THE EMERGING FIELD OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT: SIZZLE OR FIZZLE?
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>> SHIBLEY: Welcome to the Professional Development Speaker Series, sponsored by the National Dissemination Center for Career and Technical Education.

My name is Ralph Shibley, and I am with the University of Rio Grande, and I am a National Leadership Institute scholar for the year 2001-2002.

Before we introduce today's guest speaker, a word about the process we will follow for the presentation.

Our guest will present for 45 to 60 minutes, followed by a 30-minute question-and-answer period.

Questions will be asked by the audience at the Longaberger Alumni House here and by those who are logged in to the NCCTE chat rooms.

Today the National Dissemination Center is honored to have Dr. Ronald Jacobs from The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio.

Dr. Jacobs' presentation is entitled "The Emerging Field of Workforce Development: Sizzle or Fizzle."

Dr. Jacobs is a professor of workforce development and education at The Ohio State University.

He is a frequent contributor to the human resource development scholarly literature, having written nearly 100 journal articles and book chapters on different areas of human resource development, including human confidence, employee development, structured on-the-job training, and organizational improvement.

Dr. Jacobs is particularly known for developing a system view of the human resource development field and for his research and development work on structured on-the-job training, a term that he first introduced to the human resource development literature in 1987.

He is the coauthor of the book "Structured On-The-Job Training: Unleashing Employee Expertise in the Workplace," which has become the standard guide to help managers, quality engineers, and human resource development staff implement this training approach in their organizations.

Much of his research has been on determining the financial benefits of structured on-the-job training, information that is critical for making more informed training investment decisions.

In addition, he is the author of the book "Planned Training on the Job" and is currently completing a casebook for the American Society for Training and Development, entitled, "Implementing Planned Learning on the Job."

Dr. Jacobs has extensive consulting experience in both manufacturing and service organizations, having worked for numerous large organizations.

Included in the list are American Electric Power, General Motors, KLM, and Seagate.

He has presented and consulted internationally in numerous nations,
including Taiwan, South Korea, Egypt, Brazil, and Mexico.
Dr. Jacobs has been invited distinguished professor at the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands and held Shaw professorship at the school of business in Nanyang Technological University in Singapore. Dr. Jacobs currently serves as the editor of the "Human Resource Development Quarterly," a major scholarly journal of the human resource development field.
In 1994 he received the Instructional Technology Research Award from the American Society for Training and Development. In '95 he was recognized for his scholarly contribution to the human resource development field by the Academy of Human Resource Development.
Currently Dr. Jacobs has written about the emergence of workforce development and its implications for research and practice. For the past couple of years, he has been writing and speaking about workforce development and its implications for graduate studies.
Join me in welcoming Dr. Ron Jacobs.
>> JACOBS: Thank you, Ron.
(Applause)
>> JACOBS: Thank you very much, and good afternoon to everybody. It's a pleasure to be here and to discuss a topic, I think, of high interest not only here in the United States but internationally as well.
This interest in workforce development I believe started about five years ago when I began to see -- began to notice that people, primarily I think from career and technical education perspectives, began to change their job titles, program names, initiatives that they were involved in, from what had been before, whatever the names had been, to workforce development.
"Workforce development," unfortunately, the term, in spite of its prominent use in recent years, has not undergone much scrutiny in terms of what it means and what its implications are.
This presentation or my discussion with you today is a little bit different from some of the previous ones in this professional development series.
I think that the previous speakers you would easily say would be experts and well qualified to their experiences on their topics. This is different in the sense that although I've given much thought to the topic of workforce development, I can't say that I'm an expert because I'm not sure if there are any experts right now.
It's an emerging topic, an emerging idea, and I think the literature needs to say where this topic is going, what the form of the topic will be, and maybe we can come back together in five years from now and say who the experts are and what ideas have been represented in their speeches and their presentations.
It's interesting to note that if you look at the career and technical education literature, sometimes people use the word "workforce development" as a synonym for CTE, and if you accept that premise that
workforce development, or WD, is the same as CTE, then perhaps you can say that there's -- as my title suggests -- there's more of a fizzle than a sizzle. But there really wouldn't be too much to talk about if they were the same thing. But after having watched and observed and participated in a number of projects, my own sense is, my own conclusion is, is that what we're looking at is something of some importance, something of some importance that we need to consider, and so I would suggest to us today that what we're looking at is more of a sizzle than the fizzle.

What I think is unique about workforce development from the other fields of study that we might have represented, including CTE, career-technical education, human resource development, and perhaps adult education, is that workforce development represents a more inclusive, perhaps a more systemic approach to what we've been thinking about in that broad enterprise of working and learning. So it's from that perspective that I would like to share with you some of my thoughts today and also to hopefully say something provocative enough so that when we have a discussion and comments at the conclusion of my presentation, that we will be able to have some dialogue and help expand some of the meanings that we're presenting today.

My presentation has basically three parts to it. I view it more as a discussion than a formal presentation. What I like to do is discuss a little bit about the need for change, the need for considering a broader or more articulated or integrated view of what we do as professionals and then provide some information about how I think about workforce development, how I define workforce development, and what I think the conceptual boundaries are of that area of practice and then discuss some of the implications for thinking about workforce development.

If we're going to think about workforce development from a broader sense, what does that mean for us as practitioners, even if we're maybe not working from a larger leadership perspective, but working from a practitioner perspective? Let's think about the need for change. The interesting thing about where we are today is that I believe that, similar to many other fields of study, is that practitioners have led the way for us, but I think that people in the field have sensed, perhaps intuitively they've sensed, that something needs to change in terms of how they function.

And I have an opinion that I believe that -- that practitioners look for another term other than the ones that they were using to describe what their activities were or what they -- how they wanted their activities represented to others. When I think about the forces on people in the last five years or so, I think they come down to four different streams, historic streams, that I'm sure all of you have read about and know about to some
degree, but I think there's some value and worth repeating them and connecting them with our understanding of workforce development. Those four historic streams that have occurred in the last -- perhaps in the last 15 years are globalization, technology, political change, and the new economy.

Globalization is an interesting term, and I think we've heard a lot about the global marketplace, but a number of scholars and political commentators tend to believe that the globalization started in October of 1989 when the Berlin wall came down because that was the first time that we had unrestricted movement of goods and services and ideas across the various parts of the developed world. So when we think about globalization, it really has a relatively recent history for us.

Another aspect of globalization is a sense that we have throughout -- throughout the world right now, we have the sense that the inclusion of organizations and countries in the global marketplace at a speed and at a breadth that is unlike any other era that we've ever had.

I often tell the story about being in Taipei, and traveling from downtown Taipei to the airport, one goes through a rather -- a rather heavily manufacturing area, and I remember seeing often, because I've been there several times, a manufacturing facility with a galvanized roof and galvanized walls to it, and it looks rather ramshackle from a western perspective, but broadly on the front of that building it says, "ISO 9001."

And so when I look at that building, I look at the outside, and I think, well, how could anything of value be presented or manufactured in that organization, in that facility, but at the same time, the notion of ISO 9001 certification allows organization to compete in the global marketplace. In fact, they may be competing against some small company here in Ohio.

And because of the global marketplace, ISO allows their markets to come to market, to be known and to be trusted. So we see this idea of globalization, and we see it quite prevalent in all the things that we do.

Without technology, though, I don't think globalization would have the need by which to transport much of the information, much of the goods and services that we think about. Technology is obviously a telecommunications phenomenon first and foremost, in terms of the Internet, the movement of information and the money, financial information.

But technology also has to do with the movement of management technology, know-how. Technology, because of its movement of information, allows organizations to locate where the talent is and where the availability of the workforce is.

And so right now we have customer service centers located in Ireland. We have customer services for the U.S. located in India.
And it really doesn't make any difference for people on the telephone, but the fact is if that product and service can be delivered, it brings people together through that technological advance. I think the third stream that we see is the political change that's going on, and, I think, from both a domestic and an international political changes.

One of the things that I see is the -- the previous reluctance for partnerships to occur between the private sector and the public sector has pretty much disappeared.

In fact, people are looking for partnerships. People are looking for partners to come together. And it doesn't seem to matter anymore that partners might be two organizations, two private sector organizations, perhaps even two organizations that in other respects are competitors in the same marketplace.

So I think from a domestic perspective, I think we see partnerships and the lessening of reluctance for partnerships to occur across different sectors of our society.

Political change from an international perspective has to, first and foremost, focus on the idea of democratization in many countries, the openness of countries, and allowing the transparency of understanding what's happening in those countries.

I read in "The Economist" just about three weeks ago that China is encouraging -- they wish to build a -- to rebuild their railroad system and to build a highway system, and they're looking for foreign direct investment to do that.

So they're looking for outside people to be shareholders in an infrastructure that they would have.

Now, that's something that's very unusual when you think about how closed that country has been for the longest period of time.

The last issue here is the new economy and all that it brings about. The new economy has been represented by this new sense of capitalism, this unfettered capitalism that we've seen in the last -- in the decade of the '90s, at least, the idea that the new economy has features, high quality of products, low costs, high competitiveness, and accompanying low inflation, the notion that organizations throughout the world are competing against each other and driving costs down because of that open marketplace.

Several scholars, including Peter Drucker, never accepted the fact that there was a new economy, but whether there was a new economy -- and I say "was" because we're certainly entering another era, I believe -- whether there was or is, there's no doubt that the influence of -- the globalization has changed the way people do their business and how they interact and sell their goods and services.

There is a very interesting insert from "The Economist" from two weeks ago that talks about "the next economy," the term that I think Peter Drucker has identified, and it's identifying the next economy as being quite different from the new economy.
The next economy will continue into the 21st century and will feature the effect of the changing demographics of the western world, the changing demographics as people age and still wish to -- and they wish to retire but reenter the workforce in a -- in a part-time way, in a part-time capacity.

So the next economy that we're entering into may be quite different from the new economy, in a lot of respects mainly because of the nature of the workforce itself.

What I have on the screen, these forces -- and, again, I have to say that I think that people have intuitively felt some -- the fact these factors have impinged upon how people think about their work, and I think that people have intuitively come to these conclusions when they've thought about what they're doing, that have come across in terms of making the term "workforce development" more attractive to them.

I think when you look at it, I think we all have realized that global events have much more immediate and systemic effects on local consequences.

I think that whatever happens in any country happens -- we can feel the effects here in the United States.

I'm quite close to several people in Singapore, and I know that that country especially has had a severe drop in its GDP because of our recession here, and it's immediate.

Because of the just-in-time production system, what's being produced in Singapore -- or what's not being bought in the United States immediately affects the production in Singapore in no more than two weeks turnaround time.

We also know that the societal consequences are often brutal and long lasting.

In just a minute I'd like to share with you a case study from a city that I was born in, Johnstown, Pennsylvania, which at one time was a very, very prominent and prosperous city that had gone through the era of industrialization and had very much difficulty coming out of it, and I think it provides a case study for us in terms of workforce development.

Another issue that I think people are beginning to realize is that our human competence has a shorter life cycle, so the sense that when we train people or provide educational experiences for youth, for example, we can't expect that training to last for much -- we don't know how long, but certainly the life cycle of that training, it can't be very long, the way the economies are going -- the economy is going.

And so whatever we provide for them in a vocational education or a vocational technical situation may have relevance for a few years, but not many.

I think we're also coming to the understanding that partial educational solutions are no longer effective; that planning has a much more systemic approach, that training youth without affecting what goes on in organizations can't be done in the longer perspective,
and I'll talk about that more in a little bit. 
And, finally, I think that people understand that their social partners are not adequately linked. 
And I'm not sure that if I spoke to practitioners -- and I've tried to, as much as I can -- if they could articulate these points exactly the way I've presented them here, but I use these points as the rationale for saying that's why, intuitively, many practitioners have moved from, perhaps, using "CTE" as the name or vocational education as the name, to trying to find something that will represent a more connected, a more articulated perspective of what they're trying to do.
They know quite well that what they're doing is part of a larger enterprise, and that larger enterprise is part of a larger scheme of how workforce development occurs.
I mentioned just a minute ago about this -- for my presentation I thought I would reconstruct some of this information.
I use it for other presentations as well.
But some of you may know Johnstown, Pennsylvania.
It has sort of a -- part of American history because of two very disastrous floods.
Johnstown, Pennsylvania is located about 70 miles east of Pittsburgh in a river valley that collects water, and then certain events occur, like heavy rains, and then they're very susceptible to flooding.
But I took it from the perspective of my father's family, who was from that city, and what has happened to that city from that time.
And I follow the chronology here because I think it's a good example not only of how the new economy or the globalization and some of these issues have come to bear on a particular locale, but it also shows, I think, the nature of workforce development and where we have come and shown that need to address some of those issues at the societal level.
Back in 1957 there were two major employers in Johnstown, Pennsylvania.
Johnstown is in the middle of coal-producing country, and because it has coal producing, it is a steel-producing city now -- or was, anyhow.
But Bethlehem Steel was the major employer in Johnstown, and it peaked in its worldwide employment at 165,000.
And in Cambria County, Pennsylvania, there were 20,000 steel workers, 20,000 people directly employed in steel-making companies.
You can imagine if there were 20,000 people who were working in the steel industry, how many other associated employees there might have been for ironworks and repair shops and grocery stores that all were connected in some way to the steel-making industry.
In 1965, the first time that 10 million tons of steel were imported into the United States, and in 1977 -- you can just imagine what the result's going to be now -- 1977, Bethlehem Steel begins to have layoffs in Johnstown and Lackawanna, Pennsylvania.
And in 1978, there were 21 million tons of steel imported into the
U.S., and, unavoidably, Bethlehem Steel closes its manufacturing plant in Johnstown.

By that time my family had long left, so this is from historical data. In 1990, the Cambria County census showed that 11% of the people had left since 1980, so there was a net loss of about 16,000 or 17,000 people.

Not until 1994 was -- the Cambria County Area Community College was established, and interestingly, if you go through the catalog, there's not one course there on coal production, steel making, welding, anything like that.

So that if you look at this area of the United States, western Pennsylvania now, the unemployment rate is about 10%.

Historically, Johnstown has been one of the higher unemployment rates in the United States through the '80s and into the '90s, and now the largest employer is not a steel maker but is in the service sector, the local hospitals.

Three hospitals locally employ 5,000 people, and there are some specialty steel makers in that area of about 2,500 people, and you can see what's happened to Bethlehem Steel in the meanwhile as well.

One of the issues -- one of the things that we'll look at in just a minute is that the Cambria County Area Community College -- and I have not been in contact with them so it will be interesting if anybody from there is watching this -- they also have a workforce development outreach center, which seeks to connect with local business and industry and help them identify the needs and address the problems.

And so it's interesting how this area of our United States has been so brutally affected by the change in the economy, and it just now, within the '90s, has had an opportunity to try to respond to those. I think that when you look at these kind of situations, you can find them throughout the United States.

I don't think Johnstown is necessarily a unique city in all that has happened to it; it just happened because of its one-time prosperity, and now it's trying to recover from that.

When we think about -- or when I think about workforce development -- and I have to mention a colleague that I work with, Josh Hawley here at Ohio State.

When we think about workforce development, this is the definition that we use: Workforce development for us is the collective of work-related programs offered through schools, organizations, and agencies to promote the dual goals of social and economic progress that are consistent with the goals, cultures, and resources of those involved.

One of the things in making a definition -- and if you've ever engaged in the process of doing that, you have to identify what level of abstraction that you're thinking about this definition to fit, and so if you make it too low, you're going to have to put in too much detail; if you make the definition too high, then it loses any kind of meaningfulness.
So we've been using that idea of levels of abstraction in trying to move this definition up and down in how we make the statements. And I certainly want this definition to provoke some comments and questions as I finish my comments here.

The idea here is that workforce is -- workforce development is all the things that occur, all the things that occur that are programs that are offered through schools, companies, governmental agencies, for the dual goals of social progress and economic progress. And there are some implications that I'm going to share with you in just a few minutes about the idea of what happens, if you adopt a workforce development perspective, what the implications are in terms of how to achieve those long-range goals and how planning might occur differently.

In spite of the fact that we think about career and technical education or human resource development or adult education as being the fields of interest here, perhaps, workforce development operates because it's really an area of practice. It operates from societal issues.

And we've identified these four societal issues that we think are important from a workforce development perspective. These four issues, I believe, encompass the fields of study that are represented by it, by people that are interested in these issues, but they don't directly address or mention those fields because we believe that it's more important to think about what are the societal issues that are being addressed?

I think they're pretty self-explanatory. I hope that as you look at that list up there, you can identify one or more of those that pertain to your own professional activities. How to prepare to enter or reenter the workforce and then on down the line.

Again, these were written in a means to try to encompass all the things that occur as broadly as possible so that we know that different things from different fields can be put into that.

I have a couple of pages of examples here, and I'm using these examples at this time because I think it's important to say what are the things that are included and what are the things, perhaps, that are not included.

And as you scan the list there, I would suspect that you'll see many more things that are included as opposed to not included. I won't read the list, but I tried to think of as many different situations that you here in Columbus or watching otherwise might be able to identify with.

Certainly you can see that schools are the providers, labor unions are the providers, organizations are the providers. Continuing in this list a little bit, state government could be a provider, chambers of commerce could be a provider, organizations as a provider, and, finally, community colleges as a provider. What interests me is not who's doing the providing or the location,
but it's the umbrella, whether or not you can fit some of those two dual goals that we identified for workforce development within the context that we're talking about here.

This is the -- I thought it would be interesting to follow up on the idea that from Johnstown, Pennsylvania to Cambria County Area Community College, they have a center for excellence in workforce development, and I pulled the Web -- pulled the mission statement off the Web.

And, again, for me, when they look at themselves as being a center for workforce development, I see that as being a part of the larger entity of workforce development, but I see them as being a provider -- as one of the many providers that we might see within the workforce development context.

The notion of workforce development for me, in a general sense, concerns how we as adults and our relationship with the workforce, the emphasis being on the notion of the workforce -- and I just have to say to you that in our own discussions here at Ohio State, when we think about what the conceptual core is, when we think about our graduate study, the notion of workforce is a prominent part of what we are about, how we as adults make transitions through, away from, coming back into, and out of the notion -- the abstract notion of workforce.

And so we had to put some idea of what is a workforce, who are the components of the workforce?

And these are the issues -- or these are the components that I believe that are important for us to think about in terms of workforce. Those people emerging into being employed, those people currently employed full or part-time, those people undergoing employment transitions -- that's a prominent aspect of what's going on in today's economy, layoffs, furloughs -- those people employed at one time but not currently -- we can think about retirees, people totally out of the economy for some reason -- and, of course, those people who are recruited for employment from other locations.

As part of my opportunity as a professor, I've been taking graduate students on international study trips for the last five years, and the year before last we went to Ireland.

We spent a week in Dublin.

And at that time was the first time that there had ever been a mosque that had been built in Dublin, Ireland.

And so you would think to yourself, well, welcome to the global economy, because Ireland, as many of you might know, has been a -- what they call the "tiger of Europe" in terms of it being a software center, software development center, but where do you find IT workers? There's a capacity issue for the Dublin Institute of Technology. They can't matriculate any more students.

And so the economy at that time needed more workers.

And so you'd have to bring workers from other places to replace -- to fill the positions that are needed for industries in Ireland.
And so where do you find them?
You have to find them where they are.
And so people from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India have been moving to Dublin and taking positions that you might see normally Irish people.
And so because of the changing demographics of some parts of that country, now a mosque is being built.
So certainly this idea of workforce has a -- some categories to it that maybe we hadn't thought about in the past.
I think when we think about the concept of workforce development, the notion of workforce development has some implications that I would like to spend a little bit of time discussing, and hopefully we'll be in some discussion about it with those of you as well.
One question has been raised about whether or not workforce development is a field of study, a field of study that has a body of knowledge, that has a theory to it, that has a set of practices to it.
And my own sense right now is that workforce development is not a field of study at present.
I believe that it's too broad in what it represents for it ever to be a field of study, but it is probably more likely an area of combined professional practice.
I think by people identifying in states -- several states have offices of workforce development.
By identifying that, they're signifying the articulation that they want to have across the various systems of working and learning.
I think another implication is that what workforce development represents is a perspective.
It's a perspective on how to use existing fields, CTE, career-technical education, human resource development, and adult education to address increasingly interconnected social problems.
We know that what body of knowledge that comprise CTE by themselves can't address all the issues that you might see from people in a community college, in a -- from a chamber of commerce perspective, within an organization perspective.
So that the interconnections across the fields, I think that WD -- WD represents more of an analogy of an umbrella, an umbrella that encompasses some of these other fields, a way of connecting the other fields.
I think that WD, workforce development, is both a process and a product.
It is what people do in their practice, and it also represents what outcomes we seek to achieve.
You know, I have some pretty strong feelings about that, in terms of what outcomes we seek to achieve.
And in my next slide, I think that if people begin to develop the notion of workforce development, I think it needs to be a very intentional use of that term.
I believe that sometimes people use the word "workforce development" because on its surface it represents more of a connectedness, more of
an elevation, perhaps, of what they were doing previously, but I think that there are other issues there that are associated with the term "workforce development" that need to be considered. The notion that workforce development programs, however they might -- whoever might be delivering them or wherever they might be delivered, they should benefit individuals, organizations, and society in ways that each value.

I think that workforce development programs -- because if you adopt that perspective, the notion that workforce development programs should not benefit one group at the expense of another group. And I think maybe the third bullet there summarizes my feelings about this.

If a person or a group, an office, adopts a perspective of workforce development, I believe that workforce development planning is going to take on a much different perspective than what we've done before. When you think about what HRD people do in organizations, they might be looking at only the perspective of what outcomes they might seek for the organization's performance. But how that performance links to society is also another issue. And I think if people adopt the workforce development perspective, then we begin to see what I call a win-win-win possibility.

We often think about win-win possibilities, where there's dual partners, but I think in most workforce development collaborations, there are three partners. There's always going to be the individual. There's always going to be organizations involved. And, invariably, there's going to be unions and society involved as well.

And how to make that win-win-win possibility occur is really to change the planning that people engage in, from whatever perspective they start with. Wherever that perspective might be from an organization's perspective or from a community college perspective or even from a vocational high school perspective, there needs to be the larger scheme of what's being -- what are the outcomes that we're trying to achieve, and how do those outcomes affect others within our what we would call society? Greater connectivity has social consequences.

When we ask ourselves to be connected, when we ask ourselves to look for partners, I think there's a consequence of that in the sense that we begin to look about -- we look around and say, "Are we really in a partnership where everybody is achieving or attempting to achieve the outcomes that they set out to achieve?"

Another implication here, perhaps the final one, has to do with the idea of career and technical education professionals and HRD and adult educators need to recognize that their contributions are good, that they make good contributions, but at the same time, that their contributions are limited in the context of workforce development, so that CTE and other fields of study that we can identify related to
workforce development are always in the context, perhaps, of this larger umbrella of workforce development. Workforce development may be -- and I think this is a room for discussion -- workforce development may be the umbrella that allows us to connect our different activities in our various communities to make it possible for schools and organizations to feel comfortable together, that each of them will identify outcomes that they wish to achieve of value, and that the broader society will benefit, the locations, the communities will benefit, because individuals are benefiting, organizations are benefiting, which will have outcomes for that site or that community as well.

Maybe that sounds a little bit unrealistic, but I would encourage you to look at the strategic planning literature as it has evolved in the last few years, and certainly the strategic planning literature has begun to address not only from what organizations seek to do, in a long-term sense, but how that long-term planning occurs as it connects to what some people call the mega level, the societal levels.

And so there's already people playing with the ideas that systems need to be connected, to a great extent -- to a greater extent. I have identified some key questions for the -- for my discussion and presentation here. And if at different locations that the -- the key questions -- what I'm asking groups to do, if they're interested, or if anybody's interested in doing that, is to look at what their local communities are like, in terms of the connectivity, the connections across the various providers, across the various systems in their own local communities, what that means in terms of a success for those dual goals.

And, again, those dual goals that I go back to are the notion of social progress, the advancement of people, the advancement of people and their learning and their self-actualization, that they grow as people and as citizens, and also as economic progress as well, whether or not the economic aspects are being advanced as well. Sometimes I think we feel some discomfort from a schooling perspective in thinking about the economic perspectives, economic development, but the reality for the next era, I believe, is that the link between education and the economy of any location is becoming more and more tightly woven together.

And so the planning that goes on has to reflect that -- that close relationship. So at this time I would like to close my comments and entertain any comments from the local group here and also discussion that might be coming through the chat rooms as well.

>> LEWIS: It seems to a large degree that workforce development has evolved out of the -- first manpower development and then unemployment and training, and in many areas, it is defined by whether it receives funds from the Department of Labor under the Workforce Investment Act at the present time, and the boards which have been established at the
state and local level to provide policy oversight to the workforce investment are really referred to as workforce investment boards. So it seems in some ways education's kind of defined out of that. They give some passing reference to the involvement in community colleges and vocational training, but many -- it seems to me, my interaction with the professionals in the field, they seem to think of what they are doing as workforce development, and everything we're doing is just ancillary to that.

>> JACOBS: And I think that -- I've heard that, too.
And I think that the mistake is to do that because I believe that people set up silos that allow them to become more disconnected from the other components that comprise any community effort. And I -- I believe that's destructive in the long term.
I don't think that any community can have that win-win-win possibility -- even with a changing economy -- we don't know where the next economy's going to head, whether it's going to be a high-tech economy or what, and there's always going to be mistakes made in terms of where people put their money and, you know, where the investments might be wrong.

There are some communities now that are still trying to bring in high-tech manufacturing into their communities, and now that would be not a very wise investment right now.
But, at the same time, whether they succeed or fail, the connectedness and the understanding that they're all together, and not one of them is -- in a sense, all of them are doing workforce development, and one of them is each doing workforce development at the same time as well. So I agree with you.

I think that it's destructive.
I think it's harmful for somebody to claim that what they're doing is different from everybody else because it is -- it needs to be connected and articulated from more of a system perspective.

>> Ron, when you think of impacting policy at the federal level -- we have so many different institutions, agencies, organizations delivering workforce development as you have defined it, if you think of the AACC, ACTE, the labor union, business organizations -- the list goes on and on. What suggestions would you have for coordinating at the federal level any kind of a logical, systematic approach to address workforce development issues?

>> JACOBS: That's a good question, and I don't know if I have the definitive -- you may have the answer; I don't have the answer. I think, though, that whatever happens globally impacts things locally much greater.
And I think that's the opportunity for action, is at the local level. And I think that the current configuration of the Workforce Investment Act allows that to occur so the community can figure out what their resources are.

And that's why in our definition that we included the idea of those
goals in the context of local goals, local cultures, local resources, and what makes a particular location competitive, what makes a particular location different and unique from others. So I think that the freedom -- I think there has to be a degree of freedom for those partners to come together and say, "Where are we, what is our best chance to be competitive," and certainly not at the expense of others, but in terms of exploiting what we have to offer. You know, I think that when we think about workforce development, it can be a concept that can balloon and expand, perhaps unnecessarily, beyond the boundaries, and I think that would be a disservice to the concept, to expand it, because some people have asked me, "Well, doesn't Ohio State University belong as a provider for workforce development?"
And I don't know if we think about universities in that way. But I think that's one of the other issues, is that without -- maybe this will provoke somebody to write in -- is that the movement from vocational education to career and technical education, although I'm an outsider to that movement, to that change in that term, I think it was an error in terms of maintaining its allegiance to technical education only.
I think that when we think about workforce development, there are so many other things that contribute to an economic aspect of a community beyond technical education. And so if we adopt the idea of workforce development, then we have to think about the larger picture of how people -- the larger issues of how people get into the workforce, what they do in the workforce as they move in and out of the workforce. So it may or may not have anything to do with what technical education is as a part of it, and certainly a large part of it, but do we want to stay -- do we want to stay focused on that part only? I think that's a question for us to ask.
>> I don't want to dominate these questions, Ron, but you've obviously given some thought to what implications this approach to workforce development has for preparing teachers, either at the secondary level or the postsecondary level.
>> JACOBS: Well, I haven't thought about it too much from a student level, from a secondary level, but I believe that how this is affecting our own graduate instruction -- undergraduate and graduate instruction here at Ohio State -- is that we would like our students to understand that they may be coming to Ohio State for specific skills and understandings about how to practice, how to do the things that they want to do. People that study with me may wish to go into organizations that may be professional, and that is fine. At the same time, I would hope that they would also carry with them the acknowledgement that they may be associated with the HRD field and the practice of HRD, but at the same time they're part of a larger entity.
And I -- I came to that awareness primarily because my students told me that was true.
More and more of my students were beginning to be employed in organizations where they were part of school-to-work activities, they were part of community college outreach programs where they had connections with schools and other agencies.
And so for a graduate program to -- in our area -- to exclusively only talk about adult education, human resource development, or career and technical education, I think would be wrong because the reality is that there is nobody out there talking about those fields.
What people are talking about in practice are those issues.
And it's those issues that are driving what's happening in practice right now.

>> I have a question from Mike Rush, state director, Vocational, Career-Technical Education in Idaho.
What partnerships have you seen across the nation between the career-technical delivery system and traditional Department of Labor programs?

>> JACOBS: I can't answer that because I don't -- I don't have knowledge of those.
But I would ask him, you know, in terms of partnerships -- well, partnerships I see are more from organizations partnering with unions, partnering with schools.
My perspective starts from -- because of my background, in terms of -- unfortunately for the question, my perspective of partnerships comes from where organizations become the initiator of the partnership.
So I'm sorry I can't answer that.
Maybe he could rephrase the question.
I can address the idea of partnerships, but that specific question, I don't think I can.
It's a good question, though.

>> LEWIS: I'll try again.
The one-stop center has been established under the Workforce Investment Act to try to get the different players all colocated, sharing similar information, and so on.
Do you have any information about how well that is accomplishing the integration and cooperation which you would like to see?

>> JACOBS: I think those centers, as far as I understand and as I've observed, are successful for the individuals involved in them, and I'm not sure what impact they've had in terms of organization, you know, how organizations have received them and how they reflect the availability of jobs and how organizations are participating in those.
And so if one were to ask that question from a workforce development perspective -- and that's what I go back to.
If I say "from a workforce development perspective," I would immediately want to be asking questions about whether organizations had been involved, what the impact of the one-stop centers have been on employment in those organizations, what impact in terms of the
economic benefits that have shown to these organizations that participate.
I think those are questions that need to be asked, and I don't think that they're being asked right now.
Because I think that if you're looking at those situations, organizations need to benefit in tangible ways from including those people as part of their hires.
This may have been an easier conversation back maybe two years ago when the unemployment rates were so low.
But certainly it will be another interesting era to see as we -- in the next couple of years in the current economic situation.
>> LEWIS: If I'm understanding your question, you see the one stops at present as focusing primarily on benefits to the individual rather than benefits to the organizations which are hiring those individuals?
>> JACOBS: I think that's true, and I think that some other questions might be asked.
I don't know, maybe it's the university that needs to be asking questions about impacts for organizations, which I think is a legitimate question to ask.
It's a societal response to the issue of unemployment or those skills and -- but, ultimately, the provider of the employment will be the private sector, to a large degree.
>> I'd like to make a comment about the collaboration between these organizations.
Mike Rush had brought up the question of how the Department of Labor had been impacting workforce development.
I think one of the things we need to be realistic about is the impact of federal policy and federal dollars coming to different state and local organizations that drive those collaborations.
Historically, the U.S. Department of Labor hasn't had as much resources to contribute to workforce development as -- recently, anyway -- as the Department of Health and human services in regard to welfare to work and the Department of Corrections in terms of training the increasing numbers of people who are incarcerated or the departments of development that each state has to stimulate economic growth in local areas that have been underserved.
And I think that at least in Ohio what we've seen is a big push in workforce development through those state agencies and then trickling down to the local level because of the money and because of the policies that have come out of Washington, D.C., that have driven those collaborations and literally forced those collaborations among CTE providers and the social service or economic development agencies that work in those areas.
Quite frankly, a lot of these folks probably would not work together if it weren't for some kind of policy that forced them to all sit at the same table at the same time --
>> JACOBS: Right.
>> -- and talk about policy and collaboration.
>> JACOBS: Yes, that's interesting. In some related writings that I've done, I talk about the notion of partnership, and in that writing I've spoken about research partnerships, but I think the idea still applies. These partnerships, I -- in my own way of thinking -- are different from collaborations. When we think about a partnership, it's a true marriage in the sense that -- that each partner has identified goals to achieve, and your goals might be different from my goals, but the only way that we can achieve both of our goals is to work together. And it doesn't mean that both of us have the same goals; it just means that we may have different goals, but we have to rely upon each other to achieve what we want to do, and I think that's a true partnership. And until organizations believe -- or institutions, schools, organizations, communities believe that notion of partnership have -- that it's okay to have different goals, that achieving those goals is supportive of each other, but perhaps in the long term, in a long-term sense, there needs to be a vision that everybody can -- can agree that that's where they want to go. For example, workforce development, I'm sure, if you go into the Huntington Bank or any large organization here in Columbus, Ohio, their first and foremost interest is in the performance of their employees. But at the same time, they know how they impact the community and -- the community and the society here in central Ohio and all of the places where they serve. So the connectivity between how -- what they wish to achieve as goals and what impact that they might have are certainly -- I would hope that they would be there; I would hope that that would be part of their awareness. And so when I hear people -- and I guess that's one of the major points that I wish to reemphasize -- that when people begin to say "workforce development," I want them to attach additional meaning to that term "workforce development" and not just put a new label on what they've been doing before. I want them to say "workforce development," but it has some -- it represents a set of new understandings about how people work together and how people engage in partnerships. And that's the reason, also, that I mentioned I think that workforce development planning is going to change; it's going to have to change. That planning process has to be a process of articulate -- the partners articulating what they want out of the relationship, and so -- to ensure that everybody tries to help each other achieve that. Can you tell I grew up in the '60s?

>> SHIBLEY: Well, Ron, thank you very much for your time and your insight into workforce development. I think all of us that partake -- that took part in this today have some new challenges to us.
And whether that's to be a contributing partner who sits at the table and defines new ways that we're going to interact in our community or whether that's the fact that we realize now that human competence has a shorter life cycle than it ever has before, and we have a greater shortcoming in terms of workforce out there, we certainly have a large challenge to make all of these things come about. So if you will, everyone, I would like to thank Ron Jacobs for his contribution.

(Applause)

I'd like to thank the audience for coming this afternoon and those of you joining us by way of the Webcast. Please join us again on December the 10th for our next scheduled Professional Development Speaker Series presentation. At that time the speaker will be Mike Rush, who asked a question today, and the topic is "Oh, Vision, Where Art Thou? Defining the Marketing Vision of Career-Technical Education." That presentation will begin promptly at 3:00 p.m., and, again, it will be Webcast. All presentations, as you know, are archived on the www.nccte.org Web site. Thank you.

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