Working Wired:

Empowering Workforce Development in an Information Society

2001 Summer Institute Proceedings

Acknowledgements

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In 1987, with the support of the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration, Michigan State University established the Michigan Partnership for Economic Development Assistance (MP/EDA). The purpose of MP/EDA is to "promote and support the expansion of economic development efforts in the State of Michigan through the provision of research, training, capacity building and technical assistance to economic development agencies and community based organizations serving distressed communities." Each year since its inception, MP/EDA has organized and conducted, with numerous public and private partners, a Summer Institute focusing on a current issue in community and economic development. This report summarizes the 2001 event, "Working Wired: Empowering Workforce Development in an Information Society."

The 2001 Summer Institute explored the transformation of the nature of work in the 21st century. To ensure full participation in the emerging digital economy for all Americans, it is critical that workforce development efforts take into account the importance of information technology. This focus grew out of the theme of the 2000 Institute by continuing a focus on a technology-based economy and the many aspects of the Digital Divide that keep poor, immigrant, and other underutilized workers from fully participating in the economy.

The 2001 Summer Institute, held on July 10 at Michigan State University, was designed to help community leaders, educators, economic development practitioners, and community builders to address these issues. This year's Summer Institute featured workshops on information technology skill development for the emerging workforce, the underutilized workforce, and the existing workforce, and an examination of state and local level policies that may encourage workforce development in an information technology society.

The 2001 Summer Institute, summarized in the following pages, is an expression of our continued commitment to providing citizens access to needed information. The 2001 Summer Insititute, this report, and the numerous other activities sponsored by the MP/EDA are the result of the generous support of many individuals and organizations throughout the State. We are grateful for their support. An informed free people, engaged in a great cause, is a force for incredible transformation. As we seek to identify and implement the essential elements of sustainable communities, the participation of citizens and their freely created civic organizations will be pivotal to that process.

The Sectoral Employment Development Learning Project

In 1997, the Sectoral Employment Development Learning Project (SEDLP) began in order to document and evaluate selected sectoral programs and to disseminate the findings to policy makers and practitioners. The project is supported by the Ford, Charles Stewart Mott and Annie E. Casey foundations, and the Aspen Institute. SEDLP's purpose is to open paths of economic advancement to low-income individuals. Industries are targeted in which employment opportunities for low-wage individuals could be expanded. Sector projects are visible in the low-income communities they serve. The needs and challenges of individuals in these communities affect the design of the services offered.

The sector projects aim to create changes that will have an impact beyond individual participants. For example, programs may create new paths into a high-wage industry or aim to improve the job quality and chances for advancement in an industry that employs the working poor. Sector programs employ a range of strategies to accomplish their mission, including employment training; operating a business; providing consulting services to the industry; and engaging in policy advocacy work. Implementing a sector program often requires strong partnerships between several organizations. These may include employer associations, community-based organizations, labor unions, community colleges and local government offices.

Training Programs

The six programs included in the SEDLP program employ a range of strategies and work in a variety of industries. The training programs of SEDLP aid communities in New York, Chicago, Detroit, San Antonio, and San Francisco. In New York City, the Garment Industry Development Corporation provides training to employed and unemployed individuals in the garment industry. The Paraprofessional Healthcare Institute of the Bronx supports training of low-income women of color in paraprofessional health care skills.

The goals of the Jane Addams Resource Corporation of Chicago are to retain and grow local industry, provide community residents with educational services and offer job training in the metalworking industry for incumbent and unemployed workers. Focus: HOPE, a civil and human rights organization based in Detroit, offers precision machining and metal working training to inner city youth and young adults. This Detroit based organization also operates businesses that provide hands on experience in parts and services for the automobile and related industries.

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In San Antonio, Project QUEST, a nonprofit organization works with employers, community colleges and others in coalitions to develop training projects for low-income individuals. The Asian Neighborhood Design Program, a community development corporation in San Francisco, provides training in cabinetry, carpentry and other construction trades.

The Participant Study is a three-year longitudinal survey designed to document the experiences of sectoral program participants with respect to training, employment, retention and advancement. The study measures employment and earnings outcomes of participants before and after they receive program services. The survey is completed at the start of the training, and at ninety days, one year and two years after training.

Key Findings about Respondents' Earnings

Twenty-one percent of survey participants moved out of poverty on the basis of earnings alone.

Respondents' earnings showed dramatic improvement because of increases in both hours worked during the year and earnings per hour. Overall, participants reported an average increase of $7,203 in their annual earnings one year after training. Non-incumbent workers (those who began the program unemployed or underemployed) increased their earnings by $9,048. Among respondents who were employed both before and after training, median annual individual earnings increased by 64 per cent, from $8,580 to $14,040. Twenty-one percent of survey participants moved out of poverty on the basis of earnings alone in the 12 months following training. When participants of incumbent worker training programs are excluded, this figure rises to 27 per cent.

For the sample as a whole, the number of hours that participants worked increased an average of 601 hours per year, but this change is attributable entirely to increases among non-incumbent participants. Non-incumbent participants worked an average of 805 more hours during the year after training than during the baseline year. Among incumbent workers, average hours worked per year actually decreased slightly, yet remained at a full-time level of 1,949 hours per year, while annual earnings rose slightly, increasing by $786. Thus their increase in hourly earnings more than compensated for the reduced number of hours worked. Among all participants, average earnings per hour at their main job increased by 20 per cent ($1.72 per hour) during the year after training, compared to the previous year.

Key Findings About the Employment Status of Respondents

In the baseline survey at the start of the training, 74 per cent reported having worked at some point during the year. In the year following training, 94 per cent reported having worked at some point. In the year after training, 59

per cent of the employed respondents worked year-round at their job(s), compared to 32 per cent of the employed respondents who worked all year at their job(s) during the year before the start of training. Among the employed respondents, 87 per cent reported holding at least one job in the sector for which they received training.

Key Findings About Job Quality

Improvements in participants' earnings per hour indicate they found higher quality jobs after training. However, other factors including participants' satisfaction indicate that job quality also improved. In general, participants had access to a better benefits package through their post-training employment. When asked about their primary employment, 78 per cent reported they had access to employer-provided health insurance in the year after training, compared to 50 per cent in the baseline year. Similarly, in the year after training, 73 per cent of jobs provided paid vacation, compared to 44 per cent before training.

Key Findings About the Training Experience

Eighty-seven per cent of respondents reported they completed their training, and 82 per cent said they used the skills or knowledge learned in the program on the job. One year after training, 60 per cent of all respondents (70 per cent when incumbent workers are excluded) reported that the training they received in the program helped them get a new job. Of respondents, who reported participation in previous training experiences, 41 per cent said that the previous training led to a job, and 55 per cent said they used the skills or knowledge from that other training on the job. Among those who did not complete the training program, the reason cited most frequently was a health problem involving either themselves or a family member.

Conclusion

In an environment that emphasizes increasing the work behavior of low-income individuals, sectoral employment programs address the critical question of how to improve the quality of employment opportunities available to individuals striving for economic self-sufficiency. One year after completing training, participant outcomes are extremely positive. They demonstrate that trainees made significant strides in the labor market. Survey respondents reported substantial gains in annual personal earnings and earnings per hour; higher employment rates; increased work hours; and improved job satisfaction and job quality one year after enrolling in the training program.

Despite these substantial improvements in economic status, a significant number of respondents still do not earn enough to lift themselves and their

Eighty-seven percent of respondents reported completing the training.

families out of poverty. While significant gains were made, many respondents have quite a distance to go before they will achieve economic self-sufficiency. As we track the labor market experiences of these respondents over time, we will see if they are able to build on the progress they have made thus far. Results of the two-year follow-up survey of these participants, which will be presented in forthcoming publications, will shed more light on these issues and provide more information on how participants fare over time in the job market and in their respective industries.

For more information about the Sectoral Employment Development Learning Project, go online to www.aspeninstitute.org/eop.

1. Emerging Workforce

As technology continuously reshapes today's workplace, educators struggle to teach skills young people will need to be effective and successful workers. As the need for technologically competent workers grows, educators have to redefine what needs to be taught and how best to teach it. Educational standards and teacher preparation, according to presenters Mike Souden and Susan Meston, must incorporate technology skills in educational strategies in order to adequately prepare young people for the "wired" workplace.

Mike Souden, Director of the Regional Education Media Center of Michigan, first discussed the progress educators have made in integrating technology competencies into the existing educational standards framework.

Based on a 1991 Department of Labor report, technology was recognized as a necessary component for preparing young people for the work force.   "The Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills" (SCANS) report, Mr. Souden argued, provides a broad set of objectives for preparing young people with critical workplace technology skills.

Those skills include the abilities of students to select equipment and tools, apply technology to specific tasks, and to use computers and other information technologies. Since 1991, Mr. Souden reported, the development of the World Wide Web, the improvement of data processing programs, and the rise of e-mail and wireless technology intensify the challenge to include technology in the learning process. SCANS also identifies writing, speaking and interpersonal skills as basic skills for students. Technology can be used to create documents such as reports and graphs. It can also be used as a presentation tool for clearly expressing ideas. The Web allows students to interact with people from culturally diverse backgrounds.

While SCANS objectives are not yet being fully realized, educators are taking the first steps in incorporating technology skills into educational standards. New, better defined standards for information and technology literacy, for example, are being developed for students, teachers, and administrators. Mr. Souden observes, "it is not a teacher problem but a teaching style problem."

Mike Souden discussed preparing young people with critical workplace technology skills.

Presenter Susan Meston, Deputy Superintendent of the Muskegon Area Intermediate School District, next addressed the question of how technology is changing the way that learning happens in the classroom. Schools are increasing teachers' technological literacy, she noted, by providing basic computer training, explaining what technology can do, and locating Internet resources that teachers can use. By integrating technology into instructional methods, teachers can learn how to effectively present content in multimedia lessons, engage in distance learning opportunities, and take their students on electronic field trips.

Distance learning provides a good opportunity for students to connect with each other across state and county lines. An electronic field trip allows students to travel electronically to a new place. Ms. Meston described how one class recently took an electronic fieldtrip to the Columbus Zoo. "Is it as good as going to the zoo? Heck no! You don't get the sounds and smells," she admits. "But to have the ability to share in an experience – like seeing a new born manatee – is a great learning opportunity."

Both Ms. Meston and Mr. Souden remarked that by integrating technology into instruction, students can and do

2. Underutilized Workforce

Mark Wilson, Associate Professor of Geography, Urban and Regional Planning at Michigan State University began the session with an examination of the social context of technology. Information in the age of technology is of growing importance. Information itself is a major product of advanced societies. In fact, Mr. Wilson called information a commodity. For example, when we buy a vehicle we look at more than just the manufactured product. The cost of the vehicle includes the insurance, advertising, data processing, design, distribution, and even telecommunication costs. Many types of services and information, Mr. Wilson stressed, are embodied in the vehicle. The example shows that the value of intangible things has risen. In other words, the information content of the vehicle increases in value.

We have evolved, Mr. Wilson explained, from an agricultural and manufacturing society to a service society that emphasizes the importance of information gathering. As we change the ways in which we produce things, we change the types of occupations and industries that make them. This directly impacts job and career choices. Children, he noted, increasingly go into professions other than those of their parents, and they change jobs or professions more often. Today's jobs are increasingly focused on the information industry. In the "information society" technology influences the way we behave, work, and interact as people. This means that technology has become a social context, Mr. Wilson stated. Moreover, there are economic, social, and political forces that shape the development and power of technology. It is important, then, to understand that these forces are being decided within our social framework and to acknowledge that we are a part of the framework shaping process.

Mr. Wilson next asked the question, "can we help shape our technological futures?" If so how do we? Answers to those questions raise important issues about access to technology and the ability to use technology, Mr. Wilson said. Can one use a computer? Does one have proximity to the technology at home, at work, at school, at the library, or other locations? Also, why is one seeking information via the technology? Would one be better off seeking the information elsewhere? Then there are

Mark Wilson examined the social context of technology.

questions about the cost of Internet access. Can one afford the cost of the computer hardware, Internet service provider fees and telephone billing costs?

Mr. Wilson compiled information based on a recent survey of Michigan residents conducted quarterly by the Institute for Public Policy and Social Research. Generally, the survey results found the Michigan experience to be very similar to the national experience in terms of computer and Internet access. Of the Michigan households surveyed, 51.5 per cent have a computer. Forty two per cent of Michigan households surveyed have Internet access.

Knowing how to access information, Mr. Wilson argued, is an important part of being a member of the knowledge economy. Once citizens have access to such knowledge, the number and range of services available to them will be greatly enhanced.

"Technology is a means to an end," Mr. Wilson concluded, "and not an end it itself." "The computer does not substitute for knowing math and being literate. Technological skills are not a substitute for knowledge; they are, an additional requirement needed in this information society as we prepare for and compete in our technological future.

Marcus Jefferson and John Duley followed with a look at ways to bring technology skills to low income residents of Lansing. "We actually bring technology to the people in a unique way," said Mr. Jefferson, Director of Closing the Gap. Planning for the program started about three years ago, according to program founder Mr. Duley. Current program partners include the City of Lansing, the Capitol Area District Library, Lansing Community College, Head Start, the Black Child and Family Institute, and New Horizons Computer Learning Center.

Closing the Gap began through the Greater Lansing Housing Coalition (GLHC), also founded by Mr. Duley. The GLHC was organized to assist low-income residents of Greater Lansing purchase their first homes.

In 1997, GLHC was encouraged by the Federal office of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to place a computer learning center in a Meridian Township low-income housing community. The purpose of this center was to offer computer resources to children in this community. GLHC determined that computer learning resources could also benefit Habitat for Humanity new home residents and those using resources of transitional housing

organizations. The underserved segment of the community also included Head Start parents and Work First participants. Closing the Gap, according to Mr. Duley, is designed to help people gain access to computers, secure computers of their own, and gain further computer training. A motivating factor for involvement in the Closing the Gap program is the ability of participants to have a computer in the home. This will help their children compete successfully in the race to become and remain technologically competent. The program also targets people of varying levels of computer knowledge and skill, especially important for clients entering the world of computer involvement for the first time. The Closing the Gap team hopes the program will eventually help level the workforce playing field.

- Reported by Dewey Lawrence

3. Current Workforce

Brad Dyer from the AFL-CIO Human Resources Development Incorporated started the session. The private nonprofit organization's main work, he explained, is soliciting state and local grants in support of workforce education and training activities throughout the state.

Mr. Dyer described how the work of AFL-CIO Human Resources Development Incorporated has changed dramatically over the past decade. Ten years ago, he pointed out, the organization was working exclusively with displaced workers. Current programs involve more incumbent workers needing training and job preparation to meet new demands for higher level basic skills. The ability to read and do simple math at the sixth grade level used to be sufficient to land a decent blue-collar job. For the same job today, the basic skill requirement in mathematics could very well involve algebra and statistics in addition to simple arithmetic. High school graduation is now required for many blue-collar jobs.

Besides occupational skills, employers invariably want workers who can work well on a team, have effective communication skills, and are able to resolve conflict. There is also what Mr. Dyer called a "universal demand for computer literacy." In response, his organization, often in partnership with community colleges, has been preparing new and incumbent workers in new skill sets through its Regional Workforce Development Centers. Mr. Dyer emphasized that present day employers are complex, often requiring very specific skill sets. His organization is involved, then, in customized training for skill sets

Brad Dyer described customized training to match worker skill sets with employer needs.

that match the requirements of specific employers.

Mr. Dyer next gave an overview of technological advancement in the last decade and its impact on employment in virtually every sector. Skills needed for specific jobs, he contended, have not only been upgraded but in "some cases jobs themselves have been redefined or have virtually disappeared." For example, in the manufacturing sector, he remarked, "today you may need the training simply to continue the job you have been doing." Incumbent workers need to adapt more rapidly because companies are under increasing pressure from global competition to modernize. He also addressed sweeping changes in the building trade and construction industry where current workers are increasingly required to use technologies that did not exist five years ago.

The ability to stay abreast of new information technology is equally important for jobs in the service sector. Mr. Dyer cited an example of changing skill sets within his own organization. Compared to a decade ago, newly hired secretaries need higher competency in skills such as producing reports, managing contracts, using cost allocation software, and bookkeeping.

In his final remarks, Mr. Dyer stressed the need for closer cooperation between industry and training providers in order to better match needs with skills. He encouraged workforce development programs to work more closely with community colleges to provide upgrade and training for the new workforce in addition to keeping abreast of future workforce needs. Reflecting on the future, he speculated that the baby boomer retirement could cause problems if the current workforce and new entrants are not sufficiently trained to "move up."

Mark Strolle was the second speaker. He is a quality network representative at UAW Local 602 where he oversees training and transition programs. He started out by introducing the mission and activities of UAW. He explained that the mission of the UAW is broader than that of a bargaining agent. The Union is also actively involved in social services such as raising money for charitable causes and forming educational partnerships with local schools.

Mr. Strolle next addressed changes in the manufacturing world during the last decade. He contended that transitions in auto manufacturing spell the biggest challenges faced by current autoworkers. He recalled the time he was hired at a Lansing plant in 1978 when manufacturing required

Mark Strolle stressed the growing importance of computer literacy among manufacturing workers.

only basic mass production work skills. Demands on the skills sets of the current workforce have changed dramatically, he noted. "No longer do we hire workers in the Lansing motor plant like the way I was hired in 1978." Auto plant applicants today go through an elaborate screening process, Mr. Strolle explained. They have to pass tests in basic reading, writing, math, and computer competencies. They also have to show evidence of newer "soft" skills like the ability to work in groups.

Referencing a recent screening test, Mr. Strolle shared a surprising statistic that reflects the lack of basic skills among the current workforce. As high as 80 per cent of applicants fail the assessment test. Recent high school graduates fail at a higher rate than older workers. If in the past "people were not interested in the workers from the neck up" these days, Mr. Strolle said, mental skills are far from ignored.

Mr. Strolle discussed how the UAW Local 602 was helping its current workers in skills upgrade by using Internet technology to encourage participation and learning within the organization itself. The UAW Local has a skill center, staffed in part by Lansing Community College instructors, where its members can hone their computer skills. He explored some of the ways the Local was taking advantage of Internet-based communication tools like e-mail and interactive chat rooms to promote communication and learning within the organization. Computer skills are essential, he noted, not only for factory floor operations but also for the members to participate fully in the Union, a trend, he speculated, that would significantly change the way unions operate in the future.

In his concluding remarks Mr. Strolle stressed the importance of computer literacy for school kids before they get into the workforce. He also emphasized the continuing need to modernize the current workforce in order to keep pace with the demands of the information age. "There is a real need," he remarked, "to embrace information technology because of its ability to help people learn and participate in our society."

Scott McDonald from the Michigan Laborer's Training and Apprenticeship Institute (MLTAI) closed the session. He focused on his personal experience with continued training and learning in a successful effort to reach the level of competency he enjoys today. Noting the technological advancement in the building trade and construction industry within the last five years, Mr. McDonald gave examples of dozens of jobs previously labeled "unskilled," but

Scott McDonald explored the need to prepare today's labor force for versatility more than anything else.

now requiring specialized training and certification. It is increasingly difficult, then, for journeymen to remain in or have any career mobility without constant training and certification in new technologies. Like the previous speakers, Mr. McDonald emphasized the increasing importance of basic reading and math skills at a level previously not considered necessary for "unskilled" labor. Today's need for higher level basic skills is even greater due to the fact that potential trainees must pass training certifications for new trades and upgrades. This, he observed, is a special problem for older workers long out of high school.

Like the previous speakers, Mr. McDonald attempted to dispel the myth of the traditional blue collar worker. Workers today are taking increasingly complex jobs requiring high levels of skill and sophistication. He strongly emphasized the need to prepare today's labor force for versatility more than anything else. Moving to new jobs and learning new tricks to keep old jobs both require training.

MLTAI offers apprenticeships in building trade and construction skills ranging from low tech to high tech. These apprenticeship programs prepare people for the changing workforce. Laid off workers can also explore new careers Mr. McDonald talked about the challenges faced by his organization in helping workers fully utilize these opportunities.

The biggest challenge faced by MLTAI is recruiting clients for apprenticeships. Although people see value in apprenticeships and continuous training, most workers, according to Mr. McDonald, are still reluctant to change. This is true especially among older workers whose initial excitement often wanes when they are asked to read thick training manuals. Even though there is a 35 per cent increase in wage rate for anyone with a 16-hour training certificate from the institute, there is still a widespread misperception among workers, according to Mr. McDonald, that they can stop learning once they are employed in a trade. To overcome this resistance, MLTAI offers incentives for members to join. Nonetheless, only 20 per cent of members have gone through some training at the center. Mr. McDonald concluded with the remark that the challenge is to inspire the rest.

- Reported by Tamara Juarez

4. Policy for State and Local Government

Katherine Willis began her presentation by introducing Cyber-State.org, a nonprofit

formed in 1998 by the Michigan Information Technology Commission, a group of fifty Michigan leaders representing the business, nonprofit, healthcare, government, and philanthropy sectors. Cyber-State.org seeks to make Michigan a world leader in the use and development of information technology in a way that benefits everyone. The organization, Ms. Willis explained, has four concrete goals: increase Michigan's online population; expand the availability of information technologies for learning; support information technology entrepreneurship; and encourage access to online information.

Cyber-State.org, in partnership with Public Sector Consultants, conducts an annual survey of Michigan residents to find out who is online. After briefly describing the survey's methods, Ms. Willis analyzed the results. The most current survey found that from 1999 to 2000 ownership rates of computers was essentially unchanged, a statistic consistent with national trends. According to Ms. Willis, the portion of the population with higher income and education may already have acquired the technology. Also, with the steady demise of free Internet service providers, people at lower and middle income ranges have less incentive to buy

computers. Metro Detroit, Ms. Willis noted, has the lowest penetration of ownership of computers in the home, while central and southern Michigan enjoy the highest rates.

Although the survey found no increase in the rate of computer ownership, results did show a nine percent increase in the number of people using the Internet. This, according to Ms. Willis, could be attributed to the variety of available locations that offer Internet access, including businesses, schools, and libraries.

Ms. Willis also presented some 1999 data on technology use and education. According to survey results, people with lower education levels are becoming increasingly involved in Internet use, and they are applying such information technologies in much greater rates. Nonetheless, results also showed that individuals with lower education rates and in lower income brackets are still less likely to be using computers and accessing the Internet.

Other results showed that 58 per cent of new users are women, 44 per cent are over the age of 65, and 17 per cent under the age of 25. One third of new Internet users have a high school degree; one third have a college or vocational degree.

Of all Michigan residents using the Internet, the majority of

Katherine Willis presented data on technology use among Michigan residents.

individuals connect using modem access, and 14 per cent use broadband connections, the majority of which are in the Detroit Metro area. Ms. Willis added that results show most individuals are happy with their current connection speed.

Data from a March, 2000 survey addressed reasons why people are not acquiring and using the Internet. There are a number of obstacles, including literacy and language limitations. According to Ms. Willis, another barrier impacting workforce development is the lack of local information available on the Web.

Ms. Willis concluded her presentation by briefly examining some policy implications, particularly those relating to education. While there is a statewide plan for education technology, Michigan is only one of six states without allocation for educational technology. At the local level, one option Ms. Willis suggested are local district bonds, which can be financed with local school districts. Part of the problem, however, is that bond funds can only be used to purchase hardware, and cannot cover other related expenses such as planning for the integration of technology into curricula, technology development for teachers, and technical support.

Jeff Ogden followed with a overview of Michigan programs that encourage development of Internet infrastructure. Some of the programs he mentioned lasted only a year or two, and others are ongoing. Some are privately funded, while others are centrally managed.

The Michigan Information Network was among the programs Mr. Ogden reviewed. Its goal is to create a state-wide network in support of a variety of school based applications, including video and Internet use and access. Link Michigan, another program introduced by Mr. Ogden, encourages development in areas of the state without advanced telecommunications access. Other programs include the Gates Foundation Grants to libraries and NSFNET, a collaboration of the National Science Foundation, Merit Networks, IBM, and MCI.

Mr. Ogden stressed throughout his presentation that the Internet is a public/private partnership that has accomplished much over a very short time. This theme of working among different groups and across traditional lines is, according to Mr. Ogden, especially important when talking about education and work force development.

Mr. Ogden next questioned the assumption that technology is a

good thing. He asked whether technology is important for its own sake, or rather as a means to an end. He raised several questions. Is more technology itself a good thing? What is the purpose of more technology? What is the goal?

Mr. Ogden then examined the phrase "working wired" by raising critical questions. Does "working wired" mean technology based jobs for the unemployed and underemployed or more trained workers for a technology hungry business sector? Does it include telecommuting? Is it a tool to facilitate education?

In Michigan, Mr. Ogden pointed out, a local call to the Internet without per-minute charges is available to 98 per cent of all telephone exchanges. Given that statistic, he asked, "are we done? [H]as Michigan conquered the digital divide? How can we move beyond where we currently are?" In many cases, he noted, institutions such as libraries, community colleges, and schools may be able to offer more advanced access to the Internet and better Internet applications not readily be available in private homes. In addition to greater Internet access , there is a also a need to make sure that Internet information is available in a language that people understand, including important information on local jobs, entertainment, and other items of local interest.

Mr. Ogden then began talking about the future of technology by introducing Internet 2, a Michigan based effort created by some of the largest colleges, universities, and research organizations in the country. Its goal is to develop network capabilities that would allow new applications currently unavailable on the commercial Internet. He examined some of the policy and development issues raised by the advanced capabilities of Internet 2. When thinking about the regulations and policies of a new Internet, Mr. Ogden posed key questions: Should there be more competition or more regulation? In addition, is the government's role to get out of the way, or is it to intervene? If it intervenes, does it do so by passing rules and laws or by creating an incentive based system? Mr. Ogden wrapped up his presentation by demonstrating a new capability of the Internet through a real-time video link with his office.

Charles Monsma shifted the focus of the session to state and local governments in Michigan. First, he outlined Michigan's workforce development infrastructure and its recent changes. Workforce development programs are handled by 25 Michigan Works agencies located

Jeff Ogden summarized Michigan programs to develop the Internet infrastructure.

Charles Monsma discussed the Washtenaw County strategic planning process for workforce development.

have been going through strategic planning processes.

As an example, Mr. Monsma covered the strategic planning process taking place in Washtenaw County. That began with an environmental study to determine local trends. Based on these findings, the workforce development agency designed a report card to determine what was going well, and what wasn't. In Washtenaw County, the report card outlines five goals.

The first two are demand side employer goals: development of sector based workforce development strategies and addressing workforce needs of small and medium sized business. Small business, according to Mr. Monsma, is where most of the growth is occurring both at national and local levels. One of the most pressing needs for small businesses, especially start-up tech firms, is skilled employees. In addition, small businesses are less likely to have the internal resources to provide training, recruit workers, and do other types of services that the workforce development agencies and their partners could bring to them.

The next development goals are supply-side goals. The third addresses the needs of the county's working poor. The fourth harnesses the untapped human resources in the county to address

the current labor shortages, including high school and college graduates and persons with disabilities.

The final goal aims to improve system wide planning efforts and customer outcomes through a concerted quality assurance initiative. This initiative calls on local agencies to put more of their energies into outreach in order to gain better understanding of the needs and values of local businesses.

The next step involved developing an operational plan. With community input, the five goals were narrowed down to three broad objectives. The demand side objective seeks to increase the number of Michigan Works service customers who obtain employment at small and medium sized employers by five percent per year over a three year period. The second objective, on the supply-side, aims to increase by 10 per cent the employment of low-income workers, including persons with disabilities, in full-time jobs with employer based health benefits. This objective also targets a 10 per cent increase in Washtenaw County high school students participating in career preparation experiences.

Partnerships are an integral part of the Washtenaw strategy. There is a strong need, Mr. Monsma stressed, for closer

contact between, for example, the school systems and the workforce development agencies, and closer contacts with the university system, social service agencies, transportation services, and all of the other support systems the working poor need to become viable employees.

With broad institutional participation, more knowledge of the market, linkages of markets to employees, and federal and state dollars, local programs such as Washtenaw's can succeed, Mr. Monsma concluded, in boosting regional information technology employment.

- Reported by Chris Foley

Luncheon Keynote

Alan Shaw

Toward A New Workplace Ethic of Craft and Community

"The competitve ability is the ability to learn." - Seymour Papert

Technologies and demographics in the workplace are constantly in a state of fluctuation. To meet the dynamics of these changes, the power of old and new ethics should be explored. Throughout contemporary workplaces there are demands for new forms of expertise and competitiveness coupled with the new demands of an increasing pace of change and increasing diversity. Through the fostering of process oriented learning, today's workers can enjoy a sense of shared craft with productive ends.

A Traditional Workplace Training Model

We need a modern workplace ethic that transforms work into craft and training into a developmental cycle.

The process of how knowledge is pursued is more enduring in the workplace than simply what types of knowledge are known. Through exploration, reflection, creativity and collaboration, workers can adapt to new forms of technology and rise to new challenges. Exploration and discovery are required when adapting to new forms of media in the workplace. Reflective, analytical problem solving follows as cognitive abilities are shaped by the first step of exploration. Creativity or creation of products is the result of an organizational process that fosters a notion of craft in the workplace. The overall goal of process oriented learning is the "building of collaborative peer communities" within workplaces that leads to a shared sense of craft.

Historically, workplaces have placed heavy emphasis on training and access for workers to master a new skill. These two elements represent a passive, short-term end-product oriented workplace model described as the "training model" with the main focus being "what you know."   "In a workplace where constant upgrading and retooling have become the norm, a regimen of training and re-training have become a necessity. However, training modules often focus on skills instead of craft and ideas instead of conceptual frameworks."

The Developmental Workplace Model

On the flip side of the coin, the concept of "how you came to know" represents an active, long-term process-oriented workplace model, known as the "developmental model." Empowerment and development are key players. "The changing technological landscape does not dominate the focus of the workers, but instead it plays a more supportive role, acting mainly as a context through which they engage the craft in new ways and with others who share in their experiences." Developmental growth is defined as "the ability to

progressively engage in a work and then to disengage in order to reflect upon it. This cycle of engaging and disengaging is especially consequential when there is a community with which to examine the work and share in the reflections."

There are two current perspectives that deal with learning and development. Seymour Papert of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology took part with other researchers in a study of passive and active learning to develop the theories of Constructivism and Constructionism. Constructivism is an active learning model that sees the learner as needing constructive (craft-like) activities to learn best. Constructionism is also an active learning model, yet it emphasizes the role that a community of learners (a peer community within the workplace) can play in enhancing the capacity of the learner.

Bob Moses, founder of the Algebra Project and a civil rights organizer for 40 years from the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee serves as a case study for the theory of Constructionism. " The work of Bob Moses during the sixties shows how organizing more cohesive communities empowered people who felt helpless in the South. The method used by Bob Moses to teach Algebra also emphasizes building cohesive learning environments to empower kids educationally and equip them with a sense of a learning craft and a learning community in the classroom."

Boston's MetroLINC Program

In Boston schools, new initiatives promoting the developmental model have been introduced. Some of the initiatives foster a professional community among the teachers, while others aim to offer additional access to technology. In support of the latter, Alan Shaw has been instrumental in the development of an online lesson plan called "MetroLINC." MetroLINC aids teachers in the development of their sense of craft and community in the schools through the creation and sharing of lesson plans online.

Teachers participating through MetroLINC can develop and share pedagogy with colleagues while integrating curriculum standards (which aids in the refining of craft). The sharing of online lesson plans also aids in the development of benchmarks for evaluation (refining of craft). The program fosters online Peer Review, mentorship and collaborative projects that facilitate the creation of a professional learning community. Teachers utilizing MetroLINC are allowed increased exposure to new technology while completing more important non-technical accomplishments. By writing up their own lesson plans and evaluating their relevancy to various curriculum standards, the teachers use the technology to develop products of their craft that they have ownership of and that represent both engaged practice and disengaged reflection.

Today's teachers are on the front line of the changing workplace expectations and technologies.

There are three organizations that provide software that focuses on developmental plans, personal learning plans, and organizational learning plans. IMANI Information Systems, the National Institute for Community Innovations (NICI), and Linking Up Villages (LUV) offer tools that complete the following tasks: Mapping out of procedural knowledge in an institution into a type of "Concept Map"; offering a self-assessment process; developing of the "Best Tools"; peer review and peer mentorships along with collaborative projects.

Technology can be applied appropriately as a means to define processes that lead to a shared sense of craft and product related outcomes, engage the workforce in developmental processes such as reflection and planning, and to develop and expand peer relationships to facilitate new and old forms of workplace community.

For more information about these tools, go online to www.imanisystems.com, www.nici-mc2.org, or www.villagenetwork.org.

Following lunch, five experts convened to interact with one another and with the Summer Institute participants about the topics of technology and workforce development. John Austin moderated the panel, which also included Alan Shaw, Barry Stern, Katherine Willis, and Mark Wilson. The following remarks are excerpted from the discussion.

Technology as Tool vs. Solution

Austin: Does anybody [on the panel] have a response to Dr. Alan Shaw's keynote address at lunch?

Stern: Shaw has put a theory structure behind something that has been around for quite some time. It should be common sense. Ask yourself: Where are you now? Where are you going? How do we measure that? And what is working now?

Willis: Alan points out a need for community conversation as well as that technology can be helpful as people build connections that enable human networks. How many of you [to audience] have developed networks among the people who are involved in economic development?

Participant: We use it to collaborate on our goals and services that we provide.

Shaw: Technology is a tool that can serve to foster networks. Computers or other technology are not a solution or an end.

Stern: Technology is beyond our ability, it has capacity beyond what we can do or deliver. Computers are in schools but they are just sitting there. Proper curriculum and programs are not being widely used that can fully utilize the capacity of the technology we have [Stern offers a scenario of how a school of the future might look and function, supporting Shaw's view of technology as a tool.

Wilson:	[Supports both Shaw and Stern's viewpoints of technology and computers are tools.] You can be online watching television essentially… or you can be online using [the Internet] as a telephone. Same computer, same desk. It's what we do with the computer or other technology that is important.
Participant:	What do you do for people who do not know how to use the computer for reasons such as a limited geographic region [rural areas] or any other reason that could lead to a digital divide?
Shaw:	[Discussed what has to happen for people to use the computer in the workplace for staff development or training.] How do you add a two-way discussion element to it? For one example, once the structure is down, the technology is a gateway to conduct these discussions and to integrate responses from the bottom up to things that are coming from the top down.
Participant:	[Points to the use of online discussion in Holland, Michigan, to identify available services within the community.]
Shaw:	Citizenship has evolved downward to less and less participation. Technology can assist civic participation at the small group level where there is a need and a desire for that. But these online discussions are too often at the national scale where nothing can really happen…. They need to be brought down to the community level where change can occur.
Participant:	Is the unstable workforce [due to the rapid transfer of technology] in terms of people not keeping their jobs longer than a few years something that is temporary or is it structural?
Shaw:	Collaborative communities in the workplace to discuss craft will help people who participate in them by making them aware of new technologies and how to use them. These dialogues within the communities will keep people up to date. If the dialogues are not taking place every new wave of technology will be disempowering to the worker. Again technology can be used to facilitate these dialogues.

"Technology can assist civic participation at the small group level... online discussions are too often at the national scale where nothing can really happen."
- Alan Shaw

Willis: Enabling cohorts within the workforce development process to
                 share their experiences so that the individuals within the cohorts
                 can grade where they stand in comparison to others in the
                 group. How, practically, can cohorts use technology to build
                 with each other?

Wilson: Technology can not only be used as a tool but as a weapon. It
                 can deskill jobs. Jobs that once used a range of skills can be
                 broken down into just keyboard entries. How do you avoid
                 those jobs? How do you make sure people are well paid for
                 those jobs? Technology is not good or bad, people will have
                 different experiences. We need to be aware of who the
                 winners and losers are in the workforce.

Stern: [In reference to previous question:] There are more jobs for
                 temporary and contract workers. It is more stable for some,
                 less for others. People are using technology to improve
                 themselves as they see fit. There are a number of self-service
                 tools. Every person who wants access to the Internet can get
                 it at Michigan Works service centers. However, is there really
                 a digital divide or is it a reading divide? Can people with low
                 levels of math and reading skills use the Internet profitably?

The Digital Divide

Austin: [To Stern:] Are you concerned that online job searches are not
                 useful to certain people?

Stern: [Some people thrive] when they are given the opportunity.
                 However, many people couldn't pass an eighth grade reading
                 test. Can they navigate the Internet effectively?

Participant: [Concerning the same topic, a participant stated that she did not
                 believe she would need to teach people how to access the
                 computers once they were available:] I noticed however that
                 many people were afraid of the computers. Once they were
                 taught basic skills, they became very excited. They then
                 learned much more on their own. The programs are set up to
                 guide people around. Even with low reading levels, no one has
                 any problem once they get past their fear.

Shaw:	If there is an importance to have math and reading skills to access the Internet, along comes a big push for the literacy programs. The notion that everyone should have access to the Internet is starting to become a social norm. This creative energy the people need to go out and volunteer in literacy programs, and at churches and schools. This is happening worldwide. Technology is not the question. It is all about what is going on in the community. Are we getting empowered citizens? We are looking for the bottom up response. What other elements come into play with the need for access? We can't lose the active citizenship.
Participant:	Access is available but still need to be addressed because some families still don't have enough [access]. [To Shaw:] How do you empower young people to become leaders in the community that were previously afraid of the technology?
Shaw:	It is critical to find leaders. Leadership can not be handed to them though. They have to build it from the ground up. Examples: make money for community projects; tell stories of the history of the community. What ever the issue is, it is a catalyst.
Participant:	When you meet with business owners to discuss what is important to them, why are dress code and other work skills more important than technology skills?
Stern:	When someone shows up with all the skills, they will get the job over someone that only possesses one or the other.
Shaw:	A lot of young people are not knowledgeable about the work environment. People will enter the workforce with only technology skills. In college they learn all these environment issues as well.

- Reported by Tim Harms and Brandon Dunn

5. Emerging Workforce

Mike Richter, Nancy Davis, and John Austin discussed current initiatives taking place throughout Michigan to ensure that young people are adequately prepared to meet the new demands of the expanding information technology age. Such demands represent an increasing concern for many educators and policy makers throughout the nation. With a rapidly growing number of jobs available in the Information Technology field, more and more people are beginning to recognize the importance of preparing young people to fill these new occupations.

Mike Richter, of the CISCO Academy, began the session by describing the academy's vision. He stated that for the past five years, the academy, based at Lansing's Eastern High School, has been striving to put its vision of e-learning into practice. This vision not only includes students becoming more proficient in working with computers, but it also embraces the idea that in the near future people from many different backgrounds will be able to benefit from e-learning activities.

Mr. Richter described a new pilot program in Lansing School District high schools that offers

Mike Richter described an intensive course to prepare high school students for a career in the information technology field.

Nancy Davis described the Michigan Virtual High School's Oracle Internet Academy.

school environment. Ms. Davis described this new initiative as a natural "evolution of school," which takes into account the new impact that the Internet is having on everyday life. Through this initiative, students are able to enroll in Web-based Advanced Placement (AP) courses. Unlike the CISCO Academy courses, these online courses are not offered with a "face-to-face" classroom instructor. Instead, the instructor guides the course primarily through the use of the Internet, with such activities as online tests, assignments, and conversations in live chat rooms, via e-mail, and by telephone. According to Ms. Davis, these courses offer more opportunities and provide students with skills that they would not learn in a traditional classroom.

Although the program is only a year old, over 800 students have enrolled in its AP courses. In addition, over 8,000 students have used the Oracle Internet Academy's AP Exam Review tool. As more and more online courses are developed, Ms. Davis predicted, they will reach students who are not in traditional high schools.

Ms. Davis next emphasized the importance of training teachers to become online instructors who can integrate technology into everyday classroom activities. If teachers

aren't properly trained on the use of technology in the classroom, students will not receive the education that they need to ensure success in the new high tech world," Ms. Davis stated. Moreover, with the implementation of the new Teacher Technology Initiative (TTI) that provides every eligible Michigan teacher with a lap top computer, it is essential that teachers receive the training to use these computers effectively in the classroom. For this reason, MVHS also provides support for teachers who are either interested in becoming online instructors or are struggling with the use of technology in their classroom. According to Ms. Davis, the organization has had many inquiries from teachers who are interested in becoming online instructors.

John Austin, of Public Policy Associates, next discussed the education agenda of the state regarding the adequate preparation of school aged youth in the use of technology. According to Mr. Austin, Michigan is focused on the outcomes that programs such as those described by Ms. Davis and Mr. Richter will have on the long-term success of students when they leave the school environment. These technological initiatives are still very new, making it difficult to know what effects they will have on students' futures. Policy makers seem to agree, however, on the importance of investing in initiatives that will teach young people how to manage the new technologies. Mr. Austin spoke about another important issue that must be considered when discussing technology and education: the large achievement gaps in schools. According to Mr. Austin, closing the gap in achievement between schools in low income areas and those in middle or higher income areas is a major priority for state policy makers. With the growing importance of technology in everyday life, many policy makers are concerned that schools without the resources to purchase computers or to train teachers and students will fall even farther behind.

In order to ensure that these under- performing schools do not lag behind, the state is focusing on training teachers to become proficient in integrating technology into their classroom activities. Mr. Austin stated, "We must focus as a society on issues of equity. One essential component in achieving equity in the school system is to ensure that our teachers are trained and have the skills necessary to adequately prepare our students for meaningful careers and lives." State leadership understands the impacts that early childhood investments in students can have on the productiveness of their futures. For these reasons, state policy makers are especially interested in

John Austin discussed the goals of state education policy makers in Michigan.

Linda Hanks and Michael Bradley discussed the Focus: HOPE Information Technologies Center.

6. Underutilized Workforce

Linda Hanks and Michael Bradley began the session by discussing the work of Focus: HOPE's Information Technologies Center (ITC) launched in January of 1999. Ms. Hanks noted that 900,000 IT jobs will need staffing next year.   ITC places emphasis on teaching technical as well as personal skills necessary to move the underutilized workforce into these high demand IT positions.

ITC's prerequisites and target population are important components of the program. To be eligible, a participant must possess a driver's license, reliable transportation, and a high school education or its equivalent. Ms. Hanks clarified that these requirements mirror those critical to acquiring positions in the IT industry. Minority youths and those living in inner cities are targeted for participation. ITC offers three paths toward work in the IT sector and has an 81 per cent graduation rate.

The first step for participants, Ms. Hanks explained, is to enroll in a five-week introductory IT skills course. After completion, participants move on toward certification in Network Administration, Desktop Support, or Network Installation. All of these educational paths are based on three major principles: hands-on activity; multiple learning devices; and a curriculum constantly updated to IT industry standards. Internships, communication classes, and group projects are among the teaching approaches used at ITC.

A particular aspect of information technology training addressed by Ms. Hanks focuses on the problem of over-qualification. Employers looking for workers with basic skills in network and systems administration often do not hire entry-level applicants with highly advanced qualifications. To protect against such a barrier to employment, ITC developed Desktop Support, a program that teaches a wide skill set as opposed to more technically specific skills.

Focus: HOPE partners with several companies to move participants into successful job placements. For example, Focus:

HOPE has built a relationship with Ford Motor Company and its outsource companies so that program graduates have a ready avenue toward employment. ITC works with program graduates until they find jobs. Ms. Hanks stated, "we educate, but we educate to place."

Ms. Hanks described ITC as emphasizing both technical and personal skills. The ITC curriculum is tailored to suit the needs of employers. Program expectations include being drug-free, adhering to a 10 per cent absence maximum standard, and observing the ITC dress code. Ms. Hanks explained that standards of professionalism are as important to the success of program participants as technical skills training.

Michael Bradley of the CISCO Academy, also discussed the ITC, concentrating on early challenges faced by the program. CISCO Academy, a partner of ITC, relies heavily on the concept that technological training and personal skills development are prerequisites for success. Understanding what employers want, Mr. Bradley reiterated, is the key to fashioning a curriculum that not only produces hirable graduates, but also keeps the program up-to-date with the IT industry. Mr. Bradley briefly illustrated one of the basic problems faced by the program: the lack of teachers to staff the program.

Mark Wilson, of Michigan State University, next spoke about the role of information technology in everyday life. Mr. Wilson explained that in the information age, information technology is critical to the economic and social fundamentals of life. He maintained that information is a commodity that our economic well being and future is highly dependent upon. In this way, technology and society are bound together. As technology changes, so too does our social reality.

Mr. Wilson went on to point out that there are economic, social, and political forces at play in the creation of new technologies. The role of specific technologies in the social organization of particular age groups is a good example of the kind of dramatic social changes we should be aware of.

Mr. Wilson then referenced the same technology use survey he analyzed in the morning session. He reported that results of the survey reflect geographical, racial, and gender differences in reference to technology access and usage.

Mr. Wilson closed with a brief discussion of technology in the workplace and its affects on the workforce. He also stressed that technology should be viewed as a means and not an end to successful and fulfilling workplace endeavors.

Mark Wilson stressed that technology should be viewed as a means and not an end to workplace success.

7. Current Workforce

Thomas Schumann began the session with a brief history of Michigan Virtual University (MVU), a nonprofit founded in 1998 by Governor John Engler and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. Two-thirds of the Board of Directors, Mr. Schumann explained, are from business and industry; one-third represents government and higher education.

MVU's mission is to meet the state's specific workforce development and educational training needs through Web-based technology, projected nationally to be an $11 billion industry by 2003. MVU is not an education institution. It does not issue diplomas. Through signed agreements with 28 Community Colleges and 14 four year universities, MVU serves as a "portal broker," according to Mr. Schumann, making courses available to new domestic and

Thomas Schumann described Michigan Virtual University's programs to update worker skills.

international markets.

Among the 30 Virtual Universities throughout the nation, Michigan Virtual University is the first to focus primarily on workforce development. Two years ago MVU took on an additional charge to help accelerate Michigan institutions' ability to offer online education. A Virtual High School was also added.

In addition to its educational role as a staff development tool MVU is also an economic development initiative dedicated to attracting new industry to Michigan. "By improving the [information technology] skills for the Michigan education community," Mr. Schumann acknowledged, "the IT workforce will be strengthened across the state."

Mr. Schuman next described the MVU audience as consisting of K-12 teachers, staff, administrators, and students across the state, including charter, public, and parochial schools as well as higher education institutions. MVU also serves nonprofits and small businesses with 25 employees or less. Overall, MVU serves 850,000 users, making it the largest online training initiative in the world.

MVU also teams with the Michigan Community College Association on an IT curriculum for their M-tech centers. By combining resources, per unit course costs were dramatically

development needs based on a comprehensive survey by Kellogg Community College funded with a grant from the State of Michigan. Conducted in Barry, Branch, and Calhoun counties, Ms. Tarr said the survey examined " key issues involving the workforce, . . . the effectiveness of the current programs, and what needs to be done in the future to enhance the programming." She focused on the topics of county population, the labor market, the new economy, and workforce readiness.

Barry and Branch counties Ms. Tarr reported, are growing from an influx of population from Kent County. Branch County is mushrooming in population, while Calhoun County is declining. The birth to 19 year old population in the three county area is declining, while the 65 and over age group is increasing rapidly.

Meanwhile, Ms. Tarr noted that the labor market has shifted from high wage/low skill jobs to medium wage/high skill employment. Since there are not enough people to fill the current demand for technical careers, there is a need, she emphasized, for "21st Century Literacy" skills, including strong academic thinking and reasoning ability along with teamwork skills and proficiency in technology. "Everybody who has worked in an office in the past five years," Ms. Tarr said, "knows that

Kathryn Tarr discussed the role of workforce development boards in funding local activities.

8. Policy for State and Local Government

This workshop covered two levels of workforce development. Rosalyn Jones first addressed information technology (IT) outreach for small businesses, and George Erickcek next introduced contemporary policy issues informing workforce development.

Rosalyn Jones works for the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) of Lansing. She oversees the College Recruitment and Retention Campaign, an outreach program designed to encourage IT graduates to choose tech positions in the state. According to data from the Information Technology Association of America (ITAA), 1.6 million IT jobs were created last year. Half of the available positions, Ms. Jones stressed, are unfilled. Thirty per cent of the positions are available in the Midwest, the majority in Michigan. Using marketing research, MEDC

identified people and key communities in the midwest—Chicago, Cincinnati, Columbus, and Indianapolis— in an effort to alert skilled workers of the job opportunities available in Michigan.

In August of 2000, MEDC conducted a survey of 250 Michigan businesses (60 per cent of them with 100 or fewer employees). The survey included multiple questions about the businesses' college recruitment efforts in the fields of information technology, life sciences, and engineering. Fifty-six per cent of the reporting businesses noted that they had positions available in engineering, 47 per cent in IT, and 12 per cent in science.

Regarding recruitment, 56 per cent of the companies stated that they have difficulty recruiting college students. Small companies have an especially tough time, according to Ms. Jones. In light of these findings, MEDC started a targeted recruitment program in January, 2001, at 13 midwestern universities. Among other outcomes, the program encouraged students and future graduates in the IT, science, and engineering fields to submit professional profiles on MEDC's website. Ms. Jones related these efforts to another MEDC initiative, the Michigan Recruitment Alliance. The Alliance helps small

businesses recruit qualified college majors in high-tech fields. Businesses participate in the Alliance through posting job openings on Careersite and participating in a minimum of two off-campus events including job fairs and marketing campaigns. The Michigan Recruitment Alliance also builds relationships with university placement professionals at the target schools. Ms. Jones briefly mentioned future endeavors with other like-minded organizations to attract and retain high-tech graduates from Michigan and other midwestern states.

While Ms. Jones' talk addressed challenges with highly skilled individuals, George Erickcek's presentation centered on people with low skills and the policy issues involved in the placement of individuals marginally attached to the workforce. His discussion covered contemporary knowledge on workforce development, a case study of the *Michigan Works!* program, the strengths and weaknesses of the information age, and visions of how to use technology more effectively in workforce development.

Mr. Erickcek, an economist with the W. E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, is not quite "won over," he admitted, "by the power of the Internet." While

Rosalyn Jones addressed information technology outreach for small businesses.

George Erickcek addressed contemporary policy issues in workforce development programs.

conceding the positive effects of how the World Wide Web works as a catalyst to connect prospective employers with workers, he argued that personal relationships between workers and employers are more important.

The first part of the presentation addressed contemporary policy issues on workforce development programs. Mr. Erickcek argued that demand-side factors , those targeting businesses themselves , may be more important than supply-side programs that target at-risk workers. Mr. Erickcek mentioned that research has found that millions of individuals remain unemployed, even in the best of times. Economic development efforts help, but they are not sufficient to address the problem. Almost a third of welfare recipients, for example, face employment barriers that reduce their odds of employment by 50 per cent.

Supply side programs are burdened by what Mr. Erickcek called the problem of "displacement effects." This happens, for example, when a job taken by a person graduating from a training program "displaces" another person who may have been successful in getting the job without the program .The problem of displacement effects, he noted, is that it does not necessarily

decrease unemployment rates. According to Mr. Erickcek, supply side programs work best when businesses are directly involved in their design and implementation.

Mr. Erickcek cited research showing noted that effective training programs share a number of characteristics, including clear performance goals They seek to place people in quality positions with good earning potential. They link graduates to employers' hiring networks. Effective programs also screen and provide diagnostic tests to determine who is best served by the training.

In addition, research indicates that with low skilled jobs, soft skills, such as timeliness, teamwork, and self-confidence, are more important than hard skills. Mr. Erickcek also noted that temporary employment services are successful because people are placed in work environments where their performance can be observed, unlike an interview where it is impossible to make a performance judgment.

Mr. Erickcek went on to discuss *Michigan Works!* , a customer-driven workforce development system that helps employers find the skilled work they need and workers locate good jobs that provide economic self-sufficiency. The program features a talent bank that matches employers and job

seekers. It provides access to other job boards (electronic or traditional), along with resume and cover letter assistance and one-on-one assistance. The program is available to anyone that seeks to use it, thus avoiding the stigma, Mr. Erickcek explained, of targeting only risky or undesirable workers. Its strengths are providing personal assistance to people who are "computer illiterate" and its public and private accessibility.

Mr. Erickcek closed by stating that existing policies addressing the marginally employed workforce could be strengthened with better "personal touch" efforts when helping people get through tough times of unemployment. He also urged that businesses stay involved in workforce development planning during both good and bad economic times. Jobs programs must be designed, moreover, to lower displacement costs and provide career opportunities.

— Reported by Michael Hicks

Appendices

Appendix 1: 2001 Summer Institute Day Agenda

8:00 – 8:30   **Registration**

8:30 – 8:45   **Welcoming Remarks**
Rex LaMore, Project Director, Michigan Partnership for
Economic Development Assistance (MP/EDA), Michigan State
University
John Schweitzer, Urban Affairs Programs, Michigan State
University

8:45 – 9:30   **Morning Keynote Address**
Jack Litzenberg, Senior Program Officer
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation

9:45 – 11:45   **Morning Concurrent Sessions**

Session 1
Emerging Workforce
Presenters Mike Souden and Susan Meston with facilitator
Linda Patrick and recorder Mary Carlson

Session 2
Underutilized Workforce
Presenters Mark Wilson, Marcus Jefferson, and John Duley
with facilitator Reynard Blake and recorder Dewey Lawrence

Session 3
Current Workforce
Presenters Brad Dyer, Mark Strolle, and Scott McDonald with
facilitator Tom Coleman and recorder Tamara Juarez

Session 4
Policy for State and Local Government
Presenters Katherine Willis, Jeff Ogden, and Charles Monsma
with facilitator Katherine Willis and recorder Cathy Stauffer

12:00 – 12:30   **Fourth Annual MP/EDA Award Presentation**
Presentation by Rex LaMore, MP/EDA State Director

12:30 – 1:30   **Luncheon Address**
Alan Shaw, Executive Director
Linking Up Villages
Introduction by Reynard Blake

1:30 –2:00   **Townhall Discussion**
Panelists Barry Stern, Alan Shaw, Katherine Willis, and Mark
Wilson, with facilitator John Austin and recorders Tim Harms
and Brandon Dunn

2:15– 4:00   **Afternoon Concurrent Sessions**

Session 5
Emerging Workforce
Presenters Mike Richter, Nancy Davis, and John Austin with
facilitator Susan Cocciarelli and recorder Chris Foley

Session 6
Underutilized Workforce
Presenters Linda Hanks, Michael Bradley, and Mark Wilson
with facilitator Reynard Blake and recorder Jill Harper

Session 7
Current Workforce
Presenters Thomas Schumann and Kathyrn Tarr with facilitator
Joe Rahn and recorder Patricia Wood

Session 8
Policy for State and Local Government
Presenters Rosalyn Jones and George Erickcek with facilitator
Katherine Willis and recorder Michael Hicks

4:00   **Reception and Networking**

Appendix 2: Speakers and Presenters

John Austin is senior project manager at Public Policy Associates of Lansing, and serves as an elected member of the State Board of Education.

Michael Bradley is lead instructor for Network Administration at Focus: HOPE in Detroit.

Nancy Davis is executive director of the Michigan Virtual High School in Lansing.

John Duley is founder of the Greater Lansing Housing Coalition and the Closing the Gap project of the Black Child and Family Institute in Lansing.

Brad Dyer is director of the Michigan State AFL-CIO Human Resources Development, Incorporated, in Lansing.

George Erickcek is senior regional analyst for the W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research in Kalamazoo.

Linda Hanks is information technology manager for Focus: HOPE in Detroit.

Marcus Jefferson is executive director of the Closing the Gap project of the Black Child and Family Institute in Lansing.

Rosalyn Jones is research and development coordinator at the Michigan Economic Development Corporation in Lansing.

Jack Litzenberg is senior program officer in the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation's Pathways out of Poverty program.

Scott McDonald is apprenticeship coordinator at the Michigan Laborers Training and Apprenticeship Institute in Perry.

Susan Meston is the deputy superintendent of the Muskegon Area Intermediate School District.

Charles Monsma is director of the Institute for Community and Regional Development in Ypsilanti.

Jeff Ogden is the Merit associate director for MichNet in Ann Arbor.

Mike Richter is a math and computer teacher at Eastern High School in Lansing.

Thomas Schumann is vice president for academic affairs at Michigan Virtual University in Lansing.

Alan Shaw is executive director of Linking Up Villages in Dorchester, Massachusetts.

Mike Souden is director of the Oakland Regional Educational Media Center in Waterford, Michigan.

Barry Stern is director of the Office of Policy and Planning at the Michigan Department of Career Development in Lansing.

Mark Strolle is quality network representative for United AutoWorkers Local 602 in Lansing.

Kathy Tarr is vice president of college relations at the Kellogg Community College in Battle Creek.

Katherine Willis is president of Cyber-State.org in Ann Arbor.

Mark Wilson is an associate professor of urban planning at Michigan State University in East Lansing.

Appendix 3: 2001 MP/EDA Award Presentation

Each year at the Summer Institute, the Michigan Partnership for Economic Development Assistance (MP/EDA) presents an award for notable achievement in community and economic development.

The purpose of this award is to recognize excellence in scholarship and action in community and economic development in Michigan. Applications are welcomed from practitioners in community settings at any level, as well as from students, faculty and research staffs of Michigan colleges, universities, and research institutes.

*State Director Rex LaMore (r) presents
John Duley the 2001 MP/EDA
Community and Economic Development Award.*

Past Winners of the MP/EDA Community and Economic Development Award:

1997   Lindon Robison
        Steve Gold and
        Marcelo Siles

1998   Susan Turner

2000   Doug Lynott
        Joe Rahn

At the 2001 Summer Institute, John Duley was awarded the 7th MP/EDA Community and Economic Development Award. Mr. Duley has contributed to the Lansing area community for many years through his leadership and involvement in a wide range of activities to promote social justice and improve community conditions. In selecting him as this year's recipient, the awards committee identified in particular his visionary planning and tireless work in recently launching Closing the Gap, a technology skills training program of the Black Child and Family Institute.

To suggest a nominee for a future MP/EDA Community and Economic Development Award, contact the MSU Center for Urban Affairs at cua@msu.edu or (517) 353-9555.
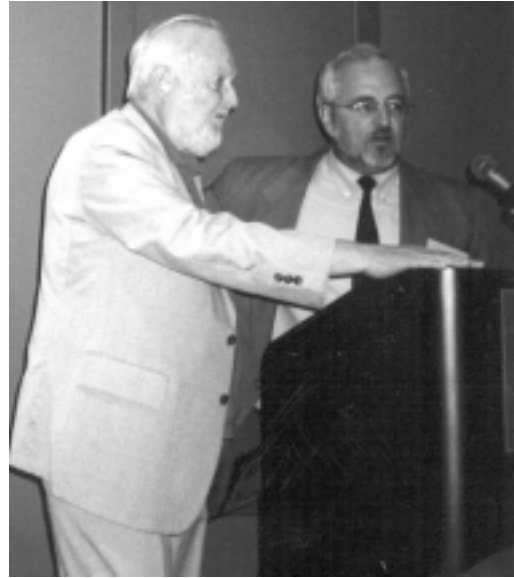
Appendix 4: List of Participants

Wanda Acevedo-Ferrer
Grand Rapids Community College

Carlos Alexander
United Water

Kimberly Alsup
MSU/CUA

Barbara Arbuckle
Detroit's Workplace MI Works

John Austin
State Board of Education/Public Policy Associates

Mike Behrenbrinker
Peckham Inc.

Reynard Blake
MSU/CUA

Sharon Blizzard
CEI Community Health

Michael Bradley
Focus Hope-CISCO Academy

Aleshia Brooks
Greater Lansing Urban League

Demetrius Brown
University of Wisconsin

Catherine Burton-Snell
Allegan County Intermediate School District

Rosemary Carey
Michigan Education Association

Mary Carlson
MSU/CUA

Karen Carotta
United Way Community Services

Elaine Chaney
Presbyterian Village-Redford

Leslee Clerkley
Ann Arbor Housing Commission

Student Cloutier
Goodwill Industries

Susan Cocciarelli
MSU/CUA

Michael Cole
Catalyst Consulting

Rhonda Cole
Branch Co Eco Growth Alliance

Tom Coleman
HNTB Michigan Inc.

Gwendolyn Coney

Gregory Conyers
Think Detroit

Mary Copeland
Parents Empowering Network

Rachel Copeland
Michigan Primary Care Association

John Czarnecki
Michigan Economic Development Corporation

Nancy Davis
Michigan Virtual High School

Jeremy Deming
Boys & Girls Clubs of Lansing

Tommie Dennie
Muskegon Housing Commission

Cris Doby
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation

Bette Downs

Deborah Drennan
C.O.T.S

John Duley
Greater Lansing Housing Coalition

Brandon Dunn
Virtual University

Brad Dyer
Michigan AFL-CIO HRDI

Jonathan Edelman
University of Phoenix Grand Rapids

George Erickcek
W. E. Upjohn Institute for Employment

Latreena Ewing
North Star CDC

Chris Foley
MSU/CUA

Elaine Furu-Baker
Calhoun ISD

Judy Gardi
MSU Extension

Christine Geith
MSU Global

Lori Gerstheimer
Flint-Genesee Economic Growth Alliance

Stephanie Gingerich
City of East Lansing

Callie Glave
Branch County Economic Growth Alliance

Jose Gomez
MSU/CUA

Barbara Gordon
City of Kalamazoo

Edgar Gordon
City of Kalamazoo

Gina Grace
Sparrow Health System

Gregory Handel
Detroit Regional Chamber

Linda Hanks
Focus Hope Info Technologies Center

Rhonda Hardy
University of Illinois Extension

Tim Harms
Virtual University

Jill Harper
MSU/CUA

Sally Harris
Project for Urban & Regional Affairs

John Heideman
Wayne State University

Michael Hicks
MSU

Chris Hnatiw
Tri-County Regional Planning Community

Thelma Hoggard

Melissa Huber
MSU/CUA

Gail Hudnut
Michigan Economic Development Corporation

Marcus Jefferson
Closing the GAP/Black Child & Family Institute

Johnnie Johnson
UW Extension

Sharon Johnston
Presbyterian Villages of Michigan

Rosalyn Jones
Michigan Economic Development Corporation

Dan Joranko
MSU

Tamara Juarez
MSU/CUA

Tim Kaffer
Advent House Ministries

Janis Kellogg
NEMCOG

Young-Tae Kim
MSU/CUA

Doug Klein
Lansing Community College

Allyson Knox
Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce

Richard Kohn
Advent House Ministries

Martha Kwant
CEI-CMH

Rex LaMore
MSU/CUA

Dewey Lawrence
MSU/CUA

Rosemary Lee
MFIA

Sam Leiken
Council for Adult & Experiential Learning

Paula Leonard
STRIVE

Ralph Levine
MSU

Matt Levy
Public Sector Consultants

Jack Litzenberg
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation

Jim Lunday
Michigan League for Human Services

Paul McConaughy
Capital Area United Way

Scott McDonald
Laborers Training & Apprenticeship Institute

John Melcher
MSU/CUA

Trina Middleton
Neighbors of Belknap Lookout

K. Milton
Hickory Hollow

Charles Monsma
Institute for Community & Regional Development

Jean Morciglio
Lansing Community College

Collette Moser
FRA/ERE Agriculture Economic

Belinda Moses
Family Empowerment Institute

Betty Nelson

Arun Neupane
MSU/CUA

Dennis Norton
Greater Bibleway

Dan Oegema
City of Grand Rapids

Jeff Ogden
Merit Network Inc.

Linda Patrick
Flint MSU Extension

John Peck
US Department of Commerce EDA

Dawn Phillips
Family Independence Agency

L. Joseph Rahn
Hastings Industrial Incubator

Matthew Roman
Eaton County Community Development Dept.

Kassandra Ray-Smith
MSU/CUA

Lindsey Reames
US Department of HUD

Kourtney Rice
CEDAM

Mike Richter
Eastern High School

Christine Roeder
City of Farmington Hills

Leslie Roth
Michigan Works!

Terri Sanchez
Grand Rapids Department of HUD

Thomas Schumanns
Michigan Virtual University

Alan Shaw
Linking Up Villages

Kathy Smith
MSU/CUA

Mike Souden
Regional Education Center of Michigan

Celeste Starks
MSU/CUA

Cathy Stauffer
MSU/CUA

Ron Steiner
Ociana County Economic Development

Barry E Stern
Michigan Department of Career Development

Deborah Strohaver
Jackson Community College

Ray Sumlar
Community University

Faron Supanich-Goldner
MSU/CUA

Lynda Sweigart
Goodwill Industries

Kathy Tarr
Kellogg Community College

Cynthia Telfer
Ann Arbor Housing Commission

Jonelle Thibau
Michigan Works! Association

Mark Thomas
MSU Extension

Carol Townsend
Grand Rapids MSU Extension

Tonya Upthegrove
Greater Lansing Urban League

Deborah VanHowewyk
U of M Urban & Regional Planning

Van Varner
MSU Extension

Bobbie Wallace
Inkster Housing Commission

Bettie Warfield
Community University

Dennis Washington
Public Sector Consultants

Richard Wears
HUD

Chris Weaver
STRIVE

Brian Wegener
MSU Extension

Garrit Wierda
Michigan Works!

Cathy Wilhm
Lansing Community College

Betty Williams
Coalition for Children

Katherine Willis
Cyber-State.org

Patti Wood
MSU/CUA

Greta Wu
Peckham Vocational Industries

Laurel Yaroch
Kent County Literacy Council

Johnson Lyles Yolanda
Warren/Conner Development Coalitions

Donna Young
Michigan HRDI

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CEDP Mission

Our Mission at CEDP . . .

Michigan State University is the nation's premier land-grant university, and in that tradition the MSU Center for Urban Affairs Community and Economic Development Program is committed to developing and applying knowledge to address the needs of society—primarily urban communities. Specifically, our mission is "to facilitate the use of university and community resources to address urban issues that enhance the quality of life."
In carrying out the CEDP mission, we . . .

- Provide training and direct assistance designed to increase the capabilities of community-based organizations.
- Assist community-based organizations with identifying concerns in the community and developing adequate responses to urban problems.
- Conduct research that assists in the development and implementation of innovative problem-solving strategies.
- Promote and expand MSU's capacity to provide needed training, direct assistance, and research to address issues in urban communities.

How we reach out to the community at CEDP . . .

The CEDP was established in downtown Lansing, Michigan, in 1970. Since that time, the CEDP has expanded its outreach office to additional cities in Michigan and has a statewide capacity to initiate and support innovative problem-solving strategies to improve the quality of life in Michigan communities. The Community and Economic Development Program maintains a full-time presence in targeted communities. Each targeted city has a resident community development professional who lives there and works with various community advisory committees. This university outreach faculty member fosters programmatic relationships with local development groups and organizations to facilitate the flow of new innovations and information between the university and the community.

To contact the MSU CEDP . . .

Michigan State University Center for Urban Affairs
Community and Economic Development Program
1801 W. Main Street
Lansing, MI 48915
(517) 353-9555
Visit us on the Internet at http://www.msu.edu/unit/cua

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