Youth Programs

Advancing the Youth Employability Agenda

Drawing on Lessons from *New Futures* and *Summer Beginnings*

Summer Beginnings Work and Learning Network		*New Futures* Cities
★ Phoenix, Arizona	★ New Orleans, Louisiana	★ Little Rock, Arkansas
★ Los Angeles, California	★ Baltimore, Maryland	★ Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
★ Northeast Connecticut	★ Niagara, New York	★ Bridgeport, Connecticut
★ Broward County, Florida	★ Puerto Rico	★ Dayton, Ohio
★ North Central Indiana	★ Seattle and Northwest Washington	★ Savannah, Georgia

Youthwire is Moving to *HandsNet*

Two years ago, the Center for Human Resources at Brandeis University established *Youthwire*, a computer-based electronic bulletin board for employment and training practitioners. This spring, *Youthwire* is moving to a new location: the *Youth Development Forum* on *HandsNet*, a national non-profit electronic network. The Center for Human Resources will be joined in managing the new *Youth Development Forum* by the Center for Youth Development and Policy Research at the Academy for Educational Development.

Expanding the Information Available to Youth Practitioners

Youthwire's move to *HandsNet* makes it possible for the Center for Human Resources and the Center for Youth Development to substantially expand the scope of youth-related information available to practitioners through electronic networking. The new *Youth Development Forum* is designed to address a wide range of youth-related issues and to provide the information practitioners need to establish youth development strategies that link employment, education, health, recreation, social services, and citizenship.

Topics within the new forum include:

· *Education and Employability*, including information on program strategies for in-school and out-of-school youth, summer programs, assessment, and basic skills/academic enrichment.

· *Adolescent Health*, including discussions of AIDS prevention, teenage parenting, substance abuse, and youth violence.

· *Citizenship and Social Development*, including community service, culture and ethnicity, mentoring, and recreation.

The new forum also includes Washington news; the Job Training Partnership Act on-line; summaries and full-text copies of legislation such as the Reemployment Act and the Education 2000 Act; *Federal Register* notices on youth-related issues; and information on conferences, professional development opportunities and technical assistance resources. Finally, the *Youth Development Forum's* open exchange provides a continuing opportunity to share ideas and information with other practitioners.

Join a Human Service/ Social Policy Network

The move to *HandsNet* also offers youth practitioners another benefit: access to timely and comprehensive information on a broad array of social policy and human services issues. As the leading network for information and exchange on social welfare issues, *HandsNet* links advocates and practitioners from a variety of human services and public policy fields. Each *HandsNet* forum is managed by a national research center or public interest group covering more than a dozen topics, including:

· Child Welfare (including foster care)
· Family Economic Security (including welfare reform)
· Comprehensive Strategies (including services reform and integration)
· Housing and Community Development (including homeless issues)
· Community Issues (including hunger, substance abuse prevention, welfare and poverty issues, community action agencies)
· Rural Issues
· Legal Services
· Health Issues
· Federal Budget and Policy
· AIDS Policy, Prevention/Treatment and Funding (opening soon)

Other *HandsNet* forums feature daily news items and national policy updates drawn from the national newswires and major newspapers.

Finally, with over 3,000 members, *HandsNet* also provides an opportunity to share ideas and information with a broad, national group of advocates, policy makers, and practitioners and to begin learning about and linking with organizations in housing, community development, welfare reform, juvenile justice, and other youth and employment-related fields.

For More Information

For more information on the Forum, contact Louis J. DeFrancis-Block at the Center for Human Resources at Brandeis, at (617) 736-3770. For information on joining *HandsNet* so you can access the *Youth Development Forum* and others, contact Elaine Varga at *HandsNet* at (408) 257-4500.

Advancing the Youth Employability Agenda

This issue of *Youth Programs* is about change: How are communities changing the ways in which employment and education services for young people are planned and delivered, and how are they changing the program experience itself? What are the steps we need to take in order to provide new, more productive experiences for young people in our programs, and what are the steps we need to take to reorganize our services as a whole to provide the experiences and supports young people need to become self-sufficient?

In this issue of *Youth Programs*, we look at the experience of two national initiatives that are designed to change the ways in which communities address the employability needs of young people. The *New Futures* initiative is a five site effort to create comprehensive, community-wide youth strategies that provide a more coherent, integrated set of services for at-risk youth. *Summer Beginnings* is a twelve site effort to integrate academic enrichment and work-based learning into the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) summer jobs program as a first step towards the integration of work and learning as a central strategy in all youth employment programs.

Two powerful themes link these initiatives together. The first is the commitment to bringing about a fundamental change in the way programs and communities address the issues of youth and employability. While one starts from a "system" perspective (*New Futures*) and the other from a "program" point of view (*Summer Beginnings*), both aim at changing the ways in which schools, businesses, employment and training professionals, and others work together to provide youth and employment services, and both recognize the need for change at both the "program" and "system" levels in order to improve the quality of services for youth.

New Futures and *Summer Beginnings* are also linked by a commitment to a common set of principles or themes that are increasingly setting the standard for effective youth employment policy and practice. Among these themes are the need to focus on youth as youth, integrating youth development into employability development; the central role of a work and learning connection in employability; the need to provide a sequence of services over time; and the importance of promoting quality in a decentralized system. These themes represent the core of a new

youth employability agenda that is at the heart of the changes sought by the *New Futures* and *Summer Beginnings* communities and others.

This opening section provides a brief overview of *New Futures* and *Summer Beginnings* and a short introduction to the four themes that we see as informing the new youth employability agenda. The first article that follows examines the experience of the *New Futures* communities in their efforts to create community-wide youth employability strategies and, based on that experience, suggests a series of lessons for practitioners and policy makers. The rest of the articles in this issue focus on the *Summer Beginnings* experience. Drawn from the "Field Kit" on academic enrichment prepared by Brandeis in conjunction with *Summer Beginnings*, these articles provide an introduction to the *Summer Beginnings* "vision" for academic enrichment and the critical lessons for implementing work and learning strategies at the local level. The final article in the newsletter links these efforts back to emerging national policy through excerpts from the most recent Department of Labor policy notices on summer programs and academic enrichment.

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New Futures: An Overview

One of the major developments in employment and training policy (and youth policy generally) over the past ten years has been the recognition that the needs of at-risk youth cannot be addressed by programs operating in isolation. Increasingly, practitioners and policy makers are coming to the conclusion that to adequately address the multiple needs of youth and their families, communities need to develop comprehensive, community-wide youth and employment strategies that address a broad mix of interrelated issues, including educational achievement, employability development, teen parenting, substance abuse, economic growth, and community development.

Begun in 1988 by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the *New Futures* initiative is an ambitious, five-city effort to put the goal of a comprehensive, community-wide youth strategy into practice. Under *New Futures*, each of the five participating cities (Little Rock, Pittsburgh, Bridgeport, Dayton, and Savannah) received five-year grants of up to $12.5 million to develop comprehensive community-wide strategies for addressing the needs of at-risk youth beginning with middle school-aged youth and continuing through high school graduation. The initial focus of the *New Futures* efforts was on four major areas of institutional change: education reform (particularly reduction in the school dropout rate); youth employability development; teen pregnancy prevention and adolescent health; and the development of integrated service delivery systems incorporating case management as a central feature. However, the broader goal of *New Futures* was to help those communities make fundamental changes in the overall planning, financing, and delivery of services to youth and their families.

As the article on the *New Futures* experience in this issue makes clear, the *New Futures* communities have all worked and struggled through their first five years to develop comprehensive employability development strategies that provide a range and sequence of services for youth, as well as strategies for school change and improved delivery of health and social services. Each community has taken a somewhat different approach, with some more strongly emphasizing the school-to-work transition or dropout prevention, and others focusing on a broad set of youth development issues. What has been consistent across all five cities, however, has been a commitment to a comprehensive approach and the need to address a series of fundamental policy issues along the road to institutional change.

Summer Beginnings: An Overview

In June of 1993, the Center for Human Resources at Brandeis University and the U.S. Department of Labor announced a new nationwide summer demonstration program called *Summer Beginnings*. Focusing on new approaches to academic enrichment, twelve communities in ten states made a commitment to develop an integrated work and learning strategy in their summer programs and to help young people make a successful transition from school to work. As charter members of the National Work and Learning Demonstration Network, *Summer Beginnings* communities have committed to five basic demonstration guidelines:

1. **Refine or adopt a work-based or classroom-based work/learning strategy** based on the Brandeis *Field Kit for Communities Committed to Improving Academic Enrichment in Summer Employment Programs.*

2. **Implement and support the performance-based work and learning assessment process** and the study of participant progress based on the SCANS skills framework, in order to adequately prepare the nation's youth for entry into the workforce.

3. **Develop a summer-to-school transition strategy** as part of the program design including provision of academic credit for summer enrichment activities and a plan for obtaining prorated tuition where appropriate.

4. **Intend to fund program operations** for a three-year period.

5. **Support and lead staff participation** in training and other activities conducted by Brandeis.

Summer Beginnings is the first step toward establishing an extensive network of effective summer work and learning strategies for youth that focus on active learning in class and on the job. Further, through performance-based assessment, *Summer Beginnings* seeks to improve the summer-to-school transition for young people, documenting and sharing their summer work and learning achievements with the schools.

Furthering President Clinton's goal of summertime academic enrichment, this new initiative provides meaningful summer work experience and develops academic skills required for effectiveness in the workplace. To use President Clinton's words, this initiative is removing the "artificial line between work and learning."

By providing a new approach to work and learning, *Summer Beginnings* **enables communities to rethink their approaches to youth employment training, and summer, as well as year-round jobs programs**. A major feature of *Summer Beginnings* is an active partnership between employers and schools so that classroom teachers will be better informed about the workplace and employers will be armed with strategies for helping young people to learn.

The New Youth Employability Agenda

New Futures and *Summer Beginnings* are part of a broader movement to redefine the nation's basic approach to youth employment and to define a new youth employability agenda. In both cases they have built on and reflect a common set of policy themes that are increasingly identified as critical building blocks for effective youth policies and programs. These themes have been emerging for some time, but they have been most recently identified and articulated through the research synthesis efforts of the Youth Research and Technical Assistance Project, a three year initiative conducted by the Center for Human Resources at Brandeis University and Public/Private Ventures for the U.S. Department of Labor. Focusing on the need for youth development strategies in employment and training, work and learning, the development of sequences of services, and program quality (and the implications for capacity building), these themes provide a new framework for national policy and an agenda for employability development at the national and the local level.

Youth Development. The first of these policy themes, and one of the strongest messages to emerge from the Youth Research and Technical Assistance Project, is the need to integrate the ideas of youth and adolescent development into youth program design and to provide developmentally appropriate experiences (including work experience) for young people as part of every youth employment initiative. Simply put, most employment and training programs have been designed for adults and older youth with relatively little attention paid to the developmental needs of younger adolescents. For young people to

become self-sufficient, however, youth programs need to provide opportunities to experience new situations (such as work), try on new roles, and practice social, emotional, and cognitive skills in context.

One of the most effective ways of providing the developmental experiences adolescents need, while also developing the skills needed for employability, is through appropriately structured work experiences. There is an increasing body of evidence that suggests that work experiences are important at early ages for learning and for later workforce participation and success. This research points to the need to expand the availability of work-related experiences for youth of all ages (but especially younger youth) and to provide a sequence of age-appropriate employment and training interventions, both as a means of advancing the general developmental needs of young people and of promoting their long-term employability. To accomplish that goal, we also need to improve our understanding as practitioners and policy makers of adolescent development and integrate that knowledge into policy and program design.

Work and Cognitive Skills. The second major theme is the importance of strengthening the link between work and learning and of providing opportunities to develop basic and cognitive skills in a "real world" context. This theme lies at the heart of *Summer Beginnings* and is a central element in the *New Futures* employability efforts. Research in a variety of fields suggests that strong connections between work and learning have a significant payoff in terms of cognitive skills development and long term employability for all age groups (both younger and older youth and adults). Recent commission reports, conferences, and national and state initiatives have reinforced that understanding and underscored the significance of the work and learning issue in national employment policy and its resonance among policy makers. The commitment to work and learning as a cornerstone of a new employability agenda is perhaps clearest in the new School-to-Work Opportunities Act. That legislation, responding to a broad research and policy movement, promises to integrate work-based and classroom-based learning through partnerships between schools and employers that prepares students for either a high quality job requiring technical skills or further education and training. (The Education 2000 legislation and the Fair Chance initiative also both promote this work and learning connection.) The basic program strategies outlined in that Act (work-

based learning, classroom-based learning, and connecting activities) represent a fundamental recognition that the work and learning connection lies at the core of any new employability development effort.

Program Strategies for School-to-Work Transition

· *Work-Based Learning*, which includes paid work experience, structured training, and mentoring at the worksite.

· *Classroom-Based Learning*, based on career majors, which is a program of instruction designed to meet high academic and occupational standards.

· *Connecting Activities*, which assist employers, schools, and students, to connect the worlds of school and work. This is the "glue" necessary to help local partners deliver quality work and learning programs.

Extending Services Over Time. The third basic theme is the need to develop a *sequence* of services that extends over time as well as a comprehensive *mix* of services. Experience, common sense, and research point in the same direction: the more at risk the population, the more extensive services must be to achieve substantial employment and income impacts. But achieving extended coverage has proven elusive for public programming.

The emphasis of policy analysts and researchers on the long-term impacts of particular program interventions has buttressed the tendency to see programs as one-time interventions rather than links in a support chain leading to self-sufficiency. The more recent paradigm of "comprehensive" services has led to an emphasis on the simultaneous clumping of services, rather than chronological linkages.

The needs of the labor market, as well as those of at-risk populations, support a changed view of program services. A few employment and training programs have begun to provide post-placement services and linkages with other institutions that will extend the potential impact of their programs. These efforts need to be understood and built upon if we are to serve both participant and employer clients more effectively.

Promoting Effectiveness and Quality in a Decentralized System. As a largely decentralized system both locally (through networks of service providers) and nationally, the employment and training system faces a constant challenge in promoting the quality and effectiveness of its programs. As the emphasis on providing services to more "at-risk" youth grows, and as the employment and training system moves towards the provision of more complex, comprehensive, and longer term services, the issues of program quality and effectiveness are becoming more critical. One of the major implications of these developments (and one of the major lessons of initiatives such as *Summer Beginnings*) is the need for a significant and strategic investment in capacity building among employment and training professionals. We need to recognize that while performance standards and increasingly sophisticated strategies for defining and measuring outcomes can help drive the employment and training system in new directions, the quality of programs and services ultimately depends on building the skills of the professionals responsible for implementing them.

Shared Lessons and Shared Commitments
In their efforts to develop new programs and change the planning and delivery of services, the communities involved in *New Futures* and *Summer Beginnings* shared a commitment to improving the quality of employment and education services for youth. Many of the problems and lessons learned were also common to both programs. As the articles in this issue make clear, whether pursuing community-wide change or the design and implementation of a new strategy for academic enrichment in the summer, issues of leadership, "buy-in" by staff and program partners, staff capacity and capacity building, time and commitment all emerge as central to the process of change. At the "program" and at the "system" level, change is first and foremost a political process: practitioners need to look as carefully at the question of how to build needed support as they do at questions of curriculum design or instructional approach.

The other broad lesson to emerge is that each community must ultimately create its own youth employability agenda. While the broad themes that are emerging at the national level provide a frame of reference, each community has to develop its own vision and build on its own resources in improving services for youth.

Building A Community-Wide Youth Employability Strategy: Lessons From The *New Futures* Experience

One of the major changes to take place in employment and training policy over the last ten years has been the effort to focus services on more at-risk youth and to develop the comprehensive service strategies needed to address the needs of those young people. That effort, in turn, is prompting growing numbers of communities to take a fresh look at the organization and delivery of services at the local level and to begin building new, community-wide, multi-institutional strategies that address not only employability development *per se*, but the often related issues of educational achievement, teen parenting, substance abuse, economic growth, and community development.[1]

The Need for Community-Wide Strategies

For many communities, the development of this type of "comprehensive, community-wide" approach is a critical first step towards effectively serving today's disadvantaged youth. Only through some form of collaboration can communities begin to develop comprehensive program strategies that address the multiple needs of many youth (by linking work, education, support services, etc.) or establish the sequence of services needed to help young people move towards employability over time. Joint planning and action at the community level are equally necessary for communities to make effective use of the limited resources available for serving disadvantaged youth.

But for most communities, the development of an effective youth employability strategy also represents a substantial political and institutional challenge. At the heart of any community-wide effort is a call for institutional change. For a comprehensive system to succeed, schools, employment and training providers, social service agencies, and area businesses all need to change many of their traditional ways of doing business and begin operating under a common vision and shared set of goals.

As the emphasis on community-wide strategies grows, it is increasingly important for policy-makers at both the state and local level to understand the kinds of activities and commitments required to create a community-wide employability strategy and to move that agenda forward. The purpose of this paper is to contribute to that effort by highlighting some of the lessons from the *New Futures* initiative – a five city initiative aimed at reforming community strategies for at-risk youth, including the development of community-wide strategies for employability development. The "lessons" outlined here are based on a series of individual interviews and focus group discussions with representatives of the *New Futures* cities. The questions guiding these discussions, and this paper, were: How had the *New Futures* communities attempted to build a community-wide employability strategy, and in particular, what were their different starting points? What problems had they encountered? And what were the lessons they learned along the way?[2]

Three Lessons

Three broad lessons stand out. The first is that *the development of a community-wide strategy is an essentially political task – one whose success or failure depends in large part on the presence of strong local leaders and the local capacity to define a common agenda, involve appropriate members of the community, negotiate common interests and concerns, and develop accountability across institutions.* To meet these challenges, communities and their leaders need to pay serious attention to and make a significant and ongoing investment in *process.* While "technical" issues (concerning funding, conflicting rules, etc.) abound (and are often seen as significant barriers), policy makers need to recognize that the major challenges are the political tasks of building a shared vision and maintaining the community support needed for institutional change.

The second major lesson is that *developing a successful community-wide strategy is hard.* In pursuing institutional change, communities often have to address very fundamental issues of race, community governance and the control of local decision-making, differing attitudes and values towards youth, and the community's investment in education and training. None are issues quickly or easily raised and resolved. Here again, the issue of leadership is paramount. To build support for a common community vision and strategy in this context takes active and committed

leaders who are willing to take risks and who have made a long term commitment. The *New Futures* communities discussed in this paper have ended their fifth year of work on community-wide strategies, and most would readily admit that they are just now beginning to achieve the trust and clarity of vision needed to build a coherent local strategy.

Finally, the third major lesson is that *the issues of youth and employability development – and the starting points for collaboration – are defined differently in every community.* For some communities, the primary concern may be with future workforce development; in others the focus might be on dropout prevention, youth violence or teenage parenting. The major point here is that there is no one "right" way to approach these issues – no one model or approach that can serve every community. Rather, each community needs to define "the problem" it wants to solve and the resulting strategy in a way that best reflects local priorities and concerns and that best engages the interest and commitment of community members. Only by building a vision grounded in locally-based issues and needs can community-wide collaboratives gain the support they need to address the needs of at-risk young people.

The *New Futures* Initiative

During the 1980s, a number of national foundations and public agencies began sponsoring initiatives aimed at establishing comprehensive, community-wide strategies for addressing issues of poverty and at-risk youth. Among the most ambitious of these was the Annie E. Casey Foundation's *New Futures* initiative.[3] Begun in 1988, *New Futures* awarded five year grants of up to $12.5 million dollars to five cities to develop comprehensive community strategies for addressing the needs of at-risk youth and to help those communities make fundamental changes in the planning, financing, and delivery of services to at-risk youth and their families. The five *New Futures* cities are Bridgeport, Connecticut; Dayton, Ohio; Little Rock, Arkansas; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and Savannah, Georgia.

The initial focus of the *New Futures* initiative was on four major areas of institutional change and redesigned delivery of services: educational reform and particularly the reduction in the school dropout rate; youth employability development; teen pregnancy prevention and adolescent health; and the development of integrated service delivery systems

with case management as a central feature. The key assumptions behind the initiative were:

- that the problems faced by at-risk youth are multiple and interrelated,
- that services are fragmented and do not meet the real needs of youth and their families;
- that efforts to improve services are hampered by a lack of hard information about the problems youth face and the effectiveness of the responses by youth-serving institutions; and,
- that in most communities there is too little priority placed on solving the problems of disadvantaged youth.

To begin the process of building a community-wide strategy, each of the *New Futures* communities established a collaborative decision-making body (the "oversight collaborative") comprised of leaders from the public and private sectors. The major goals of the collaborative were to act as a forum for information and debate and to provide a top-level, multi-institutional force that could develop a long-term reform agenda, promote new policy approaches, support the redirection of resources, and provide the political "clout" needed to bring about fundamental change in the delivery of services.

Employability Development in the Five *New Futures* Cities

In terms of youth employability, the emphasis of *New Futures* was on the development of comprehensive, community-wide strategies for employability development and school-to-work transition. As with *New Futures* generally, the goal was to create a system that was "youth-centered" and that cut across traditional institutional boundaries in providing a flexible mix of services and experiences that was organized in a sequence running from middle school through high school graduation, and that drew on a broad range of resources including the employment and training system, public schools, social services, and area businesses.

Each of the five *New Futures* cities approached the employability development challenge with these broad goals in mind. But the communities quickly diverged in the degree to which their efforts focused on formal community-wide agreements and on the types of programs and activities they incorporated into their efforts.

· In *Pittsburgh* and *Savannah*, the major focus of the *New Futures* youth employability effort was the development of a formal agreement linking the public schools and the business community. In **Pittsburgh**, the "Pittsburgh Promise" linked the schools, businesses, and *New Futures* in an agreement to improve school outcomes in exchange for jobs. In practice, this translated into several major initiatives: the definition of a set of "career competencies" intended as standards for employability; a substantial effort by the public schools to integrate those competencies into the academic curriculum in the public schools; development of pilot career centers in two high schools; and a "jobs component" that provided pre-employment skills training for high school students in conjunction with a private sector summer and post-graduate jobs program. Perhaps the most striking element of the Pittsburgh plan was the relatively heavy emphasis on integrating work-related skills into the academic curriculum and its close connection to the school system's broader efforts at educational reform.

In **Savannah**, the "Savannah Compact" also attempted to link summer and post-graduate jobs with student achievement, but without the initial effort to define a widely accepted set of employability skills. There, the Chamber of Commerce and the public schools signed an agreement outlining a series of educational and employment goals that included improved student attendance and achievement and a move towards site-based management for the schools and the provision of internships and summer jobs by the business community. As in Pittsburgh, there was a clear connection between employment goals and school improvement. But in Savannah, there was a heavier emphasis on the direct link between improved academic skills and access to a job. Several years after the signing of the Compact, in an effort to move that agreement forward, Savannah began the development of a set of employability skills that would stand as goals for the public schools and be accepted as credentials by the business community.

· In *Dayton*, youth employability efforts were also built around the long-term goal of a community-wide compact (the "Dayton Dream") and an integrated, sequential system of services. There, however, the community began by establishing a working group of school, employment, and social service representatives who focused initially on the coordination of existing programs, the definition of a core set of employability skills, and the design of a high school career center as

the centerpiece of a system of school-focused services. By 1992, the Dayton *New Futures* effort had decided to focus those activities on the city's vocational high school as a pilot site with an energetic administrator and strong ties to the business community.

· *Bridgeport* also had a school/business compact that had been developed during the mid-1980s (largely independent of *New Futures*) to link the schools and the business community. But another major focus of Bridgeport's youth employability effort was the increased coordination of existing employment and youth-related services in an effort to build a more coherent continuum of services and the development of career-related services for younger in-school students. Part of that effort included creating a jointly funded staff position at the Regional Business Council whose role included the development of new joint initiatives and the identification of new resources.

· Finally, *Little Rock* also began by pursuing a compact at the beginning of its *New Futures* involvement, but quickly focused its major youth efforts on school restructuring and the development of an effective case management system for at-risk youth. By the end of the third year of *New Futures*, the Little Rock leadership had begun to view employability development as part of a broader community and youth development agenda arising from concerns over youth violence, substance abuse, teenage parenting, and school failure. By the end of 1992, Little Rock had made a commitment to a major planning process around employability with the goal of integrating it into the community's youth efforts.

Shared Commitment

What the *New Futures* communities shared was a common commitment to the development of a community-wide employability agenda and to a collaborative, comprehensive approach. What they also shared, however, were a number of problems common to those types of efforts – problems that were in no way reduced by the availability of substantial outside funding. Among the barriers each of the cities confronted at one point or another during the *New Futures* process were conflicts over turf among agencies; weak or broken commitments from institutional partners; disagreements and or confusion over the goals and objectives of the initiative; problems engaging the attention of community leaders; frustration with the slow pace of change; and negative

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perceptions of both community institutions and the youth to be served. In virtually every community, to at least some degree, plans had to be changed, the initial agreements had to be reworked, and commitments made early in the process had to be renewed. In several of the communities, a lack of buy-in or progress on the original vision led to a substantial reorganization of the *New Futures* initiative as a whole. One of the most basic lessons from *New Futures* is that these types of issues are almost certain to arise in virtually every community regardless of funding or the specific strategy being pursued.

Key Steps in Building an Employability Agenda
While the experience of the *New Futures* communities was varied and often difficult, it also served as a valuable laboratory for community-wide collaboration and generated a wealth of experience for other communities to draw on in their efforts to develop comprehensive employability development strategies. Among the more important lessons to be drawn from *New Futures* is a better understanding of the key steps and major elements in the process of developing any community-wide collaborative effort. Those steps/ elements include defining a shared community vision, using information, involving the right people, focusing on strategy, and defining outcomes and accountability.

Defining a Shared Vision
Perhaps the strongest lesson to emerge from the *New Futures* experience is the importance of clearly defining the problem to be solved and the development of a shared community vision as the first step in any collaborative effort. In simple terms, communities need to agree on what they see as the problem they want to address, what their goals are, and how they want to go about achieving them. While the idea is simple, communities often attempt to bypass this step, skipping the sometimes slow process of examining and debating community needs, identifying resources, and exploring the often conflicting goals and missions of local institutions. The result when that happens is a plan or agreement (a "compact") that lacks the credibility, commitment, and clarity of direction needed to bring about institutional change.

Three Views of Employability. In terms of employability development, the need to develop a common vision and understanding is particularly important. As the *New Futures* experience made clear, while many of the issues of youth and employability are common

across most communities, every community approaches those issues from a slightly different direction. Among the *New Futures* cities, the communities defined the problem they wanted to address in at least three different ways:

1. *Focusing on Employment and the Economy.* Some communities – most notably Savannah – began by defining the issue of employability in terms of jobs, employability skills, and growth or competitiveness. In those communities, the issue that engaged leaders and residents was that of jobs and growth: *"We need to improve employability development so young people are prepared for jobs and so employers can hire capable workers."* For those communities, the major emphasis of the local strategy was on "compact-like" hiring agreements, defining needed skills, and on substantial business involvement in the schools, especially the high schools.

2. *Education and Dropout Prevention.* A second approach – with Dayton as one example – focused more heavily on work and employability development as a strategy for improving education and reducing the rate at which students drop out. *"If we are going to keep youngsters in school, we need to help young people see the connection between schooling and "the real world" (i.e. jobs) and give them the opportunity to learn relevant skills in a practical context. Internships, vocational education programs, applied technology, summer jobs, etc. are tools for educational improvement."* For these communities, employability efforts tend to be tied more clearly to educational reform and more heavily school-based. Here too, there is often a stronger focus on middle-school efforts and higher education as a desired outcome.

3. *Youth/Community Development.* A third approach – evident in both Little Rock and Bridgeport – focused on work, family and employability as resources in addressing even broader issues of youth and/or community development. In this approach, work and skills development are seen as ways of helping young people build self-esteem, self-confidence, an awareness of their futures, etc., and as such, become integral elements in comprehensive strategies addressing issues such as youth violence or teenage pregnancy. *"If we want young people to grow into healthy, self-sufficient adults*

and our community to a safe and healthy place to live, we need to give young people a sense of their own capacity and of possible futures." For these communities, employability efforts might tend to focus on the importance of connecting young people to competent, caring adults, hands-on work/internship experiences, the development of clear pathways to work/higher education, and comprehensive support for struggling families.

Two points need to be made here. The first, as suggested earlier in this paper, is that **there is no one "right" way to approach the myriad concerns linked to the issues of youth and employability**. For one community, the most effective starting point might be a concern with the local labor market or the schools. For others, the rallying point may be issues of teen parenting or concerns over the community's neighborhoods. For some, several different issues will need to be tied together. What is important is that the ways the issues are framed reflect a real set of local concerns and provide a common language and point of commitment.

The second, and equally important point, is that **each of these approaches has implications for who needs to be involved in local efforts, who will be served, the type of service strategy developed, and the kinds of outcomes to be achieved**. Here too, it is important to recognize that there is no one "right" approach. Instead, the way in which each community defines the problem it wants to address needs to shape and direct the kind of strategy it pursues.

The Role of Information

One of the more important tools that can be used in creating a local vision is the development and use of locally-based data. In the *New Futures* cities and elsewhere, communities have begun to find that the use of local (rather than national data) and the involvement of local citizens in data gathering and analysis — through surveys, neighborhood hearings, focus groups, etc. – has helped to create a sense of immediacy and ownership of community issues and to focus attention on those issues of greatest local relevance. How well are young people prepared for or connected to jobs in the community? To what extent are youth violence or teenage parenting an issue in *our* community? The pursuit of these kinds of questions, the process of generating information within the community, and open discussion of what this information means locally can provide a powerful engine for the vision-building process.

Involving the Right People

Involving the right people in the process of designing a community strategy is as important as defining a common vision. One of the familiar lessons drawn from the experience of early partnerships like the Boston Compact is the importance of involving key decision makers who have the authority and the "clout" to make commitments and set the agenda for local institutions – major business leaders, the PIC Chair, the School Board President and Superintendent, etc. This lesson still holds, and it was this idea in large part that led to the emphasis on the oversight collaboratives in the *New Futures* initiative.

But, for many communities, the traditional model of downtown (and top-down) business and political leadership no longer works. On the one hand, for growing numbers of cities, the traditional business leadership no longer exists: the major businesses have become subsidiaries of larger national corporations with headquarters and decision-making centered elsewhere. Moreover, in many communities, the firms representing traditional sources of leadership are struggling to reduce their workforces; the major new source of job growth in those communities are often smaller employers. One of the major challenges in developing a youth employability strategy in those communities is that of gaining the interest and involvement of new leaders, particularly those in smaller businesses. How, given the limited resources of those smaller firms (and their often negligible investment in training), can communities gain their active involvement in employment and education efforts? There are no simple answers, but this is clearly a growing concern.

At the same time, as their initiatives developed, virtually all of the *New Futures* communities began moving towards increased parental and neighborhood involvement. Here, too, is a constituency largely ignored in early partnership efforts. But as the *New Futures* cities found, parents are a constituency that clearly have a stake in the outcomes of any community-wide effort, can provide information and an avenue into the community otherwise unavailable to the "downtown" leadership, and who represent a vital political resource for promoting institutional change.[4]

The lessons concerning "involving the right people," then, operate on several levels. The first is the well-recognized need to involve the key institutional representatives and the leaders who can bring a degree of political and policy clout. But the second is that in most communities successful implementation

also means broadening the net somewhat and involving new, "nontraditional" representatives of the business community, parents, and others (school building administrators and teachers, for example) who can help make the connection between the traditional leadership and the community at large. Finally, it is important to recognize that "involving" the right people may also require a strategic investment in "educating" those individuals and building their interest (or overcoming their disinterest) over time.

Focus on Strategies First

A third major lesson is to focus on strategies first, then programs. Too often, community planning efforts become bogged down in developing a single program or sponsoring a group of activities and failing to look more broadly at the range of needs within the community and the mix of resources available to address them. While it is often critical for community-wide efforts to start with a single initiative which can then grow (as a way of learning to work together), it is essential that even early initiatives be clearly cast as part of a long-range strategy, with clear plans for moving from pilot site to community-wide effort and from program implementation to policy reform. One useful step in focusing on strategies is the development of a local resource map that identifies major target groups and/or needs and begins to map out the various resource streams within the community that are available to address them.

Defining Outcomes and Accountability

The complement to defining a vision is the need to also define clear outcomes and accountability. One of the ways in which community-wide strategies stumble is in failing to agree on firm roles and responsibilities and on how those commitments will be measured.

Among the *New Futures* sites there was widespread agreement that the development of effective goals and standards for accountability was one of the harder tasks they faced. In part, this reflects the difficulty of implementing agreements among relatively decentralized groups of institutions. (In reality, the "business community" rarely speaks and works as one; similarly resources and authority are often widely dispersed within local school systems.)

But the difficulty in developing real accountability also reflects the problem of defining goals that are an appropriate basis for accountability. As most of the

New Futures communities found, there needs to be a balance between the broad, overarching goals driving the local strategy – reduction in the dropout rate, teenage parenting, youth unemployment or inactivity, etc. – and more readily reachable interim goals. In the words of one *New Futures* participant, the problems need to be defined in "solvable" terms, and the goals and objectives need to be defined in ways that will help to measure progress as well as the ultimate impact of the initiative.

Finally, however communities define their goals and accountability, they need to build in an ongoing evaluation process. As the *New Futures* representatives pointed out, evaluation can be a double-edged sword – occasionally looking to measure outcomes before they can reasonably be expected to appear. But an ongoing evaluation process does provide the tools and information needed to enforce accountability and to maintain a degree of perspective on what are often complex, long-term initiatives.

Lessons for Community-Wide Initiatives

In addition to the specific lessons outlined above concerning the elements and steps involved in developing a community-wide collaborative, the *New Futures* experience also offers some broader lessons on the issues involved in community-wide, collaborative initiatives. Taken together, these lessons reinforce the importance of leadership, commitment, and an understanding of the kinds of issues involved in building a community-wide employability strategy.

The "Political" Character of Collaboration

As suggested at the beginning of this paper, one of the major lessons to emerge from the examination of *New Futures* was the essentially *political* nature of the process of developing a community-wide strategy. A collaborative strategy is political not in the sense of partisan politics or trading favors, but in the sense that it involves bringing together and negotiating often competing public and private interests in the community; in that it involves fundamental public policy decisions; and political in the critical role played by the process of involving key members of the community.[5] In every *New Futures* community, schools, businesses, the employment and training system and others were being asked to change the ways in which they planned programs, shared information, and allocated resources in working with at-risk youth. For that to happen, communities needed to do more than

simply follow the steps outlined in some program guide. They needed to think creatively about how to address very fundamental issues, how to engage the interest and support of key leaders, and how to bring the community together around a common idea. Where problems occurred (and they were common), they were rarely "technical" (such as conflicting regulations). More often than not, the real barriers resulted from a failure to think strategically about the politics of collaboration – a failure to secure real agreement or to involve a critical party in the negotiations.

Addressing Basic Policy Issues

The "political" nature of the process results, in part, from the fact that the issues of youth and employability often raised very basic issues of public policy and community values. In defining who would be served in a comprehensive system or what criteria would be used in determining employability, the *New Futures* communities often had to address fundamental policy issues concerning community attitudes, goals and governance. In several of the *New Futures* communities, for example, the question of youth employment was closely tied to the perceived racism of the business community – business complaints about the poor skills of high school graduates were perceived as an excuse to avoid hiring minority youth. The development of a set of mutually acceptable criteria for hiring meant working through those issues before agreement could be reached. Similarly, questions about who should be involved in the planning process raised serious issues about local governance and control of decision-making. Every community grappled with the trade-offs between oversight collaboratives or policy forums that were designed to bring together only local power brokers and those that provided a substantial role for parents and neighborhood leaders. The question of "who should be involved" raises difficult issues of inclusiveness, ownership, and top-down versus bottom-up decision-making. Finally, in defining the goals of their employability efforts, communities often had to mediate between conflicting philosophies. Was the purpose of the "compact" to develop good workers, or to help young people stay in school and develop their "full potential." Was the focus a "narrow vocationalism" or a broader effort towards "self-sufficiency." At issue here were fundamental values and beliefs about the community's youth, education, and the role of business in local affairs.

These types of issues form the core of any effort to establish a community-wide strategy, because they define many of the basic attitudes and policy parameters that will guide the policy decisions and program designs that make up the local effort. Failure to resolve them – as well as the more familiar and frustrating issues of turf and the fight for scarce resources – almost guarantees failure of any collaborative effort. At the same time, the issues are neither simple nor easily resolved. In order to succeed at any comprehensive, community-wide strategy, communities need to recognize and address the "politics" as well as the "technology" in their effort and to build the political support needed to make change take place.

The Importance of Leadership

The political nature of the process of building a community-wide strategy, in turn, puts a premium on community leadership that is willing to take risks and to make a long-term commitment. One of the clearest lessons to emerge from all five *New Futures* cities was the need to find a "champion" – one or more leaders who see the need for a community-wide strategy and are willing to take an active and aggressive leadership role.[6] That champion (or those leaders) needs to be willing to confront difficult issues (people often spoke about the need to "call the question") and to take risks in moving the employability agenda forward. At the same time, the leadership in this type of effort also needs to be able to think strategically in terms of involving others and shaping the discussion so that it leads to resolution and not just to confrontation.

Patience and Commitment

Given the seriousness of the issues that often need to be addressed, patience and a commitment to the long-term are also critical. In each of the *New Futures* communities, much of the early process has been devoted (in some cases deliberately, in others not) to developing the relationships, understanding, and trust needed to begin the real work of building a community agenda. In almost every *New Futures* discussion, participants pointed to the need to learn one another's language, understand differing personal and institutional goals and missions, and build a body of experience together to work from. In most cases, they also pointed to substantial conflicts along the way.

This "trust building" process is a familiar feature of any collaborative effort, and partnerships across the country have found there are no easy shortcuts. There is a substantial payoff to this process in the view of the

New Futures participants – in a very new and different understanding of the community's needs and resources, and a new level of trust among key actors. But it is a process that is often painful and frustrating to go through, and participants often drop off along the way. Communities need to understand in advance, once again, that the development of a collaborative vision and strategy will take time and that there will be many bumps along the way.

There Are No Magic Bullets

The nature of the issues involved, and the need to work together to build a common sense of vision and trust lead clearly to the third major lesson – the difficulty of replicating this type of community-wide initiative. While there are clearly a number of broad lessons and helpful hints for leaders and policy makers to follow in their own efforts, there are no simple road maps to follow. Recognizing that every community needs to define its own starting point and build its own coalitions, the most fundamental lesson is that the development of a community-wide strategy is an intensely local phenomenon, and the most effective manner of proceeding is by paying serious attention to the needs, resources, and relationships in each particular community.

Implications for Policy Makers

Many of the lessons from *New Futures* are aimed at local policy makers and point to the need for local leaders to look at the process by which a community-wide strategy is built. To successfully take on that type of effort, local policy makers need to be prepared to confront serious and often difficult issues ranging from turf to fundamental questions of educational and social policy. They need to look at how they can raise awareness of local issues (for example by using local information); involve and build ownership among a widespread set of constituencies; negotiate agreement on a well-defined common vision; set standards for accountability, and evaluate the results of their efforts.

But the lessons outlined here also suggest ways that state and national policymakers can also foster the development of community-wide strategies. States and the federal government can support this local process by working to raise the awareness of local leaders of the issues of employability and to orient and educate them to the kinds of decisions they need to make. This can take many different forms. State and federal agencies can develop public informational campaigns aimed at local leaders and conduct serious

leadership forums and/or training sessions on these issues. They can also help to develop sources of locally-based information so communities can begin to define needs and priorities at the local level. And they can take an active role in helping to build local capacity by working directly with, or providing technical assistance to, local policy bodies to help them understand and frame the local debate.

State and national government can also provide incentives for collaborative efforts at the local level. One strategy is to provide incentives for collaboration through grant guidelines, jointly funded programs, performance standards, and other financial and regulatory methods. A second approach might be to create new collaborative situations aimed at encouraging communications across institutional lines at a variety of levels. In this instance, jointly sponsored meetings of administrators (bringing education, human service, and employment administrators together), joint training sessions for line staff, or multi-institutional conferences might all be used as ways of bridging the gaps among youth-serving institutions.

States can also provide direct assistance with the collaborative process through the provision of technical assistance and outside facilitators to help communities work through local collaboration issues. As the representatives of one *New Futures* city noted, the availability of an outside facilitator was a critical factor in their ability to put difficult issues on the table and deal with them productively.

Finally, for policy makers at every level, one of the major issues is that of time. In supporting collaborative efforts, policy makers at every level need to be "aggressively patient" – pushing hard for progress, but recognizing that these collaboratives cannot be built over night. At each level, policy makers need to begin to look at the development of a community-wide youth employability strategy as a long-term, multi-year venture and to begin to design policies (such as multi-year funding strategies), that support the growth of long-term relationships among institutions and that make it possible to invest funds in community-wide initiatives over a substantial period of time.

Notes

[1] This paper was prepared by Alan Melchior and Susan P. Curnan under a grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The authors would like to thank the Foundation for its support for this work, and to particularly thank the project's program officer, Miriam Shark, for her active interest, encouragement, and assistance. However, the views expressed here are those of the paper's authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Foundation.

[2] In each of the five cities, staff from the Center for Human Resources at Brandeis University met with key policy leaders, agency administrators, and program practitioners for extended individual and group interviews. Brandeis then worked with a smaller group of city representatives to review and refine the major themes from those meetings. The findings from this process were initially presented as a workshop on "Institutional Change Through a Community-Wide Youth Employability Strategy," at the National Governors' Association Policy Conference, "Investing in Youth," in New Orleans, December 10, 1992. Working group members included Susan P. Curnan, Director, and Alan Melchior, Deputy Director, Center for Human Resources, Brandeis University; Paul Berry, Chair, Arkansas State Job Training Coordinating Council; Susan Brownlee, Associate Director, Allegheny Policy Council for Youth and Workforce Development; Tom Dalton, then City Manager, Little Rock, Arkansas (and currently Director of Human Services for the State of Arkansas); Bill Daniel, Vice President and General Manager, Dan Vaden Companies and Chairman, Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce; Kathy Emery, Executive Director, *New Futures* for Dayton Area Youth, Maria Mojica, Executive Director, Bridgeport Futures, and Miriam Shark, Senior Associate, Annie E. Casey Foundation.

[3] Other initiatives include the Rockefeller Foundation's Community Planning/Action Project; the Mott Foundation's Teenage Parent Self-Sufficiency Project, and the Department of Labor's Youth Opportunities Unlimited demonstration.

[4] Bridgeport was particularly active in involving parents in the *New Futures* process and established a training program for parents serving as collaborative members as part of the Bridgeport initiative.

[5] In many ways, building a community-wide agenda is not only a *political* process, but also a *personal* one. In large part, questions of commitment, shared vision, turf, the willingness to change (that is, the heart of the political agenda) depend on the nurturing of positive, trusting relationships among the key actors. Successful political strategies, at least in part, are those that recognize the value of establishing and supporting those relationships.

[6] One of the founders of the Boston Compact often spoke in similar terms in calling for a "passionate advocate" to take the lead in community efforts.

Summer Beginnings: Integrating Academic Enrichment into Summer Jobs

In Spring, 1993, at the request of the United States Department of Labor, the Brandeis Center for Human Resources brought together a group of experienced employment and training practitioners and policy makers to develop an agenda for increasing the effectiveness of youth employment training through emphasis on real work and academic enrichment. Specifically, we were asked to respond to two questions:

1. **How do we create summer programs that bring about learning gains among young people for whom success was previously unknown?**

2. **How do we use the *Summer Beginnings* experience as the start of a movement to redesign and restructure year-round youth programs and create effective transitions for our nation's young people?**

Drawing on many years of experience working directly with young people, and bolstered by the best in contemporary research on adolescent development, this group began by preparing a set of working papers that reflects a deep commitment to the principle that all young people can learn and achieve.

At the same time, the Brandeis Center also launched a 12-site national demonstration network, *Summer Beginnings*, designed to test this course for change and actually implement high performance academic enrichment strategies. These sites include:

- Phoenix, Arizona
- City of Los Angeles, and
- Los Angeles County, California
- Northeast Connecticut
- Broward County, Florida
- North Central Indiana
- New Orleans, Louisiana
- Baltimore, Maryland
- Niagara County, New York
- The Commonwealth of Puerto Rico
- Seattle, and
- Northwest, Washington

This next section presents an overview of Summer Challenge 1993 and the *Summer Beginnings* intiative, focusing on the vision and principles for integrating work and learning. We have also included a section, Drafting a Blueprint for Action, which provides a framework for answering the first question on creating summer programs that bring about learning gains.

Finally, the third section, on community connections, addresses the issues related to the redesign and restructuring of year-round youth programs. To assist communities in making the necessary connections, we have examined recent legislation and policy guidance.

The Vision: Integrating Work and Learning

We were aware of the fact that Summer Challenge 1993 and the JTPA Reform Amendments of 1992 provided new opportunities and challenges to program operators, and that our recommendations, coupled with the demonstrations, could also help spark a movement for the restructuring of year-round programs. The message from President Clinton and the Department of Labor was clear: *the Summer Youth Employment and Training Program (SYETP) needs to tackle the academic deficits of young people. A traditional summer jobs approach is no longer enough to benefit communities, employers, and the many youth that walk through the door today. Change is inevitable and the sooner we begin the process, the better.*

Introducing the "Summer Challenge" in 1993 and now again in 1994, President Clinton and USDOL encourage communities to solve this problem by:

- Breaking down the artificial wall between what is work and what is learning, and

- Providing academic enrichment which, at a minimum, counteracts the erosion of basic education skills and, to the extent possible, increases the level of education skills, especially reading and math.

At our meetings, and through the *Summer Beginnings* Network, we took on the President's challenge to develop a vision of youth employment practice that stresses the importance of providing young people with the skills they will need to make a successful transition from school to the adult world of work. The *Summer Beginnings* Network, and the Brandeis work groups, identified these skills, and outlined a set of fundamental principles that youth employment educators can use to ensure that young people acquire these essential skills. We decided to avoid a static model, and instead, opted to present what might be regarded as a philosophy of youth employment training. We offer a set of goals and approaches that seek to put young people first. We hope that our colleagues in the field will use these goals to help refine their own program objectives and will draw on these approaches to develop and refine their training programs.

The immediate goal of our work group was to develop technical assistance materials for program operators and other practitioners engaged in the 1993 "Summer Challenge." We did that by developing *A Primer on Improving the Quality of Academic Enrichment in Summer Youth Employment Programs* and *A Field Guide for Improving Academic Enrichment in Work-Based and Classroom-Based Programs*, both of which are available from the Department of Labor and the Center for Human Resources. What follows is an overview of the vision and principles that inform the recently revised second edition of the *Field Guide* entitled *The Field Kit for Communities Committed to Improving Academic Enrichment in Summer Youth Employment Programs*.

The **1994 Summer Challenge Edition** builds on, and incorporates, the central beliefs and experiences of the *Summer Beginnings* National Work and Learning Network, as well as the original work groups.

Skills for the Future
Recent studies and commission reports have highlighted the need to adequately prepare the nation's workforce with basic employability skills. In *What Work Requires of Schools: A SCANS Report for America 2000*, the authors identified five competencies and a list of three "foundations," or workplace skills, that are needed for solid job performance. A similar report, *Investing In Our Children*, by the Committee on Economic Development noted that:

".....mastery of the old basics of reading, writing and arithmetic may be sufficient for entry-level jobs, but because of the constantly changing nature of work, minimum skills are not sufficient preparation for career advancement. Schools and youth employment training programs must make a greater effort to develop higher level skills, such as problem solving, reasoning, and learning ability."

The work group presents the following outline of the SCANS findings in order to help program operators broaden their thinking with regard to skills development.

The SCANS Skills	
Competency Skills	
Resources	ability to identify, organize, plan and allocate resources.
Interpersonal	working in teams, teaching others, serving customers, leading, negotiating, and working well with people from culturally diverse backgrounds.
Information	accessing and evaluating data, organizing and maintaining files, interpreting and communicating ideas, computer literacy.
Systems	understanding social, organizational, and technological systems.
Technology	selecting equipment and tools, applying appropriate technology to a given task.
Foundation Skills	
Basic Skills	reads, writes, does math, listens and speaks well.
Thinking Skills	thinks creatively, makes decisions, solves problems, visualizes, knows how to learn and reason.
Personal Qualities	displays responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, integrity and honesty.

The changing definition of employability has a number of important implications for program operators. Policy makers need to address the challenge of ensuring long-term self-sufficiency in a rapidly changing labor market. This challenge is best met by ensuring that young people learn how to learn. Program operators must shift their thinking from providing a short-term intervention to determining how they might better provide a continuum of learning opportunities over a longer period of time – in other words, *educating young people in the habits of mind that make them life-long learners*. Indeed, the goal is skills development that will enable a young person to move from the point of high school graduation, through a series of increasingly more responsible jobs or post secondary education, and that will enable the individual to further his or her learning at every step of the way.

Active Learning

Youth employment training can be an arena for educational change. Young people who are not succeeding in the traditional high school classroom, often find their way when presented with challenging work assignments that both draw on their untapped capacities and acknowledge their need to try on adult roles and responsibilities. Active learning might be defined as learning in context. The workplace offers a context in which reading, writing, and math skills make sense to young people as the necessary tools for accomplishing an interesting task. Problems that might have seemed incomprehensible in a textbook are more easily solved in the worksite context. Visible achievement through hands-on learning is the key.

When adult staff work in concert to ensure that each young person is fully engaged in the work at-hand, the stage is set for learning. Effective instructors, like effective parents, know how to draw out the abilities of young people. Helping the young learner to focus so that he/she can make sense of the challenges involved, is essential. Working together to get the job done, in a one-on-one relationship, is a sure fire method for promoting youth achievement.

Three Strategies

As the youth employment field has evolved over the years, a number of program formats or strategies have emerged. Our objective was to identify the essential ingredients or elements that make each of these

strategies effective. Since we are familiar with the great variety of program types, and well aware that no new program can exactly replicate an existing one, we focused on three broad program strategies:

1. **Work-based programs**;
2. **Classroom-based programs**; and,
3. **Summer jobs programs**.

We believe that most program operators will be able to see something of their own program in at least one of the strategies, and will take away a few key principles from our outline that will be useful in evaluating and fine tuning their own work.

The following is a brief summary of our discussion of key program strategies.

Work-Based Learning

In programs that use work-based learning strategies, work and learning are completely integrated. It is a mix of 100% work and 100% learning. The emphasis is on learning through critical task-based relationships with caring, skilled adults.

Major learning activities take place consistently at the worksite – either on projects involving crews/work teams of young people or through one-on-one assignments in departments of organizations.

The primary adult, who acts as a coach or facilitator of learning, is either a worksite supervisor within the organization (for one-on-one assignments) or a crew leader/work team facilitator (for teams of six to seven youth).

With guidance from this primary adult, young people research, plan, and complete all aspects of the work, as well as evaluate their own progress and work as they proceed. In doing so, young participants learn a variety of important basic skills in the context of functional tasks required to accomplish the work – hence the term *"learning-rich work."*

Classroom-Based Learning

Young people in programs that use classroom-based enrichment strategies participate in a mix of classroom learning and work experience aimed at conveying an array of important academic, occupational, and other important skills.

Major learning activities take place in the classroom and at the worksite. Indeed, through close communication between worksite supervisors and classroom instructors, work experience supplements classroom learning activities as well as conveys work-oriented skills.

In this strategy, classrooms are transformed into high performance work organizations where young people learn skills in real work and life contexts.

Summer Jobs Strategy

Programs based on a "summer jobs" strategy place primary emphasis on work experience. They have a less intensive educational focus that varies from youth to youth and from worksite to worksite based upon the job tasks, worksite, and management orientation of the worksite.

At an ideal worksite, a participant's supervisor endeavors to train the young person in valuable skills and to relate those skills to academic and real world applications. If the supervisor is willing to play this mentor/trainer role, significant functional context learning can take place. However, the role of "supervisor as basic skills instructor" is not necessarily an expectation.

Most enrichment that occurs within this strategy occurs away from the worksite. SDA staff arrange for participants to attend short-term activities that broaden their horizons and expand the knowledge gained on the job. All participants attend some of these activities. Many of the supplemental activities are based upon specific requests solicited from a particular participant(s).

Before enactment of the Summer Challenge, this strategy was the most common in the JTPA community.

Academic Enrichment

Academic enrichment is often presented as the new challenge for the JTPA system. Both the JTPA Reform Amendments of 1992 and President Clinton's Summer Challenge initiative emphasized that the Summer Youth Employment and Training Program – in 1993 and beyond – should provide a blend of work and learning aimed at basic skills enhancement and skill-building. In reality, this is not a new challenge, but a continuing one. Summer enrichment and summer remediation have been required elements of the summer program since 1987. As a result, SDAs need to develop summer programs that are much more than just work experience.

In the past, SDAs were called upon to provide educational "remediation." When we say, "enrichment" we are talking not only about "remediation," but also about other educational experiences and interventions. "Academic enrichment" includes, but is not limited to "basic skills remediation." Beyond the concept of remediation, academic enrichment is the process of introducing young people to new experiences that broaden and deepen knowledge and skills. It is expected that through creative curriculum and instructional strategies, programs will build skills through an array of work-related and life-related academic enrichment activities.

Academic Enrichment

Academic enrichment is a strategy for:

· Maintaining and increasing young people's existing skills levels;

· Adding new skills to young people's repertoires; and,

· Exposing young people to new experiences and new ideas.

Therefore:
Any learning, that at a minimum, counteracts the erosion of basic education skills and, to the extent possible, increases the level of education skills, especially reading and math, is academic enrichment.

Remember, integration is an important word when it comes to defining and interpreting academic enrichment. For example, when you carry out learning-rich work-based and classroom-based strategies as defined in the *Field Kit*, you are, in fact, **"doing academic enrichment."** Many practitioners have told us that academic enrichment sounded like a great idea, but it just was not practical. They could not afford to have all of their summer youth in classrooms. We hope we have made the case clearly that academic enrichment does not necessarily mean time spent in classrooms. When it is, in fact, a classroom-based approach, it should look quite different from add-on remedial components.

Academic enrichment is most effective when it utilizes the principles of functional context instruction. Functional context instruction, a strategy for integrating work and learning in classrooms, is the use of actual work-related or life-related materials and simulations to teach the applications of basic oral, reading, writing, computation, and reasoning skills to enable young people to use printed and written information to perform specific job and life tasks competently. (from *Literacy at Work* by Jorie Philippi).

Besides having implications for classroom curriculum and instruction, this further points to work as an excellent way of providing academic enrichment if it is learning-rich work, meaning that young people have the opportunity to practice skills, and to acquire and apply basic academic skills in the context of doing real work.

Academic enrichment has both immediate and long-range goals which are inter-related. Short-term enrichment seeks to avoid summer learning loss and to strengthen cognitive skills development: reading, writing, math, basic scientific concepts, and critical thinking skills. Equally important is to fully engage the young person in learning by enabling him/her to begin to use and acquire knowledge to solve problems posed by challenging work or community undertakings. The bumper sticker for this enterprise reads: *Use Your Head and Your Hands*.

Within the context of achieving visible results, learning comes alive for young people, allowing them to engage directly in their own education with skilled adults -- teachers or others who work with them. This "active learning," together with enhanced basic skills,

provides the building blocks and dynamics for progress towards academic enrichment's long term goal: establishing the habit of ongoing learning that will be necessary in tomorrow's workplace.

Learning with adults in direct connection with work offers other opportunities for education and growth, such as understanding the value of teamwork for problem solving and achievement, or learning how to get along with peers and supervisors alike in relation to getting the job done. Often called work maturity skills, these attainments are not reserved for the worksite only. They also encourage and facilitate academic enrichment by enabling the young person to be more fully available to, and more successful in, the learning enterprise.

All young people will gain from academic enrichment when the adults they are working with hold high expectations for their achievement, encourage their progress, and connect learning with the real world. All teenage learners bring energy, abilities, hopes, and aspirations to each experience – adults who can draw on these capacities at the worksite or in the classroom will help ensure the success of their program participants.

Conclusion

Finally, as our brief overview indicates, youth employment training is about helping young people to succeed. Flexibility, creativity, and a commitment to integrating work and learning are the glue that holds the best youth employment programs together. In the youth employment field we find ourselves changing old patterns to adapt to new realities. By translating research into practical strategies and through the hands-on expereiences of the *Summer Beginnings* Network, we have developed a framework for answering the two questions with which we were originally charged during Summer Challenge 1993.

Drafting a Blueprint for Action: How to Create a Quality Academic Enrichment Strategy

As we have mentioned, two questions were used to guide the agenda for increasing the effectiveness of youth employment training through emphasis on real work and academic enrichment.

The first was **the need to create summer programs that bring about learning gains among young people for whom success was previously unknown.**

To answer this question, we developed a three part process:

Solidify a Vision	⇨ **for youth and for systems**
Establish a Blueprint	⇨ **for planning and implementation**
Improve Practice	⇨ **change the way we think about and run summer youth programs**

(please see the chart on the following page)

The Blueprint: Putting It into Action

Understanding and accepting the **Vision** of a quality academic enrichment program is only half of the formula for making it happen in your community. This section provides the **Blueprint** for getting there. Based on the experiences of the *Summer Beginnings* sites, as well as input from a National Workgroup of experienced practitioners, this **Blueprint** takes you through the process of creating a quality academic enrichment program.

Three things become clear from examining the experiences of the *Summer Beginnings* and "Summer Challenge" Communities. The first confirms that *the process is different for every community*. Each faces different political issues; serves different mixes of young people; decides on different service delivery approaches; and defines different outcomes. Some sites spent a great deal of upfront time working through the politics – selling the idea to the PIC Board and developing partnerships with the schools and worksites. Other sites already started with the necessary buy-in from the PIC, schools and worksites. They needed to invest more energy in staff retraining and curriculum development. The process depended very much on where each site started – the local conditions and circumstances.

The second lesson we learned is that *there are certain critical elements or action steps along the way that every program must deal with in some form or another*. Although how, when, and to what extent programs will need to work through these steps depends on local conditions and circumstances, communities will have difficulties creating the program they envisioned without addressing each of these common sense steps. The starting point varies greatly, but in the end, successful communities will have covered all the bases.
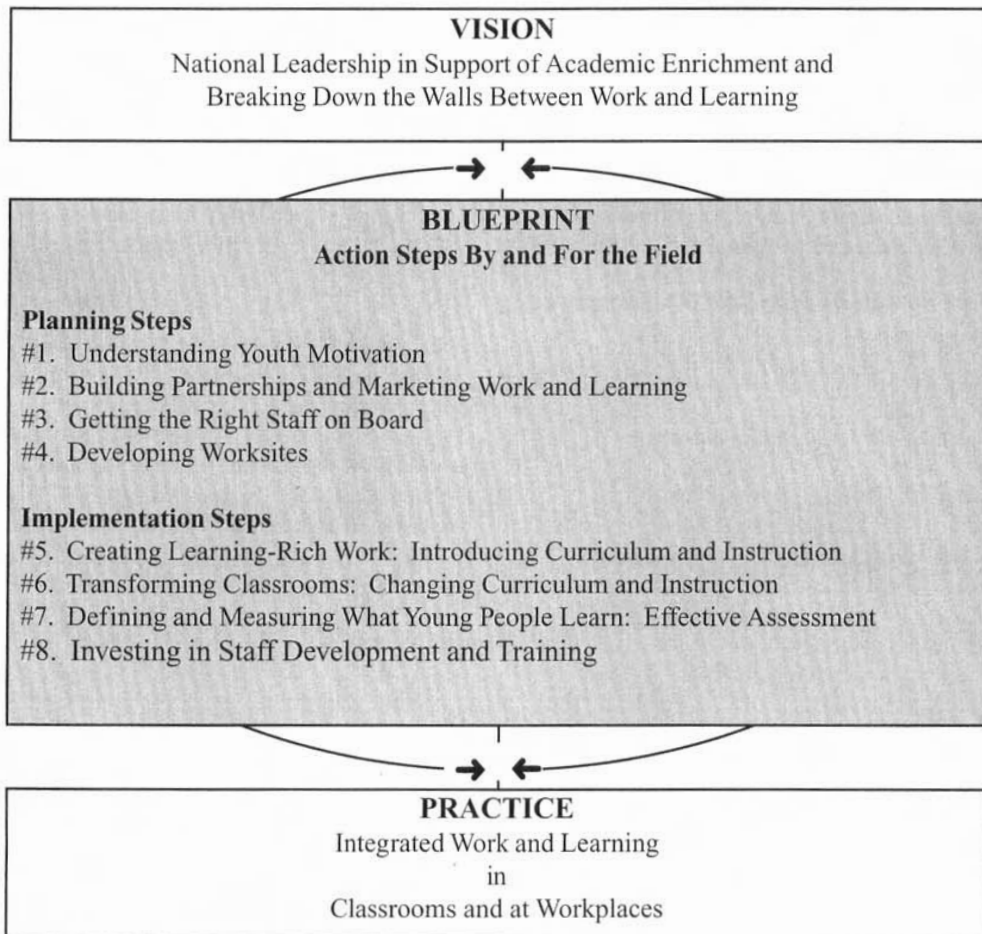
Finally, we confirmed that *the steps identified in the* **Blueprint** *are not necessarily linear in* **Practice**. *Although there is some order to how programs initially address them, they are evolutionary in nature, with different aspects of each step coming into play throughout the development and implementation of the program*. So it is with the process of moving from **Vision** to **Blueprint** to **Practice** generally. Operationalizing the **Vision** through the **Blueprint** development will inform the **Practice**. On the other hand, the actual implementation will likely cause you to rethink and revise the **Vision** and the **Blueprint** to accommodate local conditions.

What are the Action Steps to Developing a Quality Academic Enrichment Program?

Effective program redesign involves planning, implementation and evaluation phases. Therefore, we have structured the **Blueprint** into planning and implementation phases. The evaluation phase is ongoing. It runs through the planning and implementation phases and should be incorporated into every step of the process. Once programs are up and running, an overall evaluation plan should be established. The overall evaluation plan (the subject of a forthcoming Technical Assistance Guide) may require adjustment to the MIS and should include specific progress indicators upon which to evaluate and monitor progress toward goals.

It is important to note that all planning steps do not stop with the onset of implementation but are ongoing and active throughout implementation and evaluation.

Integrating Work and Learning in Summer Programs
The Blueprint for Action

VISION

National Leadership in Support of Academic Enrichment and
Breaking Down the Walls Between Work and Learning

BLUEPRINT

Action Steps By and For the Field

Planning Steps
#1. Understanding Youth Motivation
#2. Building Partnerships and Marketing Work and Learning
#3. Getting the Right Staff on Board
#4. Developing Worksites

Implementation Steps
#5. Creating Learning-Rich Work: Introducing Curriculum and Instruction
#6. Transforming Classrooms: Changing Curriculum and Instruction
#7. Defining and Measuring What Young People Learn: Effective Assessment
#8. Investing in Staff Development and Training

PRACTICE

Integrated Work and Learning
in
Classrooms and at Workplaces

In addition, every implementation step does require upfront planning. We have divided the **Blueprint** into planning and implementation phases to provide you with a framework for understanding how the action steps fit together; it provides a way of organizing and managing change incrementally. In addition, the descriptions of the action steps are not exhaustive. Each community must have active discussions about how to tailor the **Blueprint** to their **Vision** and about their expectations for putting it into **Practice**.

Finally, although each action step is important on its own, they all are interwoven, and it is the well-conceived packaging of these steps into a **Blueprint for Action** that results in quality programming for youth.

Implementing Academic Enrichment: A Focus on Two Action Steps

Today's young people need newer and higher level skills to function effectively in contemporary society. These skills not only include the 3R's – reading, writing and arithmetic – but also include higher order thinking skills, problem solving skills, and the ability to integrate and apply knowledge, and to work cooperatively with others.

Two of the major strategies for implementing academic enrichment into summer and year-round programming are to:

· **Create learning-rich work, and**
· **Transform classrooms.**

Pulled from two of the **Mini-Technical Assistance Guides** in the Brandeis *Field Kit*, (*Action Step #5: Creating Learning-Rich Work,* and *Action Step #6: Transforming Classrooms*), the following provides a brief overview of the lessons learned through the *Summer Beginnings* experience around these two **Action Steps** from the **Blueprint** – the foundation for creating effective work and learning programs.

Action Step #5: Creating Learning-Rich Work

One strategy for integrating work and learning is to create learning-rich worksites where young people develop and practice skills in the context of real work. With the facilitation of a caring, competent adult, young people are responsible for researching, planning, implementing, and evaluating all aspects of a project and its accompanying tasks.

Premises

The following is a list of the premises that provide the foundation for the work component of a quality academic enrichment program whether, the program is designed as a classroom-based or work-based strategy.

1. Young people enrolled in the summer program are capable of responsibly performing complex tasks *if* their supervisors are properly supportive. In this case, supervisor refers to the young person's worksite supervisor, crew leader or work team facilitator – the person responsible for directly supervising and assisting the young person to build skills on the job.

2. With encouragement and guidance, supervisors can *invent* learning-rich work tasks that are useful to the employing organization and instructive to the young participants.

3. Young people can learn the SCANS competencies and foundation skills while performing these tasks. Indeed, it is difficult to think of a responsible and useful task that does not teach one or more of the SCANS competencies and/or foundation skills.

4. Successful American workplaces will emphasize training in the SCANS competencies as businesses struggle to remain competitive and the public sector seeks to reinvent itself for the twenty-first century. Successful workplaces in both sectors will become learning organizations. Supervisors will become coaches, and workers will become learners. Learning-rich tasks for summer youth workers can provide a model for employing organizations.

Lessons Learned

Our experiences with 1993 *Summer Beginnings* programs provided the following five general lessons that proved critical to creating learning-rich work environments:

1. **Management Buy-in:** The process of making the summer program a learning-rich experience begins with "buy in" from the managers of the employing organization. Those who manage the supervisors have to champion the approach.

2. **New Ways of Doing Business:** As worksites become learning-rich environments, rather than just "summer jobs," the roles of employers, as well as individual worksite supervisors, and learners need to change. Employers will be investing in the future workforce by putting more significant resources, particularly time, into assisting young people to learn and to develop skills. Worksite supervisors will be called upon to spend more time with young people as a coach rather than "the boss." Young people will become learners, developing valuable SCANS skills through the work. This past summer was unfamiliar territory for many. Over the course of the summer, employers learned a lot about what young people could accomplish if high expectations and guidance were provided. But it was not an easy process. Employers were stunned at the amount of time they needed to invest in young people to make it work. Selection of supervisors became a critical factor. Did they have experience working with young people? Did they feel empowered to be flexible and creative and make the work experiences learning-rich? All of this did not happen easily or overnight.

3. **Training and On-going Support:** Even with careful selection of supervisors, inventing learning-rich tasks requires training from people who can creatively facilitate the process. It will require supervisors to make paradigm shifts in how they work with young people and how they see the work. In addition, it will require supervisors to strengthen existing skills and to develop new ones. This will involve upfront training in the overall philosophy of the approach and in the more technical skills required for supervisors to become coaches, find the learning in the work, and take advantage of teachable moments. It will also require on-going support and planning time for supervisors as they themselves are developing new skills. Besides being skilled in supporting supervisors as they attempt to find the learning in the work, trainers have to understand the specific workplace. "You have to walk in our shoes," one recreation department manager told us.

4. **Time to Prepare:** The process, from buy-in through training the supervisors, takes considerable time. The process should begin at least three months before the summer program starts and/or should be tied to a year-round program if possible. Indeed, Arizona Call-A-Teen began making arrangements with their worksites five months in advance. The summer program at The Johns Hopkins University worked with the Maryland's Tomorrow program in Baltimore City Public Schools well in advance of start-up. Preparation must include an opportunity for the supervisors to work in teams, with a facilitator, to invent tasks that are both useful and learning-rich. Given this opportunity, most supervisors will rise to the challenge.

5. **Value the Young People, Value the Work:** Management and the supervisors have to make it clear that they value the young people and what they can do. Supervisors must see the tasks the youths perform as valuable to their organization and themselves personally. The young people need to understand why what they are doing is important and, later, reflect on what they have learned and why those skills are important to many jobs.

What Makes Learning-Rich Work Different?

Typical Summer Job	Learning-Rich Work
Short-term summer employment means little can be accomplished.	Tasks are identified upfront and 6 to 8 weeks is enough time to see projects through to completion.
Workers are all treated the same and minimal skill levels are assumed.	Workers' strengths are identified and exercised to the benefit of both worker and employer.
Jobs are simplified to minimize needed training.	Tasks are complex, giving workers opportunity to develop workplace know-how skills.
Supervisor directs youth worker and tells him/her how to meet goals.	Youth worker is self-directed. Worker and supervisor agree on goals, and worker plans a strategy to meet these goals. Supervisor coaches youth through this process.
Worker performs simple, isolated tasks, with little or no vision of the system or the end result.	Worker appreciates the importance of assignments because she/he designs the process to reach the result.
Summer workers do not know the procedures and people within the organization, so they can not do much.	Summer workers are integrated into the organization, but they are not constrained by allegiances, preconceptions, and commitment to the status quo. Youth workers can provide a fresh perspective and be agents of change.
Little progress is made in increasing basic skills and developing SCANS competencies.	There is a clear link between SCANS competencies and work tasks. Youth workers have multiple opportunities to practice and develop transferable skills.
Summer workers take up valuable supervisor time.	Summer workers provide valuable products and services that would not otherwise be available.
Youth worker typically feels unvalued and views the work he or she is performing as unimportant to the organization.	Youth workers feel valued as part of the organization. They take pride in their work and what they can do.
Employer provides a reference at the end of summer, attesting to worker's employability.	Worker develops portfolio, providing evidence of work skills. This is reviewed by school personnel, and academic credit is awarded for learning.

Action Step #6: Transforming Classrooms

Classroom-based programs combine a mix of classroom learning with real work experience. However, in a quality academic enrichment program, practitioners must transform the traditional add-on remediation classroom into an active learning, high performance, work organization. The traditional classroom, in which young people sit in rows and listen to the teacher or complete work assignments, and in which skills are disconnected from the context within which they are used, is *not an effective way for young people to learn or build skills*.

In the redesigned classroom, major learning activities take place both in the classroom and at the worksite. Work experience is designed to supplement classroom learning, and classroom activities are designed to convey work-oriented skills.

Premises

The *Summer Beginnings* Demonstration project began with a set of premises related to transforming classrooms. These were, as follows:

1. The guiding philosophy is that all young people can learn;

2. Task-based relationships with caring, competent adults are essential;

3. Curriculum and instruction should embody concepts from motivation research, i.e. that young people will learn if the tasks are intrinsically meaningful; and if learning goals are directly related to performing the task at hand;

4. Young people who are given opportunities to set their own personal goals and take charge of their own learning will have a much stronger likelihood of achieving their goals and the program's goals; and,

5. Classroom-based activity should integrate tools, reading materials, techniques, technology, situations and experiences from the work world in order to teach both basic and higher order skills.

Lessons Learned

Reflecting upon the summer experiences, local planners and classroom staff also identified a number of "lessons learned." These were, in brief:

1. **Teacher/Instructor Buy-in:** Ensuring that classroom teachers/instructors understood and owned the premises and concepts of the "transformed classroom" was a central challenge for all sites. In some localities, planners were able to write new expectations into job descriptions and hire staff who were interested in the new model and in trying innovative instructional methods. In other sites, staff were already "on board." In these situations, planners spent much time and care with initial orientation, upfront training and ongoing support. The message to teachers/instructors in these sites was: "We know this is a different way of operating than you are used to. However, we'll convince you that it's worth it to do this differently and then we will help and support you with the changes every step of the way."

2. **New Ways of Doing Business:** As the classrooms were reconstructed as active learning environments for young people (emphasizing teamwork and skill development within the context of intrinsically meaningful work projects), the roles of the classroom teacher/instructor and the learners needed to change. To use a driver's education analogy, teachers/instructors needed to take a "passenger seat rather than the driver's seat" role. Their job was not to steer the car (by extension, the classroom) or make it go; but to assist, facilitate and coach young people such that young people would take charge and figure out how to "drive the car" (drive the learning.) For many, this was unfamiliar territory and the going was somewhat perilous. At the same time, new expectations encouraged the young people to tackle challenging tasks and assume more responsibility for the processes and the outcomes of both work and learning. All of this did not happen easily or overnight.

3. **Training and Ongoing Support:** The changes necessitated by the "transformed classroom" model required strong, effective, upfront training. Initially, this training was delivered by "outsiders," i.e. Brandeis trainers associated with the national demonstration project. This delivery model ensured that training was consistent across sites. It also may have helped establish the credibility and visibility of the approach in the eyes of local community planners or program teachers/instructors. At the same time, it was important to have training capacity in the local SDA or nearby, so that follow-up sessions could be offered and so there was a local resource to address technical questions as they arose.

4. **Reflection/Self-Assessment:** The formal training was a necessary, but insufficient staff development step. Also important to the success of the projects was creating time and space – often this meant every day – for teachers/instructors to meet and discuss their issues, concerns and questions regarding the instructional process. They needed planning time to work out how to teach skills in context. Finally, they had to create time to reflect upon their work, and identify specific needs for technical assistance at various stages of the change process.

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Differences Between the Traditional and the Transformed (Contextual) Classroom

The Traditional Classroom	The Transformed Classroom
Classroom environment is traditional - located in school; desks in rows.	Classroom environment is set up to encourage active learning – does not resemble traditional classroom but a high-performance work organization.
Organizing system of the classroom is simple: one teacher to 30 students.	Organizing work systems are complex: teacher and students both reach out beyond school for additional information.
Students are expected to conform to teacher's behavioral expectations; integrity and honesty are monitored by the teacher; students' self-esteem is often low.	Students are expected to be responsible, self-managing, and resourceful; integrity and honesty are monitored within the social context of the classroom; students' self-esteem is high because they are in charge of their own learning.
Teacher knows all answers.	More than one solution may be viable and teacher may not have it in advance.
Teacher teaches, lectures.	Teacher facilitates and coaches.
Teacher plans all activities.	Students and teachers plan and negotiate activities.
Students routinely work alone.	Students routinely work in teams with teachers, peers and community members.
The connection between basic skills and work skills is vague.	Curriculum is project-based and taught in real life and work contexts.
Reading, writing, and math are treated as separate disciplines; listening and speaking often are missing from curriculum.	Disciplines needed for problem solving are integrated; listening and speaking are fundamental parts of learning.
Thinking is usually theoretical and "academic."	Thinking involves problem solving, reasoning, and decision making.
Young people are assessed through pre- and post-tests.	Assessment is authentic and performance based.
Teacher makes all assessments. Information is organized, evaluated, interpreted, and communicated to students by teacher.	Students routinely assess themselves. Information is acquired, evaluated, organized, interpreted, and communicated by students to appropriate audiences.

Summer Beginnings Demonstration
A Few Key Messages

Related to the Four Major Policy Themes Emerging from U.S. Department of Labor Recent Research*

SERVING YOUTH AS YOUTH
- The critical role of a task-based relationship with a caring adult
- The need to take into account age and stage of development

CONNECTING WORK AND LEARNING
Transforming the Classroom/Creating a Learning-Rich Experience
- The effectiveness of active learning around team-oriented projects where young people plan, implement, and evaluate all aspects of the project.
- Teachers/supervisors need to take on new roles: as facilitator/coach, not "one with all the answers".
- Teachers need to have an understanding of workplace know-how skills and how to create curriculum where young people can learn those skills (there are implications for staffing and staff development here!).
- Importance of finding committed worksites, including commitment from top level.
- Importance of providing worksite supervisors/crew leaders with training on workplace know-how skills and ability to create "learning-rich" work for young people.
- Supervisors/crew leaders need to be able to take advantage of all learning opportunities and understand how to assess young people for those skills (flexibility!).

INCREASING THE INTENSITY OF EXPERIENCE
- All the elements reinforce and motivate: hands-on learning, real work and real accomplishments; assessment as opportunity to conduct self-evaluation, develop pride of ownership.
- Importance of connection to year-round programming.
- Importance of involving all the community – schools, business, etc.

QUALITY/EFFECTIVENESS
- Need to define clear, meaningful outcomes – SCANS skills as an effective framework
- Performance-based assessment as effective means of measuring (and reinforcing) learning.
- Importance of investing in training of staff and worksite supervisors
- Need to address critical political question of serving less with more.

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Community Connections: Policy Support for Summer and Year-Round Youth Programming

Integrating Work and Learning: It's Here to Stay

We have already discussed the message sent loud and clear from President Clinton and USDOL regarding the importance of breaking down the walls between work and learning and providing academic enrichment as part of the summer jobs strategy. Knowing this was just the beginning of a larger reform effort to bridge the work and learning gap, Brandeis and the *Summer Beginnings* Network answered the second question with which they had been charged:

How do we use the *Summer Beginning* experience as the start of a movement to redesign and restructure year-round youth programs and create effective transitions for our nation's young people?

To begin this process, we found the following three steps are necessary:

Integration ⇨ **work, service, and learning**
Connection ⇨ **summer, school, and work**
Consolidation ⇨ **legislation, titles, and partners**

We recognize the importance of integrating work and learning, as well as creating effective strategies for doing so. In order to move from the specific program design elements to changing institutions and systems, we must think beyond a specific program or title (e.g. Title II-B - SYETP). Instead, we must build partnerships to connect youths' experiences from school-to-summer, from summer-to-school, and from school-to-work.

The call for partnerships has been around for quite some time, but now more than ever, we need to consolidate legislation, titles, and partners if we expect to effectively serve youth.

There is increasing policy guidance, and with it increasing opportunities to create the type of community connections that provide youth with a continuum of services specific to age and stage of development. These connections also integrate work and learning in different ways to lead youth through a "progression of youth employability development." (Please see the Community Connections chart on the following page.)
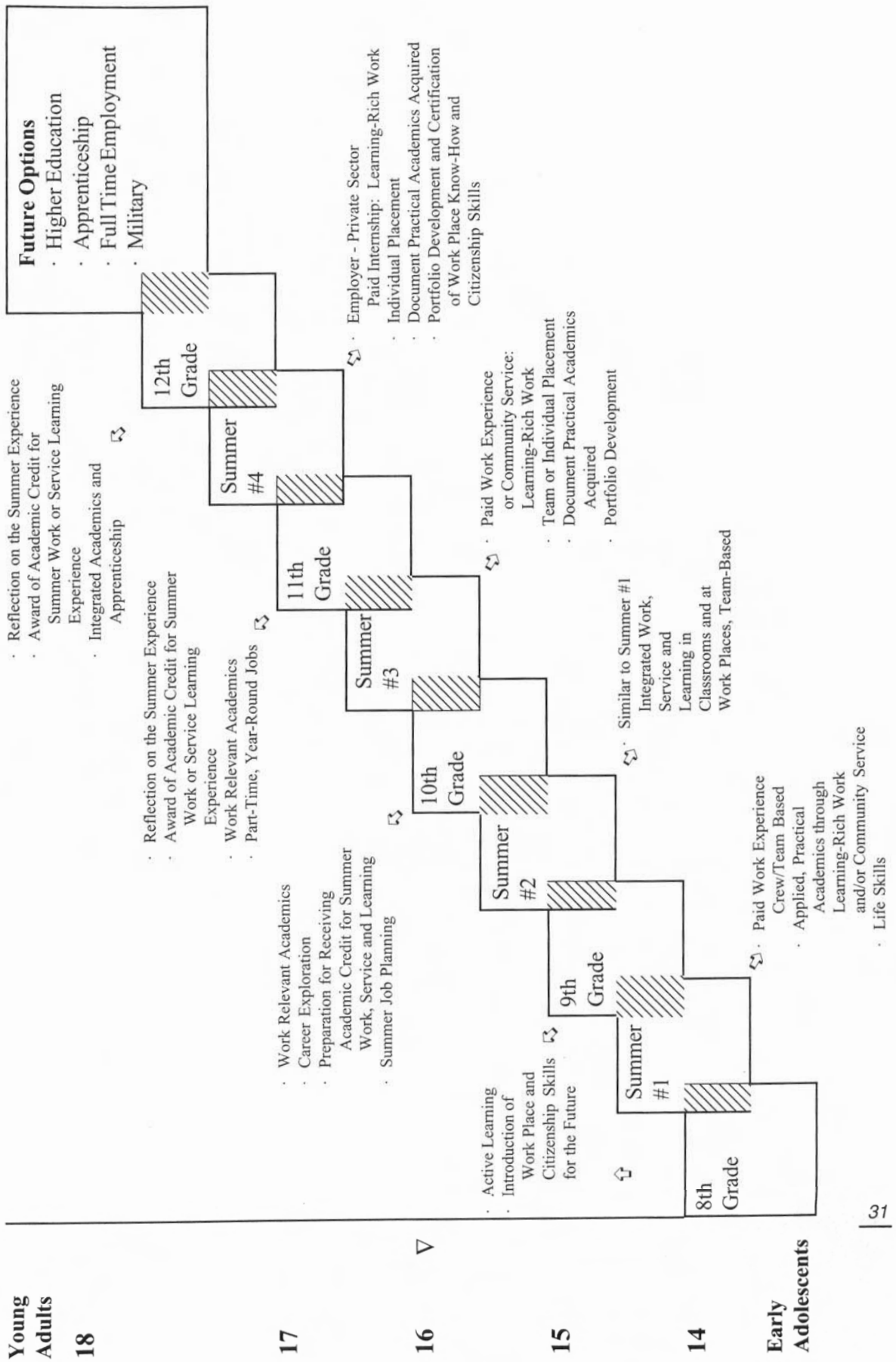
Pertinent Legislation:

If we look at recent legislation, it becomes clear that the movement to integrate work and learning and improve academic enrichment in summer programs is part of a much broader effort to improve school-to-work and school-to-school transitions for our nation's youth.

When this document was being published, there were several major (non-JTPA) national initiatives underway – and some that have just recently been passed – that offered contexts for advancing both the academic enrichment vision and the youth employability agenda through community connections:

- **"The School-To-Work Opportunities Act,"** developed jointly by the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education, supports the development of flexible school-to-work systems that meet local needs and build upon local initiatives. The three core components each program funded under this act will be required to include – work-based learning, school-based learning, and connecting activities – are cornerstones of the academic enrichment effort we describe in this document. **The basic principles and the specific learning strategies that emerged from the 1993 *Summer Beginnings* pilot efforts are completely congruent with the intentions of this Act.** The *Summer Beginnings* experience can also provide the curriculum "glue" to bring us closer to the "seamless system" envisioned by Labor Secretary Reich.

Community Connections
Progression of Youth Employability Development
Through Continuous and Connected Work, Service and Learning Opportunities
For 14-18 Year Olds

Future Options
- Higher Education
- Apprenticeship
- Full Time Employment
- Military

12th Grade

- Reflection on the Summer Experience
- Award of Academic Credit for Summer Work or Service Learning Experience
- Integrated Academics and Apprenticeship

Employer - Private Sector
Paid Internship: Learning-Rich Work
- Individual Placement
- Document Practical Academics Acquired
- Portfolio Development and Certification of Work Place Know-How and Citizenship Skills

Summer #4

11th Grade

- Reflection on the Summer Experience
- Award of Academic Credit for Summer Work or Service Learning Experience
- Work Relevant Academics
- Part-Time, Year-Round Jobs

- Paid Work Experience or Community Service: Learning-Rich Work
- Team or Individual Placement
- Document Practical Academics Acquired
- Portfolio Development

Summer #3

10th Grade

- Work Relevant Academics
- Career Exploration
- Preparation for Receiving Academic Credit for Summer Work, Service and Learning
- Summer Job Planning

- Similar to Summer #1
Integrated Work, Service and Learning in Classrooms and at Work Places, Team-Based

Summer #2

9th Grade

- Active Learning
- Introduction of Work Place and Citizenship Skills for the Future

- Paid Work Experience Crew/Team Based
- Applied, Practical Academics through Learning-Rich Work and/or Community Service
- Life Skills

Summer #1

8th Grade

Young Adults
18

17

16

15

14

Early Adolescents

31

"**The National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993**" emphasizes service learning as a key element of programming for school-aged young people. Service learning is a concept entirely analogous to work-based learning, using service instead of work as the functional context for learning. In service learning, young people:

· prepare for their service by identifying a community problem;
· learn about the actual work they will perform and the context that makes it necessary;
· take action to meet the community's needs vis-a-vis the problem; and
· engage in reflection after the service to more fully understand the problem and their roles in helping to solve it.

Communiy Service, in short, provides another means of making the work and learning connection.

· "**Goals 2000: Educate America Act,**" education reform legislation to set up a national system of world-class skills standards, is directly related to portfolio assessment, SCANS skills, and academic enrichment concepts.

· **The proposed Re-employment Act** promotes an integrated workforce investment strategy designed in part to address the anticipated dislocation that will result from NAFTA. The Act would combine resources and strategies from JTPA Title III, unemployment insurance, and the Trade Readjustment Act to create centers serving dislocated workers. Dislocated workers would have universal access to services regardless of the reasons for their dislocations. These centers are envisioned to evolve into one-stop-shopping service centers with a broader focus on meeting all worker training and assistance needs.

The *Summer Beginnings* sites were, in a sense, one-stop centers for young people. They integrated a variety of interventions to meet the work, learning, and other human service needs of the young people they served. There are many transferable lessons.

Connecting work and cognitive skills via "active learning" is also a hallmark of the "**Carl Perkins Act,**" the "**Elementary and Secondary School Act**" reauthorization, and other education and workforce preparation or related bills.

Key Messages from the Department of Labor

At the same time, the United States Department of Labor recently issued a Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL 5-93), further iterating the importance of academic enrichment in summer programming for youth. By following this guidance, academic enrichment becomes a wedge into the larger systemic change issues – a broader investment in school-to-work transition, Goals 2000, Youth Fair Chance, and other initiatives.

The TEGL (No. 5-93) was issued with the main purpose of providing states with program guidance for the Calendar Year 1994 Summer Youth Employment and Training Programs (SYETP). In this TEGL, once again we find federal commitment to the work and learning link and programs that provide "a total learning experience." The following are highlights excerpted from the TEGL (No. 5-93) with specific reference to legislation, national goals, and the integration of work and learning:

Legislative Purpose

For the sake of overall perspective, it may be helpful to reiterate the legislative purposes of the SYETP (JTPA Section 251):

"It is the purpose of programs assisted under this part–

(1) to enhance the basic educational skills of youth;
(2) to encourage school completion or enrollment in supplementary or alternative school programs;
(3) to provide eligible youth with exposure to the world of work; and
(4) to enhance the citizenship skills of youth."

Goals and Objectives

The Department of Labor's vision of the summer program is of a program which plays an important role in Secretary Reich's "First Jobs/New Jobs/Better Jobs" strategy – a program where new entrants to the labor force and those with short job histories:

a. build and refine a strong foundation of workplace competencies and discipline; and

b. gain an abiding appreciation of the inextricable connection between work and learning ("life-long learning") which is so critical to a long-term attachment to, and success in, a rapidly changing labor market.

It is this vision which has guided the development of the goals and objectives for the 1994 summer program:

National Goals

a. Ensure that youth receive benefit of meaningful work experience which:

   (1) demonstrates the value of the work to be performed to the individual, the employers, her/his community, and her/his city or county and state;

   (2) assists the youth in acquiring basic work competencies and discipline – e.g., punctuality and reliability with regard to attendance; responding to supervision and direction; cooperating with co-workers in team efforts; delivering quality work products and services;

   (3) impresses upon youth that they are personally responsible for rewards or sanctions which may be dispensed for good or bad performance on the job;

   (4) offers a workplace context in which work and learning are integrated; the SCANS foundations and competencies – or reasonable variations thereof – should be used in identifying what is to be learned in the workplace.

b. Further facilitate the integration of work and learning by ensuring that any classroom-based learning which is offered conveys the real work applications of the academic disciplines the youth are studying. The SCANS foundations and competencies – or reasonable variations thereof – should be considered in developing curricula for classroom-based learning.

c. Assist youth in adopting the attitudes, values, and behavior patterns which are vital to success in the classroom, on the job, and as a citizen.

d. Counteract the erosion of basic educational skills associated with school vacations and strive to increase the level of educational skills, particularly in reading, writing, and mathematics.

e. Enhance working relationships with local school systems to ensure a two-way flow of relevant information about participants' progress and follow-up services which may be needed.

f. Strengthen linkages with the JTPA Title II-C program and other available programs to preserve and enhance educational and work maturity gains achieved by the Title II-B program.

g. Enlist the involvement of the private sector to:

   (1) increase the number of unsubsidized job opportunities available to disadvantaged youth;

   (2) expose youth to work in a private sector setting.

h. Enroll the maximum number of youth possible and minimize the amount of unplanned carry-forward, consistent with sound financial practices and fiscal integrity.

National Objectives

a. Provide educational services to at least **50 percent** of participants nationally; such services may be delivered in classroom setting or in a workplace context, or both, but must be documented.

b. Achieve a **ten percent** increase in the number of private sector unsubsidized jobs filled by disadvantaged youth.

c. Achieve an expenditure level of **90 percent** of total availability (i.e., new allocation plus carry-in from PY93). The amount transferred to Title II-C will be subtracted from total availability when computing the percentage of funds expended.

What follows is an elaboration of some of the goals and discussions of other issues which have arisen. However, ETA considers the legislative purposes of the Act and all the goals and objectives enunciated herein as equally deserving of achievement.

Integration of Work and Learning

There are two inter-related principles associated with the integration of work and learning (variously referred to as "work-based learning," "contextual learning," and "functional learning");

a. Learning SCANS Foundation Skills and Competencies (or reasonable variations of SCANS) within the context of performing work on an actual job;

b. Conveying work-oriented skills – particularly, but not limited to, SCANS Foundation Skills and Competencies – in a classroom setting.

The March 31, 1994 amendment to SYETP [in the Educate America Act] codifies into law the priority DOL accords the integration of work and learning. To wit:

(a) **Program Design**. –

(2) **Required Services and Design**. – (A) Subsection (c) of such section 253 of the Job Training Partnership Act (20 U.S.C. 1632(c) is amended by aiding at the end of the following new paragraphs:

(4) **Integration of Work and Learning**. –

(a) **Work Experience**. – Work experience provided under this part, to the extent feasible, shall include contextual learning opportunities which integrate the development of general competencies with the development of academic skills.

(b) **Classroom Training**. – Classroom training provided under this part shall, to the extent feasible, include opportunities which apply to knowledge and skills relating academic subjects to the world of work.

As the statute implies, work-based learning and classroom-based learning must complement and reinforce each other. Most SDAs' program designs have traditionally consisted of two distinct components – work experience and classroom education – with varying degrees of interaction between the two. This design continues to be acceptable, **provided** the two components, as indicated above, are complementary and mutually-reinforcing.

Some SDAs have integrated work and learning to the point that all learning is acquired on the job. This, too, is an acceptable model, although program experience suggests that this approach is most useful for older youth who do not suffer from serious educational deficiencies.

An important requirement of both models – but particularly the "all learning on the job" model – is that the participants' acquisition of SCANS skills and competencies (or reasonable facsimiles) must be **documented**. The use of portfolios is recommended as a documentation device. It is highly desirable for youth to actively participate in the documentation process – e.g., keeping journals which become part of the portfolios.

What ETA is strongly promoting is an approach to the summer program which goes beyond static and self-contained work experience and education components; what we are seeking is a concept of the summer programs as a "total learning experience," with relevant learning taking place in any activity in which a youth participates. Thus, classrooms should be transformed into interactive, work-related environments; and worksites, as indicated above, should be re-oriented to include learning-rich experiences related to the SCANS foundations and competencies.

Thus, the integration of work and learning is an important feature of the Administration's larger workforce agenda, particularly one of the Department of Education's and the Department of Labor's major initiatives--School-to-Work Transition (STW). The summer program can reinforce the same message being communicated to youth by STW, namely, that school and work cannot be separated; that lifelong learning matters; and that youth can avail themselves of opportunities to equip themselves for success in the labor market, without necessarily attaining a baccalaureate degree.

(Excerpted from Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 5-93. Please note that combined italic and bold are ours.)

The Field Kit for
Communities Committed to
Improving Academic Enrichment
in Summer Youth Employment Programs
▽ The 1994 Summer Challenge Edition ▽

The Center for Human Resources at Brandeis University has used the experience gained from all of the *Summer Beginnings* sites to inform and expand the *1993 Field Guide for Improving Academic Enrichment in Work-Based and Classroom-Based Programs*. The "new and improved" edition – *The Field Kit for Communities Committed to Improving Academic Enrichment in Summer Youth Employment Programs: The 1994 Summer Challenge Edition* builds on, and incorporates the central beliefs and experiences of the *Summer Beginnings* National Work and Learning Network, as well as national workgroups of experienced practitioners.

Based on a vision of youth employment practice that stresses the importance of providing young people with the skills they need to make a successful transition from school to the adult world of work, the *Field Kit* provides communities with a detailed step-by-step **Blueprint for Action** that describes the process of developing effective work and learning strategies.

BLUEPRINT
Action Steps By and For the Field

Planning Steps
#1. Understanding Youth Motivation
#2. Building Partnerships and Marketing Work and Learning
#3. Getting the Right Staff on Board
#4. Developing Worksites

Implementation Steps
#5. Creating Learning-Rich Work: Introducing Curriculum and Instruction
#6. Transforming Classrooms: Changing Curriculum and Instruction
#7. Defining and Measuring What Young People Learn: Effective Assessment
#8. Investing in Staff Development and Training

The *Field Kit* is designed to provide practitioners with a new way of thinking about summer jobs in their communities and to provide a jumping off point for the long-term redesign of year-round programming and significant improvements in the school-to-work transitions for youth in our country. The *Field Kit* is infused with a combination of research about best practices and actual lessons from *Summer Beginnings*.

The incorporation of pullout **Mini-Technical Assistance Guides** adds to the overall flexibility and ease-of-use of the *Field Kit*. Within the context of the **Blueprint for Action**, several **Action Steps** have been broken out as separate documents allowing practitioners to use efficient and concise materials for specific audiences.

The *Field Kit* is available directly from the Center for Human Resources at Brandeis University at a price of $75.00. To order, please call the Center at (617) 736-3770.

Youth Programs

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