

Joint Union–Management Workforce Development Model

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In their early synthesis of the features shared by joint training programs, Ferman, Hoyman and Cutcher-Gershenfeld (1990) argued that such programs, as they emerged from the industrial restructuring of the 1980s, represented a distinctive innovation in worker training and career development with the potential to become “a stable and significant domain” in labor–management relations. The authors described joint training programs as an emerging set of institutional arrangements that included large-scale, negotiated, and jointly administered trust funds providing technical training, personal development, and access to education for union members. Though there were many examples of joint union–management training activity prior to the appearance of the industrial joint training program model, earlier programs were narrowly focused on single-issue training or time-bounded training efforts. In contrast, the new model spanned many areas of training activity, covered divergent populations of workers and managers, and incorporated service delivery strategies guided by a philosophy of worker involvement and jointly determined decision making. Among other research implications, the authors identified the classification of joint training activities as a challenge for understanding the structural tendencies within these young organizations.

Notably, the authors speculated that the emergence of these innovative joint training programs marked a historic change in traditional collective bargaining practices and past attitudes of both union and management toward the centrality of education and training activities. Gomberg (1967), writing during a time when union density was near its postwar high and the mechanisms of collective bargaining were finely tuned, argued that special labor–management committees, including those covering human relations issues, were transitory formations that reflected

(inherently unstable) experiments in class collaboration and focused on supplementary issues (such as worker displacement.) Such efforts would survive, he said, only if they remained subsidiary to the collective bargaining process. Contemporary industrial relations experts disagree. Based on the experience of employee involvement programs, Cutcher-Gershenfeld, Kochan, and Verma (1991) concluded that jointly sponsored participative initiatives that involved unions as full partners and were directly connected to collective bargaining contracts were likely to be sustained over time because they bore the capacity to broaden out to encompass many issues, helping to institutionalize the program into the overall operations of the organization. Joint programs were not isolated phenomena, these authors argued, but signaled a fundamental restructuring of labor–management relations. As both management and labor came to understand the need for continuous workplace learning for employees and adjusted the services in joint programs according to competitive pressures, scholars predicted, such programs could become “permanent social institutions” (Ferman, Hoyman, and Cutcher-Gershenfeld 1990).

Our research into the current status of joint training and continuous workplace learning programs bolsters the argument of latter-day scholars. We examine the extent to which these programs have been institutionalized as well as the potential role of the joint union–management training model in helping to craft the comprehensive workforce development system called for in this volume.

In the two decades since the first edition of this volume was published, new joint training programs have emerged, while diminishing resources have forced several existing programs to modify their offerings and others to shut their doors altogether. Still other programs have expanded their service offerings beyond the provision of formal education and training in the workplace and now include a wide array of services that intervene at the point of production to improve quality and firm performance, increase the level of worker skill and expertise, and help U.S.-based firms meet the demands of global competition. In addition, many joint union–management training programs now engage in regional and sector partnerships, taking on new functions as workforce development intermediaries in the external labor market to extend their services beyond individual firms and to new population groups in the wider community. Importantly, the joint training program model has spread its reach across the domestic economy, expanding from their manufacturing roots in the Midwest to service-sector firms spread across the nation.

Our review suggests that joint training programs have proven to be resilient institutions with the capacity to respond to the great need for

ongoing education among active and laid-off workers. In this chapter we argue that the involvement of joint union–management partnerships in internal and external labor markets not only strengthens the joint training program model but also adds value to the broader workforce development system, helping improve the system’s effectiveness in those industries and regions where joint programs exist. Furthermore, we argue that joint training programs not only represent a shift in the strategic importance of jointness within the U.S. labor movement, but that these efforts were the primary mechanisms by which this shift occurred.

We begin the chapter with a discussion of two seminal works on joint training programs that together codified the joint training model, including its organizational structure and worker-centered pedagogy (Sarmiento and Kay 1990). We continue with a review of the literature about joint training published between 1990 and 2009. The aim of this review is to identify the features of the model that have been institutionalized and to discuss the innovations that have occurred. In order to highlight the structural features of joint programs that contribute to their sustainability, we present a five-part classification of key features.

This review is followed by a discussion of the Institute for Career Development (ICD), a joint education and training partnership between the United Steel Workers union and multiple employers in the steel and rubber industries. Though the program has at times faced threats to its sustainability, it has also experienced tremendous growth in its scope and reach over 20 years. This growth contrasts with other programs in the manufacturing industry that have contracted or in some cases been dismantled all together. Our purpose is to explore the features, mechanisms, and processes that have made the ICD a resilient and sustainable institution of worker education. We conclude with a discussion of the policies that may help strengthen and expand the role of joint training programs in the 21st-century workforce development system.

The Legacy of the 1980s: The Joint Training Program Model

The joint training model first emerged in 1982 when, faced with massive industrial restructuring, the United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW) and the Ford Motor Company negotiated the UAW/Ford Education, Training, and Development Program to retrain thousands of displaced auto workers in new careers (Ferman, Hoyman, and Cutcher-Gershenfeld 1990). The parties realized before long that industrial restructuring required active workers to develop deeper technical skills and broader capacity for critical thinking and problem solving. The UAW–Ford program was broadened to offer education and training to incumbent workers. The UAW quickly distributed

the model throughout the auto sector, first by negotiating new programs with the other two U.S. automakers, General Motors and Chrysler, and then with the larger auto supply firms. Soon the Communications Workers of America (CWA) and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) took up the model and negotiated a joint training fund in the 1986 contract with AT&T, forming the Alliance for Employee Growth and Development.

By the early 1990s, the model had become widely distributed among large, unionized firms. In their early years, joint programs represented a significant new investment in the education and training of a segment of the American workforce, frontline industrial workers, who had been largely ignored by the training sponsored by employers and the public system. The new programs were massive, well-funded operations that offered services to thousands of workers across the country. In addition, training delivery was largely decentralized, designed and administered by local committees and functioning through contracts with local education providers. The limited history and the complex nature of these programs meant little could be known about their operations and their outcomes. Indeed, the authors acknowledged that there was limited scholarship available to draw on in their discussion of the model.

To compensate for the lack of systematic research on joint programs, the authors drew on data from a survey of 102 labor management pairs and the anecdotal accounts of program leaders and practitioners in large, national programs (Ferman, Hoyman, Cutcher-Gershenfeld, and Savoie 1991) to outline the basic program model and explain how joint programs were an innovation to workforce development and training (see Table 1). In its simplest form the model consisted of three basic elements: a negotiated training trust fund, a joint governance structure including a single union and a single employer, and a mission to upgrade the skills and meet the personal development needs of union members. Their description of the model elaborates on these basic features.

The picture that emerges is a training activity characterized by codetermination in decision making, with high degrees of local control, that is providing services to active and displaced workers via a mix of internal worker-trainers and external service providers, all of which may be supported with internal funds and public dollars (pp. 164–65).

In the same year the AFL-CIO Human Resources Development Institute (HRDI) published *Worker-Centered Learning: A Union Guide to Workplace Literacy* (Sarmiento and Kay 1990). Rather than focus on the institutional arrangements, funding mechanisms, and institutional relationships, these authors offered a prescription for a worker-centered

TABLE 1
Distinctive Features of Joint Training Programs

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- Are rooted in and defined by collective bargaining that specifies mission, governance, and coverage and provides a financial formula.
 - Target broad populations, including displaced and active workers.
 - Emphasize career development, employment security, and broad training and education that would increase workforce flexibility.
 - Developed under an implicit agreement that joint training programs would not replace existing union and company training obligations such as apprenticeship training and specific job- or production-related training.
 - Include codetermination in decision making.
 - Present participant-driven content, with training based on worker's expressed needs and aspirations.
 - Exhibit high degree of local control over training, with local joint committees determining needs, organizing training, and developing service delivery systems and relationships.
 - Make extensive use of local community networks for counseling, assessment, and training.
 - Evaluate based on outcomes for workers.
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Source: Ferman, Hoyman, and Cutcher-Gershenfeld 1990.

pedagogy to guide the development of joint training programs and their relationships with workers. By combining trade union values for workplace democracy and equity with established principles of adult learning, worker-centered learning places the learners' needs and interests at the center of the educational process. Workers are engaged in every step of the process, from design to delivery to evaluation. In addition, basic education and job related training are broadly contextualized so that the participants are encouraged to explore the social, economic, and political structures that shape their work and skill requirements. The authors articulated several worker-centered learning principles (depicted in Table 2), which they suggested union leaders and program operators use to guide the development, delivery, and evaluation of education and training provided by joint training programs.

Since 1990 the literature on the industrial joint union-management training programs has largely followed these two tracks. Authors often anchor their discussion of joint training programs on the basic structural and pedagogical principles set forth in these seminal works, providing very little systematic analysis or critical inquiry to confirm, extend, or invalidate them. Ironically, though Ferman, Hoyman, and Cutcher-Gershenfeld (1990) called for rigorous research to refine the joint program principles and cultivate the model, no one, not even the authors themselves, took up the systematic study they proposed. While much has been published about joint training programs in the last 20 years, it is largely anecdotal, drawing on the accounts of program leaders and practitioners as well as publicly available documents, program materials,

TABLE 2
Worker-Centered Learning Principles

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- Education that builds on what workers already know, taking the workers' strengths, not their deficiencies, as the starting point in the educational program.
 - Education for the whole person, not just the learning needs related to the workplace.
 - Codetermination in development and planning of program.
 - Participatory, bottom-up decision making to ensure that programs are responsive to needs of workers and learning goals.
 - Equal access to programs, with barriers to entry such as current skills and responsibilities mitigated by a compliment of support services.
 - Worker involvement in the design of skill assessments, which in turn are used to support individual learning goals and provide feedback on individual progress, not as tools to screen workers for placement in jobs.
 - Confidentiality of classroom records.
 - Integration of basic skills education into a larger education program.
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Source: Sarmiento and Kay 1990.

and journalistic accounts to describe individual programs. Thus much of this work appears to be motivated by advocacy rather than the goal of evaluation guided by social scientific methods.

This approach to the research on joint training programs lies in stark contrast to the rigorous and substantial line of research that exists on joint programs focused on single issues like health and safety (Schurman and Israel, 1996; Schurman, Hugentobler, and Robins 1990) as well as extensive research that exists on broad, strategic, and firm- or industrial-level labor-management partnerships (MIT 2001; Luria, Vidal, Wial, and Rogers 2006; Kochan, Eaton, McKersie, and Adler 2009). Indeed, many authors acknowledge the lack of rigor in the literature on joint training programs and offer several explanations. Some claim joint programs lack the resources to invest in data collection and program evaluation (Tao, Richard, Tarr, and Wheeler 1992), so they also lack the systems and knowledge to track program quality and performance (Bloom and Campbell 2002). Harris (2000) attributes his lack of investment in data collection and analysis to the politicized nature of the union-management partnership. Union and management leaders, fearful that poor evaluations might cause their partners to withdraw support from the program, limit the availability and access to the hard data researchers need to conduct rigorous analyses. The end result is that there are few agreed-upon metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of joint programs (Bloom and Campbell 2002). A systematic research agenda is hampered by the lack of a validated set of descriptive variables that can be used to compare one program to another (Ferman, Hoyman, and Cutcher-Gershenfeld 1990).

In a review of the literature on joint training programs from 1990 to 2009 we observed that, except for a few evaluations of specific courses and initiatives sponsored by joint training programs, the literature has largely been written by practitioners for practitioners. It is heavily focused on set of principles and practices that closely resemble those first articulated in the 1990s, which the authors claim contribute to the effectiveness of joint training programs. These claims are backed up by anecdotal evidence gleaned mainly from the authors' experience or through interviews with program leaders.

The endurance of an anecdotal set of principles in the literature on joint programs is evidence to us of a shared body of knowledge cultivated by a community of practitioners who govern and operate joint training programs. Communities of practice are often thought of as a shared history of learning that over time builds a domain of knowledge and a set of tools and practices that enable the practical application of the knowledge (Wenger 1998). Central to the cultivation of this shared knowledge is a group of people who, sharing a common concern or passion about a topic, interact on an ongoing basis to deepen their knowledge and expertise. We argue that the literature on joint training may represent the articulation of a community of practice. It also may be one of the mechanisms by which the community of joint program practitioners and its knowledge domain has been constituted and is distributed.

The Practice of Joint Training (1990–2009)

Five features of joint training programs emerged in the review of the literature on such programs published between 1990 and 2009. Though built on the basic principles first outlined in 1990 (Ferman, Hoyman, and Cutcher-Gershenfeld 1990; Sarmiento and Kay 1990) these features have been extended, distributed, and institutionalized in the structure and operations of joint training programs by a community of practitioners who share common values for promoting economic and educational equity. These institutionalized features include reliance on a pedagogy of worker-centered learning, a wide array of services and programs, delivery of services to multiple population groups, development of multiple labor market capacities and functions, and a partnership organizational structure in which labor and management share in the governance and balance multiple interests in workplace training.

Worker-Centered Pedagogy

Worker-centered learning is a functional, contextualized learning experience in which workers engage and come to know more about real workplace issues and performance problems as they develop new

FIGURE 1
Example of Worker-Centered Learning

Nursing homes care for patients with complex needs who require the services of diverse professional groups. Yet the nurse aides, the front-line caregivers, are often marginalized, and this impacts the quality of patient care. The training, which involved 130 members of multidisciplinary work teams, focused on helping the team develop communication and team skills while increasing the knowledge base and empowering the front-line staff to take on a broader role in care.

In the beginning of the program, participants decided on critical questions to focus their leaning and teamwork during the five-week training program. The training consisted of three days of didactic instruction in palliative care and team-building skills and two days of mentored practice. Teams also worked between sessions to explore their questions and to experiment with solutions to structural problems.

King (2009) found participants were more aware of their impact on patient care and increased their understanding of patient needs. They also reported a clearer understanding of the role of other team members. Front-line workers reported gaining more confidence and more self-esteem. Indeed many participants requested further training in gerontology and patient care. Some enrolled in vocational training programs leading to new credentials. Managers also reported observable improvement in the teams' ability to resolve conflicts and to solve problems.

Source: King 2009.

knowledge and skills. General education and skills training are contextualized in the functional aims of workers who voluntarily enroll in training to improve job performance, advance in their careers, or to develop and grow as a person. Educators and participants often construct the curriculum together by drawing upon workplace, union, or political-economic issues to contextualize the learning program. Figure 1, an example of a worker-centered program for nursing home workers sponsored by the SEIU 1199 Education and Upgrading Fund, shows how the pedagogy is part of a broader process of individual empowerment and economic development. It is a systematic approach to workplace learning that builds new learning structures and relationships into the daily experience of workers, which supports the application of new skill and knowledge on the job.

Harris (2000) explains worker-centered pedagogy as a strategic union response to two contradictions in the practice and theory of workplace learning. First, though employers wanted more skilled workers, they faced strong economic pressure against making the investments needed to increase the level of learning and engagement among a large number of line employees. Second, he pointed out that though the literature called for a new worker who is responsible for his or her learning and careers and is more engaged in the workplace, the voice of the worker was often missing from academic discussions and research on perceived workforce skill gaps and learning needs. Worker-centered pedagogy addresses these discontinuities.

Worker-centered pedagogy places learners at the center of the educational program, engaging them directly in the entire learning process.

According to Schied (1994), this is accomplished through the active role of the union in the education program.

Worker centered learning recognizes that workers, through their unions, play a central role in developing their own educational programs. A worker-centered approach makes the worker, in context of his/her union, the cornerstone of the educational program. . . . The learner and union educational staff are actively involved in the development of the curriculum (p. 9).

Kemble (2002) argues that union involvement adds value to workplace education and training in two ways. First, unions negotiate training funds that serve to address a major gap in human capital investments in U.S. industries because they extend training to the front-line, active workforce, a population often overlooked by employer training and public workforce development programs. Second, the involvement of the union in program design tends to mitigate the power differential that exists between workers and managers in the training needs assessment process. Workers who work through their unions are often more candid when talking about performance problems, and this candor results in more accurate training needs assessment and better, more relevant program design.

Though joint programs have an institutionalized pedagogy that places the worker at the center of the learning process, programs will contextualize the training in the workplace, so education and training must also take production-centered issues and goals into account. The dual focus of joint training programs ensures that all stakeholder interests are considered, and in the design and delivery of training that inevitability leads to conflict inside programs that must be resolved.

Bloom and Campbell (2002), in a study of nine courses offered by three joint training programs, found that joint programs developed and institutionalized organizational codes and structures that help the partners manage conflicting needs and interests. The way in which programs are structured to manage this creative tension can be observed in the mission statement that delineates the goals of the program. Some programs emphasize individual development, signaling an emphasis on individual learning and development. It is assumed that greater awareness of and response to individual learning needs and interests can be aggregated to bring workforce needs and outcomes into focus (Bloom and Campbell 2002). Programs that emphasize individual development invest in a comprehensive system of educational and career counseling that helps individuals assess their skills and learning styles, set goals, and select training programs that can help them meet their short- and long-term goals. Program practitioners and leaders aggregate and tap this information to gain a broader perspective on skill gaps and needs in the workplace. There is

an assumed value chain in this approach—as individual skill and knowledge levels increase, workers gain more employment security and firm performance is improved (Marschall, forthcoming).

Some challenge the notion that programs can achieve broader results in the workplace by merely aggregating individual learning. This is why some programs have adopted more systematic focus on the employers' strategic goals and skill needs to ensure training is linked back into the workplace. For example, joint training programs have customized their training to meet the needs of specific business units or occupational groups within the company. Many joint programs work extensively with hiring managers and shop stewards to ensure that training is designed to meet the needs of hard-to-fill positions and that trainees are hired when they complete the program.

Some practitioners argue that these customized efforts run counter to the basic principles of worker-centered learning because they focus on the needs of a select group of workers and not the community as a whole. Critics of this approach claim it risks resulting in narrow job- or employer-specific training that cannot provide workers with portable credentials and skills required for employment security in the current labor market. Thus the dual focus of joint programs presents challenges and causes tension inside joint programs that must be managed. However, Bloom and Campbell (2002) observe that these challenges and tension lead to dialogue and creative problem solving and “helps to ensure that the training plans and delivery are genuinely relevant to the learning needs of both workers and their employers” (p. 22).

Expansion of Training Offerings and Services

Surveys of joint program leaders (Bloom and Campbell 2002) as well as reviews (Roberts and Wozniak 1994; Harris 2000; Kemble 2002; Marschall, forthcoming) and case studies (Tao, Richard, Tarr, and Wheeler 1992; Hensley 1996; Fischer 2003; Takahashi and Melendez 2004) of joint programs reveal that they provide a variety of career and educational counseling, basic and occupational skills training, education leading to personal development and widely recognized credentials, and job placement services. Indeed, these studies include reviews of programs in a wide range of industries (telecommunications, entertainment and food service, industrial manufacturing, health care, construction, building, and maritime trades). The consistency of this finding leads us to conclude that another institutionalized feature of joint training programs is the provision of a wide array of services to program participants.

For example, out of the 14 joint training programs studied by the AFL-CIO Working for America Institute, 12 had at least three of the

following services: tuition reimbursement, instruction in English as a second language, basic skills and entry level training, technical and occupational training, and skills upgrade training for particular jobs (Working for America Institute 2001). Hensley (1996) analyzed 700 labor-management workplace training agreements and found that joint training programs expanded the focus of traditional negotiated training benefits beyond generally required job skills and new technology implementation, including career counseling, general education, upgrade training, and personal development.

Program offerings expand over time. The early joint programs, as well as many new programs in the early stages of their development, are first initiated to respond to a specific event or problem that calls for a training solution. For example, though the UAW-Ford Education and Training Fund was negotiated to serve the retraining and job placement needs of laid-off auto workers, the program was quickly expanded to include active workers when the parties realized a number of factors: increasing skill demands in the workplace; the need to upgrade the basic skills of active workers so that they would be prepared to participate in vocational retraining should they be laid off; the effectiveness of the joint training model over the unilateral employer training model in workforce training; and the willingness of union workers to participate in and complete a course of study offered by the joint training program. The variety of the services offered naturally expanded along with the growth of the training population and the variety of needs they and their sponsors presented to the program. (The program in the steel and rubber industries, described below, provides another example of this evolution.)

A similar developmental cycle was observed by Korshak (2000) in a joint training partnership negotiated by the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees (HERE) with union hotels in San Francisco in the late 1900s. The program began with a focus on soft skills training and workplace interventions aimed at improving communications and relationships among workers and between workers and their supervisors. In the Holiday Inn, a joint training study team surveyed the bargaining unit and found that management provided training programs were not relevant to workers' needs. Workers wanted English language education and training in communications and problem-solving skills, and they expressed a strong preference for on-the-job training over classroom training.

The program developed training in the workers' expressed needs and incorporated training in critical thinking and technical skills. The program was piloted in a highly contentious work group that was charged with developing a plan for managing the renovations of the hotel's restaurant. The employees did not trust that management would rehire

them after the renovations. To allay their concerns, the team formulated a multifaceted plan to help the employees support themselves during the closing period and to prepare them for jobs in the new restaurant by training them in new customer service skills, food safety, and alcohol awareness. In addition, workers were crossed-trained in banquet skills, which provided them with new salary streams as well as a career pathway out of the restaurant. The team also agreed to new job classifications, redefined jobs, and new hours of operations. The project helped transform the once narrow, dead-end restaurant jobs into a new work structure that created career ladders to more challenging and better-paying jobs in the industry. The program had such payoffs for all parties that the partners agree to expand it into other areas. Over time the program helped workers and supervisors establish a new culture of learning, leading them to question the way hotel jobs and careers were organized and motivating them to work with the joint program to reconfigure work and provide new training that improved the career opportunities for workers and business performance for the employer (Korshak 2000).

In these and other cases, joint programs build up a constellation of services, developed one on top of another, until gradually a robust set of direct services emerge to respond to the needs of multiple stakeholders. This gradual and pragmatic developmental process fosters change in stakeholders' understanding of the joint program—they move from seeing it as “a program” designed to help the parties respond to an event (industrial or workplace restructuring) to seeing it as a resilient institution with robust capacity to support continuous learning among the front-line workforce and to intervene in and improve the performance of the firm and the functioning of the internal labor market.

Expansion of Services to Multiple Population Groups

The discussion of the developmental trajectory of joint programs points to another salient feature of the model. Joint programs have institutionalized a practice of delivering services to multiple and distinct population groups, including incumbent workers, dislocated workers, and persons in need of education and training in basic skills, including English language training. Though many programs, such as those involving the UAW and the CWA, started with a mission to serve displaced workers, they soon expanded to other population groups. In addition, as other partnerships took up and replicated the joint training model, they adapted it to their particular condition and needs.

In some cases this has meant that the program model expanded to include the provision of services to groups not covered by the collective

bargaining agreement. For example, the CWA-IBEW-AT&T Alliance for Employee Growth and Development created Alliance Plus, a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) to extend training to AT&T managers and business units that sought their assistance on narrow job-related training not allowable under the training programs' guidelines. At first this innovation was viewed as an administrative mechanism that allowed the program to respond to an expressed need of a major stakeholder. But when the company began to downsize in mid-1990, this seemingly administrative mechanism became a central strategy in efforts to ensure the future viability of Alliance Plus. Like other programs, Alliance Plus is funded on a per-capita basis, so a reduction in the number of employees had a significant, long-term effect on the program's budget. Not only did the program experience significant decrease in its revenues, but the per-unit cost of training also increased because the program had lost a critical mass of participants in many locations. The training program used Alliance Plus to reach out to other CWA bargaining units to offer and provide short- and long-term training to other groups of union workers.

The Garment Industry Development Corporation (GIDC), on the other hand, a joint labor-management sector partnership in New York City, was originally launched to address the education and training needs of the entire industry, including owners, managers, union leaders and representatives, buyers, suppliers, contractors, and retailers as well as bargaining unit members. Conway (1999) claims that sector partnerships like GIDC give new meaning to joint programs' dual mission because they actively intervene at the site of production to improve both the supply and demand sides of the labor market. GIDC and other sector partnerships provide a bundle of services, including the provision of ongoing education and training for all stakeholder groups (e.g., employers and supervisors) to develop new cognitive capacity and attitudes on every level of the industry that can help the industry as a whole convert to new, more competitive organizational structures and processes (Conway 1999).

New York City is home to one of the most concentrated and diverse union training centers in the United States. There are union and joint training programs in almost every sector of the city, including construction, health care, education and public sector, building maintenance, transportation, entertainment, manufacturing, hospitality, and food preparation (Fischer 2003). In 1985 the Consortium for Worker Education (CWE) was formed as a nonprofit conduit for the distribution of New York State workplace literacy funds to union programs in New York City (Fischer 2003). The consortium has grown to become one of the more extensive examples of the expansion of joint programs to new

population groups. Today, with a budget of over \$100 million, it is the largest worker education and training organization in the city.

CWE developed by bringing the extensive union training industry together under one umbrella to share and improve programs. CWE also drew on the wide array of programs and services, the industry knowledge, and the employer relationships that resided inside of joint programs to leverage public and private foundation dollars and extend the programs to new population groups. Though the CWE's role in the public workforce development system is controversial in the job training industry in New York City, it is widely recognized that many of the consortium's programs result in better performance outcomes for individual participants because they often result in placement for low-income, underemployed, and unemployed community members in union jobs that offer continuous education and career opportunities (Fischer 2003).

By expanding the resources of joint training programs in New York City beyond the boundaries to individual partnerships and opening them up to other population groups, the CWE has helped align the joint training programs more closely with each other while simultaneously leveraging the critical mass of joint programs to improve the functioning of the external labor market. CWE has emerged as the center of a system of joint training programs in New York City that has helped reduce redundancies among programs while allowing the public system to leverage and benefit from the worker-centered, dual-focused approach to worker education to improve services to a broader, more diverse population. The question remains as to whether and how these gains will help mobilize a new generation of workers, especially those from within professional ranks, to support and join labor unions (Kemble 2002, Scully-Russ 2006).

Multifunctional Intermediaries

CWE is also an example of a fourth feature of joint programs: some programs systematically intervene in external labor markets—often organized in a regional area and/or as a cluster of companies in a discrete industry—to provide services that address skill gaps and improve the functioning of the workforce and economic development system. Though this feature is thought to be a recent innovation in joint programs, it really is more than 30 years old.

The District 1199c Training and Upgrading Fund in Philadelphia was established through collective bargaining in 1974 to provide education benefits to union members and members of the community interested in careers in health care. The program has grown since then into a multifunctional workforce intermediary that provides a myriad of workforce development functions (such as setting skill standards, developing

common curriculum, and educating and training workers), educational programs leading to certificates and pathways to higher education, and job development and placement for displaced, underemployed, and low-wage workers in the Philadelphia region. The program combines these efforts with economic development functions such as layoff aversion, modernization services to upgrade the performance of health care providers, and other activities that help union employers create good jobs for workers and the community.

Over the last 30 years, the 1199C Training and Upgrade Fund has brought together key stakeholders in a local community and labor market to “fashion” a workforce and economic development infrastructure to provide career pathways for low-wage workers and to grow and articulate their demands for skilled labor in health care. Indeed, the program meets Giloth’s (2004) description of a workforce intermediary.

They are fundamentally brokers, integrators, and learners who entrepreneurially enact workforce development rather than simply “meeting the market” or conforming to a publicly mandated set of roles and responsibilities. . . . They represent such a broad range of institutions and approaches . . . [but embody] distinctive strategy elements as well as organizational characteristics . . . [such as] dual customer, brokering partners, and integrating resources for the purpose of meeting employer and worker needs (pp. 7–8).

A new program that was developed by the Training and Upgrade Fund for front-line behavioral health care workers illustrates how a joint training program can play a critical multifunctional role to fill a critical gap in the labor market. The new initiative was aimed at improving the quality of jobs as well as the quality of care in the community. In this example, the fund combined its deep and structural partnership with employers (see joint governance below), with a worker-centered pedagogy and its historic relationships with the postsecondary education to upgrade the role of the front-line behavior health care worker, improve the quality of care to patients, and provide workers with new skills that put them on a pathway to higher education and a good, sustainable career (R. Wilson 2009).

The effort began in 2004 when the fund, along with two of the leading employers employing mental health workers in the city of Philadelphia and several area education institutions, joined forces with Jobs to Careers, a national initiative to develop the skills and career pathways for front-line behavioral health care workers. Though the fund had long provided entry-level training for such workers, the new education program

was linked to a comprehensive strategy to upgrade the industry's workforce practices. The program worked with the partners to develop new competencies that both met the current minimum requirements for carrying out behavioral health work and also injected new ones to move the work to higher levels of performance and responsibility (R. Wilson 2009). The program worked with employers and the union to use the new competencies to upgrade jobs and improve quality of care.

Meanwhile, the program also worked with their long-time educational partners in the region to develop a new competency-based curriculum and credentialing regime that integrated classroom instruction with on-the-job learning and assessments. This educational strategy had two significant results that helped to meet the dual mission of joint programs. First, it helped to ensure that competencies and new knowledge were embedded into the daily routines of front-line workers—improving the quality of care and firm performance. It also ensured that workers learned while they earned, putting individuals on a pathway to a college degree they once thought was unattainable. This was accomplished because the new curriculum included three instructional modules, each roughly equivalent to six academic credits. The fund crafted a comprehensive education program that combined its original entry-level behavior health care technician certificate program with 42 hours of college preparation courses and the three new competency-based modules. Workers continued to work while participating in training that led to an award of 21 college credits, putting them halfway along the path toward an associate's degree.

According to the fund's director, Cheryl Feldman (Scully-Russ 2009), their deep, structural relationships with contributing employers provide the program with great insight into the industry's skill needs as well as the insider knowledge required to make programs work for the industry. Employers are integrated into every level of the program. At the board level, employers help decide how funds will be spent, hospital administrators will oversee the development and delivery of programs at the work-site, and supervisors will help students transfer new learning to the workplace.

In addition, the program invests much time and energy in developing its worker-centered pedagogy to ensure programs respond to workers' interests, needs, and learning styles. Through many years of experience and experimentation, the program has established a niche in the training and development of health care professionals in the region. The programs acts as a bridge between education and the workplace that helps bring teachers together with students to integrate work-based skills into instruction as well as to embed learning to the workplace.

The 1199C Training and Upgrade Fund is but one example of how joint training programs that engage in the broader workforce development system both achieve their own mission and help improve the functioning of the labor market. This case also shows that when joint programs move into the broader arena, they may become a vital part of the institutional framework of the regional workforce development system.

Joint Governance

The final feature that has been institutionalized is the establishment of labor-management partnership organizations in which both union officials and management personnel share in governance. When the joint training model first emerged in the early 1980s, the concept and practice of jointness was a subject of intense controversy. Traditionally, union leaders tended to emphasize their adversarial relationship with employers. AFSCME president Jerry Wurf summarized this 1970s-era stance in reference to quality of work life programs:

I must stress the adversary nature of labor relations. . . . I'm skeptical of any employer, in government or private industry, who states that he's motivated entirely or in part by the quality of his employees' work life. . . . Unionists are justifiably skeptical of quality of work life programs that management attempts to impose unilaterally or to hustle workers into accepting. Very often these programs are nothing more than speed-up or union-busting masquerading in the disguise of trendy social science (Wurf 1982:133).

Though this position began to moderate as U.S. employers encountered the pressures of foreign competition and unionized employees in some industries reached out to their union counterparts, the debate inside the labor movement over jointness as a principle and strategic approach remained unresolved for many years. Some argued that jointness and the "team concept" co-opted union militancy at a time when it was needed most: a period of transformative change in the economy when the workings of capitalism had become more transparent (Moody 1988). Many took a more pragmatic perspective, arguing that though joint activities may be necessary, they should remain marginal adjuncts to the primary labor-management relationship, adversarial collective bargaining. Still, there were strong advocates for jointism who argued that joint activities provided unions and workers with new forms of control and empowerment in work, potentially leading in the long term to the co-management of enterprises (Bluestone and Bluestone 1992) and a more cooperative, associational model of unionism (Heckscher 1988).

The debates led to the formation of the AFL-CIO Committee on the Evolution of Work to provide a forum for the labor movement to deliberate the implications of the changing economic landscape and to forge a consensus among senior labor leaders on a strategic union response. The committee's 1983 initial report, *The Future of Work*, recommended progressive action to reduce the surplus of labor, including devoting greater attention to human resource development "through better education, training, retraining, upgrading, and upward mobility opportunities for all workers, both employed and unemployed" (AFL-CIO 1983:18). A later report recognized that some employers had reached out to unions to create partnerships to modify the organization of work and called upon unions to "take the initiative in stimulating, sustaining and institutionalizing a new system of work organization based upon full and equal labor-management partnerships" (AFL-CIO 1994:2).

Several unions made significant investments of union funds in the development of new resources and tools to help local union leaders take on new roles in joint activities. The CWA, for example, developed a workbook on joint labor-management processes to guide local leaders in using joint programs to solve concrete problems and improve working conditions; international staff were then trained in organizational development skills to provide technical assistance to locals (Sheahan 1993). CWA president Morty Bahr became a national champion for the cause of worker education and training, arguing that "many of us believe we can build our unions by offering education and training services to workers" (Monks and Bahr 2003:5). The International Association of Machinists (IAM) established a partnership training program for union leaders based on rigorous guidelines for union involvement in high performance work organization systems "where labor and management are interdependent and equally dominant in the revitalization of our industrial base" (Kourpias 1994). The UAW established the Paid Educational Leave (PEL) program to train local and rank-and-file leaders in joint skills and educate them about the global trends affecting their industry. The Service Employees Union (SEIU) established the Lifelong Education and Development (LEAD) program to help affiliates negotiate and establish career ladder programs in the service sector and to engage with management through quality of worklife programs to improve service delivery.

The late 1980s and early 1990s appeared as a crossroads in the evolution of jointness in U.S. labor relations. Ferman et al. (1990) observed that

in many workplaces there have emerged a broad array of joint committees. . . . Some of these committees are adjuncts to the collective bargaining process, while others are not. There are even joint committees of top leaders who are responsible for

coordinating the activities of many other joint committees. . . . These joint activities represent an entire domain of contract administration that can sometimes surpass grievances and arbitration in terms of the time and even the importance of the activity for union leaders, which has led some scholars to argue . . . that joint activities can have a robust, two-way relationship with collective bargaining instead of just serving as a secondary adjunct (p. 159).

Thus the evolution and institutionalization of jointism in the U.S. labor movement has occurred on both the policy and operational levels. The institutionalization of joint programs inside of the labor movement can be observed in the legacy of many of the early joint training programs that continue today. For example, though AT&T has been racked by the harsh economic conditions in the telecommunications industry, Alliance Plus has adjusted and continues to provide services to active and displaced workers. In addition, other new labor-management partners continue to take up the joint training programs model. In 2005 The Coalition of Kaiser Permanente Unions, AFL-CIO, negotiated a nationwide workforce development initiative, inclusive of two new Taft Hartley trusts, to support the joint development of new systems and programs to respond to the workforce impacts of the industrial restructuring occurring in the health care industry (Mills 2001).

New forms of jointness have been institutionalized inside the labor movement, in part because joint training programs have been effective in helping unions respond to the real challenges facing workers in a globalized economy. Scholars speculate that union leaders have accepted the instability in the economy and have taken responsibility to help union members transition, in part because they hope that workers will remain loyal to the labor movement (Harris 2000). Generally, mainstream union leaders have settled on the notion that jointism and selected partnership activities with management are a legitimate strategy to help unionized employers maintain the viability of their firms in the face of global competition and continued industry restructuring—in those instances in which employers accept the legitimacy of union representation, share corporate information, enable workers and union officials to participate in decision making, establish labor-management structures with equal representation, and meet other standards outlined by the AFL-CIO (1994).

The Institute for Career Development: A Resilient Partnership

The establishment of a resilient, multiemployer partnership on skill development in the steel industry was contingent on the three factors

identified by Eaton, Rubinstein, and McKersie (2004) as contributing to cooperative labor–management relations, including joint recognition of industry crisis, the presence of dedicated union and management leadership, and the negotiation of strong collective bargaining language. Indeed, the Institute for Career Development developed and expanded over time as the partners formalized their skills partnership, expanded their service offerings and population groups, and gradually broadened the institute’s activities from interventions into individual bargaining units, to the industry, and more recently, to the broader workforce development system. This minicase illustrates how the five joint training programs features evolved over time as well as how they work together to foster a dynamic and resilient institution of worker education and training.

Following the massive destruction of foreign manufacturing capacity during World War II, U.S.-based integrated steel companies emerged as global leaders in steel production. In subsequent decades, as Asian and European firms used advanced technologies and flexible work organization techniques to rebuild their domestic industries, American companies reduced their research and development spending and chose to diversify by purchasing firms in other industries rather than increase their capital investment in steel and deploy new technology (Dertouzos 1998). During the 1970s, industry experts projected that there would be steel shortages for the next decade, leading steel producers to believe that “they could keep running their old mills indefinitely and still make money” (Kaufman 2001). That belief evaporated when restrictive monetary policies and a recessionary economy in the 1980s led to a surge in steel imports and the recognition, by management and union representatives alike, that falling demand, excess production facilities, and foreign competition from more efficient producers would result in plant closings in the context of severe industry restructuring.

The top leadership of the steelworkers union had a history of fostering productive labor–management cooperation, stretching back to the formation of joint committees during World War II and an explicit political commitment to industrial democracy (Rubinstein 2003). Faced with inevitable concessions, United Steelworkers President Lynn Williams adopted a strategic approach to collective bargaining to help offset what he termed the power differential in the industry and contribute to overall company viability. As he described this framework:

We insisted in the difficult times, during concessionary bargaining, that workers had to have a voice in the industry. Concessions, if they were going to be made, should be looked at as an investment. Workers investing should be treated like shareholders. So

we did stock deals in place of money and we fought for union representatives on company boards and fought for a real voice in the industry and total information (Marschall 2008).

In 1986, following two years of meetings of joint problem-solving teams, the union and National Steel signed a contract that crafted a “cooperative partnership” in which the company agreed to a no-layoff pledge while the union accepted a reduction in job classifications. Importantly, the agreement stipulated that employees who would otherwise be dismissed would be placed in an employment security pool and then assigned to other tasks in National Steel plants. This provision, along with job classification changes, placed a premium on in-plant training and continuing skill development for hourly employees. As one manager said, “Where we had pipefitters and welders, we now have mechanics. Part and parcel of this is an extensive training program that was developed with the union” (Rutigliano 1988:37). Similar terms were enacted at LSE, a joint partnership of LTV Corp. and a Japanese company, where unionized workers achieved the power to make day-to-day operating decisions, determine work schedules, and develop training and job progression schedules. Pursuing a bargaining strategy that elevated employment security for union members, the union elicited management willingness to share authority and information, provide proper compensation for workers when they learned new skills, and share in the increased profits of the enterprise. Skill training played a critical role in this strategy, Williams (1995) said:

For domestic industry to survive and compete in today’s world, workers must be trained in new and old skills. Cross-training of people assigned to a specific area must encompass the duties of more than one classification, and new skills must be learned because of changing technology (p. 142).

Though the steelworkers union made progress on increasing the skill training available to members, their actions could not forestall continued plant closings and mass layoffs. Employment in the steel industry dropped from an average of 422,000 hourly employees between 1966 and 1970, to only 101,000 in 1992 (Locker Associates 1993). The union responded by establishing a headquarters-level task force and bargaining with companies to obtain 90-day prior notice of plant closings, company contributions of cash and office space for services to the unemployed, and joint governance of program operations. Union and company leaders opened more than 50 workers assistance centers during the 1980s, each providing a comprehensive range of services to former employees, family

members, and residents in surrounding communities. To cultivate a sense of “worker ownership” over the programs, assistance centers typically were located in convenient plant buildings or familiar union halls. Many services were delivered by peer counselors, fellow union members trained to recruit their colleagues, conduct skill assessments, and arrange suitable vocational training. All members would receive equitable treatment and high-quality services, the union emphasized, with services being available for a year or more after facilities had closed. Working with the national AFL-CIO and experts in dislocated worker services, union and company representatives raised funds from federal government programs and spread their comprehensive, participatory worker assistance model to chemical workers, copper miners, and aluminum workers nationwide (United Steelworkers of America 1986). Notably, union and management at J&L Steel negotiated a small fund for worker transition to be financed by cents-per-hour contributions from the wages of existing workers (similar to such measures in the auto industry).

These two strands—increased joint emphasis on skill training and assistance centers for dislocated workers—came together in 1989 when the union negotiated a contract financing a new organization, the Institute for Career Development (ICD). As Williams recounts the train of events, the union had bargained provisions against contracting out with several companies, but encountered resistance for USX (the former US Steel that had expanded into other industries.) The conflict resulted in a six-month lockout by USX, removing their steel from the market and boosting the sales of competitors. When the next round of bargaining arrived, the union found that other companies had substantial resources and were open to discussing greater investments in skill training. The union had already been working with Ben Fisher of Carnegie Mellon University to examine the joint training partnerships in the auto and communications industries. Williams became convinced of the need for a steel

industry program when he traveled to local union halls and discovered that it was common around the major plants that people were taking early pensions who didn't really want to. And the reason was that they were intimidated by the new technology they saw coming in and they saw their jobs disappearing and newer, more technical jobs coming along. They didn't have [the skills] and often their math was not up to the demands. . . . Then, in the downsizing, we had all these skilled people but they didn't have any marketable skills. So we decided to come up with some ideas to address this somehow (Marschall 2008).

Their collectively bargained approach was to have 10 cents per hour worked by steelworkers in participating companies set aside in a fund

that would support a small central staff, which would set standards for training activities, and a network of local joint committees (LJCs) located near plant sites, where they would be responsive to the needs of incumbent workers and dislocated union members. Operating principles were established, notably that minimal funds would be expended on brick-and-mortar building projects and that training would focus on basic skills instruction in an informal, supportive atmosphere. Over two decades, the ICD has become a respected continuous learning institution, involving the union and 14 steel and rubber companies, whose services are delivered by as many as 72 jointly governed LJCs. Classes sponsored by ICD enrolled nearly 15,000 workers in 2006 and offered more than 2,000 customized courses (United Steelworkers 2008). Their learning philosophy, practices, and structures reflect the key features that we have identified in durable joint training programs.

First, ICD-sponsored courses integrate a worker-centered conception of learning signaled in the organization's mission statement, which emphasizes that "workers must play a significant role in the design and development of their training and education" in order to reach their full potential, both as employees and human beings (Institute for Career Development 2008b:9). To implement what they characterize as a "bottom-up" planning process, each LJC receives training to survey local union members and identify areas of study that would be popular with steelworkers, to respond to promotional opportunities in their facilities, or to help them transition to alternative jobs (for those permanently displaced.) Because ICD leaders found that many steelworkers had negative experiences in the traditional educational system, classes are oriented toward topics with practical applications that will help participants become accustomed to the learning process and enjoy interacting with their peers to accomplish tangible tasks. The ICD views learning as an active process in which persons relate new concepts to their existing understandings and exchange knowledge with their peers, all in the context of real-life actualities (such as fixing broken motors in home appliances) and situated learning contexts. Courses are designed so that the community and social environment facilitate the learning experience, combining the use of instructional technology and group collaboration to reinforce their competency goals (Institute for Career Development 2007). An extensive survey found a high level of satisfaction with ICD courses, with 68% of participants ($n = 529$) rating the benefits as valuable (Smith Education Associates 2008).

The ICD also provides a comprehensive array of services that address the personal learning goals of unionists and the acquisition of transferable skills necessary for alternative careers. After identifying the interests and goals of workers, center staff are advised to "start small"

and offer a few well-defined programs, often involved with computer literacy training and working to repair familiar mechanical equipment. Basic skill enhancement is available in all centers, including preparation for obtaining a GED, effective reading and writing, and refresher training in math skills. To enhance workers' personal development, courses are offered in life skills, preparing for college classes, and financial planning. After career counseling by LJC staff, participants have access to tuition assistance for enrollment in accredited educational institutions (Institute for Career Development 2008b). In 2007, ICD centers held more than 1,547 courses in 28 categories, the most popular being "Computer Basics" and pretechnical courses such as "Auto Body and Repair" and "Heating, Ventilation and Air" conditioning technology (Institute for Career Development 2008a).

As indicated by the roots of the ICD in dislocated worker programs, the organization serves multiple population groups. The recession of 2007 to 2009 contributed to a host of mass layoffs and facility closings, according to reports by LJC coordinators, leading to more laid-off members seeking to make productive use of their time off by enrolling in community college classes, taking customized computer courses, and preparing for craft maintenance jobs (Institute for Career Development 2009a). Those workers whose hours had been reduced but were still on the job had access to skill training to enhance their ability to perform assigned work tasks and use new technology. Program centers continue to be open to services for union family members, enhancing the supportive learning atmosphere, and community organizations, maintaining the link with outside resources.

With its network of local training centers embedded in a range of communities, the ICD built on its knowledge of industrial manufacturing skill training and its interest in renewable energy and energy efficiency occupations to adopt a workforce intermediary role in selected areas. The ICD responded to the availability of federal grants to propose a "Career Pathways in Green Industries" program that is conducting skill training for incumbent and dislocated steelworkers, veterans, and unemployed adults. Each of the four program sites involves a regional labor market that encompasses urban areas, suburbs, and rural counties. Through its partnership with community colleges and economic development organizations, the ICD is becoming a part of the institutional structure of these regional labor markets, helping them prepare for the emergence of a clean energy economy (Apollo 2008). The training services delivered in each area have been customized to the needs of local employers, notably the expressed desire of steel firms such as Arcelor-Mittal USA to hire and promote "incumbent and new employees with

knowledge in green work systems and energy efficiency standards” (Institute for Career Development 2009b). ICD program staff are working with federally funded Workforce Investment Boards to recruit participants and place trainees with employers, the sort of cooperative relationships that will integrate LJC bodies with the ecosystem of education, job training, labor exchange, and community-based organizations that comprise the federally financed elements of the nation’s workforce development system.

Finally, the ICD has integrated the principles of jointness throughout its governance structures, reflecting the ideological predilections of United Steelworkers (USW) union leaders. The ICD mission statement emphasizes that union and company leaders are implementing a “shared vision” in which skill training responsive to firm-level economic needs are balanced with the individual enrichment required for workers to “have more stable and rewarding personal and family lives,” thus building competencies relevant to workplace, home, and community environments (Institute for Career Development 2008b). The ICD’s governing board of directors, which formulates policy and monitors expenditures, is composed of an equal number of representatives from the USW and top company managers. Similarly, a 21-person advisory board draws from human resource professionals, employee relations executives, and USW District-level leaders and staff to counsel and provide assistance to the ICD director. In turn, each LJC, which develops and implements local training projects in concert with employee demonstrated needs, incorporates union and company personnel, including front-line supervisors and experienced workers who are respected by their peers. Attendance at ICD annual national conferences is diverse, encompassing company managers, local USW leaders, training coordinators, site directors, and many “Learning Advocates” who work directly with program participants.

The role of the ICD remains salient in the precarious global economy buffeting steel, rubber, and other manufacturing companies. As layoffs and plant closings occur, the demand for retraining and career development services continues apace. Moreover, services provided by the ICD have the potential to retain jobs in U.S.-based facilities. Of the nine steel companies listed as members of ICD, only two are independent firms with facilities solely in North America. The remaining are part of geographically diverse, multinational firms or joint ventures with Korean, Russian, and European steel makers. Luxembourg-based ArcelorMittal, for example, has steelmaking operations in 20 countries and operates 21 major production complexes, only three of which (employing 12% of its global workforce) are located in the United States (ArcelorMittal 2009). Though skill training programs for employees will

not ensure that these domestic facilities remain open, their availability will contribute to the viability, competitiveness, and technological sophistication of those locations, helping unions and management alike make optimal use of their human capital resources.

Implications for Workforce Development Policy

The growth of joint training programs and their integration into the internal operations of firms provides unions with new ability to influence how actors inside the firm adjust to competitiveness and cost and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the internal labor market (Marschall, forthcoming). Similarly, the movement of joint training programs into institutional arrangements and partnerships external to the firm—such as their involvement in workforce intermediaries or with the public workforce development system—provides unions with new leverage over how multiple stakeholders (employers, public agencies, education institutions) respond to economic change. The interaction between joint training programs and the broader (yet overly fractured) national workforce development system presents opportunities for joint programs to add value to the broader systems because joint programs may help broaden the participation of employers in the public system as well as enable the system to rapidly expand services to the active and laid-off workers who are in great need of continuous learning. Thus we offer four policy recommendations to strengthen and expand the role of unions and joint programs in a 21st-century workforce development system.

Encourage Union and Joint Program Involvement at Every Level of the Public System

Joint programs continue to look beyond the needs of individual workers and firms and engage in collective action to boost regional or sector economies through training. These activities not only improve the joint program model but also help to fill skill gaps, introducing new standards for educational quality that will improve the quality of programs throughout the entire system. Public policies are needed to ensure as well as to expand the involvement of unions and joint programs in public boards that oversee and deliberate investments in training and development of the workforce.

Currently local union leaders are embedded in the federally financed workforce development system through their mandatory membership on some 600 Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) established by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA). In addition, representatives of unions and joint training programs are involved in policy-making organizations that work with the U.S. Congress to fashion legislation that

supports sector strategies incorporating the principles of jointness and proposing target programs to be operated by labor-management organizations. Yet broader involvement of unions and joint program practitioners in the workforce development system is constrained by current workforce policies and the bias of some public officials that leads them to seek out nonunion employers as industry representatives to public workforce development policy and program initiatives. Under the Job Training Partnership Act of 1982, private industry councils were required to include substantial representation from unions and community organizations. The public boards are only required to include two labor representatives under WIA.

Our discussion of worker-centered pedagogy illustrates how union involvement in the development of education and training provides for creative tension that improves the quality of the education and training programs. The worker perspective that unions bring to the workplace learning process will also help balance the broader policy level discussions and debates about how to expand and improve public investments in the training and development of the U.S. workforce.

Encourage New Investments in Incumbent Worker Education and Training

Initiating a new joint training program is an expensive undertaking that many employers may find difficult to afford in today's economy. New policies are needed to encourage employers to make investments in the training and development of the workforce. For example, a unique opportunity may have been missed in the early release of the economic recovery funds. In addition to providing jobs, an allowable expense could have been education and training to help incumbent workers develop new skills while also providing new jobs to the community. Though long debated in labor, it may now be time to also consider new forms of tax incentives that encourage employer investment in education and training, as proposed by the Center for American Progress (Bosworth 2007).

Support New Partnerships and Revitalize Practitioner Networks

Initiating a new joint training program requires knowledge and expertise that local leaders and employers often lack. In addition, existing practitioners often engage across programs to learn from each other and to partner on developing innovations or solving common problems. In the past, these learning processes were supported by structured networks of joint program practitioners whose mission was to foster new learning among joint programs and to assist in launching new partnerships. For

example, the AFL-CIO Working for America Institute as well as the Association of Joint Union–Management Education Programs sponsored research, workshops, annual conferences, and other exchanges that helped to elaborate and distribute the knowledge domain underlying the practice of joint training programs. These networks were well respected inside the community of joint training practitioners and among their partners. However, recent political and economic trends have caused the association to dissolve and have severely limited the ability of the Working for America Institute to foster networking among union leaders interested in workforce development. New policies and resources are needed to support the networking of practitioners and to help them to continue to refine and distribute the knowledge base of joint programs throughout the unionized sector of the economy.

New policies could also help diffuse joint training program practices to other parts of the workforce development system. For example, American unions have long advocated peer counseling, and joint training programs have successfully integrated peer support specialists into comprehensive services for dislocated workers (AFL-CIO 1995). Inspired by the proliferation of “union learning representatives” in the United Kingdom (T. Wilson 2009), the American Federation of Teachers is operating pilot projects in partnership with employers in three locations to help provide training and career development services to members (American Federation of Teachers 2009). The AFL-CIO has proposed that the workforce development system incorporate a learning network of certified “professional workplace learning advisors” who would conduct learning needs analyses for co-workers, recommend pertinent education and skill training programs, and advocate for continuous skill improvement. Advisors would be knowledgeable about the labor exchange services available for public employees in the employment services in One-Stop Career Centers and (if such a program were available) would refer fellow employees to the “career coaches” in the centers, as envisioned by the Center for American Progress (Soares 2009).

Support New Research on the Joint Program Model

Finally, we recommend new policies to support systematic research of the joint program model, with the goal of generating new insight to strengthen and diffuse the model and its effective practices in order to improve the delivery of education and training to the 21st-century workforce. This would require investments in new internal systems of evaluations that would help individual joint programs develop new metrics and tracking systems to help them understand their processes and improve the quality of their programs.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have explored how a set of basic practices and philosophical principles that were first articulated in the early 1990s have been refined, distributed, and institutionalized into the material structures of joint training programs. Together the five joint training program features discussed here have given rise to a robust and flexible model of worker education and training that holds great potential for the 21st-century workforce development system. Though more research may be needed to validate these features and understand how they work together to contribute to effectiveness of worker education and training programs, the lack of rigor does not negate the fact that joint training programs have proven to be sustainable organizations that fill a significant gap in the U.S. workforce development system through providing a wide range of relevant services to diverse populations of front-line workers. These services affect the lives of workers in meaningful ways, and they contribute to performance of firms, and in some cases to the broader regional economy.

The current economic crisis has fostered a level of government investment in the education and training of workers that may be unprecedented. It has also sparked new dialogue about how to make broader, more systematic education opportunities available to all Americans. In addition, it has opened new debate over the responsibility for the funding of workforce education and training as well as the most effective division of labor for the provision of education and training to working adults. For the last 30 years, these issues—including the responsibility for educational funding, the appropriate mix of education and job-related training, the need for particular occupations and jobs as well as the most appropriate credentialing regime, and the most appropriate modes of training delivery—have been the subject of ongoing discussion and innovation inside the community of joint training programs. The experience of meeting the education needs of working adults, and the knowledge of workforce development that underlies the practice of joint training programs, is a valuable resource to all concerned with modernizing the American workforce development system. We argue that the learning and experiences of the community of practitioners who have developed and refined this model must be considered in any discussion of the workforce development system for the 21st century.

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