorities.

To these programs, including me, "school to work" offers a better chance for improving high schools than any other area of reform. The school-based component requires the integration of academic and vocational education and creates bridges between secondary and postsecondary education. A work-based component provides opportunities for learning different capacities (including motivation and discipline) than schools can teach. And linkages or "connecting activities" insure that both components are consistent.

But to others, the noise around school-to-work programs may seem baffling. None of the elements is particularly new. Efforts to integrate academic and vocational education and tech-prep programs are already taking place in vocational education; and the work-based components seem like a re-labeling of work-experience and co-op programs. The last wave of occupationally related innovation just 20 years ago—with career education and work-experience programs—resulted in very little. What's to prevent school-to-work programs from following the same cycle of proposal, enthusiasm, and collapse? In fact, even now there are early warning signals. The strength of the school-to-work vision—the combination of several supporting reforms—is itself a weakness, since reformers can stress one component to the exclusion of others. And so many proponents of school-to-work have taken different directions, each with a vision that cannot possibly endure.

- Advocates of "youth apprenticeship" continue to elaborate descriptions of what the work component ought to look like. But developing work-based components without reforming high schools probably cannot work. Quite apart from the problem of whether there can be enough high-quality work placements, school-to-work programs fit poorly with the conventional high school dominated by the college-prep track. A work-based component without changes in high schools can only become a rebirth of independent work-experience programs.

- Others have placed great faith in external assessments—certificates of initial mastery and industry skills standards—to force reform. But relying on external assessment mechanisms is a difficult road: the recent example—state assessments initiated during the 1980's—failed to reshape high schools significantly. External pressures for change without the capacity of teachers and administrators to change is pointless and will only add to the paralysis of high schools.

- Educators themselves are unclear about the role of school-to-work programs. Only a dwindling number in vocational education have participated in the integration of academic and vocational education and tech-prep initiatives. Most academic educators have been preoccupied with other reforms—subject-specific changes in math and English, for example, or "restructuring" (whatever that is), or following the principles of the Coalition of Essential Schools or some other piper—that have little to do with occupational preparation. Without a vision of a more occupationally oriented high school, two unattractive outcomes are likely. One is that schools will generate school-to-work programs for "at risk" kids, or for the "non-college-bound"—immediately dooming such programs to second-class status. Alternatively, a "three track" approach might emerge, with a college-bound track for perhaps 20 percent to 25 percent of students; a high-quality school-to-work track for another 20 percent to 25 percent; and an amorphous curriculum for the remaining 50 percent to 60 percent, the continuation of the justly



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maligned general track.

The most likely development, without a clear vision of how high schools should change, is that the great interest in work-based learning and the lack of interest among educators in occupationally oriented education will create the worst of all worlds. Work-experience programs will provide some work opportunities for at-risk students, in high schools that remain dominated by the college-bound track, utterly failing to reshape the high school in any important way.

What steps are necessary to avoid this kind of stale reinvention of work-based programs? There are seven questions that school-to-work programs must confront:

1. *How should high schools change in school-to-work programs?* In my view, the various efforts now under way to establish career academies, schools with several career clusters or majors, and magnet high schools with occupational focuses exemplify the changes that are appropriate. These efforts all make the integration of academic and vocational matters easier, by bringing academic and vocational teachers together around a common purpose. By providing an occupational focus, they make transparent the occupational purpose of

high school and facilitate the connection to work-based learning. Such efforts are also consistent with calls to develop "focus schools" with clearer missions, with the interest in more contextualized instruction, and with support for smaller schools to reduce the anonymity of the large comprehensive high school.

In these efforts, it is crucial to acknowledge the cycling of reforms in education. The efforts to install work-experience programs and career education just 20 years ago were utter failures, after all, and any occupational focus in high schools has been suspect ever since the early years of the century. Past efforts have castigated for reinforcing tracking and for lowering standards, particularly when they focus on less skilled positions (as conventional vocational education has). But current efforts have the potential for avoiding the traps of both equity and quality (or "standards"). The emphasis on including all students, not just at-risk students, provides a way to avoid the inequities often associated with occupational programs. The focus on broad clusters of related occupations—including the highest-skilled occupations and related high-level academic competencies—avoids both watering down content and tracking students away from the highest-status positions. And efforts to integrate academic and vocational content need not be narrowly utilitarian or vocational. They present opportunities to include the literature of work, historical perspectives on technology and society, and social studies examining the important public issues surrounding technology, occupational changes, and related economic questions—all ways of linking school-to-work programs with the moral and political purposes of schooling. As John Dewey said in *Democracy and Education*, "Education through occupations consequently combines within itself more of the factors conducive to learning than any other method." That is, occupations can provide a focus or context to make more effective the teaching of any of the disciplines included within the high school.

2. *What is the vision for the work-based component?* Much has been written about the work-based component of school-to-work programs—particularly the need for high-quality placements with real educative potential—as well as about the difficulties of finding enough such positions. There is little need to rehash these arguments. However, the broader question that school-to-work legislation implies is: What are the responsibilities of employers in the reconstruction of American education, beyond providing work placements of decent quality? Anything the schools do to improve competencies can be undermined by employers—as happens when employers ignore school performance in their hiring decisions, or when they structure some jobs to require few skills, or rely

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Reform Or Retread?

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on large numbers of temporary employees without possibilities for advancement. The larger debate is one about the country's human resources, and that implies greater responsibilities on the part of employers in demanding and rewarding high skills, as well as on the part of schools in supplying them.

3. *What are the necessary "connecting activities" linking the school-based and the work-based components?* Adequate linkages are necessary to prevent school-to-work programs from degenerating into independent work-experience programs, with work disconnected from schooling. Of course, school-to-work programs will require coordinators, to recruit and monitor the quality of work placements and to provide a liaison between the school and employers. And some of the responsibilities for linkage will fall on employers.

But many linkage mechanisms will be the responsibility of schools. The possibilities include improved career guidance—not, one hopes, the "interest inventories" and passive information-transfer typical of most counseling, but something more activity-based, better integrated into the curriculum, and shared among a wider variety of teachers and counselors. Related linkage mechanisms might include practice-oriented sessions for students about looking for employment and choosing among work placements; preparation for starting work, so that students have reasonable expectations and appropriate behavior; and seminars for students to discuss their employment and its relationship to school-based learning. Some of these are novel and require that high schools rethink their connections to outside organizations.

4. *What students will be included in school-to-work programs?* The federal legislation declares that school-to-work shall include all students. But this provision is not simply an issue of eligibility: it is a question of what the school components of school-to-work programs will look like. If they are developed around relatively low-level occupations, then college-bound students simply won't enroll. If, instead, they are pitched at high-tech occupations and require substantial math and science, then low-achieving students will not qualify unless they are provided more academic support and time. School-to-work programs provide opportunities to de-track the high school, but this cannot be done without careful attention to the design of programs, to their content, to the pedagogies used, and to the support services developed for different students.

5. *What is the appropriate role for nonschool programs?* The school-to-work legislation allows

to be spent in programs for school dropouts, and by community organizations outside the schools. Since some of the initial funding for programs comes from the Job Training Partnership Act, the involvement of local private-industry councils and their state counterparts is necessary.

The question of nonschool programs involves what fraction of resources should be spent on in-school students and the reform of high schools, rather than on school dropouts and programs for out-of-school youths. In my reading, the school-to-work legislation is principally an effort to reform high schools, and so the majority of funds—say 75 percent to 80 percent—should be spent on school-based programs, though no doubt others will disagree.

Beyond the division of the spoils, the question is what kinds of programs should be devised for nonschool youths? Just as the school-to-work program should be an attempt to reform high schools, so, too, should it be an opportunity to devise more effective programs outside the schools—particularly



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because existing J.T.P.A. programs have been found to have negative effects for young people. The school-to-work legislation provides a model found in a very few J.T.P.A.-funded programs—for example, the Center for Employment Training in San Jose, Calif., and the Young Adult Learning Academy in New York City—which teach academic (or remedial) competencies integrated with job-skills training and which also provide related employment or work experiences. Experiments with such doubly integrated programs might provide the basis for another round of more effective youth programs.

6. *What role should assessments play?* Assessments include skills standards and certificates of initial mastery. A few problems will be central to school-to-work programs. One is that the increasing number of assessments may force schools into a crossfire of competing goals. A second is that two contradictory developments are now battling for dominance: one that views assessments as mechanisms to force compliance with external standards, and another that views assessments as information mechanisms to allow educators to improve their programs without external coercion.

A third problem is the uncertainty that exists over whether the skills standards and certificates of

initial mastery will be in ing decisions. Without their use by employers in hiring, the merits will be both coercive to schools and irrelevant to students. And finally, there is the timing question: If new forms of assessment will take some time to develop, what should school-to-work programs do in the meantime?

The new conventional wisdom is that appropriate (or "authentic") assessments can encourage exactly the right kind of "teaching to the test." This assumes that there can be consensus on the right test, as might be possible in a national educational system. But the school-to-work legislation envisions variation among states and localities, and consensus about skills cannot exist among employers unless we move to a German-style system of occupational standards regulated by government. Since we won't soon remake either our economic or our educational system along these lines, some modesty is necessary in determining what assessments can accomplish.

7. *What governance mechanism is appropriate for school-to-work programs?* The school-to-work legislation envisions a novel governance mechanism: State agencies collaborate in the development of a coherent program, seeking waivers as necessary from federal legislation and combining federal and state funding in ways that create coherent programs. What remains unclear are the details in which the success or failure of school-to-work programs—and other education and training programs that might follow their lead—will reside: the specific powers of a state planning effort, which agency (if any) should be the leader, how restrictive or coercive state policies will be, and other questions.

My ordering of these questions is not accidental. It reflects my interpretation of the current school-to-work legislation: That it is primarily a school-reform effort where the vision of school change must develop before other elements, lest it be merely another add-on to unreformed high schools. The work-based components are important, but they cannot be effective in the absence of school reform. My ordering reflects a relatively modest role for assessments, given the difficulties in developing and implementing them. And by placing the governance question last instead of first, I mean that questions of vision and purpose ought to drive governance instead of having political alignments drive the development of school-to-work programs.

The possibilities for school-to-work programs are enormous. They can offer new learning opportunities for young people and stimulate the reform of high schools, including their reconnection to the world outside of school. They can raise larger questions, about the responsibilities of employers and programs for out-of-school youths, that usually get ignored. But they might also end up as work-experience programs for a few at-risk students, or as reforms that generate allegiance only as long as federal dollars last—both implying a life expectancy of about five years. The path to true reform is infinitely attractive—and also much work. ■

Align linkages w/ STW as
part of STW as
a concept, not a
program. Program STW
will not work unless
school reform happens.

The Beautician Question: Can Secondary Education Be Progressive?

Deborah Meier



"When most of the world's work is held in contempt, can even an 'excellent school' be democratic?"

Secondary education is the hardest topic for me to talk about. It's the shallowest in my experience. I have fewer examples to tell. I have thought less about it than anything else I've ever done. In a way, I suppose, what I'm trying to put together for you today is a sort of half-thought through set of ideas — somewhat inarticulate — about the connection between historically progressive thinking and secondary education, and the complexity of the task that I think is before us at our school, and before all of you. I confess before I start that in six years I'd love to come back and try this again. Eight years into the experience instead of two would be a more appropriate base from which to offer insight into a new configuration of the public school.

The challenge of a secondary education consistent with the best traditions of progressive education required, for me at least, facing a whole set of not so much new issues as new formulations of long-standing issues. Questions that I had sidestepped when I began to teach young children 20 years ago, and sidestepped again when I began Central Park East School 13 years ago, forced themselves to center stage

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when I started grappling with what happens to progressivist insight when we move, past sixth grade, all the way up the grades. And on these issues I'm still uncertain. I'm still groping and, as I say, I'm still fairly inarticulate.

The dilemma of the contradictions within the progressive tradition itself, and between that tradition and the society we live in, has always been sharper, or more sharply apparent as we move from younger to older students. Yet, these contradictions may seem sharper to us now than that we face teenagers than when we dealt solely with the elementary school; they actually are not different in kind and maybe not even in importance.

The paradox for anyone seeking social change, and therefore central to also to learning-teaching tasks — which are also efforts to induce change — is that one has to struggle with both living in the world as it is (and doing it sympathetically) and at the same time try to change it. To both live within the contradictions of one's society, and try to transform it creates a whole series of compromises and complications and paradoxes that at times seem insoluble. The trick, it seems to me, is to find ways to reframe the issues. To look at it in freshly different perspectives over and over again, so that new possibilities emerge that do not violate all the continuity so essential to young and old alike as they struggle to new world.

I remember with clarity a particular experience I had many years before I consciously thought about starting a secondary school, and in fact, in one sense, the reason I avoided for many years thinking about starting a secondary school. The other reason, by the way, is that I used to think that I hated adolescents. But more on that another time.

A friend of mine who taught in a very good K-6 private school in the New York City area — one of those schools that goes all the way to the twelfth grade but which has a separate secondary school — and I met together and had a terrific and exciting discussion about a curriculum she was using in second grade. We were absolutely together on it and were sort of winding down our conversation, sitting back feeling very pleased with ourselves, when I turned to my friend and asked a question that always has been puzzling me, and that was, "Why, in that wonderful school, were the kindergarten children who were admitted still admitted on the basis of aptitude tests?" At that moment a certain tension came into our conversation. My friend said that she thought it a dilemma, too, and in fact the faculty with whom she worked were as deeply uncomfortable about it as she was, she felt. But she also thought that it would perhaps be equally unfair to accept kids into the kindergarten who would after all, not be able to be accepted into the secondary school.

Now, that was a new thought to me. I asked, perhaps feigning naïveté, why wouldn't they take their own kids in a secondary school? Well, she

said, a secondary school curriculum is a very demanding one. The school has very high standards and it wouldn't be fair to those children. She said this as though it were obvious and common sense. Yet the assumptions she was making about standards, and about demanding curriculum were oddly dissonant with the use she had made of the same ideas when she had described this rich and exciting second-grade curriculum. A sort of chasm opened up between us for the moment and I couldn't find the bridge that might reconnect us. So I changed the subject.

It was easier to change the subject then because we were both teaching elementary school. It's harder for me to 'change the subject' now. I have to find a way to reframe this issue so that we can pursue the topic; so that we can make a connection again. If my friend had trouble with this issue, steeped as she was in both issues of social change and progressive ideas, both political and educational, how could I hope to persuade the parents of children I wanted to come to my school? How could I persuade kids? How could I persuade the world-at-large?

We began planning Central Park East Secondary School three years ago and our task was to tackle that issue to avoid the tracking that our own graduates of sixth grade faced when they left us. The best ones got into good private schools if they were lucky (and the private school asked us to be grateful); the less lucky went to prestigious selective public schools that would help them to get into Bronx Science and Stuyvesant; the middle ones went to some other schools, and then there were some schools that helped the children who needed remediation. We had children in all those categories. If we believed in diversity in community, if we believed in the respect and self-worth due all our youngsters, why, in the more critical adolescent years, were we so prepared to abandon them to schools with such different values? Why did some of us, as parents, who are now teachers in our schools, have a similar history with their own children?

What did kids make of the fact that we think that everyone should play together when they're little, but when it comes to the serious business of preparing for the real world, then selectivity and sorting must start. It reminded me of stories that we had all read when we were young of black and white children playing happily together in the South, until a certain age; of boys and girls who were free to mix with each other until a certain age, and then each was sorted into their proper role for the future. How deeply interlocked were we with those assumptions that run counter to the beliefs we claim to hold in early childhood?

Secondly, despite all our learned objections, how deeply did we really believe that what is measured on an I.Q. test are really qualities that count most? Aren't our 'high standards,' our 'excellence,' our 'quality,' simply synonyms for a particular segment on a normal curve, a particular quartile on a ranked order? What are the implications for a democratic

society of such a definition of quality, such a definition of intelligence? Why, for that matter, should a doctor be a better prepared citizen than a plumber? Why should anyone doing socially useful work be less esteemed than another? How do we understand the meaning of such a scheme? On what criteria do we ourselves — if we look deeply into it, and think about our own children — esteem different paths that our children might seek? Is it merely a question of status, of preference? How do we hold these notions, and on what criteria do we hold them? Is the disrespect, the mild half-hidden contempt, that lies behind our categories of valued work central and not peripheral to the education we are giving our adolescents? Are we paying a huge social, civic, and economic price for schools which put kids down and hold them unworthy, or conversely that claim to honor work that is not honored in school? When most of the world's work is held in contempt, can even an "excellent school" be democratic? Indeed, for us to struggle with this only in school, for ourselves, and for our children is sometimes so overwhelming it leaves us dumbstruck, angry, despairing. For we narrow the credibility of any argument for providing *all* children with quality schools when we reduce the definition of quality to the accepted definitions of quality work. Rather we must come to terms with our own elitism. It's what we have come to call in our school the "beautician question."

Is the cosmetic surgeon a higher calling than a beautician? On what set of criteria do we deem one worthier than the other? What leads us to view that one of them needs a really, truly good education, and the other something else? That one of them has to know the history of Western civilization and the other only needs to know how to fill in income-tax forms? It's an issue that has long faced us as feminists. On one hand, should we go on seeking to upgrade all women into executive positions, or should we question the contempt, expressed both financially and by other means, that's attached to traditional women's work. Instead of simply accepting the notion of work implicit in the old categories, couldn't we alter the nature of that work, alter the way it's organized, alter the way it's esteemed, and the way it's paid for?

In other words, the ideals we hold for schools require us, in a sense, to act as if such a social redefinition and transformation had already occurred, when, of course, it hasn't. And that is indeed another paradox. Because if we are struck with the definition of success that currently faces our children, then by definition, not by choice, it is impossible for all schools and all children to achieve, and for all to attend quality schools. The progressive tradition stops short of building models of what such a secondary school might be and what its dilemmas might be.

We have stumbled on finding a better solution to it, or a better way of formulating it. If a school defines quality and standards in terms of the sum total of its individual students' positions on the upper end of a

normal curve, then there must be exclusiveness, there must be elitism, and in the society we live in there must be racism and classism. The resolution, it seems to me, means rereading over and over again, the words that Pat Carini addressed to us in the opening session, and pondering those and reformulating them for ourselves. It means rereading much of the work of John Dewey and his definition of the wide span of vocations worthy of human beings, or, again as Pat says: the tasks of being human.

Until we can credibly do this, we are handicapped in the public debate on educational reform. For it is this that lies at the heart of that debate. The issue of accountability, the enormous support among black parents for testing, the popularity of top-down mandates for teacher-proof curriculum, the attractiveness of labelling, all are connected with this question. In fact, as we know, they do not resolve the question. But they are, in part, attractive because they appear on the surface to at least address it.

Progressive education in practice did not, in fact, sufficiently challenge these assumptions. It didn't seriously challenge segregation or tracking. And alas! it bears some responsibility for the existence of testing and sorting as a national phenomena. It allowed, if it didn't invent, the shopping mall high school that Ted Sizer describes, with its class shops so neatly arranged, some shops for the elite, some shops for the children in the middle, and some for the failures — if they could even stand those shops and didn't drop out altogether.

In *Horace's Compromise*, Sizer says, truthfully enough, that you can tell most about a school without going into it at all, if you simply knew the social composition of the students. The Eight-Year Study — I checked with someone last night — is about a group of schools largely intended for children at the upper end of the social and economic scale.

Even leaving aside the question of the need for private schools, if you're going to have them, why not accept dumb rich kids? Why select among those who can pay? Because the pecking order of schools is defined precisely by their capacity to be choosy, right? If it's hard to get into, and if it's hard to stay in, you know it's a good school. It's a little like that joke: if there's a school I could get into, I wouldn't want to go to it.

CPESS undertook to try to deal with this task but very nervously. For we knew we weren't the first people to try to undertake it, or the first people who wanted sincerely and deeply to find an answer to the problem. It's a real dilemma and the solution adopted by many of those other schools, including the very wonderful one I went to, Ethical Culture, was to drop that dream in favor of a different one. Not a bad dream, but a different dream. Every year we used to go to Founder's Day and it was a wonderful celebration in a wonderful hall and the story was told again

about how the school was started for workingmen's children. It was a beautiful story, and it always troubled me slightly, because I couldn't understand why everybody told this as a celebratory event, since clearly there were no workingmen's children listening to this story. Ethical still has its dream, but the dream of the founder has been dropped.

We at CPESS read Ted Sizer's book together and decided that it offered us a framework, a chance to try to tackle secondary education on our own terms, to create a school of quality with a thoroughly heterogeneous and diverse student population, and without certain other restraints for reasons I will afterwards mention. Except, of course, we'd still have to live in the real world. We'd still have to communicate to our community of parents and kids, and thus to ourselves, that it was doable. Which means we had to retackle a definition of what "it" is that's doable — a task that is implicit in the elementary schools, but now had to become explicit.

The Coalition of Essential Schools, the Brown University connection, Ted Sizer's reputation, these were a kind of 'smoke and mirrors' behind which we hoped we could hide for a brief moment. They buy us time. They buy us official benign neglect for a while, a little bit of release from constraint. It makes it easier for the chancellor and for the superintendent, and this person and that person, to explain why we're doing such odd things. And these connections buy us a modicum of image magic to fend off parental and student anxiety: 'That school's O.K. They'll all go to Brown.' But for a time only. The task of making the school remains and that task is manifold.

First, there is the task of creating a school committed to enabling all — every last kid — to deal with the powerful questions facing them in their society, to allow every kid to uncover and not cover the fundamental, intellectual, and social issues of their time. Secondly, there is the task of creating a school community that focuses on the developing and abiding interest of and commitment by our children to their community, and that measure its success not in terms of the number who abandon their families and their community, but the number who find ways to strengthen their family and their community. Thirdly, there is the task of creating a school that counts its success in its ability to create powerful participants in society, active citizens, not merely individual stars. Finally there is the task of creating a school with the aim of giving all its participants an equal sense of their self-worth and value, and to help them to translate that into some other daily terms.

There are, we knew, lots of ways to go about this. In fact, a lot of our solutions were accidents of our particular history. I'm always amused at these extraordinarily learned discussions about whether it's better to have K through 6, 5 to 8, 4 to 9, 1 to 3, because in my own experience the rationales come after the fact. If your building doesn't house more

than five grades and you have an empty building over there that's too big for seventh and eighth, you add a sixth and claim enormous issues of adolescent development are connected with it. Every year I make up excuses like that to parents, explaining why we've organized our school in the particular odd way we have this year. It's really because we have more fourth graders than third graders and secondly, of course, there's a particular political situation that affects these particular solutions, both political in a larger sense societally, and in the narrower diplomatic sense. It's our individual styles and preferences as a group of people who happen to come around to do this school — I happened to have been a history major — and then, of course, it's a particular student and parent population that comes to our school. But still there were some decisions we had to make. And I want to run through about ten of those decisions and tell you what we've decided.

The first decision had to do with that question of selection. Well, we decided first of all that we would take every child who applied to our school who had graduated from our elementary school, as well as the one or two extras who didn't quite graduate. Although the New York City school system has gates at various points, we figure a kid who is 14 should be in our seventh grade, not in someone's fifth grade. We accepted children who had gone through our school, therefore, without any academic qualification, without any behavioral qualification, without exams or anything else. That meant that three-quarters of our children would be black and Hispanic in background, and two-thirds would be children who qualified for free or reduced-price lunch. It meant we would have children all the ways they come. I hate even to describe all the ways they come because we could spend the rest of the day just doing that.

Second of all, we are in a district where all sixth-graders choose where they're going to go: we don't have zoned junior high schools in that district. So we decided, after we had our own children placed, to see what spaces were left, and give priority to children from the local community who selected us as their school of choice for seventh grade. Of course, the parents often had their own marvelous and amusing reasons for selecting us. We would insist that they come in for interviews so that they would know what was going to happen to their kids — that we weren't, first of all, a junior high but a secondary school. They would listen dutifully because they wanted the kids to get in. But later on you would find out that it was the closest school physically because they had a younger sibling next door, because Grandmother lived across the street, because we were small, and nice people, and that we had used the word "traditional" and therefore they thought that means that their children would get a lot of homework, etc., etc.

But in the end we have a student population that's as interesting as

educational resources in New York City and about 20 percent of them would, in a traditional school, be considered academically high achievers; the rest fall in the middle somewhere. Or in some other place entirely.

The second decision we had to make was about how to grow, and how big to grow. We decided that we would start with seventh-graders and go up a grade at a time. We would take in 80 kids at a time giving us, we figured, a school at the end of six years of approximately 450 pupils. The Norwegian government had passed a law saying no school population should be above 450 and that seemed like a good rationale.

Third, we decided on the complex transitional part of our school, which was decided after the fact, too. It sounds so-sensible now. For us the issue was not the transition between elementary and secondary school but, given the way we were organizing the secondary school, from our secondary school to the world out there. Therefore we would have a common seventh to tenth grade program followed by what we'd like to call senior institute, so we wouldn't get into calling it eleventh or twelfth grade because it would be a program that could last anywhere from one to three years, it might even be four years, and some kids may stay there for life.

Fourth, we decided that during that first four years students would be grouped interaged and that they would be grouped in houses of no more than 80, with a faculty of five.

Fifth, we decided that they would spend two hours a day in Humanities, which included English, History, Social Studies, and Art, and then two hours a day in something we creatively called Math and Science. We decided, however, that the question of how those two hours were spent, and how they would be subdivided, would be up to the faculty of each house. It shouldn't surprise you that the Humanities people immediately said, we'll take the whole two hours and put it together and do all kinds of interesting things with it. The Math and Science people said, we want one hour for Math, and one hour for Science, and the math person will teach Math, and the science person will teach Science. This year we have one person who's taken the Math and Science together, and others are beginning to look at this with interest.

Sixth, we decided that students would spend one period a day in what we call an advisory group, following an idea that Shoreham-River Wading people talked with us about, but interpreting it in our own way — that is, a group of 12 or 13 students who spend an extended period together every day, take trips together, have lunch together sometimes, and visit around the country together. This group's advisor would be the key person for the student, relating to their family and relating to the rest of the faculty, and would be a member of the faculty of the student's house (except for me and the librarian, who are also advisors but not members of any one house). In addition, the advisory group would be a

place for a certain kind of discussion and intergroup talk, and for writing and thinking and reflecting that didn't occur in any of the other subjects.

Seventh, we decided to set aside one half a day for school community service, a concept that fostered two wonderful ideas: it provides the faculty with a long period off together, and it is very good for kids to have school community service. In fact, we have developed a terrific school-community service program for all our students. These then — the Humanities, Math/Science, advisory, and once a week school/community service — constitute our common core, 9-to-3 day, with an hour midday break in which we provide lunch to kids, and some optional electives. Between 8 and 9 in the morning, we would offer Spanish to those who wished, and between 3 and 5 after school, electives (most chose sports).

Eighth, at the end of the four years, the student, advisor, and family — and I'll go back to the family later — would collectively meet to design the student's Senior Institute experience, which would include at least three things, which I'll just mention briefly. One: some choices among several seminars or institutes, some of which we are hoping to be organized by institutions outside our school, like the Metropolitan Museum on aesthetic education, etc. Two: preparation for graduation "exhibitions," that term so grandly announced as part of the Coalition for Essential Schools. "Exhibitions" are simply a synonym for "final" graduation requirements (come back in six years and I'll tell you more about that). The third part of the Senior Institute is preparation for what's next. What's this all for? Why do you want a diploma to start with? What have you explored in that way? And how well are you prepared for life after CPE?

The ninth problem we had to decide was how were we going to have time enough among ourselves to do all of this? And that was where we floundered worst. We knew that such a design required a lot of collegiality, a lot of planning together, and even a lot of collegial teaching. So after struggling with a variety of plans, we have finally developed one that somewhat works. Firstly, it enables the staff to have one full morning, three hours, to jointly plan and review their team's educational program: the Math and Science people on one morning, the Humanities on another. Second of all, we designed a way to have an hour and a half lunch once a week for the entire staff of a house, so that they could talk about the kids that they shared. And thirdly, we arranged to have one afternoon every week for the full staff to work on all the responsibilities we shared (plus away-from-the-city retreats occasionally!). Additionally we decided this year to have one schoolwide curriculum that all of us would do for the first six weeks of school. (We chose Mapping.) Besides developing that aspect of our work, we focused a lot this past year on the problems of curriculum and on problems of school as community.

Tenth, we decided we needed to rethink the question of our relationship with families. We knew adolescence was a time when a lot of people gave up on kids. We felt very strongly that we wanted a different message to come from us. First of all, we didn't hold the belief that there ever comes a time when human beings can dispense with their families. Secondly, we believed one task of school was to foster strong commitments and strong understandings among the members of the family, not break them apart. And finally, adolescence was a time when we especially needed to work together on issues of mutual respect between school and family and to better define the roles each had to play in support of the children.

We also had to come to terms ourselves with the fact that it was an illusion and deception to believe that schools could ask, or should ask, parents to completely trust them. I barely completely trust myself. Yet there is some level of trust that we need from parents, and struggling with what that level is, together with the parents, was a part of the issues we had to address. We designed a variety of meetings. They largely focus on bringing together advisor, child, and family. We use the word "family" in its broadest sense: all those adults who are critical in that child's out-of-school life. We agreed they should meet together at least 40 minutes twice a year around the children's work. In fact, for probably half our kids we have at least three or four, sometimes many more, prolonged meetings.

Eleventh, each House, we realized, needed some resources, needed some ways to solve problems. In New York City, we have provided for us what is called the resource room: essentially the system's division of special education assigns one teacher for every 20 children who qualify for special help. The general practice is to take children out of the room. We decided that these resource people should be working in the room as just another member of the team — a resource to the children and the teachers, with additionally sensitive eyes turned towards the kids whose past experience was most fragile. We also needed resources so that each house could hire a curriculum team, or special consultants — a part-time artist, say, or a playwright, or a musician — to extend their own pedagogical field and endeavors, as well as buy the materials for it.

The five faculty members attached to each house were expected to carry a four-and-a-half-day teaching load and have a half day in which in any way they chose, someone could be free to observe other people to take another person's class so that he or she could observe, to work on curriculum for the team, or to do in other ways, tasks designed by that house.

All of that is in place, our kids seem lovely, and the ninth grade, for the first time, is not primarily asking us, how can they be like all other schools? Why don't we put bells back in? Why don't they all have desks?

Why don't we have 40-minute periods? Why don't we all have big textbooks like the other kids have? We sort of finally conned them into believing that they are on the verge of making history.

But we have not really answered some serious questions. Diane Ravitch may answer it the wrong way, but she asks a question we haven't answered to our satisfaction either. What should all 17-year-olds know, or be able to know or know how to do, to get a diploma? How shall we decide what and when work is acceptable or unacceptable? What do we even mean by those terms? How shall we judge our students, our high school, and ourselves? These are the issues that we're still struggling with, but our standards, we know, must be built by our community, and it must be credible to them. That means some compromises. They must include our commitment to all our children and we must find a way to make them public, explicit, and open to discussion and challenge. To do this, we need a lot of allies, friendly, like-minded, but tough-minded critics. In short, in order to carry out this task, we need a strong, progressive community of educators.

In searching for such a community, we need to look both in the past and in the present. We need to look at the history of people who have tried it before and learned from it, and I don't only mean from their mistakes. I'm staggered by the things our predecessors discovered that we have just forgotten about. We have to learn from the many public and independent schools out there who are trying at least a part of this, if not all of it, who are asking the same kinds of questions. And we have to accept for ourselves the fact that we'll make a lot of mistakes, we'll reinvent a lot of wheels, and then we'll make some compromises which, afterwards, we will regret.

It's incredibly exciting, it's exhilarating at the moment, although sometimes I'm dismayed by the absurdities, as when I returned to school in the fall to discover that some plumber had made a small mistake which flooded the bottom three floors of the building, and destroyed \$18,000 worth of violins and the dance floor, and that the Board of Education doesn't have insurance nor the intention of doing anything about it, although they do regret it. I also have to figure out what to do with the thousands of papers that pile up on high school principals' desks having to do with school improvement plans, with "how-to" booklets from the Board of Education telling me how to fill out endless forms so that the central bureaucracy will know who's teaching in license or out of license — a term that is somewhat inappropriate even in our setting — or with hundreds of other Catch 22s.

But it is the right moment to try this. It's the right set of issues to tackle, and with a lot of help and some luck, who knows, maybe, maybe, we'll make a small dent in history. But it cannot be more than a small dent and I don't say that disparagingly; not merely because we don't

know enough, or care enough, but because given the way we have defined good schooling, success depends ultimately on making a dent in the world young people will have to live in. It will mean making a dent in the way society values and holds worthy the work of the world that these young people are going out to do. There is a larger social agenda which schools by themselves cannot accomplish.

*Question: Do you have stories about ways in which you benefit City kids?**

Let me tell you another story first before I get to that. It's not about our secondary school kids, but it's relevant. Someone came out to school the other day to get information from me about our elementary school. People used to say about schools like ours, 'you're so nurturing and loving, but what will happen to these kids when they face the real tough world?' Well, the one thing we can say fairly certainly — we don't know what we can say about a lot of other things, and at first I was even a little troubled by having to acknowledge this — is that our elementary school graduates are terrific at handling the real, cruel world. They get through New York City high schools at a staggering rate. I'm not saying they get educated, I'm just saying they manage to survive in those awful schools, and I have some theories about the connection between those two. But nevertheless, when someone wants to know how can we prove we work I usually give those statistics. So I started to say half of our children go on to college immediately after leaving high school. But Alice Seletsky, who teaches fifth grade, interrupted me while I was giving my litany and said that this fall she had run into two kids who were our failures. She said, you know, we brag about this kid and that kid who had gotten into Brown University, and all of the rest of that, but, she said do you remember — I'll invent their names — Sam and Howard? And I said, oh do I remember them. Sad, said I. She said, no. She said, I ran into Sam recently. He is a kid we never got through to. We just never touched him. He never got what we were all about. He was living "in the streets" somewhere, just passing through CPE, waiting. So he was kind of our failure. He might even be measured a failure in anybody else's terms because he's now a custodial worker in a school. But listen on. Alice said he told her that he's going to night school because he's got to do something else with his life. Life ought to be interesting, he said, like you Alice, always said and she said that's much more of a success than a whole lot of kids we counted as successes.

And then she talked about Howard. Howard was a kid that — we hate to label — but we secretly thought he was maybe a little retarded. Or, as the British say, a little dim. But he was a sweet kid and he like

* From the questioning period that followed presentation.

to do things: the kind of kid you send on errands; and he fixes the shelf for you, but about whom you feel a little guilty because you're exploiting that willingness to be helpful. Anyway, I'm not sure whether he finished high school or not, but she said he got a job as a helper in a construction group out in Queens and he was so inventive and so helpful that his boss took him on to be his assistant, and is grooming him to be a major partner in this firm. Alice said, he told me, affectionately, that he's going to make more than me in a year or two, if he doesn't already. And he feels very valued and very worthy. Those are our kinds of success stories that I'm trying to address, but I don't know how we say that to the world.

Now it is also true in the last few years that we do see a change in our secondary school kids' attitudes — partly, by the way, because the first class did spend a good deal of time worrying about our being different. That was a major issue for them. Partly because adolescents are conformists. But now they talk with a kind of pleasure about the ways in which we're different; they're articulate about it in a way that's different. Some of the people who visit the school now say they overhear kids saying things in their small group discussions in which clearly they can hear the teacher's voice like, 'Well, what kind of evidence do you have for that?' Or, 'There must be another viewpoint; it can't be only that one viewpoint.' They hear the kinds of things that we've been modeling as questions, and the kids seem to say them almost as though they own these questions now.

When we took the ninth-graders away for retreat this year, we broke down into groups of issues kids wanted to talk about. Of course, the biggest group, mostly girls, wanted to discuss jackets with an emblem on them, and class rings, and why we wouldn't let them have a ninth-grade graduation. And the second biggest group was made up of those who wanted to develop a team sport for the school and to get us to hire a coach so they could enter the high school competitive athletic arena. I know that hasn't solved the question of where does this lead, and what are our standards, *except* insofar as I think one of the answers is something to do with kids beginning to have ownership themselves over the kinds of intellectual issues that can be addressed in a variety of ways. And I think the kinds of exercises we have in mind for the Senior Institute, as evidence of graduation, is the capacity to utilize a broad range of such questioning on a broad range of issues — issues which we have not explicitly addressed in the school curriculum but are explicit goals of this kind of schooling.

Naming

Jerome Winegar

It is very difficult to convince adults that how we pronounce children's names is an important aspect of teaching. A number of people understand this, but some people think it is all hogwash, especially people whose own simple names are never mispronounced because they are so much a part of mainstream America. Mispronunciation often means a bias. A smart person who pronounces French names and Portuguese names but not Spanish names doesn't respect that person behind the name.

The most personal possession a child has is his name. Kids love to see their names on things. Little kids from their earliest recollections love to see their names, their first initial, anything. If their first name is Sean and they see that name on a movie marquee, they immediately think, "That's my name."

Not 10 percent of the people I came in contact with ever pronounced my name correctly. When I started teaching at East High in Kansas City, Missouri, that school was similar to South Boston High, a kind of cross section of the world. From the first day, I saw names I couldn't pronounce. It was really that year that I began to understand the importance of correct names. I remember I had a kid named George Grzesiak. I could not figure it out — no matter how I pronounced it, I couldn't get it right. He kept saying, "Well, in some languages there are



"The only place Boston where there is real contact across racial lines is public school . . . Soon that will be to Boston's advantage."

Jerome Winegar is the Headmaster of South Boston High School in Boston, MA.

Special Needs, Job Training To Dominate Perkins Renewal

The nation's vocational education law might evolve into a job training program, a rubric for school-to-work transitions or an entitlement for special needs students.

Or Congress could slash it altogether, deciding the money would be better spent elsewhere.

Perkins Act Reauthorization

Those are among the scenarios—extreme guesses and safe

speculation—House and Senate aides say could shape debate next year when Congress sets out to renew the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act, P.L. 101-392.

Even before the polemics start, elections next month will create the climate for the law's reauthorization.

The elections, which threaten to shift the Democratic majority in both chambers to a stronger Republican tide, might shake the leadership on key education panels.

Competing Needs

Debate will crop up in some fashion next year over how far voc ed programs must go to serve special populations, including students who are disabled or for whom English is a second language.

Aides for Senate Republicans say they will bring the contentious issue to the forefront.

The question is nothing new. Congress addressed the issue during the law's last renewal in 1990, when legislators abandoned the practice of setting aside voc ed money for six categories of special populations.

This time around, the debate likely will center on findings from the National Assessment of Vocational Education (NAVE). The report, considered a blueprint for voc ed reform, concluded that special populations are overrepresented in voc ed programs.

NAVE also cautioned against turning voc ed into a dumping ground for the disadvantaged.

This year, Congress worked through a K-12 reauthorization bill to block the administration's attempt to expand services in voc ed for special populations.

The Education Department was working on a plan to require states to provide equipment and services, including Braille tests or teacher's aides (ED, Sept. 30). Perkins rules ED issued in 1992 under the Bush administration require schools to provide supplemental services only up to the level of their Perkins allotment.

Again, the issue will hinge on whether Congress wants to "change the notion that voc ed is a lower alternative for students by beefing up its academic requirements," a Senate staffer said. "There is a mindset that all special populations need to be served in voc ed, regardless of the cost."

Legislators could address the same concerns when they work on the nation's main special education law next year, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Which Program?

House aides, meanwhile, express more concern over outside dynamics than the law's internal provisions.

Voc ed's role in the school-to-work scheme and job consolidation are threshold issues to Jack Jennings, chief education counsel for the House Education and Labor Committee.

(more)

White House Touts Progress On Loan Repayment Front (Cont.)

The potential problem, they say, is that a wave of FEL borrowers might suddenly be ready to enter DSL repayment, a complex operation requiring the servicer to collect loans and track borrowers.

Leo Kornfeld, senior direct lending adviser to Riley, has said that won't be a problem because of the phase-in.

Election Overtones

Sperling said Clinton's loan plan is "very much a defining element of what the upcoming elections are really about."

It's particularly striking, he said, because Republicans are suggesting the federal government save money by no longer subsidizing loan interest while borrowers are in school.

But under questioning from reporters, Sperling denied Friday's events were designed to sway voters Nov. 8.

The administration didn't highlight DSL in July, Sperling said, because health care reform was dominating the domestic agenda.

In addition, he said the administration wanted to give DSL time to get up an running before launching a publicity blitz. --Michael Sherry

Special Needs, Training To Dominate Perkins Renewal (Cont.)

Jennings won't be around to guide the vocational law because he is retiring. But his predictions are bolstered by nearly 30 years' experience as the House's education specialist.

Jennings points to job training bills introduced by Sens. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., and Nancy Kassebaum, R-Kan., shortly before Congress recessed this month. Both bills will die at the end of the 103rd session and would have to be introduced again, but they show how key lawmakers are leaning.

The bills would allow states to fold their entire Perkins allotment into job training plans, virtually eliminating federal vocational program money. States rely on Perkins grants for roughly 10 percent of their vocational spending.

"The legislative issue becomes, 'why is the Perkins money there to begin with,'" Jennings said. "It may be a question of just moving boxes [money] around."

He points to two other variables that could influence how Congress directs Perkins money.

As soon as the Perkins renewal bill moves through committee, Jennings predicts that job

training advocates will attach amendments in an attempt to siphon money.

The Waive

Another variable to watch for: The five-month-old School-To-Work Opportunities Act, P.L. 103-239. The act allows states to request waivers to blend their Perkins allotment with federal money from the Job Training Partnership Act.

If states seek such waivers while the Perkins debate is under way, they could influence the outcome.

Vocational advocates are staunch preservationists who want Perkins allotments to remain an Education Department program.

Mixing Perkins money with job training issues would be vocational's death knell, said Bret Lovejoy, acting director of the American Vocational Association.

He worries that program administration would then shift to the Labor Department and attempts to educate students for careers through applied academics and work experience would be threatened. --Jennifer Cetta

OCR Tries Cooperative Approach With Mich. LEP Review

The Education Department is conducting a rare statewide probe to check for suspected civil rights violations in Michigan against students with limited English proficiency.

Such checks are not uncommon in single school districts. But the Michigan probe, launched in April, is unusual because of its scope—and its conciliatory approach.

"It wasn't that we were bashing the state of Michigan," Norma Cantu, ED's assistant secretary for civil rights, said in an interview yesterday. "We've asked them to participate in reviewing what the local districts are doing."

Cantu characterized the Michigan compliance review as a cooperative partnership.

Depending on the operation's success, ED's Office for Civil Rights could use the approach elsewhere, she said.

"We hope that the states understand that the partnership strategy ... is one that we see as viable," Cantu said.

OCR officials could not predict yesterday when they will wrap up the review.

Starts With Complaints

OCR decided to try the new investigatory approach in Michigan after conducting 10 to 12 compliance reviews in the state in the past decade and finding similar problems in services for limited English proficient (LEP) students, an ED spokesman said.

OCR is looking into whether LEP students are receiving education opportunities equal to other students, an investigatory priority Cantu set for this year.

In April, OCR administrators met with state officials to discuss potential violations of Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which bars race and national origin discrimination in federally funded programs.

State education department officials could not be reached for comment yesterday, but two bilingual educators gave the OCR approach a thumbs-up.

It feels "kind of like a friendly visit or a friendly audit of programs," said Jose Valderas, a

former board member of the Michigan Association for Bilingual Education (MABE).

MABE President Raul Rio said he has heard praise for the review. "It's better if we work as a team," Rio said, adding that pitting state officials against OCR is counterproductive.

Still Wary

While the Michigan probe may offer a glimpse of a kinder, gentler OCR approach to civil rights, not everyone is comfortable with statewide OCR initiatives.

"So much depends on what they're doing and what they're requiring from the state," said Gwen Gregory, deputy general counsel for the National School Boards Association.

OCR will have to review its results in Michigan before deciding whether its cooperative approach can work elsewhere, Cantu said. But the early indications are good.

"The state is playing more of an equal role," she said. "They're not passive."

—Mary-Ellen Phelps

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