

**Emergence of Workforce Development:
Definition, Conceptual Boundaries, and Implications**

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Abstract

Scholars and practitioners from a wide range of backgrounds have begun to use the term workforce development. This increasing usage requires sustained effort to create the theoretical background for the new term. The article reviews the reasons that the term has become more important, focusing on five converging concepts: 1) globalization, 2) technology, 3) the new economy, 4) political change, and 5) demographic shifts. This background serves as foundation for a new definition of workforce development that rests on a simultaneous consideration of individual, organization, and *societal* levels. Finally, the chapter discusses the implications of workforce development on the thinking of policy makers, researchers, and practitioners alike.

Emergence of Workforce Development:

Definition, Conceptual Boundaries, and Future Perspectives

This chapter begins a much-needed discourse about workforce development, a term used with increasing frequency among education practitioners, policy makers, and scholars alike. In spite of the increasing use of the term, there has been limited discussion about its meaning and implications for established fields of study (Giloth, 2000; Grubb, 1999; Harrison & Weiss, 1998). This discourse is critical for both theoretical and practical reasons, particularly given the economic and social benefits that are expected from workforce development programs (Grubb & Lazerson, 2004).

Specifically, the purposes of the chapter are to 1) discuss the emergence of workforce development based on five historical streams, 2) propose a definition and conceptual boundaries for workforce development, and 3) explore the implications of workforce development on policy makers, researchers, and practitioners.

Emergence of Workforce Development

Workforce development has evolved to describe any one of a relatively wide range of national and international policies and programs related to learning for work. For example, many professionals involved in administering U.S. secondary vocational education programs, welfare-to-work and other public assistance programs, and regional economic development initiatives now use workforce development to describe their services. Several recent pieces of state and federal legislation in the United States use the term to describe various youth vocational training, adult training and retraining, and related employment initiatives. For example, the

federal Workforce Investment Act in 1998 strengthened the integrated system of financing while the State of Florida's crafted legislation in 2000 creating a state wide agency, Workforce Florida, to handle both workforce and welfare policy.

As a result of these legislative and policy changes, many states in the U.S. – including our own state of Ohio – have included the term in naming of various governmental coordinating boards, initiatives, and task forces (Grubb, Badway, Bell, Chi, King, & Herr, 1999). For example, in the state of Ohio, the Department of Education, Board of Regents, and the Department of Job and Family Services all have an office of Workforce Development or Education. Additionally, to a varying extent, adult educators and human resource development professionals have begun to use the term in the context of their fields. Recent studies from Bates and Redmann (2002) as well as Jacobs (2000) describe the particular relationship between human resource development and workforce development.

While Europe's terminology focuses on Vocational Education and Training through the "DaVinci" Initiative, national governments in Europe and Asia have started to use the term workforce development. The United Kingdom, for example, uses the term extensively to describe local agents of education and training, while the term appears to be used in the recent "Department for Education and Skills" plan to refer generally to training for adults. Singapore, for example, uses workforce development as the name for its government agency focused on education and training.

There seems no single reason to explain why workforce development should be used to describe such a range of activities, or used in different ways by professional associations and government. Our belief is that individuals from differing perspectives have realized a similar basic conclusion: the success of any one program or initiative depends on the connections to

other programs that otherwise would have considered in isolation from each other (Hawley, Sommers & Melendez, 2003). For example, vocational educators have increasingly found that secondary-education programs for youth depend more and more on organization-based training programs. Adult retraining programs depend more and more on the delivery of community-based social services. Adult educators have concluded that helping individuals acquire new sets of basic skills requires substantial investment in integrated skills rather than literacy programs alone (Comings, Reder, & Sum, 2001; Murnane & Levy, 1996). Finally, an increasing number of human resource development scholars use the term *national* human resource development to describe the articulation between government and private-sector programs (McLean, 2003).

If workforce development represents a greater awareness about the connectedness of systems, why should this notion arise at this point? We believe that the drivers for workforce development come from the contemporary intersection of five interrelated streams: 1) globalization, 2) technology, 3) new economy, 4) political change, and 5) demographic shifts. These five factors are inter-related and each provide challenges for adult education specifically, and workforce development more broadly. The following sections outline the five drivers and provide illustrations from the literature of the implications for adult education.

Globalization. Thomas Friedman (2000), the political writer and commentator, boldly asserted that today's "global" world came into existence upon the fall of the Berlin Wall on October 11, 1989. In addition to its symbolic value, this historical event made it possible for the unrestricted flow of people and information across all national borders in Europe, from which all other human transactions could follow. At first glance, there seems much truth to this proposition. In contrast to previous eras of global economic development, the current situation has occurred rapidly and at a level of intensity not experienced previously.

As a result of globalization, there have resulted unprecedented connections among markets and a qualitative difference in the way that different countries interact with each other in those markets. Consider that internationally recognized standards, such as ISO 9000, allow even the most remotely-located manufacturing operations in China or Vietnam to compete with modern production facilities located in more developed countries. Thus, in spite of current events that might suggest the pitfalls of having open borders and markets, global competition will remain a phenomenon for the foreseeable future.

Competition among nations also raises the need for workforce development. Whenever nations seek to facilitate economic growth, the needs of current and future workers becomes an issue of common concern (Ashton, Green, James, & Sung, 1999). Within this context, workforce development has become a critical part of a broader economic development strategy (Giloith, 2000). In a recent paper for the 2002 UNEVOC-Canada conference, Hall (2002) described the negative impact of increased globalization on adult education, focusing on the impact on adult learning. Hall (2002) focuses on the importance of using adult education to respond to the problems of globalization, both in terms of facilitating adult learning in the workplace and resisting the negative impact of globalization.

Technology. Technology comes in different forms and each form has affected the extent and rate of globalization. Technological change is particularly important to the development of human capital, because changes in technology work with planned workforce development to increase the productivity of workers/firms in all sectors (Foster & Rosenzweig, 1996; Levy & Murnane, 2004; Rosenzweig, 1995).

In terms of communications technology, globalization could not occur without an efficient vehicle by which to send and receive information across great distances. Microchips,

satellites, and the Internet enable the immediate access to information regardless of physical location. Without this ability, developing countries would be incapable of becoming service-providers and producers of products on an equal footing with companies in developed countries. Communications technology allows companies to invest in and locate operations closer to where the specific human talent and cost-effectiveness might exist.

For instance, the emergence of customer call centers and data processing operations in India to serve the U.S. marketplace illustrates how technology makes distance transparent (Malik, 2003; Singh, 2002). Customers are usually unaware of the origin point of the service delivery, but they are aware of the quality of service they receive. In the same way, it is said that manufacturing technology enable organizations to manage their operations better, resulting in higher quality standards and lower costs to consumers. The changes in technology also present significant problems for professionals in adult learning. Technology presents both problems and opportunities for adult education. Technology increases access to learning, making it more widely available in rural areas as well as for individuals who want on demand learning. However, there are major questions in the adult education literature about the implications of technological change. As described in a recent book, Sawchuk (2003) illustrates the difficulty in characterizing the role of technological change in adult learning, but recognizing both that it increases access, but also is imbedded within the current class and social structure (Sawchuk, 2003).

New economy. The new economy is generally defined by the attributes of free-market capitalism. Global competition will presumably maintain cost pressures on products and services, thus ensuring a sustainable cycle of high efficiency, high quality, and low inflation. Increasingly, many scholars have proposed that these assumptions have been put into some doubt

first by the Asian currency crisis in 1997 and then by the current economic downturn. The new economy has also been tempered by the growing awareness of the changing global demographics (Dychtwald, Erickson, & Morison, 2004). Over the next 30 years, most developed countries are faced with increasing numbers of individuals receiving retirement benefits and decreasing numbers of individuals actually working and making contributions to retirement accounts. The new economy has been open to continual debate and some keen observers, such as Peter Drucker (1993), have even expressed skepticism whether the new economy really existed in the first place.

The new economy presents important challenges to adult education specifically, and workforce development more broadly. The economic shifts have resulted in many new job classifications which increase the need for training and adult education in specific fields. However, the new economy view of economic growth overlooks the fact that despite the development of a wide array of new occupations, most of the job growth and much of what is required of workers, is within low skill service sector jobs (Levy & Murnane, 2004; Osterman, 1999).

Political changes. Important political change has been observed in both domestic and international politics. Recent international political changes include the emergence of the European Union as a single marketplace, greater openness of many countries to foreign direct investment (FDI), legislated transparency in national financial systems, and an overall movement towards democratization and private ownership.

China provides an illustrative example of this process. As it has entered the World Trade Organization (WTO), Chinese officials subsequently announced it would sell shares of its railway system, without placing any limits on ownership, as a means to finance upgrades to the

rail system and the eventual construction of a modern highway system (*The Economist*, 2001). Involving foreign ownership in such large-scale public projects depends on having reliable domestic financial systems and the belief that such decisions reflect the best interests of the people.

National training systems have changed along with this larger shift in political structures and philosophies. Historically, the United States had very few interrelationships among government, business, and unions in terms of education and training (Weir, 1992). This historic reluctance emerged in the early 20th century through the Great Depression. The current national training system in the United States is shifting, incorporating more of the specific relationships between key political agents like business and government, although union influence has continued to slip as the proportion of workers represented by unions declines (Giloth, 2000; Osterman, 1999). In contrast, the various European and Asian models of national training systems have rested on corporatism, a political philosophy that emphasizes the mutual dependence of key government, union, and business groups in producing a skilled workforce (Crouch, Finegold, & Sako, 1999; Schmitter, 1979).

Demographic shifts. Finally, two demographic shifts influence the emergence of workforce development (Carnevale & Fry, 2001). As stated, the most powerful of these is the retirement of the baby boom generation. For instance, the U.S. workforce, which has grown in size by more than 50 percent over the past 20 years, will slow its growth dramatically over the next few decades. To replace these individuals in the workforce will not be easy without increasing the quality and quantity of educational experience given to succeeding generations.

The second demographic shift, which conflicts with the first shift, is the movement from the smaller Generation X cohort to the much larger Generation Y cohort. As a result, the larger

Generation Y cohort will likely find problems in finding adequate training and educational opportunities, given the funding cutbacks of the early 1990s in both the private and public sectors. These individuals will not be able to make substantive contributions to their respective societies without access to training and education.

These five historical streams have challenged all nations to respond in fundamental ways – upgrading transportation infrastructures, improving communications systems, and revitalizing their public schooling. Of interest here are the systemic national and organizational responses related to learning for work.

It has become increasingly clear that the well-being of nations – considered from both economic and social perspectives – is dependent in large measure on the competence of its people (Ashton et al., 1999). Human competence has been defined as the *potential* to achieve valued accomplishments (Gilbert, 1978; Jacobs, 2001). The focus of competence is primarily from an economic perspective, where individuals improve their competence to improve performance and productivity in organizations. However, there is a larger focus of competence to participate in civic society or competence to engage in social action, which is important particularly from an adult education perspective. Illeris (2003) suggests that lifelong learning does not only have a quantitative focus on more learning for adults, but also suggests that individuals need to respond to on-going social changes. Societies rely on their major institutions, such as schools, community colleges, universities government agencies, unions, organizations, among others, to acquire human competence. Sustaining national and organizational well-being depends more and more on having human competence available, and those areas of human competence will likely change on a continuing basis (Judy & D'Amico, 1997).

Definition of Workforce Development

The literature offers several definitions of workforce development. For instance, Harrison and Weiss (1998) state that workforce development consists of a constellation of activities from orientation to the work world, recruiting, placement, mentoring, to follow-up counseling and crisis intervention. According to Giloth (2000), at its core workforce development is about employment training, but involves deep employer and community involvement in networks that support both integrated human services as well as industry driven education or training. The Urban Institute states that workforce development systems provide a broad range of employment and training services, as well as targeted assistance to employers (Pindus, Robin, Martinson, & Trutko, 2000). Similarly, the National Governors' Association defines workforce development as the education, employment, and job-training efforts designed to help employers get a skilled workforce as well as to help individuals to succeed in the workplace.

Grubb (1999) states that workforce development provides individuals with the information necessary for employment including basic content, specific technical information, and academic competencies. Similarly, Gray and Herr (1998) define workforce education as “. . . that form of pedagogy that is provided at the pre-baccalaureate level by educational institutions, by private business and industry, or by government sponsored, community based organizations, where the goal is to increase individual opportunity in the labor market or to solve human performance problems in organizations” (p. 4). While both Gray & Herr (1998) and Grubb (1999) share the commitment to occupational preparation, Gray & Herr especially emphasize secondary level training. In contrast, most of the current literature calls for extensive investment

in community colleges or post-secondary training more broadly (Silverberg, Warner, Fong, & Goodwin, 2004).

We suggest that no definition currently available sufficiently addresses the potential breadth of workforce development, both in its content and potential stakeholders. Thus, we propose the following definition:

Workforce development is the coordination of public and private sector policies and programs that provides individuals with the opportunity for a sustainable livelihood and helps organizations achieve exemplary goals, consistent with the societal context.

From the definition, it should be noted that workforce development is not simply public sector programs to promote the acquisition of skills. Indeed, workforce development entails both profit and non-profit institutions to achieve a wide range of outcomes. Giloth's definition (2000) comes closest to that proposed definition, but still takes as its central focus job training and education for workers rather than a broader range of human performance interventions.

Workforce development encompasses many different areas of education, training, or business activity. The scope of involvement in workforce development can be organized around four different areas of focus. These four areas, along with examples of the types of programs they cover, are listed below.

1. *How schools and agencies prepare individuals to enter or re-enter the workforce.*

Workforce development clearly covers the traditional systems of vocational-technical training, including initial training, cooperative education or apprenticeships that are designed to prepare people for an initial job or career. The educational or training programs that provide these services differ from country to country. In the United States these programs are primarily provided through secondary level Career and Technical

Education, while in Germany and a relatively small number of European countries, this initial training is delivered through apprenticeship programs run through business (Buechtemann, Schupp, & Soloff, 1993; Culpepper, 2003; Silverberg et al., 2004). This distinction between school-based and employer based initial training is significant, and has a strong relationship to the quality of schooling (Middleton, Ziderman, & Adams, 1993).

Additionally, this focus encompasses what the U.S. labels second chance educational programs (Grubb, 2001). These programs are designed to provide adults with vocational skills, literacy and numeracy training, and offer assistance in making the transition to schooling. In the international context, these programs are broader, offering entrepreneurial training or non-formal education, and the systems for providing second chance training are less well developed. In fact, in recent reviews of the state of vocational education and training in Africa, the authors stressed the continuing need for these alternative programs, pointing out that as international funding for classic vocational education has declined, that governments have experimented with many different strategies to provide training to disadvantaged groups or individuals working in the informal sector (Johanson, 2002).

2. *How organizations provide learning opportunities to improve workplace performance.*

Human Resource Development in companies, and the associated infrastructure in higher education, consulting, and the non-profit world, is focused on improving skills in firms to support improved productivity. These lifelong learning systems are a critical part of workforce development, as most of the training that occurs after initial vocational preparation happens within the context of corporations or in response to business needs.

Both in the U.S. and developing countries, the state plays a critical part in supporting Human Resource Development in firms. In systems like Germany where corporatist relationships link business, labor, and education statutorily, the state can fundamentally design the infrastructure that supports training (Gill & Dar, 2000). In other countries, such as Korea, Thailand, or the United States the state supports business investment in HRD through re-training activities (Hawley, 2003; Lee, 2000; Moore, Blake, Phillips, & McConaughy, 2003) but does not legislate training activities.

3. *How organizations respond to changes that affect workforce effectiveness.* Much of the difficult work within firms includes activities that respond to explicit changes in skills requirements, such as increases in the use of technology or the reorganization of work processes (Levy & Murnane, 2004; Osterman, 1999). As Levy & Murnane (2004) recount, the use of technology fundamentally alters job design, skills needed, and educational requirements.

More fundamentally, training is not the solution for every human performance problem. Organizations respond to changes in workforce effectiveness through organizational development as well as classical strategies through training and development.

4. *How individuals undergo life transitions related to workforce participation.* Adult education has an integral role to play in workforce development, and adult learning and development theories are the foundation for teaching and learning systems in many workforce development programs. As the skills required to work have increased significantly, adult education has been asked to provide not only literacy or basic vocational training, but integrated services that ensure mastery of advanced vocational

skills as well as assistance to enable individuals to make a successful transition into the workplace (Askov & Gordon, 1999; Comings et al., 2001; Imel, 2000).

The life transition aspect of this issue relates directly to the demographic shift that is occurring. In many advanced capitalist countries, companies are being forced to turn to older workers to supply needed labor, as the proportion of the labor force of traditional working age is declining (Stein, 2000). Therefore, firms and educational organizations alike are being forced to engage more actively with older workers to support their training needs as well as to ensure that they have adequate transition into and out of the workforce.

The four issues cited above raise important questions about the goals of workforce development. To what end does workforce development exist? How should we evaluate the progress made in workforce development programs? Traditionally, workforce development focuses on individuals; emphasizing goals such as increased earnings or occupational mobility. In contrast, an expanded definition of workforce development, as emphasized by Holton and Wilson (2002) might add the emphasis on corporations, merging in organizational outcomes like improved productivity. Neither of these goals or the outcomes are radically different from those emphasized currently by vocational education and training. What we are arguing, however, is that there is a third dimension, society. Workforce Development programs and professionals consistently try to achieve outcomes that have a broader impact on communities, states, and nations. The extensive projects from the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Jobs Initiative in the 1990s led to the documentation of workforce development on a regional scale in the United States. Many of these programs had only small numbers of trainees, but achieved some

significant system wide changes, resulting in a better infrastructure for workforce development in communities (Giloith, 2004).

Admittedly, not every workforce development program might achieve different levels of outcomes. But, if economic and social well-being is the goal, workforce development planners should strive to view the broader context in which their programs exists. In this regard, Kaufman (1998) suggests that greater attention should be given to the mega-level – or societal level – of educational planning. Taking on any view that restricts the level of planning makes it less probable for any one set of outcomes to be fully realized.

Workforce development is distinguished from training or education by its explicit focus on economic development. The standard operating procedure for international development holds that human capital can best be strengthened by basic skills training, such as elementary school education (The World Bank, 1999). This truth has a long history, and in fact has been debated extensively in the academic literature (Largo, 1996; Wilson, 2001). An alternative perspective holds that the interconnections between education and employment mandate strong programs at the school and firm level to build a strong workforce, strengthen services to employers, provide reimbursement for incumbent worker training, and generally support job oriented development (Giloith, 2000).

Figure 1 illustrates how societal variables and organizational variables contribute to the goals of workforce development. Critical to the success of workforce development is to measure it's outcomes at both the individual level – such as, number of people prepared to enter the workforce – and the organizational level – such as, the profitability of a particular organization that has benefited from a workforce development program. Indeed, since workforce development and economic development have such a close connection, it could be argued that

the ultimate success of workforce development should be measured from an organizational perspective.

Central for understanding workforce development is how one conceives the term *workforce*, which inevitably includes the following five groups of individuals (Jacobs, 2000):

- Individuals who are emerging into being employed, most prominent of which are young adults.
- Individuals who are currently employed full or part time.
- Individuals who are undergoing transitions in their employment, such as job seekers, the unemployed, and returnees to being employed.
- Individuals who have been employed at one time but are not currently employed, such as those in prisons and retirees.
- Individuals who have been recruited from other locations for employment, such as guest workers, immigrants, and invited permanent residents.

One could argue that since this list potentially includes nearly every adult, it lacks precision and usefulness. However, our goal is not to restrict groups, but rather to describe categories that represent as many adults as possible. Indeed, while workforce is not a proxy for adulthood in all cases, nearly all adults at some point in their lives participate in or have a relationship with being in the workforce. Such an insight is critical for a complete view of workforce development and its implications.

For instance, during World War Two, many women were hired to work in manufacturing production operations, a hiring decision that had not ever happened before in US industry. As the war ended, most of these women were replaced by returning servicemen. Although the women were employed for brief periods only, they represented a unique workforce development

challenge both during the war and after the war that would have important consequence at both the societal and organization levels. During the war, the federally sponsored Training Within Industry (TWI) project came about in large part to address the issue of private-sector organizations hiring and training individuals who had limited industrial work experience (Dooley, 1945). After the war, most women returned to traditional roles, but they were much changed from their experience, which undoubtedly came to affect future decisions and future generations of women.

Implications of Workforce Development

The emergence of workforce development has brought about at least five implications for policy makers, researchers, and practitioners: 1) the need to develop collaborations, 2) the need to consider broader sets of program goals, 3) the opportunity to enrich current theory, 4) the opportunity to consider wider sets of research problems and dependent variables, and 5) re-consider graduate education.

Need to develop institutional collaborations. The proposed understanding of workforce development raises the importance of institutional collaborations. Too often, private sector and public sector programs have been planned and implemented without sufficient involvement of related institutions, which has reduced the overall effectiveness of the programs. Many exemplary examples of collaborations have emerged recently. Collaborations can now be observed by the workforce development programs, such as job training and retraining, job placement, and post-placement services, conducted by Chambers of Commerce and individual businesses (Harrison & Weiss, 1998; Hawley & Sommers, 2003; Hawley & Taylor, 2002).

A recent study has demonstrated that adult workforce programs that engage in formal collaborations produce steeper earnings increases in training participants than those that are trained in adult programs with informal collaborations (Hawley, Sommers, & Melendez, 2003).

Need to consider broader goals. Our view of workforce development suggests that program planning requires the consideration of broader sets of goals. Workforce development is a programmatic response to a societal need and, thus, should not be limited in scope to a specific organization or should be designed to benefit one set of individuals only. Rather, workforce development seeks to bridge individual, organizational, and societal interests in ways that meaningfully benefit each other. Second, professionals should select criteria for judging the effectiveness of programs using both proximal and distal criteria. That is, the achievement of immediate program goals – such as the number of graduates from a training program – is only one way of determining program success. Long-term criteria should also be considered in terms of the impact of the program downstream.

Educational professionals and policy makers working in various settings – organizations, agencies, and schools – should plan workforce development programs, keeping in mind that the programs should connect somehow with another level of related goals. For instance, government-sponsored dislocated worker programs should logically have their own program goals and they should have explicitly stated societal goals beyond the program goals, even though the societal goals cannot possibly be controlled to the same extent as the program goals. Planning and accountability systems developed by the California Employment and Training Panel shows off the benefits that come from engaging in sustained planning for employer supported training that takes into account societal and individual objectives as well as corporate

goals (Regional Technology Strategies, 1999). Nevertheless, reconciling different sets of goals is a defining feature of an integrated perspective of workforce development.

Enrich current theory. Many theories and bodies of knowledge have contributed to the fields of study that support workforce development: adult education, career and technical education, and human resource development (Jacobs, 1990). These fields are based on the application of knowledge from disciplines as diverse as psychology, economics, and systems theory. Workforce development introduces the possibility of combining perspectives such that theory development in one field can be integrated with theory development in another field, for the eventual enrichment of both fields. Deriving theory from one field to other fields has the potential to yield much new information, which would not be available otherwise. How to encourage such scholarly exchanges within the context of workforce development is an issue of critical importance.

For instance, when unemployed individuals engage in job training, many of them do not in fact complete the training, even though they understand this activity has the potential of helping them return to the workforce. Unfortunately, the variables that affect training persistence, for one thing, have not been studied to any extent. A current study in progress under the auspicious of the National Adult Learning and Literacy Center will provide needed results about the factors that facilitate persistence in adult literacy and adult basic education that may be applied to other areas of workforce development practice (Comings et al., 2003; Reder & Strawn, 2001). One could argue that such topics are well within the boundaries of human resource development theory and research, but have not been studied simply because the phenomenon does not occur in organization settings and thus has eluded HRD scholars. HRD scholars are primarily interested in training outcomes and the process of training if participants

are actively engaged in work, not when the training is for unemployed or underemployed individuals.

Research problems and dependent variables. Workforce development has the potential of encouraging scholars to consider wider sets of research problems and dependent variables. For instance, the source for most research problems in HRD is organizations. Thus, if the problem in mind cannot be found to exist in organization settings, then the HRD researcher must reconsider the problem or seek out a new one. The basis for using organizations as the sole referent for HRD research problems constrains research unnecessarily.

However, most HRD research problems have societal roots beyond organizations that could be addressed in a range of social settings, other than organizations. And, by looking only in organizations to confirm hunches or arm-chair hypotheses, the researcher may miss out on investigating issues of interest, that otherwise would have been overlooked. Skills shortages have roots and solutions beyond organizations. Organizations such as community-based agencies and educational institutions have critical roles in helping organizations meet skills shortages. The New York based “Wildcat” program, for instance, has trained entry level financial services workers for a number of years, working both with business and social service organizations (Schlefer, 1999). In the health care field, a business sector with one of the most obvious shortages, non-profit providers and educational institutions have played substantial roles in training entry level workers (Pindus & Nightingale, 1995).

Graduate education. Finally, consideration of workforce development has implications for graduate education. While it is true that professionals need to have both an identity of their own roles – HRD specialist, adult educator, or vocational educator, it is also true that such professionals need to understand the broader context in which these individuals do their work.

Thus, we believe that there is less room for silo thinking among professional groups, especially when the economic and social well-being of a community is at stake. Everyday demands require that areas of practice become more blurred and less distinct, which is desirable for achieving important a wider range of workforce development outcomes.

This realization has implications for graduate education. More often than not, programs of human resource development, adult education, and career and technical education have been placed together for the sake of administrative convenience. Unfortunately, when these programs actually come together, it becomes apparent that they have as many areas of difference as areas of commonality. The question of concern becomes – what is the underlying theme that in fact ties them together. Workforce development represents a programmatic core that might provide a unifying theme for graduate study, since it seeks not to limit the influence of any one field of study. Instead, it recognizes the equal importance of the fields in contributing to broader societal goals. Having each field maintain its academic strength is the essence for achieving workforce development goals.

Conclusion

The challenge of all civil societies is to respond to external events for the benefit of its citizens. Many countries face the same challenges of responding to issues related to working and learning. This chapter proposes that workforce development policies, programs, and activities should be considered from a more articulated perspective. No other current perspective offers the same promise of ensuring economic well-being and social justice.

This definition of workforce development clarifies the current use of the terminology. Traditionally, workforce development was used to refer almost exclusively to refer to government sponsored or funded activities for disadvantaged people. The term was particularly

tied to federal or state legislation such as the Job Training Partnership Act. The terminology covered a limited set of activities, focusing on job training and remedial education. In the 1990s, as the vision of what it took to improve the lives of disadvantaged people changed, professionals from education, human resources, and human services found the spectrum of activities covered under the term workforce development expanding but also converging across disciplinary lines.

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Figure 1: Workforce Development Framework

