Instructional Design in Job Skills Training for Welfare Recipients and Displaced Workers

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Scully-Russ (2005) described the low-wage labor market issue and the tendency in academic literature to view the problem as "fixing" the skills of low wageworkers. However, the article does not address instructional design issues surrounding low-wage employee training interventions. This manuscript attempts to discover the key factors surrounding training for welfare recipients and displaced workers from an instructional design perspective. Economic factors and educational resources are identified, and implications for HRD are discussed.

Keywords: Welfare-to-Work, Retraining Displaced Workers, Instructional Design

A recent article (Scully-Russ, 2005) in *Human Resource Development Review* tackled the low-wage labor market issue, which is emerging as an important component of HRD practice and research. The article presented some research-based ways that HRD practitioners and scholars could help ameliorate the increasing disparity between high- and low-wage jobs. Scully-Russ's (2005) treatment of this issue gives us a comprehensive perspective on this multi-level, complicated socio-technical process. However, the article does not directly offer insights on the role of 'educator' set between labor (e.g., potential employees) and the organization (e.g., potential employers).

Scully-Russ (2005) explores the tendency in academic and organizational literatures to see the problem as 'fixing' the skills of low wage applicants, and she does illuminate the limitations in this tendency. On the other hand, it appears that her purpose was more focused on the broader societal and economic issues rather than on the practical issue of designing training for low wage learners. One of these issues is the problem of how to best design effective instruction for job skills training by educators who, by either political decree or non-government agency funding, are trying to meet the challenges facing displaced workers and their communities.

This manuscript moves from the macro-level, represented in the Scully-Russ article, to the micro-level perspective of an instructional designer, and presents findings from a case study set in rural North Carolina. The low-wage issue was chosen because of all the jobs lost through plant closures, most were low-wage, unskilled jobs that paid slightly more than minimum wage (increased over time as individuals gained seniority). In addition, due to government time constraints on access to training, most new jobs obtained by employees who complete short-term training will be in the same low-wage sector, because they often take the first job offered to maintain household obligations for themselves and their dependents.

The problem in this context is how to best train welfare recipients or displaced workers by identifying the key challenges facing instructional designers for these learners. This is an important issue for HRD because the government has increased its efforts to reduce welfare rolls and enroll recipients in job training programs. Similarly, as the United States continues to export manufacturing jobs to lower-wage countries and increases imports of textiles and clothing from abroad, the pool of displaced workers in need of retraining will also continue to grow. HRD needs to address the challenge of training this new pool of workers for jobs in an information-driven economy. We see that the traditional jobs that have been available to workers with few skills and little education are quickly disappearing, and we argue that HRD scholars and practitioners need to understand both macro (strategic workforce development issues) and micro (learner and instructor issues) in order to successfully meet this challenge. This paper contributes towards our micro understanding and focuses on the issues that instructors face in this challenge.

This manuscript is the first product of a planned long-term project focused on the role of HRD for low-income and displaced workers. The project to date included a literature review and a case study on a rural North Carolina community college, charged with training this population of workers. The case study was comprised of document reviews and interviews. The interviews were conducted for a graduate-level class assignment at North Carolina State University; interviewees were selected based upon their location and their job roles. The paper is presented as follows: 1) research questions; 2) methods; 3) findings; 4) discussion; 5) limitations; and 6) conclusions and implications for HRD.

Research Questions

1. What are the economic factors and educational resources in Vance County, North Carolina that affect low-income and displaced workers?
2. What are the biggest challenges facing instructional designers charged with training this population of learners?

Methods

The data collection for this study included a literature review, document review, subject matter expert consultations, and two interviews. The names of the interviewees have been changed to protect anonymity. The interviewees were employed by VGCC and included Mr. Dean (a Dean at VGCC), and Ms. Instructor (an HRD instructor at VGCC). These two interviewees provided information about the college's work force development and job training skills efforts. In order to get a profile of the economic picture of the county used in the research, we also consulted with relevant workforce development experts in Vance County. We obtained information from an Employment Security Commission (ESC) representative, who had access to the type of jobs available to the pool of program participants and the likelihood of them finding jobs similar to the ones they lost. We also talked to representatives from the Vance County Chamber of Commerce (COC) and the Vance County Economic Development Commission (VCEDC). These sources provided information about the number of jobs lost and the new direction for development in the county. Anticipated future development includes an expansion of high-tech industries from Research Triangle Park into Vance County that will provide jobs for students who already have literacy skills and are able to complete more extensive training. Efforts are also being concentrated to attract more retail and food service jobs – the ones most likely to hire short-term program participants.

The literature review used Academic Search Elite and Business Source Elite search engines, and included the following keywords: job training for welfare recipients, welfare-to-work programs, displaced workers, retraining for displaced workers, workforce development, literacy training, and instructional design. Document examination was also conducted, and the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) test, which includes sections on Reading comprehension, writing skills, Math computation and applications was examined. The TABE test yields grade equivalencies in the skills tested. Another document examined was the WorkKeys Skills Assessment, as well as the literature focused on KeyTrain, a system for improving basic skills.

Findings

Economic Factors

The population seeking training in this case study includes welfare recipients and displaced workers in rural Vance County, North Carolina. Our study found that many, many people in Vance County fall into these two categories. Vance County was formerly a tobacco-growing and processing center as well as a major center for textile manufacturing. As textile imports from Asia and South America have increased, several textile plants went out of business in North Carolina in the last three years. This includes one plant that had been in operation for more than 100 years in Vance County. This particular plant had four spinning mills and had employed more than 1,200 workers. A tobacco processing plant, employing more than 600 workers, also closed in Vance County within the last two years. In all, Vance County has lost approximately 2,800 – 3,200 factory jobs in the last three years (Personal conversation, Director of Economic Development, Vance County, September 7, 2005).

With a population of almost 43,000 (2000), Vance County has the highest rate of unemployment among the 100 counties in North Carolina (Henderson Dispatch, 2004). Twenty percent of its population is below the United States poverty level, compared with 12.3% for the state as a whole (U.S. Census, 2000). Of those over age 25, 31% do not have a high school diploma or a GED (ePodunk, 2000). The county has a negative employment growth, and is still heavily dependent on manufacturing jobs (FDIC: RECON, 2004). The two highest categories of jobs in the county are manufacturing and retail sales (ePodunk, 2000).

At the same time the government is increasing its efforts to move people off the welfare rolls; manufacturing plants in Vance County have closed or laid off a substantial number of employees. In addition to the multiple closed textile and tobacco factories described above, the long list of closed or downsized plants include Harriet and Henderson Yarns, America, J. P. Taylor, Custom Molders, Royal Home Fashions, and CVS Distribution Center.

Our case study found that the economic factors in Vance County have caused significant challenges to the workers in the county, either through displacements or under-employment. The plan for economic development calls for new, technical jobs to eventually replace the factory and manufacturing jobs recently lost. The problem for

Vance County HRD practitioners at this time is to train the unemployed for these technical jobs that require wholly different skills and aptitudes than those required for factory labor. The representative of the Employment Security Commission described the higher technical jobs that the county expects to develop in the new few years, "The kinds of jobs they had are not the kinds that are coming back. They will need more cognitive skills instead of being jobs that require someone to be physically fast." There is ample literature to document these developments (Craig and Denstedt, 1993; Jolley and McNamee, 2003; Moore, 2000; and Springhorn, 1983), and our case study affirmed the parallels between what was happening in Vance County and the similar changes being experienced across the nation. The larger macro-economic issues surrounding industry shifts and human capital requirements are evident in Vance County, NC.

Educational Resources

Vance-Granville Community College (VGCC) operates in Vance County and serves three other counties (Granville, Franklin, and Warren). The college enrolls one out of every seven eligible adults in the four-county region. Enrollment for 2003 was 16,116 (both curriculum and continuing education courses – full and part-time students). It has an Endowment Fund in excess of $5 million dollars (the highest of any of the 58 community colleges in the North Carolina system). The interest on the Endowment Fund provided scholarships ranging in amounts from $300 to $1,200 to a total of 482 students in 2005. Total scholarships awarded this year amounted to $250,000. (Data from VGCC Public Documents; Enrollment and Endowment).

VGCC is a member of a statewide network of institutions and agencies who collaborate to tackle tough economic issues. VGCC and its state and community partners work together with a closing plant to try to minimize the loss of employment opportunities. Mr. Dean, Dean of Workforce Development, represents VGCC on the Governor's Rapid Response Team. The team is deployed when any sufficiently large industry announces that it is downsizing, moving to another location, or closing. Other members of the team include representatives from the Department of Commerce and the Employment Security Commission (ESC). The team meets with company officials to gather information about the number of employees affected and their skill levels. These employees are then invited to attend an orientation session with instructors from the college. The focus of these sessions is on courses, adult basic skills, the GED, Human Resource Development (HRD) programs, and training in pre-employment and occupational skills.

At the sessions, representatives from the ESC discuss unemployment and other program benefits, which under the Trade Adjustment Assistance Act can cover all costs of tuition, fees, books, supplies, and travel assistance for up to 104 weeks for dislocated workers (Jolly and McNamee, 2003). If the workers already have literacy skills, they are generally placed in curriculum classes or training for trades such as carpentry, automotive mechanics, computer skills, Customer Service Representative – call center operations**,** or medical coding which can lead to jobs that pay considerably more than the minimum wage. If they do not have literacy skills, they can chose between adult basic skills (GED) or HRD classes.

The sessions also can include the KeyTrain system, a skill development program for learning tied to specific job skills. The college is seeking funding under a North Carolina Department of Commerce grant to develop a Career Readiness Certification Program for certain unemployed individuals. Recently, the local public transportation agency, KARTS, has committed to providing free transportation for 200 – 250 unemployed workers to get to the college.

Instructional Design Issues

Ms. Instructor has been an HRD instructor for more than three years. She appeared quite knowledgeable about her program and others offered by the college, the outside agencies which have a stake in the training, and local industry. She described the content of the HRD classes to include basic workplace skills as well as working with numbers. The students are also taught interview techniques, resume and cover letter writing, self-development, self-improvement, how to complete a job application, interpersonal skills, and working in small groups to accomplish projects.

Ms. Instructor screens students using the TABE (Tests of Adult Basic Education) reading, math, and writing inventories, which yield equivalent grade levels in each area tested. The college recently began administering the WorkKeys assessment of relevant information about students' workplace and educational skill levels. This assessment includes applied mathematics, applied technology, listening, locating information, observation, reading for information, teamwork, and writing (Pampe, 2001). Ms. Instructor confirmed that she assumes that the students have very few skills and are anxious to learn, until proven otherwise. She relies on her experience working with students, her Christian ethic, and her judgment to guide her teaching and decision making.

The diversity of her students in terms of skills is great. While Ms. Instructor finds that her learners have very few skills, their individual work experiences, learning styles, ages, and other demographic characteristics require her to use a variety of instructional techniques. The specific instructional techniques used in these classes appear to

follow typical adult learning theory. Ms Instructor tries to make the instruction relevant to the student's life situation and engaging to the learners. For example, when the students tire of whole number manipulation, she may introduce some algebra and geometry to keep them interested and alert. Ms. Instructor also takes steps to ensure that what she is training is needed by area employers; the content is therefore designed with multiple stakeholders in mind. At present, she partners with a local hospital and several other area employers so that her training can mirror the skills the employers want their employees to have. These efforts are seen as crucial by Ms. Instructor for her to develop effective instruction.

Ms. Instructor uses a variety of instructional media during the implementation of her instructional design in order to attempt to meet the multiple stakeholder requirements. These media in the HRD classes can include books, lectures, whiteboard presentations, discussions, use of the internet for fun and educational games (particularly EnglishZone.com), a self-development questionnaire, interactive group exercises, employability coach, skill coach, Mavis Bacon typing skills (computer programs), and videos including a series on stress relief. Ms. Instructor's classes use role-playing in job-type situations as a way to identify and correct behaviors that would not be acceptable on a job. Ms. Instructor also identified "teachable moments" (an andragogical concept) to pinpoint the effects of verbal and non-verbal communications and attitudes that can hinder job placement or retention.

Ms. Instructor's evaluation is subjective. She measures success when her students begin a curriculum program, get jobs, or continue training in some trade such as carpentry or welding. Objective measures are conducted by the Workforce Development Department. For the people who interact with the Workforce Development Department, follow-up is done at 30-day intervals, up to one year. The department sees an average of 600-700 people per year. Of that number, 500 are admitted to the HRD programs and approximately 75% choose short-term classroom training. On average, 65% of the people have found jobs. Most of the jobs have been in Franklin and Granville counties, not in the two other counties served by the college (Vance and Warren). Most jobs have been in the retail sector, restaurants, fast foods, and Wal-Mart, some small businesses, and other industries. Some of the students were hired by temporary agencies. They could be working in other counties. These jobs usually do not include benefits (Personal communication, October 5, 2004).

Discussion

Two key challenges emerged from the interviews and were supported by the literature review. The challenges are 1) balancing multiple stakeholder interests; and 2) diverse learner skills. Both challenges can exist in a variety of contexts, but for training low-income and displaced workers, these challenges appear to take on a different character and seem to require different solutions.

Multiple stakeholders in this context not only want good outcomes, but they also can control the level and scope of input (e.g., resources) into the educational process. For example, government agencies allow only a certain amount of time for literacy training and curriculum development is constrained by these limits. Ms. Instructor is faced with this limitation and the fact that the ESC may only pay benefits for training that is directly linked to employment readiness. She needs to creatively balance employer needs with the skill level of the students, and try to craft a training program that will both upgrade the skills of the students and meet the employment needs of the community. This balancing act is also recognized in the instructional design literature; according to Kilgore (2003) and Dirkx (1999), the instructional designer must take into account the needs and expectations of the students, government agencies, the school, and the community.

Diversity of learners is a common challenge facing instructional designers, but again in this context the impact of this diversity seems to be more of a challenge. For example, a number of sources – Department of Social Services (DSS), ESC, and other students, refer HRD students into Ms. Instructor's classes. In addition, a new federal program for food stamp recipients, *Career Starts*, has already begun referring students for pre-employment training. The students have varied backgrounds from second grade school leavers through college graduates with some graduate credits. Some of the displaced workers have been working for 20 or 25 years at manufacturing plants that are now closed. Some of them are over 50 years old, with few skills, but they are recognized to have a good work ethic and can set an example for the other students on what is required in the workplace. These older students must now train for new careers. The consequence of these multiple referral pipelines means that Ms. Instructor has a widely diverse student population, further complicating instructional design and delivery. It would appear that this finding suggests that an assessment of student skills and learning styles may be even more important for low-wage skill training than other types of training.

The literature and the interview agree that training should be tailored to the individual learner, based on the learner's strengths and weaknesses. They also agree that constraints placed on training by outside agencies determine the nature, content, and length of training. Some training programs for adult literacy, welfare-to-work,

and retraining for displaced workers focus on short–term job skills training rather than a human capital development model that focuses more on education. The human capital development model prepares participants for additional opportunities to learn skills in demand in the workplace with the potential to earn more than the minimum wage. Community colleges have played a significant role in regional workforce and economic development. Where the literature and the reality of Vance County diverge is on the formal steps in the design model, particularly on the evaluation of instruction. For the most part, the college still depends on student retention rates and outcomes of GED tests to document measures of success. The outside stakeholders in the training efforts measure success by the number of people who have been placed in jobs – regardless of the pay scale.

The literature and the interviews also differ primarily on the formal nature of the audience analysis phase. Even though Ms. Instructor has a formal assessment tool, WorkKeys, she still depends on her own experience over many years, in assessing at what level to begin instruction. As the class progresses, she can scale the instruction up or down to meet the individual needs of her students. Our findings also suggest that the audience analysis may be even more important for VGCC, due to the different referral mechanisms and pipelines into Ms. Instructor's classes.

To meet this need, Ms. Instructor has indicated she will begin using a new formal assessment tool to find out more about the impact her training is having on employability. The literature states that many programs still rely on retention rates and test results to determine the effectiveness of their programs (Dirkx, 1999) rather on employability outcomes. To some extent, our findings suggest that VGCC is no different. At present, there is little more than anecdotal evidence that the instruction has been effective from an employability standpoint. The teacher relies on the students to come back and let her know what they are doing. The objective data, gathered from the Workforce Development Department, is unconnected with the specific instruction provided by Ms. Instructor.

Ms. Instructor knows that following a comprehensive instructional design model such as ADDIE (analyze the learners, design the instruction to meet their needs, develop instructional units, implement the instruction, and evaluate it at critical stages in the process both before and after implementation), should ensure positive results. However, she does not always know the outcome of the training, nor how to 'fix' the problem. The reason for this is that the problem could be caused by various things; consequently, Ms. Instructor faces the typical situation of designing instruction and not being able to accurately 'fix' problems. This situation is described repeatedly in the instructional design literature: if the promised results of the training do not follow from the instruction, there is debate over who is to blame – the student or the design. Kilgore (2003) points out that many program planners do not use such models in everyday practice and that when outcomes are not what the planners expect, the model may not give clues to what has gone awry.

If the problem was associated with the students, examples from other low-wage training interventions could facilitate Ms. Instructor's success. Although pre-testing and analyzing students' skills are said to be crucial to successful instructional design and program planning (Eisenstein, 2005 and Springhorn, 1983), many programs test only reading or math skills (Dirkx, 1999). In a welfare-to-work program at the University of Alabama – Birmingham (UAB), referrals to the programs were screened using the Workplace Literacy Test for levels of functional literacy and the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale. Applicants also had to undergo criminal screening before being placed in jobs at the UAB hospital (Kohler and Sapp, 1999). Further reference will be made to this program in the Findings and Implications for HRD section.

In another example**,** Pampe (2001) explained the use of WorkKeys assessments by Illinois Eastern community colleges to evaluate workplace skills for welfare-to-work program participants. WorkKeys assesses the required workplace and educational skills that have been identified by business and industry. The district covered by these community colleges shared similar characteristics as those identified for Vance County. It is rural and economically depressed, with 47% of families designated as low-income, has similar double-digit unemployment statistics, low educational attainment, low wage jobs in fast foods and retail, and no mass transportation to get participants to work or school.

Finally, another example from Canada may help Ms. Instructor. Craig and Denstedt (1993) discussed a series of assessments of learner capabilities and skills, rather than relying on grade-level information, to determine appropriate levels of training for displaced workers. The work was conducted by the Literacy Branch of the Ontario ministries of Labor and Education and Training. The results of the assessment interviews were then used to develop an individualized retraining plan. This plan matched displaced workers to the skill-training program they needed for a new job.

Ms. Instructor makes nearly all of the decisions pertaining to the actual training delivery. This autonomy is supported in the instructional design literature. In designing the instruction, the instructional designer must decide what training events or other performance enhancements will be used to equip the students to perform up to the standards specified in the objectives (Molenda and Pershing, 2004). Springhorn (1983) and James (2001) say that before designing instruction, the instructor needs to know who the students are and what they expect to get from the

class. The instructor needs to find any special learning problems**,** their preferred learning style, and occupational interests they have. Programs should be designed to have specific outcomes that can be documented to outside agencies. The instruction should consider what the students already know that is useful. In that way, students can relate learning to previous knowledge, skills, and attitudes (James, 2001). Instruction is more effective when you use strategies that enhance the transfer of new material. Students need not only basic academic skills, but they need the ability to translate what they know into knowledge that can be applied on a job. Therefore, the instructor should apply instructional strategies that test whether learners can perform specific tasks and skills (James, 2001). Many low-skill jobs now require that workers be able to utilize information from many sources to solve problems (Milukecky and Kirkley, 1998). The HRD instructor must begin instruction at the basic level and then scale it up or down to fit individual needs.

Springhorn (1983), states that objectives should be included during the development process. They should state what performance the learner must achieve. Ms. Instructor, by reaching out into the community to identify employer needs, seems to be taking steps to ensure the training is relevant and that objectives would be crafted to support community needs.

In addition to the above, the findings of the literature review suggested that training should include how to retain a job, the rules and expectations of employers, and qualities employers desire in workers: the importance of being on time, following directions, being a team player, developing interpersonal skills, managing anger, and improving their self-image (Martin, 1999***;*** Melendez, Falcon, and Bivens, 2003; and Nitschke, 2001). The curriculum should stress what each individual has to offer and needs as well as employment-related strategies (Craig and Denstedt, 1993). It should diagnose and correct learner problems at an early stage of instruction (Springhorn, 1983). The instruction must be effective (Dirkx, 1999) because of time constraints imposed by government agencies. The students need the GED if they are to obtain higher-paying jobs (Kohler and Sapp, 1999 and Brock, Matus-Grossman, and Hamilton, 2001). Training is also constrained by the pressures to get people working. Basic skills should be taught in the context of work, work readiness, and career awareness.

After implementing instructional interventions, the literature asserts the next step is evaluation, and Ms. Instructor also conducts evaluation at Vance-Granville Community College. The instructor must now determine if the interventions actually helped solve the problem (Molenda and Pershing, 2004; NAO, 2004; and HMIE, 2005). The findings of the literature review suggest that the instruction could be evaluated at several points during the design process including during the design phase and again after implementation to see if the instruction has had the desired results. In the past, basic skills classes were evaluated using student retention rates or passing outcomes for GED tests (Dirkx, 1999), however, this case study does not use those evaluative methods.

In comparison with VGCC, our literature review found comparable outcome data to assess VGCC's success. In the welfare to work project at the University of Alabama-Birmingham, of 120 people screened, 67 were accepted into the program but only 38 remained employed at the end of the year. Of the 38, only two were working full time at other than entry-level jobs. The 36 other trainees elected part-time entry-level jobs rather than obtaining their GED because of financial obligations (Kohler and Sapp, 1999). In this instance, the design was not at fault but it did not take into consideration the financial pressure the trainees would feel. Compared to VGCC, the UAB training initiative does not seem to have the same success rate in terms of employment post-training.

Limitations

Many of the conditions found in this study may be unique to the area – the rural South, the high level of unemployment, the low level of educational attainment, the size and scope of the support of the community, and the nature and scope of its civic organizations. In addition, the size of the community college Endowment Fund, as well as the number of enrollees, may also be unique. Nevertheless, it could be an example for other manufacturing centers struggling with job loss and the need for retraining. Some aspects of the study are generalizable to other areas with similar levels of welfare recipients who are transitioning from welfare to work and the need to retrain former manufacturing workers in an economy that is rapidly changing from manufacturing to information-driven employment.

Other limitations pertain to the method of data collection used for the study. Ms. Instructor was not observed in her teaching, and the interviews were conducted over the telephone. Ms. Instructor was identified by a subject matter expert (e.g., the Dean of Workforce Development at VGCC) as an experienced instructional designer for welfare recipients and displaced workers, and as such the information obtained in her interview may be considered valid. However, the study did not attempt to triangulate the information obtained in the interviews with her; consequently, this is a limitation to the study. Our next steps in the study include interviewing other instructional

designers responsible to design and deliver curriculum in this context. This tactic will help us gather information from a variety of subject matter experts and improve the validity of the findings.

Conclusions and Implications for HRD

It is clear from the interviews and literature review that both macro level (economic and societal) and micro level (multiple stakeholders and diverse learner skills) factors greatly impact designing instruction for welfare recipients and displaced workers. As companies in the United States continue to export manufacturing jobs overseas, and outsource even high-tech jobs to other countries, there is a tremendous opportunity for HRD to supply the training for displaced workers. These workers will need new skills if they are to be part of the future workforce, which will rely heavily on the usage and transfer of information.

The number of manufacturing jobs lost in this small rural county, which relies heavily on manufacturing, was so substantial as to change the very nature of the employment picture in the county. The economic context of the area continues to change, and the practice of designing instruction for workers must meet the changing needs. Regarding the economic context, for example, plans are underway for the county to become part of a hub with three other counties to bring in higher-skill jobs in the near future. The community and college have joined forces to offer training to bring the needed skills to unemployed workers in the county and to secure funds to continue these efforts. As in other cities that have suffered massive job losses, the community colleges must collaborate with the business community to provide access, training, and education for participants transitioning from welfare to work and displaced workers (Orr, 2001 and Fisher, 2001). At present, the college is encouraging these program participants to enroll in CNA (Certified Nurse Assistant) training – a combination of classroom and on-the-job training at area nursing homes. At the culmination of training, participants can find employment in nursing homes or as home health care aides at slightly above minimum wage. This mirrors a welfare-to-work training program for child-care workers undertaken by El Paso Community College (Bombach, 2001). Although this county is rather unique, the efforts taken here can be generalized to larger regions that also relied on manufacturing jobs which will not return. Further, HRD practitioners skilled at developing collaborative interventions—like whole systems design—may find these skills extremely relevant to the needs of area businesses and colleges, as they move towards more partnership types of relationships.

HRD trainers will be needed to apply the principles of instructional design to train welfare recipients for jobs and retrain displaced workers for new jobs in industries that will replace the old manufacturing jobs that needed few skills and little education. The literature (Dirkx, 1999; Kilgore, 2003; Martin, 1999; Molenda and Pershing, 2004; Springhorn, 1983; and James, 2001) refers to the use of a model in instructional design. The more students referred to literacy and job-skills training, the more the trainers need the discipline of a model to ensure the effectiveness of their efforts. The college and other organizations that provide job-training services cannot afford to rely on design-as-you-go practices. The government will use its own criteria to judge the effectiveness of programs. The college must find a better way to evaluate and demonstrate the effectiveness of its training programs. It must institute measures to intensify literacy programs so that trainees have not only job-seeking skills but also the education necessary for them to obtain higher-paying jobs. The students can be trained so that they have sufficient skills to take a job at the local fast-food place, but they need to be trained for jobs that require higher-order skills, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities – the qualities employers are looking for in new hires. HRD students will need to prepare for the challenges that lie ahead.

HRD researchers need to broaden the focus away from an exclusive focus on high-level knowledge workers, and to the needs of entry-level workers with obsolete skills and/or under developed work experience. These workers comprise an increasing proportion of society and it is incumbent upon HRD scholars to meet the needs of this group of workers through enhanced research on the design, delivery, and contextual influences on job skills training for welfare recipients and displaced workers. Research on design may focus on better ways to integrate multiple stakeholder objectives with a lower literacy population of learners. Delivery research may find more ways to effectively enhance learning for a variety of learners from this stratum of society. OD research using whole system interventions could also contribute towards these needs by developing more effective frameworks for collaboration between private and public organizations.

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