

Chapter One

Introduction

A key objective of federally funded job training programs is to ensure that the workforce has the skills necessary to obtain and retain gainful employment. Today, the knowledge and skill needs of the workforce are growing exponentially. People not only require job skills, but must be able to upgrade and change those skills quickly, either while on the job or unemployed. Federal job training policy is changing to reflect the needs of today's workforce. Yet, how will these lofty goals be achieved? The long term success of federally funded job training programs has been inconsistent at best. Now terms such as "lifelong learning" are being used in policy discussions. Because today a successful workforce is a knowledge and skill adaptable, fast-learning workforce, federal job training policy implementers will need to strengthen their ability to produce programs which foster such development.

This study examines an early element of federal job training policy implementation - the job training plan - in order to assess its effect on the fulfillment of federal policy goals.

Background

When signed in 1982 the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) represented the latest incremental change in federally funded job training programs. The purpose of the Act is to:

establish programs to prepare youth and adults facing serious barriers to employment for participation on the labor force by providing job training and other services that will result in increased employment and earnings, increased educational and occupational skills, and decreased welfare dependency, thereby improving the quality of the work force and enhancing the productivity and competitiveness of the Nation (Text, 1993, p. 4).

Prior to JTPA, the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) of 1973 attempted to:

provide job training and employment opportunities for economically disadvantaged, unemployed, and underemployed persons, and to assure that training and other services lead to maximum employment opportunities and enhance self-sufficiency by establishing a flexible and decentralized system of Federal, State, and local programs (CETA, 1974, p. 839).

The shift in the government's goals from CETA to JTPA is subtle, but significant. The stated purpose moves away from a programmatic or process goal impacting disadvantaged workers and begins to focus policy objectives on skill and economic achievement goals meant not only to enhance the workers' abilities but also to advance the nation. The difference between these goals and pre-CETA legislation is even more dramatic. The purpose of the Manpower Development and Training Act of 1962 was to:

require the Federal Government to appraise the manpower requirements and resources of the Nation, and to develop and apply the information and methods needed to deal with the problems of unemployment resulting from automation and technology changes and other types of persistent unemployment (Manpower, 1963, p. 24).

With each progressive piece of legislation, the policy objectives express more clearly what impact the federal interventions should have on the workforce and its skills.

The movement along this continuum is seen in workforce development legislation recently under consideration in Congress. The Consolidated and Reformed Education, Employment, and Rehabilitation Systems (CAREERS) Act has a draft purpose which states the Act will improve the workforce development delivery system "to meet the education, employment, and training needs of the workforce and the competitiveness needs of employers of the United States, both today and in the future" (H.R. Rep. No. 104-152, 1995, p. 4). The legislators believe this can be done by "encouraging lifelong learning and skills upgrading" (H.R. Rep. No. 104-152, 1995, p. 4) of the workforce. Clearly, those implementing job training policy will face an ever increasing challenge. Both JTPA and CAREERS Act put these policy objectives to the states for implementation.

In their classic work Implementation, Jeffrey L. Pressman and Aaron Wildavsky (1984) explored the difficulties in turning federal policies into programs which fulfill the goals of those policies. They noted that:

Whether stated explicitly or not, policies point to a chain of causation between initial conditions and future consequences...*Implementation, then, is the ability to forge subsequent links in the causal chain so as to obtain the desired results.*
(Pressman & Wildavsky, 1984, p. xxiii) [emphasis added]

For those implementing job training policy the task then is to create programs to provide skills which will raise earning potential and create a high quality workforce, in order to leverage the United State's competitive position. As Pressman and Wildavsky noted, those assigned the responsibility of achieving the government's goals face many road blocks. The people charged

with creating programs find that “once a program is underway implementers become responsible both for the initial conditions and for the objectives toward which they are supposed to lead” (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1984, p. xxiii). In the case of job training implementers, they find they have become accountable for the problem of an under-skilled, under-employed workforce and are asked to reach the lofty goals of federal job training policy. One of the initial difficulties to overcome is to determine what the government means by a competitive workforce.

The shifting nature of the global market place is changing the way in which companies compete for business, which in turn is altering the required skill base of the American workforce. Robert Reich (1992), former Secretary of Labor, discussed the needs of the new global workforce in his book The Work of Nations. He believed that “the real economic challenge facing the United States...is to increase the potential value of what their citizens can add to the global economy, by enhancing their skills and capacities and by improving their means of linking those skills and capacities to the world market” (Reich, 1992, p. 8). In order for workers to compete both within and outside the United States, their skills must increase and their basic competencies must be enhanced. Manufacturing jobs are disappearing. Jobs are developing in the customer service sector and these jobs require a whole different set of interpersonal skills and abilities.

Interestingly, as the needs of the workforce change, both political economists, such as Reich, and policy makers are beginning to utilize the language of adult education to express the needs of our workforce. The CAREERS Act calls for programs which “encourage lifelong learning” (H.R. Rep. No. 104-152, 1995, p. 4). Clearly as the skill needs of America’s workforce change, and as the job training policies are updated to reflect these enhanced needs, the ties between adult education and job training policy will grow. As policy begins to use the language of adult education to define its goals, adult education theory must inform the implementation process. Rather than only providing the tools to create programming, adult education theory and practitioners can begin to assist implementers in both the interpretation of the goals of federal job training policy and the assessment of the various options available to train the workforce.

The people who are furthest from the high-level skills and, therefore, most gainful employment are the economically disadvantaged. JTPA defines “economically disadvantaged” as: “an individual who is age 22 through 72, and who has, or is a member of a family that has, received a total family income that, in relation to family size, was not in excess of the higher of (i) the official poverty line; or (ii) 70 percent of the lower living standard income level” (Text, 1993, p. 52). This group includes those defined as “hard-to-serve individuals,” consisting of the basic skills deficient, school dropouts, welfare recipients, offenders, people with disabilities, and the homeless (Text, 1993, p. 52). The programs serving these people are covered under Title II-A of JTPA. The purpose of Title II-A is to “prepare adults for participation in the labor force by increasing their occupational and educational skills, resulting in improved long-term employability, increased employment and earnings, and reduced welfare dependency” (Text,

1993, p. 51). Again, like the overall JTPA purpose, part of the objective focuses on skill development. If the bar is being raised on the skill needs of the American workforce, the economically disadvantaged are furthest from the higher level competencies. What skills might they need to enhance their employability?

In 1992, the U.S. Department of Labor formed the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) to examine the skill needs of the workforce. In their report titled Learning a Living: A Blueprint for High Performance, they outlined basic skills and competencies needed for today's workplace:

Workplace Competencies: Effective workers can productively use:

- Resources - They know how to allocate time, money materials and staff.
- Interpersonal skills - They can work on teams, teach others, serve customers, lead, negotiate, and work well with people from culturally diverse backgrounds.
- Information - They can acquire and evaluate data, organize and maintain files, interpret and communicate, and use computers to process information.
- Systems - They understand social, organizational, and technological systems; they can monitor and correct performance; and they can design or improve systems.
- Technology - They can select equipment and tools, apply technology to specific tasks, and maintain and troubleshoot equipment.

Foundation Skills: Competent workers in the high-performance workplace need:

- Basic Skills - reading, writing, arithmetic and mathematics, speaking and listening.
- Thinking Skills - the ability to learn, to reason, to think creatively, to make decisions, and to solve problems.
- Personal Qualities - individual responsibility, self-esteem and self-management, sociability, and integrity (SCANS, 1992, p. 6).

The workplace competencies mirror Reich's thinking on the skills needed for U.S. workers to compete globally. For the economically disadvantaged, the foundation skills defined by SCANS might be more attainable and more suitable to targeting for development through programs such as those created under JTPA Title II-A. Clearly to obtain employment with long-term potential, competency of a certain level in these foundation skills would be required. Those looking to provide "occupational and educational skills" (Text, 1993, p. 51) would have to assure their programs dealt with these foundation competencies.

Who does try to provide this type of training and education? JTPA Title II-A programs are funded by the federal government through the Department of Labor. The states are given money to allocate to service delivery areas (SDAs), administrative entities covering geographic areas within their states. Each SDA has a Private Industry Council (PIC) to determine the local need for job training and the PICs are responsible for overseeing the development of the job training plans. The employment and training services provided can cover a wide range of offerings, including basic skills training, on-the-job training, career counseling, training to develop good work habits, school-to-work programs, and high school equivalency courses, among a variety of other things. PICs are made up of representatives from the private sector, and often include participation of organized labor representatives, community-based organizations, and other agencies such as education (National Commission for Employment Policy, 1995).

The focus of this thesis is on the efforts of the PICs and their SDAs to plan the implementation of federal job training programs. As Pressman and Wildavsky (1984) expressed, the implementers become the people both responsible for the problem and the execution of the solution. In the case of JTPA Title II-A job training, the implementation of policy and fulfillment of the government's goals fall first into the hands of the PICs and the SDAs.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to describe and compare key elements of Virginia's fourteen service delivery area program year 1995 job training plans in order to determine how they will deliver programs to achieve the stated purpose of JTPA Title II-A. In addition, the plans were evaluated as to their potential to guide successful program implementation.

This study focused not on evaluating outcomes of federal job training programs, but examined an initial stage of the JTPA implementation process at the SDA level. Studies done on JTPA Title II-A job training programs have evaluated employment and income results. In general, these results have not been too positive. Researchers seemed to consistently find that the long term impact of JTPA Title II-A job training on employment and income has been negligible (Castle, 1989; GAO, 1996a). Little information on program goals and objectives and on measurements of post-training skill levels is available. If the programs are not having the intended impact, a look at the earlier stages of implementation is in order. If the initial goals, objectives, and structures of JTPA programs do not have the potential to fulfill the goals of the Act, how could those outcomes be achieved? To aid in the analysis of the plans, criteria were drawn from job training and education program planning literature and utilized to determine if the plans demonstrated successful practices from these areas.

Critical analysis of job training plans can inform the efforts of those implementing this type of policy by identifying program strengths and weaknesses from an education program planning perspective. The disadvantaged must not only be trained to be placed in employment, but also must develop preliminary workplace competencies which can be built upon to ensure continued employment and increased income. Therefore, those making program determinations must have an increased understanding of which training activities would best develop these skills and competencies. They need effective ways to assess program plans, goals and objectives at the earliest stages. Of course, creation of strong “paper programs” does not guarantee that these efforts will be successful, however, developing programs with the most potential to build the needed skills and competencies is the first step to successful implementation. The field of adult education has much to add to this process through its programming theories.

Research Questions

Overall Research Question

Do the fourteen Virginia SDA 1995 Title II-A job training plans outline programs which have the potential to fulfill the overall JTPA purpose to create workers with “increased employment and earnings, increased educational and occupational skills, and decreased welfare dependency, thereby improving the quality of the work force and enhancing the productivity and competitiveness of the Nation” (Text, 1993, p. 4)?

Sub-Questions

- 1) Who oversees the management of the job training programs?
- 2) What are the stated goals and objectives of the job training programs?
- 3) If the SDA uses outside providers of training and other services, how are these providers selected?
- 4) How are those in need of training identified and brought into the programs?
- 5) What benefits are provided to help support individuals participating in the programs?
- 6) What training services and training related services will be offered?
- 7) What is the process for taking an individual through job training?
- 8) What competencies do these programs try to develop?
- 9) How do the SDAs evaluate their programs?

Significance of the Problem

The public policy process often is divided into three key elements: goals, implementation, and outcomes. As federal job training policy places more emphasis on skill development and learning ability in policy goals, it will become more difficult to achieve the desired outcomes. As the

types of job skills needed by workers become more complex, it will be more challenging to determine at the start of the implementation process which programs might best develop these skills. Increasingly, local level implementers will be asked to fulfill overall policy goals with little guidance or restriction on how they achieve these goals. Job training plans could serve as vital tools in the implementation process. It is important to examine these plans in a manner so as to identify how they do and do not reach their potential in this capacity.

Limitations

There are limitations to this type of research project. The analysis is highly interpretative. Because the findings have not been compared to outcome data, the strengths and weaknesses discussed in regard to the plans are in relation to the identified criteria, not actual program outcomes. The style of the program plans themselves set certain limitations on the project. Since the plans are written based on instructions and guidelines provided by the state, the SDAs might engage in additional activities that are not discussed because they are not required under the plan guidelines. Also, the sample has been limited to one state. Because the Act requires certain plan elements, most SDAs throughout the country would have to provide similar information. However, other states might add requirements not requested in the Commonwealth of Virginia and, therefore, may have plans which demonstrate more of the analysis criteria than these fourteen plans.

Organization of the Study

This study is organized in five chapters. Chapter One has included the introduction, background, statement and significance of the problem, research questions, and limitations. Chapter Two consists of the literature review. Chapter Three outlines the method and procedures for gathering, organizing, and analyzing the data. Chapter Four includes the data summary and analysis. Chapter Five summarizes and discusses the findings, answers the overall research question, notes the implications of these findings, and makes recommendations for further research.

Chapter Two Literature Review

Introduction

Developing and understanding workforce development policy requires a familiarity with a variety of issues and areas of study. Theories and beliefs from multiple disciplines ranging from economics to policy to education intertwine during the formation of this type of policy. This literature review focuses on key topics impacting the design, implementation, and outcomes of workforce development policy. The chapter begins with a review of the literature on the economy, business, and their impact on workforce skill needs. Next works on federal job training policy are examined to provide a sense of the general strengths and weaknesses discussed around past and present federal training efforts. A review of job training program studies follows. The chapter closes with sections focusing on literature on two key topics impacting the execution of training programs. Writings about policy implementation are reviewed, followed by a brief discussion of education program planning literature. Criteria to evaluate the SDA job training plans rise from the literature review and will be discussed further in Chapter Three.

Workforce 2000

In 1987, the Hudson Institute issued a report, Workforce 2000: Work and Workers for the 21st Century, which identified trends in the economy and business that will impact the needs of the workforce in the year 2000 and beyond. The concepts in this study have been further developed in later reports (Carnevale, 1991; Marshall & Tucker, 1992; Reich, 1992; SCANS, 1992; Geber, 1993; Grubb, 1996; Bassi, Benson, & Cheney, 1996) and criticized in others (Mishel & Teixeira, 1991). A brief overview of the issues raised by the Hudson Institute provides a useful outline for a review of subsequent studies.

During the course of their review of key trends in the economy and business that would change the nature of work and the needs of the workforce, the Hudson Institute identified four trends that will impact these areas the most by the end of the 20th century. They reported that:

1. “The American economy should grow at a healthy pace.”
2. “U.S. manufacturing will be a much smaller share of the economy in the year 2000.”
3. “The workforce will grow slowly, becoming older, more female, and more disadvantaged.”

4. “The new jobs in service industries will demand much higher skill levels than the jobs of today” (Hudson Institute, 1987, p. xiii).

The report went on to note that many of the new jobs will be available in professional, technical and sales areas, with much of the growth taking place in the service sector. The service sector is unique in that unlike manufacturing, service industries “create economic value, without creating a tangible product” (Hudson Institute, 1987, p. 21).

They noted that changes in the workplace require a different type of workforce, one with not only higher skills, but higher levels of education to better accommodate the increased use of technology and handling of information. Though service industries produce many jobs that do not necessarily reflect these higher level skills, such as work generated for waiters, sales clerks, or truck drivers, the higher wage jobs in service and the jobs created in other sectors such as healthcare, technology, and the sciences all require more education and mastery of higher abilities in the areas of language, math, reading, and reasoning (Hudson Institute, 1987).

A key idea raised by Workforce 2000 is that a main weakness of the American workforce is its education. Those most likely to be lacking basic education skills are the disadvantaged and minorities. The new job market will present the most difficulties and barriers for these groups. As the report noted, job training programs such as JTPA cannot succeed when the education system is failing the workforce (Hudson Institute, 1987).

The ideas raised by the Hudson Institute report are divided into five sections - the changing economy, the changing workplace, skills needs, educational needs, and needs of minorities - and subsequent studies and reports on these issues are reviewed below.

The Changing Economy

Robert Reich (1992) in The Work of Nations laid out changes in the economy and global market place that are leading to changes in the workplace. Manufacturing will move overseas in order to take advantage of a lower cost workforce. As noted by the Hudson Institute (1987) and discussed by Reich, value is not derived from the delivery of goods, but by the ability to provide service. For Reich, businesses succeeding in the new global economy will be able to identify needs and provide solutions to meet those needs. These services might be in the areas of engineering, sales, or financial management. Reich (1992) noted that businesses built on the identification of needs and solutions will be the strongest in the global economy. Carnevale (1991) noted that the new economy requires more quality, timeliness, convenience and specialization in the delivery of goods and services. He also wrote that changes in lifestyles has led to a shift in what types of services should be provided by today’s businesses to meet customers’ growing demand for homemaking and personal care services (Carnevale, 1991).

The Changing Workplace

To accommodate the changing economy, the workplace is changing. Many studies (Carnevale, 1991; Marshall & Tucker, 1992; SCANS, 1992; Geber, 1993) discussed the high-performance workplace. SCANS noted that the high-performance workplace is based on the following ideas: “flexible production,” “employee empowerment” to make decisions, an emphasis on excellence, “continual training to upgrade skills,” and more teamwork (1992, p. 5). Marshall and Tucker (1992) pointed out that technology plays a role in the development of this new work environment. The machines do the basic work, such as the rote tasks formerly performed by people. The employees then spend their time correcting problems with machinery and developing better products and services. Geber (1993) also saw that the high-performance workplace would foster involvement of its employees since they understand the technology and can make recommendations to improve the organization. However, she noted that companies often do not want to invest in training and technology to create a high-performance work environment since the potential pay-off of such an investment is unknown. Marshall and Tucker (1992) recommended incentives to businesses that pay high wages, make efforts to improve productivity, and work to develop high-performance organizations.

Enhanced Skills

For our workforce to meet the demands of the global economy and the high-performance workplace, they will need better skills in a variety of areas. Most studies (Hudson Institute, 1987; Frasier, 1988; Mishel & Teixeira, 1991; Carnevale, 1991; Reich, 1992; Marshall & Tucker, 1992; SCANS, 1992; Geber, 1993; Grubb, 1996) noted a lack of these skills in many sectors of the workforce. Frasier (1988) found employers in Vermont noted a need for training in the areas of communications, math, and service skills. Marshall and Tucker (1992) saw a lack of not only basic skills such as math and reading, but also weaknesses in areas such as social skills and work ethic. Geber (1993) noted organizations have trouble converting to high-performance since employees lack the basic skills to build on for high-performance.

The SCANS (1992) report on the skills needed by the high-performance workforce was outlined in Chapter One. Carnevale (1991) broke job skills out into sixteen key competencies: (1) foundation skills which foster the ability of people for learning how to learn, such as how to collect, comprehend, and apply knowledge; (2) reading skills; (3) writing skills; (4) computational skills; (5) speaking skills; (6) listening skills; (7) problem solving skills; (8) creativity skills; (9) self-esteem skills; (10) motivation and goal-setting skills; (11) personal and career development skills; (12) interpersonal skills; (13) negotiation skills; (14) teamwork skills; (15) organizational effectiveness skills; and, (16) leadership skills. Others shared his findings on these skill needs, especially basic academic skills, such as reading, writing, and math

(Marshall and Tucker, 1992; Grubb, 1996; Bassi, Benson, & Cheney, 1996). In addition, they pointed to a lack of less easily defined abilities, such as aptitude, common sense (Grubb, 1996), work ethic, and suitable social skills (Marshall & Tucker, 1992).

A report critical of Workforce 2000 (Hudson Institute, 1987) questioned whether there will be a growth in high-performance, high-wage jobs (Mishel & Teixeira, 1991). In The Myth of the Coming Labor Shortage: Jobs, Skills, and Incomes of America's Workforce 2000, Mishel and Teixeira (1991) reviewed economic and business trends which led them to conclude that high-skill jobs will not be in abundance by 2000, therefore there will be no shortage of skilled labor. Still, they noted educational and training efforts should be pursued so as to increase the skills of the workforce to provide a base for the development of high-performance workplaces (Mishel & Teixeira, 1991).

Enhanced Education

Since many of the skills needed by today's workforce are basic and academic in nature, writers often pointed to failures and weaknesses in the education system. Carnevale noted that "learning is the rationing hand that distributes earnings in the American economy" (1991, p. 134). Hager (1990) pointed out the growing overlap between education and training, noting the possibility that for the purposes of workforce development there soon might not be a distinction between the two. However, in terms of workforce preparation, many studies (Hudson Institute, 1987; Carnevale, 1991; Reich, 1992; Grubb, 1996) asserted that education, prior to any training or job development, plays an important role in a person's ability to enter and compete in the job market.

Reich (1992) reviewed our current education system and questioned its efficiency in preparing students for the global economy. Much of our schooling techniques were suited for the manufacturing environment, not the high-level problem identifying and solving environment of the high-performance workplace. Reich outlined an educational system which seeks to foster skills in "abstraction, system thinking, experimentation, and collaboration" (1992, p. 229) in order to create students ready to work in the global economy.

Grubb's (1996) work emphasized the growth of a "sub-baccalaureate" workforce. Grubb noted the potential of community colleges to provide this segment of the workforce with the additional skills needed to gain access to the labor market. He saw community colleges as a potential link which could provide both the basic skills needed by the workforce and the job skills sought by employers. Grubb (1996) noted that since training programs do not focus on basic skills, people without education often are trained on how to get a job but do not have the skills to keep a job.

Minorities

The Hudson Institute (1987) and Carnevale (1991) both felt better paying jobs will go to those with a higher level of education. Both also noted that minorities face the greatest barrier to education. The Hudson Institute (1987) devoted much attention to how changes in work impact minorities. Their findings pointed to the fact that a greater number of minorities, many of whom are disadvantaged, will be entering the workforce. However, they viewed minorities as over represented in occupations which will be disappearing in 2000 and beyond. Though the report found many jobs will be created in lower skill areas, even these jobs will require at least the ability to read, perform basic computations, and speak clearly. The Hudson Institute (1987) report pointed out “minority workers are not only less likely to have had satisfactory schooling and on-the-job training, they may have language and attitude problems that prevent them from taking advantage of the jobs that will exist” (p. 114). The disadvantaged face many of the same problems.

Carnevale (1991) emphasized the increased focus on education as a barrier for minorities. He noted “a principal cause of the stalled progress of minorities has been the increasing value of education in providing access to good jobs and learning on the job” (Carnevale, 1991, p. 137). The Hudson Institute (1987) also found that education and training barriers are only two areas where minorities need support. In order for them to participate more fully in the job market, they would need more assistance in areas around family responsibility, such as child care or “big brother” programs (Hudson Institute, 1987).

Clearly, the studies presented above reveal a dynamic economy and work environments requiring top level skills for most employees, with the best paying jobs going to the most educated and trained. As the next century begins, the actual changes in the workplace must continue to be examined and further predictions made. Though the estimates of the Hudson Institute (1987) report do not all seem to be coming to fruition as 2000 approaches, later works still point to many of the same workforce needs, such as increased skills and education and a growing emphasis on high-performance workplaces.

Federal Job Training Policy

In addition to studies done on the implementation and outcomes of specific federal job training programs, which will be reviewed in the following section, a body of literature exists which assesses the outcomes of policy based on compilations of such studies and expert analysis. These works serve to point out the perceived strengths and weaknesses in federal job training policy and its programs, and often offer recommendations as to enhancements to those policies and programs.

This section reviews a sample of this literature in order to identify the policy and program areas and elements authors have analyzed and critiqued. Literature on the Manpower Development and Training Act (MDTA) and other programs of the sixties are addressed first to give a historical perspective on federal job training program analysis. Since much federal job training policy funding is defended through the use of economic policy theory, the economic perspective on these policies and programs are briefly discussed. Finally, literature on current job training policy, such as JTPA, is reviewed.

MDTA

Mangum (1968) in his book MDTA: Foundation of Federal Manpower Policy began by noting that MDTA programs had been successful, but did not fulfill many of the Act's key objectives. He pointed out that the Act was developed under the assumption that there existed many vacancies for which the unemployed could be trained. However, the jobs that were available often required more training than was provided to the unemployed, therefore the positions were filled by those already possessing many of the requisite skills. In addition, Mangum saw that another key objective of MDTA was ignored: "Another goal originally mentioned - the general upgrading of the labor force - has never become an explicit objective in practice" (1968, p. 78).

Mangum's work focused on how the disadvantaged, a target population of MDTA, fared under the policy. Based on the outcomes reviewed, he found that the disadvantaged still faced serious barriers to successful training. For example, Mangum noted that on-the-job training (OJT) proved to be an effective training technique, especially for the disadvantaged, yet the disadvantaged were over represented in institutional training as opposed to OJT (Mangum, 1968).

Two key critiques of federal job training policy that remain constant targets for reform were brought up by Mangum (1968) in connection with MDTA. He found there was evidence of creaming, the selection of the more highly skilled and potentially employable for participation in training programs, in the early years of MDTA implementation. This was evidenced by the low number of disadvantaged in OJT programs. Mangum saw the skill requirements of available positions to be one cause of creaming, since MDTA could not provide enough training to the unskilled unemployed to make them suitable for certain jobs. He recommended service criteria targeting the disadvantaged be established in order to reduce creaming (Mangum, 1968).

The second criticism, one echoed throughout later JTPA related literature, focused on coordination of federal training programs. Mangum stated "coordination of federal manpower programs had become a major issues by 1966" (1968, p. 71), pointing to the overlapping programs and funding sources housed in multiple federal agencies. Mangum believed that coordination was more important than dealing with other training issues, such as creaming: "A

more useful area for legislative and administration consideration is the melding of MDTA with other federal manpower programs” (Mangum, 1968, p. 179).

Subsequent literature on job training programs of the nineteen sixties raised these same issues. Levitan and Mangum (1969) pointed to administrative confusion as a key problem with manpower programs. Nathan (1969) faulted the administrative structure of job training programs for their inability to focus their operations. Levitan and Mangum (1969) dug more deeply into the idea of training the unemployed for available positions, noting that since the labor market was weak there might not be jobs available for those who receive training, yet found the skills obtained through the programs gave the unemployed a needed competitive edge in a tight market. They recommended efforts to identify whether the unemployed could be trained in the skills needed by the local labor market prior to enrolling them in training (Levitan & Mangum, 1969). Nathan (1969) built on this concept, pointing not only to a failure to target useful market skills, but an inability of the programs to assure jobs obtained are stable and desirable positions. Nathan (1969) also saw OJT as an effective tool to bring minorities into the workplace.

Levin (1977) saw two opportunities for measuring the success of training on reducing poverty. One was to determine if programs actually raise people out of poverty; another was to see how other programs with the same goals compare from a cost perspective (Levin, 1977). Levin (1977) did not predict major changes to job training policy based on the experiences of the sixties. Levitan and Mangum (1969) made a series of recommendations for program improvement which included integration of programs at the federal, state and local level, a focus on the use of successful practices, a priority focus on the most seriously skill disadvantaged, and an expansion of services to meet the needs of more people.

Economics

Supporting the needs of a changing economy is not the only economic perspective on job training policy. Policy analysts often use economic theory on market failure (Stern & Ritzen, 1991), nonmarket failure (Hansen, 1991), and other combinations of economic theories (Marquand, 1993) to discuss, evaluate and justify training efforts. This brief overview is intended to provide an introduction to some of the economic theory perspectives on job training policy. These pieces in no way represent an exhaustive review, but do cover many of the key concepts.

In Market Failure in Training? New Economic Analysis and Evidence on Training of Adults Employees, Stern and Ritzen (1991) discussed in their introduction classic market failure in relation to job training. They noted that the market fails to provide training for a variety of reasons; Stern and Ritzen highlighted five:

1. “uncertainty:” the returns on training investments are unknown and therefore risky for business;
2. “liquidity constraints:” workers do not have the money to pay for their own training;
3. “minimum wage legislation:” workers are not paid enough money to offer to subsidize a certain portion of their training by sharing some of their wages;
4. subsidized training for the unemployed: workers do not have to pay for their own training until they are on the job; and,
5. labor contracts: no incentives for training are established during negotiations (1991, pp. 1-2).

They recommended the use of information on the value of training, training wages to reduce financial risk, a tax fund pool for training moneys, and a guaranteed wage level for those with certain skills levels as solutions for the areas of market failure (Stern & Ritzen, 1991).

In the same book, Hansen (1991) discussed the impact of nonmarket failure on job training. Hansen (1991) noted that the nonmarket - the government - succeeds in many areas. Information about jobs is available and the government engages in much general training. Hansen (1991) saw failure in another governmental nonmarket, the school systems. Workers do not necessarily have the general skills needed so employers can train them in specific skills. Improved education and training was viewed by Hansen (1991) as a public good since it improves society as a whole and benefits are made available to everyone without anyone else’s opportunity to access the education and training being reduced.

Marquand (1993) moved past standard economic theory and blended ideas to show that training can be justified from a socio-economic perspective. She noted economic theory fails in the analysis of and justification for job training because it “cannot handle, even in principle, ..the apparently idiosyncratic, individual variations in behavior which abound” (Marquand, 1993, p. 1075). These variations rise out of the behavior of the human capital which makes up the training population. Marquand (1993) described a socio-economic perspective on training in which “training is a purposive intervention which enhances the individual’s ability to act competently in a wider range of circumstances than before the training took place” (1993, p. 1078). Rather than making policy decisions based solely on economic reasons, she recommended a blending of economic ideas with social science in order to plan programs based on their social context, with economic theory serving as a part of the decision making process (Marquand, 1993).

JTPA and Current Job Training Policy

The Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) was signed into law in 1982. This legislation replaced the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) and was designed to provide training and development services to both youth and adults. A key change from CETA was the transfer of more control of federal programs to the states by distributing training funds in the form of block grants. JTPA enables the states to provide a variety of training and related services. Disadvantaged adults are covered under Title II-A of the Act with youth addressed in Titles II-B and C. Additional populations served under other titles of the Act include displaced workers, Native Americans, migrant and seasonal workers, and veterans. The Jobs Corps program is also part of JTPA (National Commission for Employment Policy, 1995). The focus of this research project was Title II-A programs serving disadvantaged adults.

In 1989, a few years after the introduction of JTPA, the Job Training Partnership Act Advisory Committee (JTPAAC) was charged with reviewing the first five years of JTPA programs and making recommendations for improvement. Their first finding was that fragmentation of the delivery of job training was a barrier to the success of JTPA (JTPAAC, 1989) which reflects similar criticism of MDTA (Mangum, 1968; Nathan, 1969; Levitan & Mangum, 1969). JTPAAC (1989) found that the role and objectives of JTPA were sound, but made major proposals which echo recommendations made in relation to MDTA: 1) targeting the programs to more specifically serve the needs of the most under-skilled (JTPAAC, 1989; Levitan & Mangum, 1969); 2) individualizing the training and increasing its quality (JTPAAC, 1989; Levitan & Mangum, 1969); 3) changing the goals of JTPA to measure competencies instead of only employment and income (JTPAAC, 1989); 4) improving programs through a more effective use of research findings (JTPAAC, 1989); and, 5) expansion of the linkages between the public and private sector (JTPAAC, 1989).

Five years after the Job Training Policy Act Advisory Committee's findings, the National Research Council (NRC) addressed the role of the federal government in post-secondary education. Their findings indicated that programs must be linked in order to provide "coherent, high-quality" training (NRC, 1994, p. 3). In addition to emphasizing many of the changes mentioned above (JTPAAC, 1989), NRC (1994) recommended enhancing the role of the states in job training, favoring continuous improvement instead of radical policy change, encouraging more involvement of employers, and assuring resources are adequate for programs. In regard specifically to JTPA, NRC (1994) noted that though the program has had a modest impact on its intended population, the funding levels are too low, leading to fewer programs than actually are needed. System was a key word utilized in the report, emphasizing a need to make the variety of post-secondary education and training opportunities work together better (NRC, 1994). In addition, NRC (1994) recommended the implementation of skills standards to foster skill development. Finally, they noted the need for policy design which focuses on best practices.

Mentioning JTPA in particular, they stated performance standards are used, yet “it does not attempt to identify what sort of practices distinguish more- and less-effective employment-training programs” (NRC, 1994, pp. 141-142).

Many of these recommendations rise from analysts who generally favor federal involvement in job training. Others are more critical not only of the success of these programs, but of their usefulness overall. Bovard (1989) was critical of findings that show workers are better off after training, citing studies which show people coming out of job training make less than those who do not receive training. Bovard (1989) also noted program overlap with the perspective that more programs are created because training problems are not being solved by previous programs. Lafer (1994) analyzed data which suggests that there would not be enough jobs in the market if all those in need of jobs had enough training. He noted current policy, JTPA included, does not require the government to gather information on vacancies in order to inform policy decisions (Lafer, 1994). Lafer (1994) pointed to data from employers showing that there is not a growing demand for skilled labor; he interpreted the gap between educated and uneducated worker wages to be driven by shrinking wages for lower skilled workers rather than being caused by a shortage of educated workers. He did note that changes in work ethic, attitude, and customer service abilities are needed in today’s market and assistance in these areas might be more in order than skill training (Lafer, 1994), an idea shared by others critical of the government’s role in training (“What Works?”, 1996).

The literature on training policy, even works less supportive of federal intervention, raises many similar recommendations for job training policy efforts. Best practice information should be collected and utilized in program development. Focus must be placed on the more hard-to-serve in order to assure they are not eliminated through creaming or simply a structural inability for programs to provide them with enough training to gain skill levels necessary for employment. From MDTA forward there has been an emphasis on the need to somehow change the overall job training system to be more efficient and effective for administrators and clients alike. Many of the issues raised by those analyzing job training policy rise out of or have lead to the studies which follow.

Job Training Partnership Act and Related Studies

No studies were found which related directly to the focus of this study, the job training plans developed by PICs and SDAs. However, many studies address JTPA programs, their successes and failures, the structure of the programs at the state and local level, and their outcomes. The nature of the studies often is impacted by when the research took place. Early studies focus on the development of JTPA and other training programs based on changes in federal policy. Later studies address outcomes of programs which have been in effect for a few years. Authors begin to identify a need not only to study training programs, but also to develop better ways to

evaluate these programs and their outcomes. Some key works study what is wrong with federal training programs, while other authors look for best practices to provide guidance to those implementing federal training policy. Therefore, although research on how local level training is developed and implemented is limited, JTPA and related programs have been the focus of study since they began. Appendix A contains a summary of research studies related to job training policy.

Outcomes

Many studies address the program structures and outcomes of federal training policy. Cook (1986) provided a field analysis of the operations of forty SDAs in twenty states. This study did not cover outcomes, but focused on what impact JTPA had on the structure of state level training efforts. The findings showed that the governor's office in most states was more closely tied to the control of JTPA programs than under CETA, yet at the local level many of the same CETA administrative structures were still in place. Changes in funding were not noted by Cook (1986), however a study addressing the implementation of the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS) program (Hagen & Lurie, 1995) found that the shift in legislation also impacted the resources available at the local level.

Studies focusing on outcomes look at both the direct impact of the programs on participants and how elements of the policy alter the services provided to participants. The National Commission for Employment Policy (1988) addressed how performance standards of JTPA affect the clients, services, and cost of these programs. They discovered that incentives tied to performance often reduced the services provided to hard-to-serve clients, unless the PIC had specific policies directing efforts toward targeted, hard-to-serve populations. Costs, however, were not affected by performance standards. The United States General Accounting Office (GAO, 1994c) has conducted a variety of studies of JTPA and related programs. In July of 1994, they compared JTPA and JOBS's use of performance standards, fund reporting methods, and outcome data collection (GAO, 1994c). They found both programs spent similar funds on training and education, although neither program broke-down how those funds were spent. JTPA and JOBS often shared services, yet only JTPA programs used outcome measures as part of the program data collection process (GAO, 1994c).

Actual outcomes - how well the programs achieve their results - also have been studied. The Department of Labor (1995) compiled results from a variety of studies in their report What's Working (and What's Not). This summary showed that for JTPA Title II-A programs short term training efforts proved to be least successful, with OJT and job search assistance having the greatest impact on increased employment and earnings. Interestingly, long term classroom training, such as additional schooling, seemed to lead to increased success by participants over longer periods of time. They discovered evidence that basic skills training leads to higher

earnings. These increased earnings, however, might be brought about by longer hours worked rather than an actual increase in wages (U.S. DOL, 1995). Since increased wages is one objective of JTPA legislation, along with employment rates, it is often used for outcome studies. Using data from the National JTPA Study, the General Accounting Office (1996a) found there to be no statistically significant difference between employment rates and increased earnings of JTPA participants compared to a control group five years after exiting the program. This finding directly contradicts the Department of Labor (1995) results. No studies were identified which addressed the JTPA objective to enhance the skills of the workforce.

The Governor's Employment and Training Department (1988) of Virginia completed a study on the implementation of JTPA in the state for program year 1986. This study was not a field analysis of administrative structures at the local level, but research on the outcomes of the program for that cycle. Their findings showed that 63% of participants were employed thirteen weeks after exiting a JTPA program, with 27% showing an earnings increase. Basic skills proved to impact the success of participants, with only 37% of drop-out adults employed after JTPA (Governor's Employment and Training Department, 1988). Recommendations called for more basic skills education, improved services to welfare recipients, higher quality placements, and more testing, especially of reading levels, at program entry.

Evaluation

The outcome studies show various success levels of these programs. One factor affecting outcome results is how these programs are evaluated. Bishop (1989) questioned how job training programs for the disadvantaged were being evaluated. He pointed to stigmatization as a potential barrier to increased wages after completion of training. Bishop (1989) noted that lower wages were paid to employees hired by employers with knowledge of their participation in federally funded training than what was paid to people with similar skill levels yet no tie to federal training. He recommended future evaluation be based on productivity of the trained compared to those not from a federally funded training program over utilization of earnings as a program success measure (Bishop, 1989).

In 1993, the US Department of Labor sought to provide a new evaluation methodology for studying JTPA programs. Their study utilized more carefully constructed control groups which better matched JTPA participants. Their case study of Utah (U.S. DOL, 1993) showed that non-experimental approaches could be used to evaluate JTPA programs. Their actual findings in Utah demonstrated JTPA participants were more likely to be employed two years after completing the program than those not participating in JTPA (U.S. DOL, 1993). These studies, in addition to the conflicting outcome results, point to the need for a more uniform, effective method of job training program evaluation.

Overlap

One of the most studied elements of job training programs is the overlap and fragmentation of the various education and job training programs funded by the federal government. The number of studies addressing this issue have risen sharply over the past few years, hinting at a flaw in the system. However, the increased interest around this issue, especially the rise in the number of federal studies on overlap, coincides with the development of new legislation designed to consolidate the programs. The findings for the need to consolidate federal training programs have been echoed in other literature (Mangum, 1968; Levitan & Mangum, 1969; Nathan, 1969; JTPAAC, 1989).

Zank (1991) reviewed policies for seventy-five federal programs for the disadvantaged. He found coordination to be negatively impacted by conflicting criteria, especially in regard to how income is determined around eligibility and the difference in the definition of poverty. He recommend the use of JTPA offices for program coordination with the introduction of one-point entry for clients (Zank, 1991). The General Accounting Office has studied a variety of issues around program coordination. The studies have addressed differences in program requirements and operating cycles (GAO, 1994a), agency monitoring procedures (GAO, 1994b), and program overlap specifically (GAO, 1994d). Like Zank (1991), the GAO (1994a) found that the conflicting eligibility requirements had a negative impact on the delivery of services. They also noted that the requirements confused eligibility determination. A later study (GAO, 1994d) showed that multiple programs shared the same goals, clients, services and delivery approaches, yet all had separate administrative structures. When looking at the monitoring procedures of various agencies, the GAO (1994b) discovered that agencies were not collecting information on program success, therefore could not determine what was working at the local level.

However, a few studies have noted that coordination was already taking place at the local level, indicating that locally these policy issues are being addressed. Roth (1989), in a case study of Illinois JTPA programs, adult education, and vocational education, found that area planning councils were able to coordinate their efforts in order to prevent programs overlapping in their efforts. Grubb and McDonnell (1996) looked at how local programs work together and found competition was not an issue. They noted state and federal incentives and legal mandates to coordinate assisted in this process, however, local factors, such as personal relationships, initiatives, and a history of interaction, also facilitated the coordination process (Grubb & McDonnell, 1996). Cheney (1996) in a review of PIC Title III administrative entities found that the integration of various programs did not have a positive impact on outcomes and in one case had a negative impact on outcomes. More study is needed in the areas of overlap and coordination to determine the possible positive and negative affects of integration efforts.

Successful Strategies

Researchers have found that certain aspects of job training are effective. Moorman (1981) described a successful reading improvement program in Texas. He noted that careful planning, coordination of resources between program planners and the local community college, solid evaluation, and the use of a JTPA administrative entity to fill classes all impacted the success of the program. He also found, however, that personal motivation of participants to be employed was a primary factor in the program's outcomes (Moorman, 1981). Another case study (Armstrong, 1989) found that a program which combined job-search skill training with the actual job search resulted in a 75 - 79% placement rate. It was noted that the population utilized, Mormons, was highly homogenous.

The U. S. General Accounting Office (1992) found certain services provided could be linked to program success. This study used the provision of child care to compare the success of those who received services with those who did not receive services. The findings indicated that though a direct cause and effect relationship could not be found, 69% of the parents who received child care completed training and 68% obtained employment. Of those not receiving child care, 45% completed training and 49% obtained employment (GAO, 1992).

A key study in successful practices is the U. S. General Accounting Office's 1996 report, Employment Training: Successful Projects Share Common Strategy. By comparing the practices of six programs with outstanding results in completion rates, job placement and retention rates, and wages, the GAO (1996b) identified four common strategies used by the six programs. First, all programs assured that participants were committed to receiving training and focused on getting a job. Second, all of the six programs took steps to remove barriers that prevented full participation in the programs by their clients. Some of the services utilized to assist in participation included child care, transportation and financial support. Third, the skills targeted for development by the programs always included an emphasis on employability skills, which included training in the importance of good attendance, the development of a good work attitude and work ethics, how to dress for work, and how to behave appropriately on the job. Finally, all six programs assured their skill training was linked to the needs of local employers (GAO, 1996b).

The research on federal job training, specifically JTPA programs, provides very disparate perspectives on the structure, evaluation, and success of these programs. Clearly a need for additional research exists in all areas. Standardized methods for evaluating outcomes would assist in not only better analysis, but also could provide more information on successful practices. Many of the studies done by the General Accounting Office need to be considered in context. Since the increased emphasis on overlap studies is occurring while the government is exploring policy options to consolidate these programs, the political climate's impact on the studies cannot

be entirely overlooked. Overall, the research on JTPA programs would be greatly enhanced by an increase in journalized research on these issues and concerns. More information on best practices might provide useful information to those implementing JTPA programs. The review of studies, in brief, seems to indicate that JTPA might be having slight success with the intended population, but how to improve the programs remains quite unclear.

Implementation

Mazmanian and Sabatier (1981) defined implementation as: the carrying out of a basic policy decision, usually made in a statute... Ideally that decision identifies the problem(s) to be addressed, stipulates the objective(s) to be pursued, and, in a variety of ways, “structures” the implementation process (pp. 5-6).

They noted in a later work (Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1989) that there is a growing “crisis of implementation” and stated “the concern is not with the objectives of the programs *per se*; rather, even if the programs are enacted, the ability to translate stated goals into reality may be beyond the capacity of government as we know it” (Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1989, p. iii). Because this thesis focuses on how SDAs interpret federal job training objectives and seek to fulfill them, works on implementation are included in this literature review to address the problems with implementation, the tools provided for implementation analysis, what implementation literature can provide the practitioner, and the implementation of JTPA.

As Mazmanian and Sabatier noted, there seems to be a “crisis of implementation,” with many policy goals not being met as statutes are turned into programs. In an early work addressing this issue, Implementation, Pressman and Wildavsky (1984) found in a study of Oakland, California job creation programs that much adaptation takes place as programs are implemented. They noted that implementation cannot be separated from policy and that implementation factors need to have more impact of the policy design practice (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1984). Many authors (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1984; Williams, 1976; Levin & Ferman, 1985) found that we simply just might not know how to implement complex policies, especially major social programs (Williams, 1976), such as job training for the disadvantaged. Researchers (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1984; Williams, 1976; Levin & Ferman, 1985) discovered that the greatest barrier is creating systems, operations, and administrative procedures that will produce the results sought by the policies.

Little information has been put forward as to how these barriers can be overcome. Pressman and Wildavsky (1984) pointed toward implementation being considered in the policy design phase. This concept was supported by others, such as Williams (1976) who suggested that the design process must have an actor interested in supporting the inclusion of implementation issues in the

design process. Levin and Ferman (1985) noted the lack of guidance in the implementation process and tried to outline elements of successful implementation:

- 1) First, was the program able to hold *delay* to a reasonable level?
- 2) Second, was it able to hold *financial* costs to a reasonable level?
- 3) Third, was it able to meet its original *objectives* without significant alteration or underachievement of these objectives? (p. 5)

Levin and Ferman (1985) considered implementation to be a mechanism to test policies; corrections could be made as implementation reveals design flaws in policy.

Implementation Analysis

Mazmanian and Sabatier have done a great deal of work on developing methods to analyze implementation (Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1981; Sabatier, 1986; Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1989). Their earliest framework identified three factors that impacted the achievement of policy objectives. First was the “tractability of the problems addressed by the statute” (Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1981, p. 6). Put simply, certain problems are easier to solve with policy than others. They noted that the more difficult it is for the impacted group to handle change, the more diverse the behavior being addressed, the greater number of people impacted by the policy, and the greater the need for change in behavior, the more difficult it is to reach policy objectives (Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1981). Second, Mazmanian and Sabatier (1981) pointed to the “extent to which the statute coherently structures the implementation process” (p. 10). Among other elements, they noted that policies with clear goals, resources available for implementing agencies, implementation going to agencies supportive of the policy, and opportunities for participation of outside actors have a better chance for successful implementation (Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1981). Finally, they pointed to “nonstatutory variables affecting implementation” (Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1981, p. 15) such as media attention, public support for the policy, resources of constituency groups, and supportive, skilled leadership.

Other theorists also identified elements for successful implementation. McLaughlin (1987) noted that up-front elements, such as goal clarity, may have less of an impact on implementation success than factors such as local capacity to implement the programs and the local will to make them successful. McLaughlin pointed to factors such as pressure and support for the policy as things beyond the control of policy, but important to reaching objectives through implementation. Sabatier (1986) began to lay out a “top-down/bottom-up” model for implementation analysis that would take into account the sub-systems, identified in bottom-up analysis, with top-down elements such as a focus on actors that manipulate the government’s policy actions. McLaughlin (1987) built on this idea and called for a “third generation” of implementation analysis that looks at systems of policy, not only projects, reveals the multi-

staged nature of implementation, addresses the importance of local variation, and provides micro and macro level analysis.

Clearly, implementation analysis is a growing discipline seeking to find and utilize the best elements of its theory. Yet, how helpful is this theory to practitioners? In his 1986 article “Policy Recommendations for Multi-Actor Implementation: An Assessment of the Field,” O’Toole reviewed over 300 pieces of implementation literature to determine how helpful the findings are to people utilizing them. He found little agreement on implementation theories; there also was not agreement on the components of implementation. Unlike other fields of study, implementation authors do not test the findings of each other’s work (O’Toole, 1986). O’Toole (1986) noted that in the multi-actor research, such as Pressman and Wildavsky (1984), there are few detailed recommendations, the advice given is often contradictory, and the discussions of implications are not followed by action recommendations. O’Toole pointed out “no matter how understandable, it remains true that the state of the field’s development imposes a real constraint on the quality of advice available for those in the policy process” (1986, p. 198). O’Toole (1986) recommended the field work to assist practitioners as well as continue to develop this new area of theory.

JTPA Implementation

The implementation literature on JTPA is quite limited. Dellinger (1984) provided an overview of the launch of JTPA. This piece, testimony given to a House sub-committee, outlined how the program was working. Dellinger (1984) highlighted the emphasis of JTPA on performance and how it was a results oriented program. The report noted the role of the federal government in assisting with the implementation process by providing technical assistance.

A few years later, Bailey (1988) focused on private sector involvement in JTPA. Touted as one of the strongest elements of the new legislation, private sector involvement was seen as important to the success of job training. Bailey (1988) discovered that this market system did not have the impact on program improvement conceptualized during the design of the Act. He pointed to three weaknesses. First, the financial rewards did not truly have a motivational impact on the program administrators. Second, the performance standards were not tied to JTPA objectives. Third, the JTPA administrators could use less effort to meet standards by picking only the most highly qualified for participation in the programs (Bailey, 1988). He also noted that PIC involvement, which signifies the involvement of business, was more limited than expected; much of the implementation was turned over to governmental agencies.

Nuckols (1990) found many studies do not trace the transformation of law into practice. He did so in his analysis of JTPA. In reviewing the implementation of JTPA, Nuckols (1990) noted JTPA was not meeting its objectives. Like Bailey (1988), Nuckols (1990) pointed to a lack of

PIC involvement as a failure of the Act to achieve its private sector involvement goals. In addition, Nuckols (1990) found creaming to be occurring. He stated “policy analysis could have predicted this outcome under a program where there is emphasis on quick results, inexpensive placements, little monitoring, vague guidelines, and severe funding cuts” (Nuckols, 1990, p. 650). Clearly, all three articles demonstrate the problems outlined by O’Toole (1986). Though Dellinger (1984) only intended to report on implementation, both Bailey (1988) and Nuckols (1990) critiqued the implementation process without offering recommendations for further action. Especially when dealing with programs as complex as job training initiatives, practitioners need more technical assistance as to how to approach the implementation process. Researchers should consider further how the implementation challenges involved in workforce development can be addressed during the policy design process.

Education Program Planning

The implementation literature demonstrates that additional tools are needed by those assigned the task of turning federal job training policy into programs. Implementation theorists (Sabatier, 1986; McLaughlin, 1987) pointed out the important role those at the micro-level of implementation play. Sabatier (1986) specifically discussed a manpower study that found local offices were much more important to the implementation of these programs than the central government. Yet, while implementation literature does not at this time offer strategies for those creating programs, education program planning literature has programming elements applicable to those implementing federal job training policy.

When discussing education program planning, Sork and Caffarella noted “in the most general sense, planning refers to the process of determining the ends to be pursued and the means employed to achieve them” (1989, p. 233). In the case of education and training program planning, the ends normally involve “the acquisition of new skills, attitudes, and knowledge” which is how Nadler (1982, p. 1) defined learning. As Boyle (1981) noted, a program results from all programming activities which involve learners and educators. Since job training involves skill development and those who will learn new skills, the implementation efforts do involve education program planning on some level.

In Planning Better Programs, Boyle (1981) discussed various levels of program. He stated:

A program can be conceptualized at various levels, including national, state, community, organizational, and individual. The levels are relative, but each lower level should contribute to the programs and goals of the higher levels (p. 15).

He went on to note:

A useful way to categorize levels of program is to use statements of objectives. General levels have broader statements with more specific statements for an individual program (Boyle, 1981, p. 15).

Boyle (1981) used the implementation of a federal policy objective as an example of how program can take place at a national, state, local, and individual level.

Many authors (Houle, 1972; Knowles, 1980 & 1990; Boyle, 1981; Nadler, 1982; Knox, 1986; Caffarella, 1988; Sork & Caffarella, 1989) have outlined elements to successful program planning. The amount of education programming planning literature is vast; this review only touches on a sample of representative literature. The number of elements outlined for program planning varied across the literature. Some noted five to six key planning elements (Knowles, 1980 & 1990; Knox, 1986; Sork & Caffarella, 1989) while others indicated fourteen to fifteen elements (Boyle, 1981; Caffarella, 1988). Many of the elements found in the more detailed programming planning processes could be grouped under the six categories of the other literature. The general categories included needs assessment, context analysis, setting objectives, planning learning activities, conducting the learning activity, and evaluating the program (Houle, 1972; Knowles, 1980; Boyle, 1981; Nadler, 1982; Knox, 1986; Caffarella, 1988; Sork & Caffarella, 1989; Knowles, 1990). For programs being planned at what Boyle (1981) described as the county or unit level, which could represent the SDA level in JTPA, not all of the elements would be utilized by program planners, although their decisions and goals would impact the individual level. In order to reach program objectives of the higher levels - state and federal - the program planners at the unit level would need to consider needs assessment, context analysis, objectives, and program evaluation.

Needs assessment determines a gap between desired behavior and the current state of the learner (Knowles, 1980 & 1990; Nadler, 1982; Knox, 1986; Caffarella, 1988; Sork & Caffarella, 1989). The needs identified can be based on desires of the learners (Knowles, 1980 & 1990; Nadler, 1982) or can be based on skill needs determined by the job. Knox (1986) listed many methods to determine needs. These included observation of performance, discussions with the potential learners, review of records showing proficiency, expert opinions, industry practice standards, and an analysis of new technologies and developments impacting skill needs (Knox (1986). This diagnosis should leave a clear understanding of what behaviors or skills will be developed by the program.

Context analysis (Knox, 1986) has also been called front-end analysis (Nadler, 1982), and shares much in common with community survey (Knowles, 1980) and community analysis (Boyle, 1981). Unlike needs assessment, here the emphasis is on the needs of the organization or community into which the learning will be brought. Sork and Caffarella (1989) noted that this

analysis assists in understanding factors impacting the training. The factors could be internal, such as the mission, history, or procedures of the organization (Nadler, 1982; Caffarella, 1988; Sork & Caffarella, 1989) or larger societal factors such as economic and social conditions (Boyle, 1981) or community educational needs (Knowles, 1980). Knox (1986) felt context analysis was important since it allowed the program planner to understand the setting where learners will apply what they learn.

The need to set objectives is noted by all the authors (Knowles, 1980 & 1990; Boyle 1981; Nadler, 1982; Knox, 1986; Caffarella, 1988; Sork & Caffarella, 1989). Houle (1972) focused on objectives, noting that the objective is the end which is to be achieved by the program (Houle, 1972). The objective was described as the tool used to guide program development (Boyle, 1981; Caffarella, 1988; Sork & Caffarella, 1989), set the priorities of the program (Knowles, 1980; Nadler, 1982), and provide the criteria for evaluation (Houle, 1972; Boyle, 1981; Caffarella, 1988). Boyle (1981) noted that meaningful objectives state what will be achieved through the program, identify key participants, develop a clear relationship to the overall problem, are attainable, and are clear and specific. In addition, he pointed out that objectives, especially for evaluation purposes, should in some way be measurable (Boyle, 1981).

Evaluation is the final element important to unit level programs. The literature noted that evaluation of education programs is not only used to evaluate achievement of objectives, but also to improve the education process (Knowles, 1980 & 1990; Boyle, 1981; Knox, 1986; Caffarella, 1988; Sork & Caffarella, 1989). Nadler (1982) expressed the need for evaluation to take place throughout the planning process. Knox (1986) further clarified the two part emphasis of evaluation. He defined summative evaluation as the impact of program on learner performance, the benefits the programs have to others, and the actual outcomes of the program (Knox, 1986). Knox (1986) described formative evaluation as the conclusions of all involved in the program as to how the program can be improved. Viewing evaluation as a two part process (Knowles, 1980 & 1990; Boyle, 1981; Knox, 1986; Caffarella, 1988; Sork & Caffarella, 1989) which goes on throughout the design and delivery of education or training (Nadler, 1982) turns evaluation into a thread running throughout and supporting any and all educational activities, making it a vital part of programming.

Education program planning literature develops multi-step systems to design and deliver education. As Boyle (1981) noted, at the unit level programs must have objectives which support higher level objectives. JTPA SDAs could be viewed as the unit trying to fulfill state and federal objectives through the programs they develop to be delivered by service providers to disadvantaged individuals. Although the actual learning activities are outside of their planning scope, the SDAs do plan programs and set objectives. Therefore, they might benefit from the use of program planning techniques. Unlike the implementation literature, program planning literature outlines how to create and deliver programs. The theories presented in program

planning build on the findings of earlier studies, demonstrating a field which is better equipped to serve its practitioners - educators - than are policy theories. Education program planning literature's potential importance to job training policy implementation will be discussed further in Chapter Three, but the literature outlines key elements that would flow directly into the work of JTPA administrators.

Summary

Workforce 2000

The literature noted changes in the skill needs of the workforce begin with changes in the economy. The production of goods will be replaced by a need for the delivery of services. The authors pointed out that these changes in consumer and economic needs alter the nature of the workplace. Most works outlined the shift to a high-performance workplace. These work environments let the machines do rote tasks and utilize human resources for problem identification and solution. Most of the literature stressed that in order to function in this new workplace employees would need to have enhanced skills. Though some authors questioned whether these new jobs would all require very high skills from all workers, agreement was evident in the area of basic skills and education: Solid reading, writing, numeric, communication, and problem solving skills will be needed at all levels of the workforce in the future. Minorities and the disadvantaged are most likely to be deficient in these skill areas and will need additional education and training.

Federal Job Training Policy

The literature about MDTA, published in the sixties and early seventies, focused on problems with manpower policy at that time. Authors noted the disadvantaged were not always being properly served by these policies and that the goals to end poverty and give people skills to fill open positions were not being met. The literature pointed to creaming, training for unavailable positions, and administrative confusion as key causes for the failure of manpower policy. Economics was seen as having a role in federal job training policy decisions. Policy can be viewed as a mechanism to correct market or nonmarket failures; it also can be addressed from the socio-economic perspective. In regard to JTPA, those analyzing this policy noted many of the same problems as the MDTA work. The needs of the most hard-to-serve are not being met. Fragmentation of the delivery system and overlapping services were considered a hindrance to effective programs. There is a need for more state and local influence and enhanced basic skills training and education. Even the critics of federal intervention noted a need for more education and perhaps some skill training in the area of proper work attitude and behavior.

Job Training Partnership Act and Related Literature

The studies on JTPA overall are inconclusive. Certain outcome findings were positive, especially around the success of OJT, but it was unclear if goals such as higher earnings or enhanced employment were actually achieved. The findings of a Virginia study indicated some success of JTPA in the state. Evaluation was noted as a problem in JTPA studies. Findings pointed to a need for more consistent evaluation techniques to better quantify program results. Program coordination and overlap had recently been the focus of many studies, but the findings were inconclusive. Although on a legislation level much overlap exists, the literature is not definitive as to whether this system prevents effective delivery of job training at the local level. Some successful strategies are being identified through the literature.

Implementation

The implementation literature provided theoretical concepts as to how implementation should be defined and a variety of ways to analyze policy. Most works noted that implementation is a difficult process which is often unsuccessful, if success is measured by achieving the initial policy goals. Elements for successful implementation have been identified, but not tested thoroughly as to their practical usefulness. The literature critiqued itself in one article (O'Toole, 1986) which noted that implementation literature offers little assistance to policy practitioners attempting to implement programs as crafted in legislation. Little important JTPA implementation literature was discovered during this review.

Education Program Planning

Education program planning literature noted that federal programs could be considered education programs, with the local level playing a role in the overall efforts. The authors outlined a variety of elements to successful program planning with overlap in many key areas. Needs assessment, context analysis, objectives, and evaluation all were identified by the authors as important to education planning. Needs assessment identifies what the learner must know, while context analysis captures the needs of the business or community into which the learning will be brought. All authors noted the importance of objectives for both planning and evaluation purposes. Evaluation was seen as an ongoing process both to determine if objectives were being met and to assist in program improvement.

Conclusion

This literature review demonstrates that much work still needs to be done around job training policy. The field would benefit from more research into the success of workforce development programs, particularly studies that look for results in the area of skill development. Though

many note that the skill and education needs of the workforce are growing, ways to develop employees are not rising from the literature. Neither the studies, policy analyses, nor implementation literature provide practitioners with tools and information to improve their programs. A focus on gathering best practices would be of great assistance to their efforts; a small body of literature is coming forward in this area and should be further developed. Best practice approaches coupled with an emphasis on skill results might lead to program planning that can develop those most in need of training and education. Further study is needed to discover if the successful strategies are effective when implemented in other programs. The job training program field must learn from its mistakes and successes to provide effective skill development in this challenging environment. All areas of potential assistance to this effort - program research, implementation analysis, and education program planning expertise - need to be further explored and developed with workforce development policy specifically in mind. By doing this, these wide spread fields can converge on and seek to identify a solution to the job training problem.

Chapter Three Procedures and Method

Introduction

To review, the purpose of this study was to describe and compare key elements of Virginia's fourteen service delivery area (SDA) plans in order to determine how they would deliver programs to achieve the stated purpose of JTPA Title II-A, which targets disadvantaged adults. In addition, the plans were evaluated as to their potential to guide successful program implementation. This chapter discusses the nature of the data, providing an overview of the plans and the purpose for which they were developed. The source of the data is also covered. The data analysis process for this research is reviewed here and the criteria used to evaluate the plans are outlined. Finally, further definition and explanation of the research questions is provided so as to not only clarify these questions, but also to show how SDA use of activities reflecting the analysis criteria were captured by these questions.

Procedures

Nature of Data

The data were documents submitted to the Governor to outline the program plans for JTPA job training in the service delivery areas in the Commonwealth of Virginia for program year 1995. Section 104 (a) of the Job Training Partnership Act states "no funds appropriated under title II for any fiscal year may be provided to any service delivery area under this Act except pursuant to a job training plan for two program years" (Text, 1993, p. 11) prepared in accordance with the appropriate criteria as outlined in the Act. The Private Industry Council must approve the plan and submit this information to the Governor.

The job training plan for each SDA covered all Title II programs, which included Title II-A Adult Training Program, Title II-B Summer Youth Employment and Training Program, and Title II-C Youth Training Program. This research was limited to elements of the plans which addressed Title II-A programs and general sections of the plans overlapping all three portions of Title II which were pertinent to the research. Sections dealing solely with Title II-B and Title II-C were not utilized for this project.

The job training plans studied were created using instructions and guidelines provided by the Governor's Employment and Training Department (GETD). Appendix B provides full text of

the guidelines and instructions for providing information under each plan section to which the SDAs responded.

The population consisted of all fourteen program year 1995 job training plans for the Commonwealth of Virginia. A list of all SDAs which were part of this research and the areas they serve is provided in Table 3.1. All job training plans used were approved by the GETD and the Governor's Job Training Coordinating Council (GJTCC). Program year 1995 (PY '95) was chosen for analysis because it represents the most recent submission to the state of each SDA's full plan. Program year 1995 covers the period July 1, 1995 through June 30, 1996.

Table 3.1 Service Delivery Area (SDA) Names and Counties/Cities They Serve

SDA No.	SDA Name Administrative Entity Location	Counties & Cities Served by SDA
1	Service Delivery Area-One, Inc. Lebanon, VA	Buchanan, Dickenson, Lee, Russell, Scott, Tazewell, Wise Counties; Norton City
2	New River/Mount Rogers Private Industry Council Abingdon, VA	Bland, Carroll, Floyd, Giles, Grayson, Montgomery, Pulaski, Smyth, Washington, Wythe Counties; Bristol, Galax, Radford Cities
3	Fifth District Employment & Training Consortium Roanoke, VA	Alleghany, Botetourt, Craig, Roanoke Counties; Clifton Forge, Covington, Roanoke, Salem Cities
4	Shenandoah Valley Service Delivery Area Harrisonburg, VA	Augusta, Bath, Clarke, Frederick, Highland, Page, Rockbridge, Rockingham, Shenandoah, Warren Counties; Buena Vista, Harrisonburg, Lexington, Staunton, Waynesboro, Winchester Cities
5	Northern Virginia Manpower Consortium Fairfax, VA	Loudon, Fairfax, Prince William Counties; Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas, Manassas Park Cities
6	Alexandria/Arlington Job Training Consortium Arlington, VA	Arlington County; Alexandria City
7	Piedmont Job Training Administration Charlottesville, VA	Albemarle, Culpepper, Fauquier, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa, Madison, Nelson, Orange, Rappahannock Counties; Charlottesville City
8	Central Piedmont Private Industry Council Rocky Mount, VA	Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford, Campbell, Franklin, Henry, Patrick, Pittsylvania Counties; Bedford, Danville, Lynchburg, Martinsville Cities

Table 3.1 - continued - Service Delivery Area (SDA) Names and Counties/Cities They Serve

SDA No.	SDA Name Administrative Entity Location	Counties & Cities Served by SDA
9	South Central Private Industry Council Farmville, VA	Amelia, Brunswick, Buckingham, Charlotte, Cumberland, Dinwiddie, Greensville, Halifax, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Nottoway, Prince Edward, Prince George, Surry, Sussex Counties; Colonial Heights, Emporia, Farmville, Hopewell, Petersburg, South Boston Cities
10	Richmond Private Industry Council Richmond, VA	Richmond City
11	Capital Area Job Training Consortium Sandston, VA	Charles City, Chesterfield, Goochland, Hanover, Henrico, New Kent, Powhatan Counties
12	Bay Consortium Private Industry Council Warsaw, VA	Accomack, Caroline, Essex, King & Queen, King George, King William, Lancaster, Mathews, Middlesex, Northampton, Northumberland, Richmond, Spotsylvania, Stafford, Westmoreland Counties, Fredericksburg City
13	Greater Peninsula Private Industry Council Hampton, VA	Gloucester, James City, York, Counties; Hampton, Newport News, Poquoson, Williamsburg Cities
14	Southeastern Virginia Job Training Administration Norfolk, VA	Isle of Wight, Southampton Counties; Chesapeake, Franklin, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Virginia Beach Cities

Note: Information to develop this table was provided by the Governor's Employment and Training Department, Richmond, Virginia.

Source of Data

Data were obtained through the GETD in Richmond, Virginia. In December of 1996, thirteen of the fourteen plans were gathered directly from the files in this office. The PY '95 plan for SDA 2 was unavailable at the time of initial data gathering. The New River/Mount Rogers Private Industry Council, the administrative entity for SDA 2, was sent a written request for a copy of their plan and this was received in January of 1997. A follow-up call was received from the GETD to confirm receipt of this information from the SDA and to confirm this plan had been approved for PY '95.

Method

Data Analysis

Since the full plans include data outside the scope of this research, this analysis was limited to applicable sections of the plans. The data from the fourteen plans was organized using comparative analysis in response to the research questions listed in Chapter One. The analysis was aimed at two broad areas. First, the responses to the research questions provided information for the purpose of describing and comparing the key elements of the plans to determine how the SDAs deliver programs to achieve the purpose of JTPA. Second, the questions served to guide the identification of each SDA's demonstrated use of the activities tied to the analysis criteria, a discussion of which follows.

The research questions are outlined again below with further explanation as to what information each question seeks to capture as well as which criteria each covers. This organization of the data helped create a perspective as to how the SDAs coordinated and implemented their programs. Their potential success in guiding programs which will fulfill the purpose of JTPA could also be analyzed. In addition, through comparison, unique aspects present in certain plans were identified and highlighted.

Analysis Criteria

To evaluate the potential of the plans to guide successful program implementation, criteria were identified through the literature. These criteria rose out of previous research on JTPA implementation and from education program planning literature. Four criteria were identified under each of the two categories - successful strategies and education program planning - and are described below. Chapter Two provided detailed descriptions of the research in these areas.

Successful strategies. The four criteria utilized to identify use of successful strategies in the plans rose mainly from the research done by the GAO in 1996. Programs that were successful shared approaches which ensured participants were committed to training and to getting a job, removed barriers to full participation in training, emphasized the development of employability skills, and linked the skills being trained to the needs of local employers (GAO, 1996b).

Education Program Planning. The four criteria used to identify the application of education program planning techniques to the planning and implementation of these job programs were derived from a variety of theorists. The four selected as evaluative measures for this research were chosen due to their applicability to this level - the local level - of education program (Boyle, 1981). Plans were examined to determine if the SDAs utilized needs assessments, conducted context analyses, formulated appropriate objectives, and performed full evaluation processes.

Many of these criteria contained multiple elements, such as objectives which can be appropriate to this level of program (Boyle, 1981) and also might set the priorities of the program (Knowles, 1980; Nadler, 1982). Plans were credited with partial fulfillment of the criteria if some aspect or element of the criteria appeared to be met. Each SDA was ranked in relation to criteria on a scale ranging from fully meeting the criteria to not meeting the criteria. To assign the ranking, each criteria was reviewed to determine how many elements might be demonstrated in the plans.

Needs assessments, for example, consisted of only one element: Programs either ensured individual needs assessments were performed or they did not. This criteria was either fully met or not met. The successful strategy criteria of linking to the local labor market was ranked using four elements. Demonstration of each element raised the ranking toward fulfillment of this criteria by one level. The elements sought were statements which indicated a link to the local labor market, a list of potential occupations for participants, wording which mentioned a process to pull needs information from the market, and a description as to how the SDA gathers this job market information.

The remaining successful strategy criteria were examined in the following ways. For ensuring participants were committed to training and employment, credit was given for indications that participant attitude was assessed or managed during training and for noting that lack of commitment could be a barrier to participant success. All SDAs noted they provided supportive services so the removal of barriers to participation criteria was similar to needs assessment. However, deductions were made if the SDA included statements in the plan which less than guaranteed these services to participants. For employability skills, SDAs were given full credit if work maturity skills training appeared to be linked to adults, with deductions for lack of clear linkage to adults and for limiting the availability of maturity training for adults.

The education program planning criteria were ranked in a similar fashion. The use of program evaluation was ranked in four elements which included evaluation of individuals based on goals, monitoring program success against performance standards, noting that aspects of the program needed to be evaluated, and stating that the overall program would be evaluated for improvement. Program objectives were ranked based on whether they: (1) set priorities for the program; (2) set criteria for evaluation; (3) were clear and specific; (4) noted key participants; (5) were attainable; (6) were appropriate for this level of program; (7) showed a relationship to the overall program; and, (8) noted what would be achieved through the program. Due to the similarity between linking to the local labor market and context analysis, the two criteria were considered identical and for the purposes of this review were joined.

Overall, this scale for criteria fulfillment was utilized to give each SDA as much credit possible as to its potential to meet aspects of each criteria. At times a sentence in the plan could be interpreted as showing that the SDA was taking some action in a criteria area. In brief, the scale provided the opportunity to give each SDA the benefit of the doubt in certain cases. This compensated for the limited descriptions of SDA actions provided due to the guidelines under which the plans were developed.

Research Questions

To assist in the interpretation of the data, the following questions were used to guide the analysis and application of the criteria for evaluation purposes. The purpose of each question has been defined and the criteria captured by each question are discussed.

Research question 1: Who oversees the management of the job training programs?

This question identified both the grant recipients for JTPA funds and the administrative entities for the SDAs. It assisted in determining what types of agencies, such as county governments or private for profit offices, ran these programs.

Research question 2: What are the stated goals and objectives of the job training programs?

This question not only assisted in identifying the various types of goals and objectives each SDA created, but also provided the information through which these objectives could be evaluated to determine if they reflected standards noted in education program planning literature. They were evaluated to see what, if any, of the many elements of strong program objectives they demonstrated. The objectives discussed also were reviewed to determine if they had more focus and detail than the federal JTPA objectives.

Research question 3: If the SDA uses outside providers of training and other services, how are these providers selected? Research question 3 revealed how each SDA chose its service providers. The methods used to evaluate the proposals submitted by potential service providers, particularly the criteria used by the SDAs to select from the pool of applicants, were captured by this question.

Research question 4: How are those in need of training identified and brought into the programs?

This question allowed many elements found in the plans regarding how people come into job training to be grouped and analyzed. Research question 4 captured eligibility determination, the provision of equitable services, how other agencies are used for referrals, as well as how individuals are identified and selected for training. As this question was being answered, ways in which the SDAs ensured participants were committed to training and getting a job were reviewed to determine if this successful strategy was being used.

Research question 5: What benefits are provided to help support individuals participating in the programs? By identifying the support services provided by the SDAs, research question 5 allowed one of the successful strategies to be addressed. The information found demonstrated whether the SDAs were offering services which would help remove the barriers to full participation in training thereby facilitating program completion.

Research question 6: What training services and training related services will be offered? This question was designed to pull information from throughout the plans as to what types of training would be provided to the participants and what other services would be made available so as to facilitate program participation, completion, and job placement. The answer to this question assisted in creating a picture of what the SDAs were doing to see that the participants gained the skills they needed to obtain employment, the achievement of which would go toward the fulfillment of the JTPA purpose. Through the information gathered under this question, two analysis criteria could be captured. The successful strategy of developing skills sought in the local labor market as well as the education program planning technique of completing a context analysis share much in common. Therefore, these criteria are addressed jointly, since exploration of employer needs clearly would be the key analysis activity for job training. The question also allowed information on how employer needs were determined to be pulled from the plans.

Research question 7: What is the process for taking an individual through job training? Research question 7 focused on the individual and how each person proceeds through the job training process. This question begins where research question 4 ends. The question captured assessment, referrals to training, and evaluation. The use of needs assessments, an education program planning technique, by the SDAs was analyzed here. In addition, the view each SDA demonstrated in the plans of the individuals it served was assessed. By looking at the individuals in relation to the plan objectives, eligibility determination, services, and competencies, this assessment helped determine if individuals appeared to be the focus of SDA efforts or seemed more just one part of an overall process.

Research question 8: What competencies do these programs try to develop? Whereas research question 6 identified what kinds of training a participant might receive, here the focus was on determining what competency areas were the target of SDA training efforts. In addition to basic education and work skills, skills that enable people to better function in the workplace, such as time management, working in groups and with others, proper attitude, and conflict resolution, were identified by the literature as vital to training participant success on the job. As the plans were reviewed for competency development, this information was analyzed to determine what, if any, workplace skills were part of SDA programs.

Research question 9: How do the SDAs evaluate their programs? This question sought to capture not only how the SDAs evaluated their programs in regard to achievement of individuals,

but also their overall evaluation process. This question identified how the SDAs addressed service provider performance, their own attainment of performance standards, and the general oversight of the SDA by the PIC. Their processes were then assessed in regard to information provided by education program planning literature to determine if the SDAs both measured results and utilized evaluation to find areas for improvement both in their programs and their overall processes.

Conclusion

These fourteen job training plans submitted to the Commonwealth of Virginia from its SDAs were chosen for this research as they provided an overview of how each area sought to offer programming to fulfill the purpose of JTPA. By answering the research questions, the similarities and differences between the SDAs were identified and highlighted. In addition, these questions helped provide an image of job training at the SDA level. The analysis criteria assisted in determining the potential of each plan to guide successful training and therefore meet the overall goals of JTPA. Through the utilization of scaled ratings of each SDAs demonstration of meeting the criteria, as much credit as possible was afforded the efforts outlined in these plans. Chapter Four provides the summary and analysis of this data.

Chapter Four

Data Presentation and Analysis

Introduction

By capturing key SDA activities, this data presentation and analysis details elements of the plans that impact the people being served by these programs. Focus remains on elements that describe how each SDA will target program participants and provide them services. Chapter One outlined the research questions guiding this project; Chapter Three detailed these questions and demonstrated how the eight successful strategy and education program planning criteria linked to these questions. In brief, this data presentation and analysis describes and analyzes who is trained, how they are trained and served, and what goals, objectives, and standards the plans establish and attempt to maintain. Certain sections of the job training plans were omitted from the presentation as they detail administrative procedures which though supporting the overall efforts serve more to ensure plans are in compliance with regulations than to demonstrate program activities.

An objective of this research was to evaluate these plans to assess whether they lend themselves to serve as the means to guide successful implementation of training programs. These job training plans are one part - the earliest part - of an overall training process. Covered here are descriptions of what will be done; the outcomes of what follows these plans were not addressed by this research. Yet, as discussed in Chapters Two and Three, criteria for successful program planning can be found in both the JTPA and education program planning literature. These criteria were used to evaluate the fourteen SDA plans in order to project the potential of each plan to bring about programs which fulfill the goals and objectives of JTPA. The cross case summary of the analysis criteria at the end of this chapter provides an overview of whether the SDAs demonstrated use of the activities and approaches covered by the criteria.

The research questions were designed to extract information from the plans describing the entire training process, from the delivery of funds to the grant recipient, through the determination of client eligibility and the delivery of training, and ending with the program's evaluation. The information in the plans was provided by the SDAs in response to specific plan development instructions and guidelines. Appendix B shows the instructions that the SDAs used to prepare their job training plans; complete descriptions as to what information was required from the SDAs can be found there. For the data presentation and analysis, many of the sub-headings from these instructions and guidelines were used in order to facilitate linkage between SDA responses and the plan's required elements. Details regarding the guidelines to which the SDAs were responding in the plans are provided when it serves to clarify the analysis.

Research Question 1

Who Oversees the Management of the Job Training Programs?

Each plan provides information as to the entities designated by the Private Industry Council (PIC) as the grant recipient and the administrative entity. The grant recipient is the agent selected to receive the job training funds from the state. The administrative entity assumes fiscal responsibility, oversees the program, and may provide certain services. The form of these grant recipients and administrative entities can vary. They could include incorporated PICs, local or county government agencies, municipal or city governments, public agencies, a consortium of local governments, state government agencies, educational institutions, other incorporated non-profit entities, or other organizational forms (Cheney, 1996).

Grant Recipients

The fourteen Virginia PIC grant recipient designees included incorporated PICs, municipal governments, county governments, and a consortium of local governments. The majority, fifty percent, selected an incorporated PIC as their grant recipient. The next most utilized form was the municipal or city government, this structure being indicated by four PICs. Two PICs designated county governments as their grant recipients and one PIC chose a consortium of local governments.

Administrative Entities

For administrative entities, the forms utilized vary more than for the grant recipient selections. Six PICs designated their incorporated PIC as the administrative entity. Three PICs utilized a public agency. Two of these public agencies were training consortia and one was a PIC. Three chose local government agencies. One agency was a county training consortium, one a planning commission and one a county department of social services. One administrative entity was a consortium of local governments. There also was a sole private for profit administrative entity.

Research Question 2

What Are the Stated Goals and Objectives of the Job Training Programs?

In the Goals and Objectives section of the plans, the SDAs were asked to describe how their programs “contribute to the economic self-sufficiency of participants and the productivity of the local area and the Nation” (Appendix B, p. 102). This was the only section of the plan where objective information is given by the SDAs. The responses here were diverse with a mixed interpretation of this request for information, especially in the responses as to how the program would increase economic self-sufficiency. Most SDAs responded with some explanation of the

intent and efforts of the program, while a few outlined measurable objectives for their programs and the work of their providers.

SDA 5 presented the most succinct response to how it would contribute to economic self-sufficiency. It stated, “By assisting in the appropriate match between trained individuals and employers in need of these individuals, self-sufficiency and productivity will be enhanced” (SDA 5, p. 16). A total of four SDAs provided responses similar to SDA 5, though not as brief, where their descriptions confirm that economic self-sufficiency will be enhanced by providing skills to participants. Other areas of emphasis in the goals and objectives included assurances that a trained workforce for the labor market would be created. Four of the SDAs noted this would be accomplished through a mix of services. Three outlined the structure of their programs. Two plans noted that trained workers would be able to support themselves, therefore reach economic self-sufficiency. Two SDAs made the delivery of quality programs an overall goal. Only one SDA stated specifically that the economically disadvantaged would be targeted and only one noted the focus of the program was on the benefits to the participants.

SDAs Demonstrating Unique Objectives

Three SDAs had goals and objectives which stood apart from the rest. SDAs 8 and 13 both listed a set of more quantifiable goals and objectives for their programs. SDA 8 included “increasing client awareness of opportunities,” “reducing basic education deficiencies,” “developing occupational skills needed by area business,” “assisting clients to enter employment, and “adding \$4 million to the purchasing power of the clients” (pp. 11-12). SDA 13 noted that the providers must meet their quantifiable objectives. Some of their goals were to ensure skills taught were needed by the labor market, that training would lead to full time employment, and that the training would lead to jobs with benefits. SDA 11 positioned itself to ensure that its participants left the program with an understanding of the labor market and of the need for lifelong learning. The SDA not only called for skill development in the areas of decision-making and problem-solving, but also wanted to give clients the ability to analyze the labor market so as to be able to identify and meet future workplace needs.

SDA Objectives As Program Planning Tools

Level of program and detail of objectives. Since the plan instructions require that each SDA indicate goals and objectives, all did so. Yet, the objectives did not equally represent the standards set in the education program planning literature. In Chapter Two, the ideas of Boyle (1981) and the various levels of program were discussed. At this level of program, which could be compared to Boyle’s county or unit level, the objectives should be more specific and support the broader objectives of the state and federal levels (Boyle, 1981). The specific objective mentioned in the plan outline is how the programs will “contribute to the economic self-

sufficiency of participants and the productivity of the local area and the Nation” (Appendix B, p. 102). All of the SDAs met the criteria of providing more focused and detailed objectives than the federal level. However, many of the plans did so in a minimalist fashion. Six of the SDAs barely provided further focus to the objective of enhanced economic self-sufficiency other than to state that it would occur and be achieved through the training activities. The remaining SDAs provided slightly more detail as to their local objectives. Only SDAs 11 and 13 provided objectives that brought clarity to the local level objectives and positioned the SDAs in regard to the federal government and individual providers creating a clear distinction to their level of program and the level of objectives.

Education planning standards and SDA objectives. Seven standards can be pulled from the education program planning literature on objectives. Objectives should: set the priorities of the program (Knowles, 1980; Nadler, 1982), provide the criteria for evaluation (Houle, 1972; Boyle, 1981; Caffarella, 1988), state what will be achieved through the program, identify key participants, develop a clear relationship to the overall problem, be attainable, and be clear and specific (Boyle, 1981). Out of these seven criteria, only one was met by all fourteen SDAs: identifying key participants. Twelve SDAs made some indication as to what would be achieved through the program. Eleven SDAs set the priorities of the program with their objectives and eleven created attainable objectives. Ten SDAs maintained a clear link to the overall problem. Eight SDAs created objectives which could be utilized for evaluation purposes. Only six SDAs created objectives which could be called clear and specific.

Objectives demonstrating strengths and weaknesses in SDA use. To highlight the disparity between objectives, quoted below are the weakest and strongest objectives based on fulfillment of the criteria. SDA 6’s plan provided the weakest objective, in a close competition with SDA 5; SDA 11 provided the strongest:

SDA 6: The SDA’s programs will contribute to the economic self-sufficiency of participants and the productivity of the local area and the Nation. Skills provided by occupational training are skills in great demand in this labor market. A large percentage of participants are welfare recipients, who are placed and retained in well-paying jobs leading to their economic self-sufficiency (p. 16).

SDA 11: The Capital Area Training Consortium’s programs contribute to the economic self-sufficiency of its clients by assisting each client in understanding the labor market and the impact of the global economy on their individual need to continually assess their skills and to continue life-long learning in order to remain employed.

Additionally, clients are given many opportunities to improve their decision-making skills, problem-solving skills, and ability to research and analyze labor market information – all critical skills for job security now and beyond the year 2000.

The program produces workers who are able to meet the demands of today's workplace and the workplace of the future, which adds to the productivity of the local labor market and ultimately the quality of the nation's labor force (pp. 25-26).

SDA 6 stated only what was being done. Participants were being trained in needed skills so they could obtain employment. SDA 11 discussed skill development, but also showed why those skills were important to participants. In addition, this SDA focused on what type of workers they were trying to develop: Workers who are "able to meet the demands of today's workplace and the workplace of the future" (SDA 11, p. 26). SDA 11's use of these types of descriptions and its focus on what they were trying to develop created objectives much more suitable for guiding individual level programs. These local or unit level objectives could sufficiently support and aid the formation of individual level program objectives.

Research Question 3
If The SDA Uses Outside Providers of Training and Other Services,
How Are These Providers Selected?

The SDAs were required by plan guidelines to describe how they choose their service providers. The majority of SDAs used a Request for Proposal (RFP) process to identify and select service providers for training and support services. Ten of the fourteen SDAs detailed their RFP process in their job training plans. Three SDAs utilized different methods to select contractors. Two of these SDAs selected providers for inclusion on a referral list. One SDA operated most of its own Title II-A training activities. SDA 14's job training plan noted its service provider selection process was included as an attachment to its plan; this attachment was not on file with the PY '95 plan. Therefore, this section discusses only thirteen SDAs.

Request for Proposal Process

Ten SDAs outlined a request for proposal process in their job training plans. This process is utilized to select contractors to provide either training, training related, or support services or some combination thereof. All plans indicated they adhere to state procurement procedures and applicable sections of JTPA when implementing their RFP processes. The standard procedure included notifying contractors of the Request for Proposal, reviewing proposals, and negotiating contracts with appropriate providers.

The proposals are designed to elicit information which can be utilized by the SDAs to evaluate the providers' potential to successfully serve clients. All of the plans noted past performance as a review criteria. All ten plans also noted they evaluate on some indication of cost and fiscal responsibility. In addition, the majority of SDAs rated the potential provider's ability to meet the program objectives and competency goals. Other categories for evaluation included administrative procedures, staff skills, reasonableness of objectives, responsiveness of proposal to plan needs, planned outcomes, and overall proposal quality. Certain SDAs noted specific types of training or services that must be provided by contractors, such as English as a second language training, skills training, an emphasis on placement, and models in upward mobility and developing new careers. These RFP criteria are grouped and listed in Table 4.1 which also identifies how many SDAs utilize each criteria.

Table 4.1 - Summary of SDA RFP Evaluation Criteria

RFP Evaluation Criteria	Number of SDAs Which Utilize
Past performance of provider	10
Ability to provide services which meet performance standards, fulfill objectives, and/or achieve competency goals	8
Fiscal accountability of provider	7
Reasonableness of budget/costs	5
Administrative structure/staff levels/staff ability to perform work	4
Reasonableness of measurable objectives	3
Responsiveness of proposal to job plan needs	2
Probable effectiveness of proposal program	2
Adequate financial resources of provider	2
Overall proposal quality	2
Demonstrates planned outcomes	1
Must provide skills training	1
Emphasizes placement	1
Must provide ESL training	1
Demonstrates model performance in placement for upward mobility, overcoming sexual stereotyping, and developing new careers	1

These proposals were reviewed by staff in three SDAs, by a staff and PIC committee in three SDAs, and by selection committee in one SDA. Three plans did not indicate the structure of their selection panel.

Other Processes

SDA 8 used an RFP process, but most of its Title II-A activities were run through its Job Training Services Centers. The SDA planned to enter into contracts for certain training services if they are required. Most of these contracts were established with public schools, community colleges, or other institutions. The SDA checks references on all contracted providers.

SDA 5 and SDA 11 utilized an individual referral method. In these cases, a list of providers is maintained by the SDA and clients are referred to whichever provider can give the most appropriate training. SDA 5 required information on past performance, local labor demand for skills, cost, location, and accountability from each potential provider. A voucher system is used to allow clients to access the services of these providers.

SDA 11 utilized a Request for Training process. Potential providers were required to provide a copy of their curriculum, the starting dates, training cycles, tuition costs, and the name of five employers who have hired program graduates. The staff training coordinator reviewed the information and contacted references. Those deemed viable were contracted with to provide individual training. The plan noted that this allows the SDA to ensure no occupational training is excluded from its program. Included on their inventory of providers were public providers such as community colleges. Training related service providers responded to a Request for Quote to provide services. SDA 11 also provided basic skills through two of its own training centers; plus the SDA provided case management.

Research Question 4

How Are Those in Need of Training Identified and Brought into the Programs?

The SDAs provided data to answer this question in three different plan sections. In the Eligibility Determination section, the SDAs described how they or their service providers ensure participants meet the criteria to be served by JTPA programs. The Equitable Service section instructions required each SDA to explain how it will attract the diverse populations to be served by these programs. The section covering Identifying and Selecting Participants not only had the SDAs outline how individuals are selected, but they needed to describe additional efforts geared toward the hard-to-serve.

Eligibility Determination

Each plan must demonstrate how the SDA's administrative entity will determine client eligibility to participate in JTPA Title II programs. All fourteen SDAs had an eligibility determination process in place. Seven SDAs used their administrative entity to handle eligibility determination.

Four delegated verification to the providers or contractors. Three utilized a combination of their administrative entity and service providers.

All fourteen plans demonstrated an initial verification process at the time of application. Three of the SDAs that delegated their verification offered technical assistance to the service providers. Twelve of the SDAs outlined a follow-up file review after the initial determination. All of these follow-up reviews were handled by the administrative entities. Eleven planned to review the files thirty days after application; one entity performed its follow-up review within ten days of intake. One administrative entity planned a quarterly review of all eligibility information in addition to its initial and thirty day reviews. Two SDAs did not indicate a follow-up procedure, however, language in the plans seemed to indicate this occurred since both noted that penalties would be paid if clients were determined to be ineligible after acceptance into the program. Clearly, some procedure must be used to find those ineligible clients.

When clients are determined to be ineligible after acceptance into the program, some party must be responsible for reimbursing the costs of training and services to the JTPA pool of funds. Seven of the SDAs indicated the administrative entity would be responsible for cost reimbursement. Five SDAs noted the providers or contractors would repay the funds. Two SDAs did not specify the responsible party. Funds used to reimburse lost costs cannot be JTPA related program funds.

Equitable Services

Each plan must indicate how the SDA will reach out to “substantial segments of the JTPA population, including members of both sexes, race/ethnicity and age groups, and individuals with disabilities” (Appendix B, p. 101). The overall picture painted by the plans is one of outreach and inclusion. All noted in some manner their intent to serve a diverse population in need of training and services. All SDAs had some plan to disseminate information to attract a mixed population and all noted in some way they would work with other agencies and organizations to make more people aware of their offerings.

Half of the SDAs specifically stated they would link with agencies such as the Department of Social Services, the Department of Economic Development, the Board of Education, corrections agencies, and literacy councils to assure dissemination of information to the targeted groups. Libraries, school, churches, and community groups were indicated by six SDAs as additional access points to reach this population. Six SDAs planned outreach to all sexes, race/ethnicity and age groups, and individuals with disabilities. Six SDAs indicated they orchestrated targeted outreach to bring in diverse populations. Assurances of no discrimination were written into five plans.

The RFP process was utilized by three SDAs to ensure targets were met by delegating some of this responsibility to the contractors. Two SDAs listed specific percentage targets for the populations they intended to bring in to serve. Other methods for ensuring inclusion of various populations were designing programs to attract targeted groups, planning to specifically serve the disabled and women, promoting awareness, and working with advocacy groups. Table 4.2 outlines actions and efforts used by the SDAs to attract their diverse, target population.

Table 4.2 - Methods Used by SDAs to Provide Equitable Service to Diverse Population

Methods Used by SDAs to Attract Diverse Population	Number of SDAs Noting Use
Links to agencies such as Department of Social Services, Department of Economic Development, Board of Education, corrections agencies, and literacy councils	7
Makes information available to schools, libraries, churches, and community groups	6
Outreach to both sexes, race/ethnicity and age groups, and individuals with disabilities	6
Targeted outreach	6
Assures no discrimination	5
Serves individuals with disabilities and women with special efforts	2
Uses RFP process to assure targets are met	1
Works to promote program awareness through flyers, newsletters, ads in newspaper, and presentation	1
Assures hard-to-serve individual goal of 65% is met	1
Works with advocacy groups	1
Makes extra recruitment efforts if diversity goals are not met initially	1

SDA 7 outlined its need for an improved strategy to provide equitable services. Its write-up indicated it would provide improved marketing and outreach. The SDA's new marketing approach would include disseminating information to the areas where the targeted population lived, putting pictures representing the target population into their advertising, and advertising in newspapers read by the target populations. SDA 7 responses were not included in Table 4.2.

Identifying and Selecting Participants

The plan preparation guidelines required that SDAs explain how they would identify and select participants. Although the overall purpose was to have the SDAs outline their procedures, the emphasis was on hard-to-serve individuals. SDAs were asked to provide their training and

placement goals for the hard-to-serve, to outline their efforts to reach out to this group, and to describe the services they plan to provide. An additional hard-to-serve category may be added by the SDAs. To review, the “hard-to-serve” include groups such as the homeless, long-term welfare recipients, school drops-outs, offenders, the disabled, and other groups that face additional barriers to employment.

Eight of the SDAs noted they would specifically target the most in need, with seven SDAs stating they would meet the minimum standard by providing service to a 65% hard-to-serve population. Aside from these similarities, the plans varied as to how they explained their goals. Three SDAs noted the need to provide more careful assessment for these individuals. Other approaches outlined by the SDAs included noting they would assist in the attainment of unsubsidized employment, that Individual Service Strategies would be developed, and that supportive services would be offered. Other SDAs pointed to additional goals being set for the hard-to-serve category, with some of these goals being met by the providers. One SDA noted it would set up special programs for the disadvantaged.

Use of Agencies for Referrals

Ten of the SDAs planned to use interagency referrals to enhance their outreach efforts to this group. Agencies to be targeted included the Department of Social Services, the Virginia Employment Commission, local adult education and literacy groups, the Department of Corrections, parole officers, and schools. Four SDAs outlined publicity and media efforts to attract participants to the program, with one pointing out that enhanced coverage in newspapers and through advertising such as on buses and in print not only brought people into the program but raised community awareness around their efforts. Two noted that referral systems and marketing efforts would be handled by providers or subcontractors. One SDA stressed that creaming would not take place in its area and programs would be made available to all.

Additional Services for the Hard-To-Serve

The information requested by the plan instructions on what services would be provided to the hard-to-serve overlapped many other sections of the plans. Two SDAs simply referred to other sections, such as Activities and Services, as their response. The other responses varied greatly. Assessment, coordination with other providers, and the development of an Individual Service Strategy were noted by three SDAs each. A few SDAs outlined the types of services to be provided such as basic education, skill training, job search assistance, and on-the-job training. One SDA noted the hard-to-serve needed additional counseling, case management, and follow-up after program completion.

Additional Hard-To-Serve Category

For the additional hard-to-serve category, half the SDAs chose food stamp recipients noting they are often dependent on this service and therefore face additional barriers to employment. Three SDAs chose not to select an additional category. Two SDAs selected those with limited English proficiency as additional hard-to-serve individuals. One SDA noted single parents and one SDA felt based on its geographic layout that those in need of transportation were an additional hard-to-serve group.

Participant Commitment to Training

A commitment to training and a desire to obtain employment were noted in the literature as important characteristics of successful program participants. None of the SDAs examined in this study demonstrated a clear process, procedure, or approach to test or evaluate participant commitment to training and obtaining employment. Of the fourteen SDAs only five listed any information from which one might infer that this attitude toward training and work might be dealt with during the training process. SDAs 2 and 3 examined work maturity levels as part of their assessment processes. Discovering participant commitment to employment and training might be a part of this process. SDA 10 listed motivational counseling as part of its training related and supportive services. The potential exists for such counseling to include an emphasis on developing and maintaining a positive attitude toward training and employment.

Only SDA 11 directly mentioned client willingness to participate in training. Its statement regarding willingness was tied to the participants' desire to move through training at an appropriate pace and was not connected directly to participants' overall commitment to the training process. Other SDAs might engage in activities similar to these five SDAs and simply did not mention their efforts in the plans. The work of the five SDAs only hints at the possibility that commitment is an issue they consider in regard to participants. The plans do not capture evidence that this successful program strategy is used by Virginia's SDAs.

Research Question 5

What benefits are provided to help support individuals participating in the programs?

Use of Needs Based Payments and Incentives

The plan guidelines asked each SDA to provide information on its procedure for providing needs based payments, incentives and bonuses, and supportive services and/or financial assistance. All SDAs responded to each of the three areas individually. Only three SDAs - SDAs 1, 2, and 7 - planned to provide needs based payments. SDA 1 would provide payments if the economically disadvantaged could not be served through other support services. SDA 2 noted these payments

were not entitlements, but only made to assure clients could participate in training. SDA 7 would make needs based payment if this was determined necessary as the Individual Service Strategy (ISS) was established. The other eleven SDAs did not intend to provide needs based payments.

Only two SDAs - SDA 1 and 2 - planned to offer incentives to clients for successful participation in the program. SDA 1 offered incentives for perfect classroom training attendance and achievement of certain competencies. Bonuses were reserved for youth activities. SDA 2's plan did not include details on its bonuses and incentives. Five SDAs offered bonuses and incentives to its Title II-B youth clients only. Seven SDAs did not sponsor any incentive or bonus program.

Delivery of Supportive Services

Twelve of the SDAs offered or arranged for supportive services or financial assistance for their clients. SDA 6 noted it would not provide financial assistance and did not mention supportive services. SDA 11 ensured the delivery of supportive services through other agencies and did not detail what services would be targeted. Three SDAs specifically stated they would not provide financial assistance, but outlined other supportive services. SDA 4 did not ensure services would be provided, but listed the services its providers should be offering. Two SDAs stated they would provide listed supportive services only after all other resources had been exhausted.

All SDAs that stated they would provide supportive services listed transportation as one service. Eleven SDAs planned to offer child care support for their clients. Health care was the next most mentioned service with seven SDAs noting this would be provided. Other services listed were meals, drug abuse counseling, housing, family counseling, temporary shelter, financial assistance, training uniforms, supplies and equipment, emergency expenses, disability assistance, interpretation for hearing impaired. Table 4.3 outlines the supportive services listed and notes how many SDAs stated they planned to offer each service.

It should be noted that services not mentioned by an SDA are not necessary excluded from their offerings. Most SDAs stated that services were not limited to those listed. Additional information as to supportive services is provided in response to research question 6.

Table 4.3 - Summary of Supportive Services Ensured By SDAs

Supportive Service	Number of SDAs Listing Service
Transportation	12
Child care	11
Healthcare	7
Meals	4
Drug and alcohol abuse counseling	3
Temporary shelter	2
Housing/Rental Assistance	2
Financial Assistance	2
Family counseling	2
Training uniforms, equipment, tools and supplies	2
Assistance for disabilities	1
Interpretation for hearing impaired	1

SDA Use of Supportive Services to Remove Barriers to Participation

Since many participants are unable to enter and complete training due to lack of child care or transportation, the provision of supportive services is an important SDA activity to foster successful programs. All of the SDAs offer or arrange for their service providers to offer supportive services to their program participants. Table 4.3 and the findings under research questions 5 and 6 demonstrate the variety of supportive services offered by the SDAs. The clear reason for this overall positive fulfillment of this criteria is that all SDAs are required under Section 204 (D) (iii) of JTPA to provide or assure through other sources the provision of supportive services (Text, 1993, p. 53). The standard services include child care and transportation. Half of the SDAs noted that these services were necessary in order to remove barriers to participation in training. The other half did not indicate this connection between services and participation. SDA 10 included as one of their objectives the reduction of barriers “which hinder maximum program participation and employment” (p. 19).

SDA 9 took the removal of barriers a step further by creating an additional hard-to-serve category to address the need for transportation. This SDA is located in a rural area with little available public transportation. They stated: “Many of our customers have no means of transportation to attend training or to get to and from a job, therefore creating a definite barrier to employment” (p. 34). Whereas most SDAs provide reimbursement for transportation as part of their supportive services, clearly SDA 9 has identified a need to go beyond this to address a

substantial barrier for their program participants. So, whereas all SDAs will provide supportive services, only half the SDAs clearly identify in their plans the understanding that these supportive services are key to removing barriers to client participation.

Research Question 6

What Training Services and Training Related Services will be Offered?

Each SDA is instructed to provide information on its direct training activities, training related and supportive services, and an estimate of the duration and cost of training. Though certain SDAs choose to provide this information in narrative or paragraph form, the majority of responses can be broken down into laundry lists of what will be provided. This data is described under Direct Training and Training and Related Supportive Services. The average cost and number of weeks individuals will spend in training are provided here as they assist in creating a clearer picture of the programs. In addition, each SDA must create linkages to other agencies and organizations for the provision of services and training. Since these linkages impact the training and services, they are described here.

Direct Training

Table 4.4 lists the direct training services that were outlined by the SDAs. All of the SDAs noted they would offer both basic skills or education training and occupational skills training. The majority of SDAs provided some information on the specific activities they would offer in this area, though not all did. Some SDAs also used this opportunity to list the skill areas or specific occupations they were targeting with their training efforts; six SDAs gave information on these occupations.

SDA Processes to Link Training to the Local Labor Market

In order for participants to successfully obtain and retain employment, their job skills must match what is needed in the job market. It falls to the SDAs to ensure that link is made. Eleven of the SDAs made some indication that they sought to train people in skills needed by the local labor market. Most often this was noted in the plans with only a mention that skills being taught would be in high demand in the labor market. Six of the SDAs provided lists of what occupations they would target for training. Two of the SDAs did not provide a statement on tying skills to needs in the local market. SDA 5 noted it required its service providers to indicate how they would link training to the local labor market in their RFPs. SDA 7 stated, specifically in regard to the development of more OJT programs, that it could not make determinations in this area until “the local economy and potential to employ JTPA participants can be more effectively gauged” (p. 18). This statement makes it quite unclear as to how SDA 7 is training and placing participants when it is unable to identify the employment potential in its area

Table 4.4 - Direct Training Activities Listed by SDAs

Type of Direct Training	Number of SDAs Indicating
Basic Skills/Education Training	14
Remedial education - math, reading, writing	8
GED preparation	8
Literacy courses	5
English as a second language	4
Refresher courses - enhancing basic skills	1
Occupational Skills Training	14
Institutional/Classroom skills training	8
Individual referral	2
On-the-Job Training	12
Work Experience	7
Other direct training services	
Assessment activities	7
Customized skill training	6
Case management	5
Counseling	5
Pre-Employment/Work Maturity training	4
Entrepreneurial training	3
Advanced learning technology training	2
Vocational exploration	1
Workplace Basics (SCANS skills)	1
Classes on understanding the job market	1

Although eleven SDAs noted they looked to the local market for skill needs, only three SDAs made any indication as to how they determined the local needs. SDA 2 noted it used local education institutions and the Virginia Employment Commission to provide information to determine occupations which hold both employment and earning promise. SDA 10 credited the Virginia Employment Commission and Occupational Employment Projections for their area as the sources for occupations targeted for training. In addition, it noted its Program Planning and Monitoring Committee was tasked with the responsibility of identifying these occupations.

SDA 11 provided the most complete information as to its process for keeping its program linked to the needs of the local labor market. It noted that it monitors the skills being taught in its

programs and regularly compares these to the needs of local employers. As part of the SDA’s workplace basics training, it surveyed area employers to identify needs that would be in addition to those identified by SCANS (1992). Through its membership in the local Chamber of Commerce, involvement in other employment and training related organizations, and by developing and maintaining contacts with economic development agencies, the SDA was able to ensure its training targeted sought-after industry specific skills. SDA 11 provided the only comprehensive explanation as to how a variety of mechanisms might be utilized to link with the local labor market.

Training Related and Supportive Services

As with the direct training activities, the training related and supportive services are most often simply listed by the SDAs. Table 4.5 outlines the training related and supportive services to be offered by each SDA. Here there was less variety in the responses and no one service was indicated by all SDAs. SDA 4 grouped all responses to plan instructions around direct training and training related services, therefore it was difficult to identify how it categorized its activities. Training related and supportive services were particularly difficult to pull from its narrative, therefore only outreach could be identified here. Certain activities, such as pre-employment training and assessment, were listed as supportive service in certain plans whereas other SDAs placed these activities under direct training.

Table 4.5 - Training Related and Supportive Services Activities Listed by SDAs

Types of Training Related and Supportive Services	Number of SDAs Indicating
Job development	13
Supportive services, such as transportation, child care, health care	12
Outreach to make people aware of the program	11
Job search assistance	10
Follow-up services for those who have completed training, could include counseling.	9
Job placement	8
Needs based payments	2
Pre-employment/work maturity skills development	1
Referrals to other supportive services and government programs	1
Assessment activities	1

Estimate Duration of Services and Costs Per Participant

Table 4.6 provides the estimated length of participation in the programs and the cost per Title II-A adult. Clearly the costs vary greatly. Though some of this difference might be attributed to geographic cost variation, the great disparities between SDAs cannot be explained based on the information provided. The SDAs noted that duration and costs were averages.

Table 4.6 - Average Training Duration and Cost Per Title II-A Adult Participant Listed by SDAs

SDA	Duration of Training	Cost per Participant
SDA 1	42 weeks	\$3,255
SDA 2	13 weeks	\$3,600
SDA 3	40 weeks	\$1,500
SDA 4	12-25 weeks	Not provided
SDA 5	26 weeks	\$2,000
SDA 6	23 weeks	\$3,600
SDA 7	Not provided	Not provided
SDA 8	26 weeks	\$3,229
SDA 9	36-80 weeks	\$2,083
SDA 10	96 weeks (24 months)	\$2,000
SDA 11	96 weeks (24 months)	\$1,688
SDA 12	Not provided	Not provided
SDA 13	8-28 weeks	\$2,000 - \$5,800
SDA 14	8 - 52 weeks	\$2,455

Linkages

The SDAs were required to outline the agreements they would enter into with appropriate agencies to improve the provision of services and reduce the amount of program duplication. Specifically SDAs must note their linkages with educational agencies, how they would work with other Federal education, training and employment programs, what programs would be supported by the National and Community Service Act of 1990, and their efforts to coordinate with local welfare agencies, volunteer groups, community-based organizations, labor organizations, and other social service programs.

All of the SDAs noted they would establish formal and informal agreements with local education institutions. These typically included public schools, community colleges, and colleges. Some

SDAs had a basic agreement with schools to provide JTPA training. Less than half the SDAs listed the schools they held agreements with, though this information is not requested in the plan guidelines. One SDA planned to send its job training plan to the local vocational education schools so as to prevent an overlap of services.

As for their arrangements with other Federal programs, five of the SDAs listed agencies, such as the Department of Social Services, Department of Probation and Parole, Area Agencies on Aging, and the Virginia Employment Commission, as federally funded programs they would work with. Six of the SDAs listed the actual federal programs - JOBS, the Food Stamp Employment and Training Program, the Targeted Assistance Program, and the Virginia Refugee Resettlement Program, to name a few - with which they would coordinate. SDA 5 jointly administered its federally funded programs. One SDA noted it would participate in the Department of Labor's Center for Employment Training (CET) Replication Program as one of its key activities under this heading. Another SDA detailed how it would work with other agencies to utilize Pell Grants to support certain training efforts.

None of the SDAs responded that they would engage in activities supported in part by the National and Community Service Act of 1990. A few SDAs outlined youth activities, but their connection to the National and Community Service Act was unclear.

All of the SDAs ensured they would coordinate with local welfare agencies, community-based organizations, volunteer groups, local business and labor organizations, and other social service agencies. Their descriptions varied. Certain SDAs listed the agencies they intended to coordinate with, such as the Department of Social Services, Jobs Corps, and the Virginia Employment Commission. Others listed churches, public housing agencies, and civic groups as their foci for coordination. Three SDAs simply assured they would coordinate with the required groups. Three SDAs noted they planned to bring representatives from community-based organizations and labor groups onto the PIC in order to better coordinate with these groups. Ideas for coordination included sharing cross referrals, forming joint committees, establishing cooperative intake processes, joint planning efforts, sharing data, and funding projects together. No SDA detailed its efforts in this area.

Research Question 7

What is the Process for Taking an Individual Through Job Training?

After being determined eligible to participate in JTPA Title II-A training, participants begin the training process. The Act requires that SDAs ensure each individual's need are addressed through their training programs, rather than establishing a training system into which all participants are fed, regardless of their individual skill deficiencies and goals. Each SDA must describe how

individuals are assessed, referred to training and services, and evaluated to ensure necessary skill levels are being achieved.

Assessment

All SDAs indicated an assessment strategy for individuals entering their programs. While only two SDAs noted they do early assessments to eliminate individuals prior to full assessment, a total of twelve SDAs outlined their complete, objective assessment processes. Those that did not provide full assessment strategies did note certain factors which would be tested upon entry into the program. The SDAs overlapped a great deal in how they described their efforts in this section.

During the assessment process, the SDAs or their providers sought to test many of the same elements and skills. Most indicated a mix of methods utilized for assessment, such as paper and pencil testing, review of personal information, and interviews. Twelve SDAs indicated they assessed interests. Aptitudes and supportive service needed were targeted for assessment by eleven SDAs. Ten SDAs tested basics skills, with five indicating the use of the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) and a total of seven listing additional tools. Nine SDAs looked at prior work experience; the same number measured current occupational skills levels. Three addressed educational backgrounds during assessment and one noted it determines a participant's values as part of this process.

This information is utilized to create an Individual Service Strategy (ISS). Although only eight SDAs noted the development of an ISS in this section, most of the SDAs mentioned its use somewhere within their plans. As part of this process, five SDAs noted that they set employment and achievement objectives and establish a sequence of services needed to meet these objectives. These ISSs are a direct result of the assessment process, although continued assessment can be part of an individual's ISS.

Use of Needs Assessments to Identify Skill and Ability Gaps

In education program planning, needs assessments are used to identify the gaps in skills and abilities between where participants are and where they want or need to be. Therefore, the identification of these gaps is a vital part of the education planning process, because programs cannot be planned unless it is clear what participants need. Assessment of skill levels is a required element of the job training plans, therefore all fourteen SDAs demonstrated that they perform a full needs assessment and utilize this information to develop the ISS or require their providers to perform this task. The findings above provide details as to the activities performed by the SDAs in connection with their needs assessments. Again, a few SDAs provided additional information in response to plan preparation guidelines which created a clearer picture

as to their activities in this area. SDA 5 noted that its assessment process began with the first interaction between the participant and program representative and continued through interviews, testing, and group activities. Not only are skill weaknesses identified, but career interests and supportive service needs are noted and taken into account. SDA 11 identified a process similar to SDA 5. In addition, it utilized a self-assessment workshop designed to have participants list their perceived strengths, weaknesses, and interests in order to assist them in self-selecting out of the JTPA program if it will not meet their needs. Like supportive services, needs assessments are described by all the SDAs due to the fact that plan guidelines require response in this area.

Referrals

Like the Assessment section, the responses here were quite similar between the SDAs. The plan instructions ask SDAs to describe how they will inform participants of their services and those of other service providers or agencies. One SDA noted it was currently developing its referral process and did provide information on how it referred participants. One SDA responded that it coordinated with other social service agencies to ensure people knew its programs were available, but did not address how it let participants know about other services.

Of the remaining SDAs, all twelve noted that upon eligibility determination participants are given information on the “full array” of services provided by the SDA. In addition participants are given information about programs offered by other human service agencies and education institutions. Eleven of the SDAs noted that if a person cannot be served by a particular provider, this individual should be referred back to the SDA or to an appropriate provider. With the exception of the two SDAs that did not respond completely or correctly to plan guidelines, all SDAs asserted that information about the programs would be properly shared with participants.

Evaluation

The plan guidelines ask the SDAs to describe how individuals will be evaluated to assure they attain competency levels. The majority of the SDAs, fifty percent, used pre-assessment to set the competency levels to be achieved by participants; many of those SDAs used competency levels, which will be described later, to be the measures of successful acquisition of skills and competencies. SDA 1 outlined a procedure where discrepancies were determined during the assessment period. Based on the training the individual was assigned to, competencies were then attached to their program plans based on their desired outcomes. During the course of training competencies were evaluated and the individual had a final evaluation at completion of the training. Some of the training, especially basic skills training, was evaluated using tests and other objective indicators. At least three SDAs based much of their evaluation on instructors indicating through use of a checklist that competency levels had been reached. One SDA indicated that the program was completed when a person achieved all competencies; another SDA noted that competency was achieved when all planned program elements were completed. SDA 12 did not

outline its evaluation process. It responded by referring back to the competencies it had approved, but did not describe how these competencies were evaluated.

The SDA Perspective of the Individual

During review and comparison of the plans, a distinction arose between plans as to how they present the individuals who are the clients of their programs. By regulations of the Act, all plans must show that an ISS will be established for each program participant. This requirement builds into the plans a certain focus on the individual; each SDA must show in some fashion that they review the individual needs of each person entering the program. Yet, each plan positions its clients differently. How each SDA writes of, plans for, and describes participants could be placed on a continuum. At one end would be SDAs which focus on complying to the plan regulations; at the other end would be SDAs which focus on the individuals who will be a part of the programs. All of the various SDAs present plans which fall somewhere along this continuum.

Compliance focus versus individual focus. Compliance focused plans most often stated the minimum amount of information required by the plan guidelines. Individual focused plans tended to offer more detailed information for each response, especially when the section dealt with the participants. Often compliance focused plans repeated back statements from the plan guidelines as a confirmation that the task would be fulfilled without explanation as to how. Individual focused plans told what would be offered to people and how they would move through the program. For the compliance focused SDAs the training programs were handled as administrative operations, whereas SDAs focusing on the individual demonstrated more often the training and education aspects of their services.

The individual and plan objectives. Rather than attempting to place all fourteen plans along this compliance to individual continuum, here two plans - one at each end of the continuum - will be compared. SDA 11 demonstrated a focus on the individual whereas SDA 12 presented a plan centered more on compliance. Their objectives were one area of key distinction. SDA 11, whose objectives were quoted completely above, used the Goals and Objectives section of its plan to speak to actual client outcomes. Its objectives are broader than would be used at the training program level, yet still capture areas of the program that should be impacting all clients. It spoke not just of the specific need for individuals to get work, but discussed ideas such as how the individual must learn more about the job market and develop lifelong learning habits. SDA 12 wrote about its program. It noted that the program would train for in demand occupations so participants could be matched with the best job goal. The objective centered more on what they would be doing with mention of the hoped for results. SDA 11 wrote of what the program is trying to make happen beyond the training effort.

The individual and eligibility. Another key area of difference was in the Eligibility Determination section. SDA 12 wrote of how contractors would be trained to screen applicants and detailed all of the documentation required of applicants. Its write up seemed to focus on how to catch those who did not belong in the program. Although SDA 11 has the same financial risk if they serve ineligible clients, it wrote its system was designed to “determine JTPA eligibility under all titles to ensure each client the broadest range of services possible, given the limited funds available in each Title of Funds” (p. 24). SDA 11 appeared to see the eligibility determination process as a means to make certain clients were receiving all possible benefits available rather than cutting off the ineligible from service, although this certainly must be one goal of its process.

The individual and services. The Activities and Services section, which includes assessment, referrals, training services and evaluation, was another area in which the difference between compliance and individual focused plans was evident. SDA 11 used a two part assessment process, the earliest portion of which gave participants time to assess their own needs and bring this into the training process. It noted that during the objective assessment portion the applicant’s “desire and ability to perform a task” (p. 33) was impossible to test, yet needed to be determined through interviews due to its impact on training. SDA 12 focused on the ISS: “The ISS must document a plan for each participant to follow which should result in obtaining the skills required to enter the labor force” (p. 32). The individual’s role in this process was not discussed. SDA 12 listed and described six types of training categories that would be offered and listed its supportive services. SDA 11 defined in some detail fifteen different types of training and education activities, plus noted the importance of many of these to the participants as well as mentioning those it deemed important enough not to be considered terminal.

The individual and competencies. Competencies provided another area of difference. SDA 11 did not describe its levels of competencies, noting that the levels would be set, yet depended on the individuals therefore needed to be geared to each person. SDA 12 simply noted that it had an approved competency system for youth, which applied to adults if necessary. SDA 11 evaluated participants based on the criteria set up for them to reach their employment goals. SDA 12 did not outline its evaluation process; it referred back to the competencies. This left the evaluation process for adults very unclear since SDA 12 did not have required competencies for adults and therefore might not have in place anything against which to evaluate adult achievement.

Side by side, these two SDA plans highlight the differences between write ups that utilize the process to discuss the individual and those that do not. The other plans were not interpreted to be so clearly individual or compliance focused. Many SDAs have responses which vary in their focus depending on the plan section. SDA 8 demonstrated this trait. Its Goals and Objectives section was quite focused on participants, in a manner similar to SDA 11, whereas its Activities and Services section was brief, focused on linkages with other organizations, and with minimal mention of the client as part of the process. Though no correlation can be made between the two

findings, the SDA which appeared to be most focused on the individual met the most evaluation criteria established for this study, while the compliance centered SDA ranked lowest.

Research Question 8

What Competencies Do These Programs Try to Develop?

This question was one of the most difficult to answer based on information provided in the plans. Virtually all SDAs discussed competencies they were trying to develop in program participants. However, it is unclear as to whether these competencies always applied to both adult (Title II-A) and youth (Title II-B) participants. Certain SDAs made a distinction as to which competency areas they targeted specifically for adults or youth, but not all. Therefore, this data must be interpreted cautiously. Although an SDA set a competency level in a certain area, such as pre-employment skills, it cannot be inferred that the competency level applies to adults.

Competencies

In the plans, the SDAs must describe the competency levels they have established; the instructions make it clear that specific information as to individual competencies and individual levels of competencies need not be listed. However, the plan preparation guidelines do request that the overall level of competency to be achieved is described. Interestingly, only four SDAs gave any measurable indication as to the level of competency desired of individuals in each area.

Ten SDAs indicated they established competencies in three key areas: basic education, job specific skills, and pre-employment/work maturity levels. The four SDAs that listed levels of achievement indicated they would use benchmarks and measure achievement against those. Because the SDAs were not required to provide details on their competencies, information as to the benchmarks and specific skills were not listed. Three of the SDAs noted that the providers would be required to set competencies and that these would vary with each program. SDA 11 indicated that it would utilize competencies in the three key areas, however, since each person was different, the specific competencies for every person would be set to meet their specific job goals. SDA 4 did not set adult competencies. One SDA set an additional goal for itself to achieve a 65% placement rate of its participants and used the competency section to express this goal.

SDA Development of Workplace Competencies

The need for employees to possess competency in areas such as attitude, time management, conflict resolution, and working with others was noted throughout the literature (Carnevale, 1991; Marshall & Tucker, 1992; SCANS, 1992; Lafer, 1994; Grubb, 1996; GAO, 1996b).

Whether the SDAs planned to develop these skills in adults was uncertain. The majority of SDAs mentioned work maturity competencies and training within their plans, demonstrating that these skill areas are part of their overall efforts. The Commonwealth of Virginia notes that work maturity skills include:

positive work habits, attitudes, and behavior such as punctuality, regular attendance, presenting a neat appearance, getting along and working well with others, exhibiting good conduct, following instructions and completing tasks, accepting constructive criticism from supervisors and co-workers, showing initiative and reliability, and assuming the responsibilities involved in maintaining a job (Governor's Employment and Training Department, 1989, p. 3).

This definition captures the intent of this successful strategy criteria as discussed in the literature review. However, this definition is part of the state's policy on youth competencies. It is not clear that all the SDAs that mentioned this competency intend to develop it in adults. SDA 1, for example, noted that only youth receive work maturity training.

Seven of the SDAs - SDAs 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 11, and 14 - indicated they offer training in the area of work maturity. Based on the fact that all seven of the SDAs place an emphasis on this skill area, either in the assessment portion of their program plan or as a clear part of their training process by noting this training is done in conjunction with the other skill training, it is inferred here that adults do receive training in this area. SDA 11 noted clearly that it intended to include employability skill training as part of its efforts. It stated:

The instructional program also includes workplace skills designed to assist participants in overcoming attitudinal and social barriers to employment. Participants are also involved in strengthening interpersonal skills as they participate in one-to-one counseling, team activities, and small group discussions (SDA 11, p. 39).

Of the remaining seven SDAs, only one made no indication that it offered work maturity training for adults. It is not possible from the information provided by the other six SDAs to assume they offer work maturity training for adults. Their plans mentioned things such as good work habits and attitude, but did not tie the development of these skills to their overall efforts as did the other seven SDAs. The awareness of the need for work maturity skills seems to exist in the majority of SDAs, however, their intent to deliver the training necessary to achieve these skills is not as apparent.

Research Question 9
How Do the SDAs Evaluate Their Programs?

The plan preparation instructions do not request that the SDAs describe an evaluation process. This information is sought in relation to individuals. For the programs themselves, each SDA is required to meet certain performance standards. The standards required for program year 1995 are listed in Appendix C. Much of the SDAs' ongoing self-evaluation was based on the potential and actual achievement of these standards. In addition, the SDAs monitor the service providers to ensure requirements of their contracts are being met.

Performance Standards

The SDAs described how they will meet the established performance standards and monitor actual performance by following-up with past participants. The responses around performance outcomes and measuring actual performance elicited overlapping responses. Most of the SDAs noted that the performance standards would be met by providing a mix of training and services. All of the SDAs mentioned that the providers and programs would be monitored to determine if performance standard goals were likely to be met. Only six of the SDAs specifically noted that corrective actions of some sort would be taken if performance was falling below standards. Information on how they would ensure responses by clients who had completed the program was provided by only half the SDAs. Three SDAs noted they would work to maintain a 70% response rate from past clients. Two set a goal to strive for 100% response rate. Two SDAs stated they would work with the participants to be sure they understand the importance of responding to follow-up requests for information. The other SDAs did not note responses would be sought. SDA 13 stated it would use its goals and objectives to measure the performance of contractors.

SDA Monitoring

Each SDA must outline how it will monitor its service providers and program activities. Twelve SDAs stated that this monitoring was to check provider compliance to contract terms and conditions, JTPA regulations, and Governor's Employment and Training Department and SDA policies. The monitoring activities included a review of the administrative system, the participant system, such as how records are maintained, and the provider's financial system. One SDA noted it checked to see if service providers were attempting to adhere to the set competencies. Ten SDAs monitored each provider at least once a year; three indicated they visited providers twice a year; and, one SDA implemented quarterly monitoring activities. Eleven SDAs noted they provided feedback and checked at a later date to see if improvements were made based on that information. One SDA stated it gave feedback and highlighted outstanding performance without noting how corrective actions were recommended. SDAs 12

and 13 only noted that they would monitor their providers and listed how often without further explanation. SDA 9 explained that it would be improving its monitoring process to better serve as an evaluation system that could produce information suitable for program planning.

PIC Oversight

All of the plans stated that the PICs reviewed status and program reports to see if they were progressing in a manner to meet performance standards. Two SDAs specifically noted they reviewed employment statistics and competencies as part of this process. One SDA reviewed program status to determine if all programs should continue to exist. Two SDAs utilized the process to assure participants were being successfully placed. Only five of the SDAs stated they used this information to recommend and conduct corrective actions.

Two SDAs pointed to an enhanced use of this report information. SDA 6 noted that it not only used the reports and monitoring to track the possibility of meeting performance standards, but also studied the programs in light of the needs of the local labor market and to support future program planning and curriculum design. SDA 4 utilized its desk reviews to determine if the program's design and diversity of services offered would meet the needs of the target population and reach the outlined objectives.

SDA Use of Evaluation Processes for Overall Program Improvement

From an education program planning perspective, evaluation is used not only to measure participant success in achieving goals, but also to look at the whole training process for the purpose of overall program improvement (Knowles, 1980 & 1990; Boyle, 1981; Knox, 1986; Caffarella, 1988; Sork & Caffarella, 1989). None of the SDAs demonstrated an overall evaluation process in so far as creating linkages between the various types of evaluation done as part of their standard activities and assessment of their entire training operation. All of the SDAs except SDA 12 indicated they evaluate the program participants based on competencies or their ISS goals. In addition, all of the SDAs monitored their success in achieving performance standards. This monitoring is required as the SDAs must provide an analysis of their achievement of performance standards as part of the yearly report to the Governor.

Although the SDAs did not indicate an overall evaluation process, there remained the possibility that they met the program planning evaluation criteria by not only measuring results, as through participant success and performance standards, but by also utilizing the information discovered to find areas for improvement. Of the fourteen SDAs, only one - SDA 6 - indicated that it would use its monitoring and evaluation for program improvement purposes, as was described in the findings above under PIC Oversight. SDA 9 noted it would be looking to further develop its

monitoring process as a potential tool for program planning. Overall, the SDAs demonstrated a key weakness in the utilization of evaluation principles for program and process improvement.

Cross Case Summary of Analysis Criteria

Table 4.7 provides an overview of the SDAs in relation to the successful strategy and education program planning criteria discussed in Chapter Three. The plans clearly varied in their

Table 4.7 - Summary of SDA Demonstration of Successful Strategy and Education Program Planning Criteria

SDA	SS1	SS2	SS3	SS4/PPb	PPa	PPc	PPd
11	óóó	óóóó	óóóó	óóóó	óóóó	óóóó	óó
2	óó	óóóó	óóóó	óóóó	óóóó	óó	óó
10	óó	óóóó	óóó	óóóó	óóóó	óóó	óó
3	óó	óóóó	óóóó	óó	óóóó	óóó	óó
8	-	óóóó	óóóó	óó	óóóó	óóóó	óó
6	-	óóóó	óóó	óóó	óóóó	ó	óóóó
4	-	óóóó	óóóó	óó	óóóó	óó	óó
13	-	óóó	óó	óó	óóóó	óóóó	óó
1	-	óóóó	óó	óó	óóóó	óóó	óó
7	-	óóóó	óóóó	-	óóóó	óóó	óó
9	-	óóóó	-	óóóó	óóóó	óó	óóó
14	-	óóóó	óóóó	ó	óóóó	óó	óó
5	óó	óóóó	óó	-	óóóó	óó	óó
12	-	óóóó	óó	óóó	óóóó	óó	ó

Note. The scale utilized to rate SDA fulfillment of the criteria is as follows: óóóó = fully meets criteria; óóó = meets most of criteria; óó = somewhat meets criteria; ó = meets little of criteria; - = does not meet criteria. The key to column abbreviations is as follows: SS = Successful Strategies with 1 = participants committed to training and obtaining employment, 2 = removes barriers to participation in training, 3 = improves work maturity skills, 4 = links skills to local labor market; PP = Program Planning with a = use of needs assessment, b = context analysis, c = sets objectives, d = evaluation process. SS4 and PPb were joined for analysis due to the similarity of these criteria. Chapter Three provides more information on this joint ranking.

fulfillment of the criteria chosen for analysis. Due to plan preparation instructions and guidelines, all SDAs fully met two of the criteria - providing supportive services and conducting needs assessments. Standard plan requirements also led all of the SDAs to at least partially meet the setting objectives and evaluation criteria. It is beyond this minimum level that the distinctions between the plans begin to arise, with those lowest in the ranking meeting no other

criteria completely and having at least one criteria unfulfilled. Based on the results around these criteria, SDA 11's plan would appear to have the greatest potential to effectively guide the implementation of training programs to successful outcomes, whereas SDAs 5 and 12 would have the least potential.

Conclusion

The SDA job training plans provide basic information as to what the efforts of these agencies will be in regard to JTPA. One can see the process through which funds make their way from the federal government into training activities which finally serve the individuals who are the focus of this job training policy. Yet, do these plans really demonstrate the potential to serve as tools to guide successful implementation of training programs? They clearly state what will occur, yet how the programs will be implemented is less defined. Most of the plans do not fulfill the successful strategy criteria nor the education program planning criteria identified for this research. Thus all of this information must be considered in light of the overall research question guiding this project: Do the fourteen Virginia SDA 1995 Title II-A job training plans outline programs which have the potential to fulfill the overall JTPA purpose to create workers with "increased employment and earnings, increased educational and occupational skills, and decreased welfare dependency, thereby improving the quality of the work force and enhancing the productivity and competitiveness of the Nation" (Text, 1993, p. 4)? Chapter Five begins with a summary and discussion of the findings then seeks to answer to this final question.

Chapter Five

Discussion and Conclusions

Introduction

This research project was undertaken to assess Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) job training plans. By describing and comparing key elements of the fourteen plans submitted to the Commonwealth of Virginia for program year 1995 by the service delivery areas (SDAs), an understanding was developed as to how the SDAs sought to fulfill the overall purpose of JTPA. These job training plans are submitted to inform the state as to what activities each area intends to engage in around job training for the program year. If an SDA does not submit a plan, it will not receive JTPA funding. Yet, these plans are not simply reports to the state. They capture the earliest stage of JTPA implementation. If the plans are strong, their ability to guide successful implementation is enhanced. This research sought to evaluate the potential of each plan to serve in this capacity by identifying SDA use of successful strategies and education program planning techniques. The information compiled in this paper allows the overall research question now to be addressed: Do the fourteen Virginia SDA 1995 Title II-A job training plans outline programs which have the potential to fulfill the overall JTPA purpose to create workers with “increased employment and earnings, increased educational and occupational skills, and decreased welfare dependency, thereby improving the quality of the work force and enhancing the productivity and competitiveness of the Nation” (Text, 1993, p. 4)?

The data presentation and analysis provided answers to the research questions guiding this project. Prior to answering the overall research question, key findings are summarized and discussed. These findings deal with the plans, their demonstration of the criteria, and their positioning of individuals with a focus on how these plans serve as tools to guide implementation. By looking at the data in this manner, the implications of the research can be tied to necessary actions by the SDAs and policy makers to strengthen these plans, and in turn the implementation process. Many of the recommendations for further study suggested by this research, outlined at the end of this chapter, point to research which will delve deeper into identifying best practices and determining the true effectiveness of job training programs. The goal of this final chapter is to capture the strongest aspects of the job training plans and provide suggestions as to how to improve their weaknesses. The SDA job training plans are far from failures as implementation planning tools; however, their full potential has yet to be achieved.

Summary and Discussion of Findings

Based on the results of the research questions utilized for this research, a job training program participant might experience something close to the following as he or she goes through the process. The participant is referred to job training by a social service agency that has identified this person might be eligible for JTPA training based on literature sent to the agency by its SDA's administrative entity. Rather than going to an SDA office, the participant sees an approved service provider. Based on its proposal to and subsequent contract with the SDA, this provider will screen the participant to ensure eligibility and begin an objective assessment process. Utilizing the information gathered in testing and interviews, the service provider establishes an Individual Service Strategy (ISS) for the participant which identifies not only what basic and job skills training this person receives, but also notes that child care and transportation must be provided in order for this person to participate in training. The participant begins taking courses at the local community college to build basic skills, while also attending occupational skills training. After 20 weeks of training and demonstrating that the targeted skills have been developed, the participant is assisted by the service provider in obtaining unsubsidized employment.

Described in this manner, a path through the job training process can be identified. As the findings are discussed, the strengths and weaknesses of this processes and the various elements of the plans can be seen more clearly.

Finding 1: The plans do not provide a detailed picture of what type of training process takes place in each SDA.

The results of this research indicate the SDAs have very similar processes as to what is done for job training. For certain reasons, this is can be viewed as a strength. The SDAs all meet compliance requirements that help protect and develop the most needy participants. Creaming, a problem of the past, occurred when to meet performance criteria program administrators targeted only those with the most potential to succeed in training and employment for program participation. Those who presented more of a training challenge were left out of the process. This is now deterred by the requirement that the programs identify and serve those most in need of training, the hard-to-serve. The creation of an ISS is another positive required element of the plans. This ensures that each participant has his or her specific needs identified and addressed through the training. The plan preparation instructions and guidelines make sure that certain key elements are provided properly by every SDA.

Yet, these guidelines also limit the information provided in the job training plans. The SDAs write what they will do in regard to these specific areas, but this information rarely revealed key distinctions between the activities of the fourteen SDAs. Differences between some of the SDAs

appear as tangential statements within the plans. One SDA noted it had an agreement with one provider to deliver all of its services. However, most of the responses given by this SDA in relation to the plan guidelines made its plan appear to be no different than an SDA that used many providers. With the training programs being designed and implemented at the local level, the PICs can develop training that best suits their participants and the needs of their local businesses. Yet, the plans do not demonstrate what unique structures and programs each SDA has determined will work best for it.

The location and economic environments of the SDAs are key differences that could impact the type of training delivered. SDA 9, located in southern Virginia at the North Carolina border, chose transportation as its additional hard-to-serve category in order to be able to give participants a way to get to training and jobs. Areas such as SDA 5 in Northern Virginia would not have this problem since the area has a strong public transportation system. One SDA noted due to the economic downturn its ability to place participants was being negatively impacted. SDA 7 stated it was unable to gauge the local economy to determine if the potential existed to implement an on-the-job training program.

Yet, none of these SDAs presented plan information which demonstrated how these barriers to delivering training changed the way they developed and offered training programs. Perhaps these challenges did not push the SDAs to creatively address the needs of the participants and the local labor market, but this would seem unlikely. In order to meet performance standards, the SDAs must have done something to compensate for these barriers. If additional problems do not impact the programs and services being offered, can participant needs really be met? If the needs are not met, then in the end the goals of JTPA could not be fulfilled.

Because the plans submitted create such a generic picture of job training in the state, few of the unique aspects of the SDAs can be highlighted by this research. Some SDAs went outside the plan structure and while discussing the basics also shed light on what they actually did in their training process. SDA 11, mentioned again and again as a strong plan during analysis, did just this. Perhaps the strength of that particular plan lies not in the fact that it fulfilled more of the analysis criteria than the other plans, but that it utilized the job training plan as an opportunity to create a true program planning tool as opposed to simply a report to the state demonstrating compliance in its program. Having plans which showed more of the individual activities would also provide the opportunity, if seized upon, to allow the plan reviewers to capture ideas that could be tried in other areas and identify potential weaknesses in the program's structure prior to implementation.

Finding 2: The SDAs could make better use of successful practices.

Four key successful practice analysis criteria were identified in the literature. Programs that worked with people who were interested in participating in training and committed to getting a job, provided services to overcome barriers to participating in training, sought to develop employability skills in participants, and linked the training to the local labor market tended to have more successful outcomes than other job training programs (GAO, 1996b). All of the plans met one successful practice criteria in that they all provide supportive services to ensure that people can participate in training. The fact that this is a required element of the job training plans does not diminish the positive impact these services might have on training participants. Earlier research tied the provision of these services to participant success (GAO, 1992; GAO, 1996b). Whether the SDAs strongly believe in helping remove barriers to participation or they simply provide the services because they are required to, supportive services are clearly vital to making sure people stay in job training and seeing them strongly represented in most of the plans was a clear overall strength.

Unfortunately, the other successful strategy elements were not so evident in the plans. Previously the Job Training Partnership Act Commission (1989) and the National Research Council (1994) noted programs needed to better utilize best practices around training. This paper shares that finding. The absence of both clear linkages to the local labor market and the promotion of employability skill training are of particular concern.

Though some plans mentioned they linked to the local labor market or looked to it for needs, strategies to accomplish this were not apparent. This weakens the plans greatly, especially in light of the fact that the structure of the PICs was designed so as to encourage participation of local businesses to ensure they had a voice in what skills were being identified for training. The participation of local business representatives is not seen in the plans. Those plans that list jobs targeted for skill training do not often point to PIC participation or strategy in choosing these job areas. Some plans do not even mention how or if particular jobs are targeted.

In light of the fact that the lack of connection of training to the job market has been a historical criticism of federal job training policy, this finding is quite disturbing. Levitan and Mangum (1969) noted that one reason Manpower Development and Training Act programs were unsuccessful was due to the fact that job skills needed by the local labor market were not identified prior to training efforts. It was discovered in this project that this problem still might exist almost thirty years later at the SDA level. If federal job training programs have learned from and corrected past mistakes, this should be evident in their program plans.

Another weak area around successful strategies was the development of employability skills. The confusion of the findings around this issue was exacerbated by the fact that pre-

employment/work maturity skills are targeted for development in youth, but there is no such clear connection to their development in adults participating in training. The literature on both JTPA research and workforce skill needs noted the importance of basic workplace skills around attitude, functioning in teams, taking criticism from supervisors and so on (Carnevale, 1991; Marshall & Tucker, 1992; SCANS, 1992; Lafer, 1994; Grubb, 1996; GAO, 1996b). If these skills are being developed in adults, the plans should be clearly identifying this. These abilities are important enough for criteria to have been established for their development in youth. If the SDAs have discovered that they are just as important for adults, this should have been noted in the plans. Lack of employability skills can be a key barrier to adults retaining employment. If creating economic self-sufficiency is a goal of these programs, then ensuring participants keep their jobs must be part of the process. Without the skills to function within a work environment, participants are not going to be able to make this happen.

The finding that the programs do not necessarily make sure that participants have a real commitment to the training process is not as concerning as the other missing elements, but is important to SDA efforts. This type of commitment is hard to identify and even more difficult to describe on paper. In spite of the challenges around changing this type of behavior, it is something SDAs should encourage service providers to work on.

In his study of Texas literacy programs, Moorman (1981) found participant motivation to be a primary factor in the success of these courses. Clearly at some point during training providers should first try to identify the participant's level of commitment and then take steps to develop and enhance this. In all likelihood many of the participants do not demonstrate this attitude upon entry into job training for a variety of reasons. With welfare reform, more people will be pushed into training rather than seek it out themselves. SDAs with a future focus would benefit from considering strategies to help build commitment in participants. Policy should encourage pilot efforts in this area.

Finding 3: The SDAs do not demonstrate an understanding and use of education program planning.

The four education program planning criteria identified for use in analysis were suitable for this level of program and all except context analysis were mentioned in some way by all the SDAs. Like supportive services, needs assessments were required elements of the plans and as such were represented by all. Again, although the driver for providing this activity was the plan preparation guidelines, this is a key strength of the plans. Not only do the needs assessments ensure that participants are being evaluated properly as to the training, skills, and services they need, this activity also provides the basis for creating the ISS. The use of the ISS, especially if the needs assessment identifies key areas of interest and ability in participants, creates more potential for people to be trained for jobs to which they are suited. Therefore these adults are

more likely to retain the jobs, leading to economic self-sufficiency through steady employment, thus fulfilling JTPA's purpose.

Context analysis shares many similarities with linking to the local labor market which was discussed in Finding 2. During analysis, these two were grouped due to the overlapping nature of their elements. Context analysis might be interpreted in even a more broad way and if done so would have required the plans to demonstrate activities in even more areas. Context analysis here was limited to looking at the labor market. However, the activity could also include assessing the community (Knowles, 1980; Boyle, 1981) and the place these participants would have in it if they obtained skills and became self-sufficient. What role does the community hope these new workers will fulfill? This could be addressed in a context analysis. Findings could lead to citizen skills, covering things such as their rights and responsibilities as tax payers, being added as part of the training process. This is not pointed to as a weakness of the plans as such efforts might be outside the realm of job training, yet context analysis is an element to be considered in relation to an enhanced training process.

All of the plans had objectives as required, yet their strength varied in relation to education program planning criteria. Most of the plans would have benefited from creating objectives that set the course for their efforts. The objectives tended to outline in some way what the process was about - training people and getting them jobs - as opposed to showing what the outcome would look like. What type of information will the participants have after program completion? What about the training will support them in the future to maintain their self-sufficiency? SDA 11's objectives, detailed in Chapter Four, captured the essence of a strong objective. No SDA received zero credit for their efforts in creating objectives, though the objectives could be enhanced to better serve as a planning tools and measures by which to assess the success of program activities overall.

Evaluation was also touched on by all of the SDAs, yet none truly demonstrated that it was used not only to measure the achievement of skills, but also as a mechanism to address changes that might be needed in the overall training process. All SDAs built in evaluation of program participants which is required of the plans. Yet few used evaluation beyond this activity. More than any other education program planning element, absence of evaluation in regard to the overall process is quite concerning. By not seeking out feedback and measures to determine how their total job training plan is working, the SDAs do not appear to be actively engaged in continual upgrading and improvement of their activities. They might eliminate a service provider who is not meeting performance standards, but what if they are missing the opportunity to identify and make changes that would enhance their overall performance well beyond these standards? The lack of continual improvement could lead to stagnation. The SDAs might not be responsive to increased demands on their resources over time or may miss opportunities to implement new techniques.

Finding 4: The individual is underrepresented in the job training plans.

As noted above, the plans must show that an ISS is developed for each participant. However, in addressing how the individual progresses through the programs, analysis was done to look at how each plan presented the individual within the context of what the SDA was planning to do for job training. Some plans appeared to be serving their clients, yet did not demonstrate what could be called an individual focus in how these participants were discussed. These findings are the most subjective of this study and no clear correlation to the potential success of these plans can be tied to how the individual is handled within the plan descriptions. Yet, this is an area deserving some focus here and could be targeted for future research.

The plans that were developed with an individual focus, such as SDA 11, presented a much clearer picture as to what the job training process was actually like. This plan demonstrated distinctions between its activities and those of other SDAs. Its process might not be more effective, but one can understand when reviewing the plan what this SDAs is doing in its program. It appears that part of what made these distinctions evident was the plan's focus on the individual. The plan described how the individual goes through the assessment process as opposed to noting how the individual is assessed. The plan described the training activities and identified why these types of training are important to clients as opposed to listing what types of training would be offered. Whether true or not, the individual focused plan sent the message that something different was going on in this SDA. One could even pull a practice or two, such as its self assessment workshop, from the job training plan. Though a conclusion cannot be drawn, a possibility exists that one method to enhance the clarity and strength of the plans would be to have them make the participant and his progression through the process the key focus of the plan design.

Finding 5: The job training plans reflect the guidelines under which they are created.

Though not a surprising discovery, this could be dubbed the “you-get-what-you-ask-for” finding. When the instructions and guidelines for plan preparation request an element be provided and described, it is. This is the case when all the plans demonstrate fulfillment of criteria such as providing supportive services and doing needs assessments. Part of the analysis sought demonstration of elements that were not required by the guidelines, which is why the SDAs were credited with even a mention of some activity around these criteria. In fact, the plan structure intentionally limits some of the responses, such as by not having the SDAs describe in detail the competencies they seek to develop.

This finding has a broad impact on this research. One cannot expect these SDAs to demonstrate they engage in an activity if they are not asked to do so. It cannot be generalized that a plan

which does not say it has an overall evaluation process categorically does not. The findings here are tied to what the plans state. These job training plans are being evaluated as planning tools. They are being addressed from the perspective that they can guide the implementation of training programs. This finding shows that their capacity to do so can be enhanced or limited by the guidelines under which they are created. The SDAs do have the capacity to build elements that are not specifically requested into their plans; yet, they cannot be faulted if they do not do so. This finding has more of an impact at the state and federal level, where the requirements for the plans are set. If it might be useful to have certain elements demonstrated in the plans, the guidelines should ask for them.

Overall Research Question

The final question guiding this research remains: Do the fourteen Virginia SDA 1995 Title II-A job training plans outline programs which have the potential to fulfill the overall JTPA purpose to create workers with “increased employment and earnings, increased educational and occupational skills, and decreased welfare dependency, thereby improving the quality of the work force and enhancing the productivity and competitiveness of the Nation” (Text, 1993, p. 4)? It must be noted that this study is focusing on the potential of the plans. The potential has been determined by evaluating them against successful strategy and education program planning criteria. The findings are an estimate of their success and an evaluation of how the SDAs demonstrate the use of tools and information available to them for program planning. The overall research question is addressed based on these findings.

All of the plans demonstrate there will be training and education activities at the local level. If these activities are properly executed, then participants should develop occupational and basic skills. None of the plans limited or appeared to attempt to limit their training and educational activities in favor of job placement only. Therefore they did not demonstrate the potential to fail in the area of creating skilled workers. All of the plans also included a focus on the development of basic skills which are so needed in today’s work environment. Since placement and job search assistance are common elements in the plans, the participants do seem to have the support system in place to obtain employment upon completion of training.

Yet, how the SDAs will really fulfill the purpose of JTPA remains unclear. It is obvious that to improve skills one must provide skills training. These plans do not really serve as planning tools that can guide implementation. One reason for this is that the individual aspects of each SDA are not demonstrated in the plans. A sense of what the SDA is doing beyond providing the mechanism for training is not evident. In certain cases, this is the role of the SDA. It might be turning all of the training activities over to another entity for implementation. Still, the plans would need to in some way guide the process beyond setting the compliance standards. The majority of the plans do not demonstrate successful strategies and education program planning

techniques. Therefore, in terms of potential, in many cases it is difficult to impossible to determine. The plans do not provide enough information to guide implementation so it is difficult to assess if they might be successful in doing so.

The minor variations in the plans provide the best standard by which to answer the overall research question. Yes, the plans do show that people will be trained. Yet, many of the plans are not suitable to guide an implementation process. Some plans, however, are unique enough in spite of the guidelines under which they were prepared to demonstrate their implementation potential. Their use of successful strategies and a demonstrated understanding of education program planning makes them appear to be stronger plans when compared to those that do not show the use of such elements. In the end, if all of the SDAs see that training is provided, they will take some step toward seeing that the goals of JTPA are met. Only a few SDAs have managed to show at the job training plan stage that they have the potential, based on selected criteria, to fulfill the purpose of JTPA.

Implications

Program Planning

In order for the job training plans to be viewed clearly as education program planning tools, they will have to be strengthened. Since these are training activities, the process should be seen as an education process. As such, it is surprising that education program planning techniques were so weakly demonstrated in the plans. For the plans to serve as better guidelines for implementation, their linkages to education program planning must be enhanced. A few implications around this issue are discussed below.

Create stronger and more appropriate objectives. The SDAs need to create stronger objectives which focus not on what they plan to do - mere outlines of their programs - but serve as guides for the process. As noted in the literature, objectives should guide program development (Boyle, 1981; Caffarella, 1988; Sork & Caffarella, 1989), set the priorities of the program (Knowles, 1980; Nadler, 1982), and provide the criteria for evaluation (Houle, 1972; Boyle, 1981; Caffarella, 1988). The SDAs must utilize objectives to their full potential. As Boyle (1981) noted meaningful objectives state what will be achieved through the program and develop a clear relationship to the overall problem.

Utilization of objectives in this fashion would provide better guidelines for the service providers trying to reach the SDA's goals. In addition, the objectives would serve to show the position the SDA has in relation to the federal government and the actual provision of services. This would help clarify what activities are and are not within its realm. These objectives could also help position the activities of the SDA in relation to the community. They could serve to inform the

public as to what the SDA is trying to achieve through its work. In doing so, areas where business and the community might need to step in to fill developmental gaps not covered by the programs could be identified.

Use evaluation over monitoring. The SDAs all discussed their monitoring efforts and outlined steps to evaluate program participants. The SDAs must shift from monitoring to evaluating. Clearly monitoring must exist to ensure that no financial misdeeds are performed and that the service providers are meeting their contractual obligations. However, overall evaluation processes must be put in place by the SDAs. In this way, they can begin to capture their own best practice information and assess on an ongoing basis their overall performance. Meeting the performance standards is required by the Act. As Bailey (1988) noted, performance standards are not tied to the purpose of JTPA. The SDAs need to move past using these as their sole measure of success. Fulfilling performance standards is monitoring. If they are not being met, minor changes will be made to ensure they will be fulfilled. This is not evaluation. This is not utilizing information gained from participants and review of processes to make program improvements. Having an evaluation process in place would allow an SDA to continually improve its programs. An SDA that corrects for problems discovered during monitoring might not be getting to the root cause of these difficulties. Evaluation has more potential to unearth problems in the system and to provide information that can be used to correct them.

The SDAs can change now. As some of the plans demonstrated, the SDAs do have the ability to demonstrate their individuality and unique program planning efforts within the confines of the instructions given to them to present their plans. The SDAs should take the opportunity to do so. Weaknesses in the design of the plans can be compensated for by SDAs that provide more information than requested. SDAs can build depth and breadth into their plans. Aside from helping make the plans stronger, during this time of policy transition the SDAs might benefit from demonstrating what they have to offer at the local level. It remains unclear now as to whether a PIC/SDA structure will remain in place under new legislation even if the local level gains more control over job training. If each geographic area has specific needs and an approach has been developed by the SDA to meet those needs, the plan can show this. By doing so it would reveal the importance of keeping enough geographic designations in existence so as to meet the special needs of each of these areas.

Policy

As policy begins to position job training as an opportunity to develop lifelong learners, the mechanisms and implementation systems suggested by the policies will need to encourage the use of education program planning techniques. As policy implementation moves further away from the federal level, leaving many of the decisions as to what training will occur to the state and local level, the means to capture what is happening at the local level will need to be enhanced. One

way to do this is to ensure that opportunities to learn what is going on locally, such as in the development of job training plans, must be utilized to their full advantage. The implications that follow are a few that should be considered by policy makers.

Implementation must be considered during policy formation. Mazmanian and Sabatier (1989) noted the need for policy makers to consider the implementation process during policy development. This research points to the same need. The challenges of implementation must be considered during the policy creation process. In addition, as policies are implemented, problems encountered must be reviewed by policy makers to determine if changes should be made in the overall policy to aid the implementation process. In the case of job training, policy makers could alter policy to ensure that job training plans like those reviewed here are designed to better serve as tools to guide implementation at sub-local levels. If education is to be emphasized in future legislation, then those creating policy must understand education program planning. By doing so, they can develop policies that require use of education program planning techniques during the implementation process.

Policy should require identification and utilization of best practices. In the literature review, work on job training policy noted that best practices identified through research were not being fully utilized (JTPAAC, 1989; NRC, 1994). As demonstrated in the data analysis, few of the job training plans showed they used successful strategies that the government has discovered through its research. The federal government has the potential to play a key role in the identification of best practices. Even in an environment where most of the training is being decided upon at the local level, in its role as technical advisor the government has the ability to disseminate information on what is working and what is not. The job training plan guidelines examined here showed that the state built in certain requirements to be addressed specifically, such as fulfilling the Governor's goals around school-to-work. This same mechanism could be utilized to require that SDAs demonstrate the use of best practices. If some particularly effective technique is identified, the SDAs could be asked to show how they will work to incorporate this strategy over the program year. There are many ways that best practices can be used; policy must ensure that this begins to happen.

Policy should require that SDAs detail their programs. Rather than having SDAs show a minimum level of their activities, policy requirements should be designed to capture the real activities of the SDAs. Without creating a process through which the SDAs must justify every action, policy could require a bit more from the SDAs around creating a plan that serves as a planning tool. This ties into the utilization of best practices. As it was discovered, SDAs provided information on what they were asked about. If policy makers realize the importance of best practices, they should ask to see them in the plans. The plans at a minimum should reflect what is happening at the SDA level. Rather than simply being a demonstration of compliance, the plans can be used to show the unique aspects of each SDA's activities. If the planning

process moved in this direction, it could become a useful tool in the identification of best practices. When an SDA has particularly successful outcomes, those overseeing its success would not need to return to the SDA to find out what it was doing to gain those results. At least a general sense as to how this success came about would be available within the plans. When the process becomes more sophisticated and more about the programs is laid out up-front, the weak plans can be identified earlier and technical assistance can be utilized to strengthen them prior to full implementation. Policy's impact on what the job training plans could be is great. It can have this impact without dictating what each SDA must do, but by requiring each SDA demonstrate what it will do to create the best training programs possible.

Recommendations for Further Research

Clearly, the next step is to tie the projections of this research to the actual outcomes of Virginia's SDAs for program year 1995. Care must be taken to identify useful outcome information as some of the numbers reported to the states can remove blocks of participants who lower the actual outcomes, such as not taking into account those who do not complete training. More case study research is needed to identify best practices of the SDAs. The JTPA literature was extremely limited in the area of what type of training activities were occurring; a great deal of room exists for research into what types of programs are run by service providers and their success in regard to skill development. More work needs to be done into how programs are evaluated; again here a focus on the actual skill development in participants would be useful to those interested in JTPA programs. In addition, to determine the real achievement of economic self-sufficiency, longer term studies must be conducted that follow-up with training participants not only after thirteen weeks, as is required by JTPA, but in the months and years that follow training termination.

Conclusion

The potential for job training plans to serve as true implementation guides and tools exists. With an enhanced use of education program planning and a focus on successful strategies, these job training plans could guide the SDAs and their service providers not only through one program year at a time, but also across the years by creating mechanisms such as ongoing evaluation for continual improvement of the training process. Hints of their potential exists in the plans reviewed for this study. The weaknesses identified cannot always be tied to the plans themselves or to the actions of the SDAs, but can be linked back to what policy requires of these SDAs and their programs. For the most part, the strengths identified in this research were due in great part to the efforts of the SDAs to distinguish their activities within the limited guidelines of the plans. As we move to create a lifelong learning workforce, all of our tools must be used to their utmost potential. The information exists to help create job training plans that will develop a

better workforce. Policy makers must ensure that the strongest program planning efforts are being made on behalf of our most in need.

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