IOTA LAMBDA SIGMA

# Communicator

An Honor Society in Workforce Development

Volume 11. Issue 3

September 2009

## *Iota Lambda Sigma* Annual Meeting to be in Nashville, TN November 19-21, 2009

The Constitution of Iota Lambda Sigma requires that it hold its Annual Grand Chapter Meeting at the same time and place as the Association of Career and Technical Education holds it's meeting. This year the meeting will be held in Nashville, TN on November 19-21.

Each Chapter has two delegate seats at the National Advisory Council Meeting and one seat at the Annual Grand Chapter Meeting. Members who will attend the 2009 gatherings are encouraged to email Anna Skinner at ILSgrandchapter@aol.com.

The meetings are currently scheduled as follows:

- **Thursday, Nov 20, 11:00 AM to 12:00 Noon — Leadership Training Meeting in** Delta Island B
- **Thursday, Nov 20, 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM — National Advisory Council Meeting in Delta E**
- **Friday, Nov 21, 8:30 AM to 10:00 AM — Iota Lambda Sigma Grand Chapter Meeting in Delta E**

Room locations and changes to the schedule will be posted on the ILS Web site at http://www.lions.odu.edu/~dnethert/ils/annual_grand_chapter_meeting.htm

## Why Attend the ACTE Convention?

2009 ACTE Nashville

See you in Nashville!

**Building your skills and sharing best practices with your colleagues is well worth the time and money—here are some reasons why your attendance is critical.** Educators who attend ACTE's Annual Convention are passionate about career and technical education and they recognize its importance to our nation's future. Nowhere else will you find thousands of like-minded educators who are committed to providing the best education and career training to youth and adults.

It's critical for you to be part of this network to stay informed, prepared and motivated in your pursuit of excellence. You can't accomplish this by staying inside your building. When you attend Convention, you get creative and practical ideas and strategies through workshops, speaker presentations and networking opportunities that can be implemented immediately upon your return to school.

Find out more information about the program, housing, registration and transportaiton at http://www.acteonline.org/.

# News from ILS Leaders

## Anna Sends . . .

Anna reminds members that many of the forms for awards, reports, etc. have been updated. Members should download and use the new forms when they prepare requests for awards and make reports.

## Presidents message:

What a year this has been and how quickly time moves on. I first of all want to say that I have been honored to serve a second term as Grand Chapter President.

Your Honor Society continues to find ways to serve you. We have formally aligned the organization with ACTE to allow our members to be alerted to legislative issues that impact all of us during these ever changing political times. Sister Rhonda Hoyman has also represented ILS at the yearly National Policy Seminar. Rhonda is a regular speaker at our Grand Chapter meeting, sharing valuable and current information.

During the last few years the Executive Board team has also worked hard to trim expenses without compromising services to our members. Through the efforts of brother Dave Netherton, we are offering newsletters and timely information via electronic mail, cutting costly standard mailing expenses. Past President George Haber implemented our first Virtual Conference for the Executive Board summer meeting. This, for the first time, eliminated the need for travel and lodging expenses. After a few technical glitches, that were quickly resolved by Brother Haber, the meeting was a great success.

Remember that ILS offers many awards for outstanding service, teaching or industry participation. These and other documents can be accessed via our website at http://www.iotalambdasigma.com. I encourage any member to access these award applications.

It has been a true honor to serve as President of Iota Lambda Sigma and I would like to encourage every member to get involved on the local or national level. The friends and experiences I have had will last a lifetime. I look forward to seeing many of you in Nashville at our Annual Meeting…..now where is my guitar????

*Gary A. Theil*

## Green-Job Program Aims To Plant Seeds Leading To Real Jobs

By SHEILA RILEY, *INVESTOR'S BUSINESS DAILY*,
Downloaded September 17, 2009 from
www.keloland.com/News/NewsDetail6374.cfm?Id=

Green education is a big trend. Five states are realigning high school and post-secondary education to better fit a clean energy economy, a goal of the Obama administration.

Georgia, Illinois, New Jersey, Ohio and Oregon are developing green-focused "programs of study" after receiving technical assistance grants from the U.S. Department of Education and its National Research Center for Career and Technical Education this summer.

The states will get industry representatives and educators together to look at regional economic opportunities, and to design a clear path from high school to a green career. The post-secondary focus will be on two-year colleges, but will include four-year colleges as well.

Coordination is everything, says Jim Stone, who directs the center for career and technical education, based at the University of Louisville in Kentucky.

### Rethinking The Process

"Every state has some career and technical education, but they don't tend to link the high school to the post-secondary well," Stone said.

The goal in large part is to make sure high school students take the right courses to prepare for post-secondary education, which should lead to careers in green areas such as biotech and alternative energy.

The federal government will help states design the programs. Green makes sense as a prototype for this kind of federal assistance, Stone says. "There's growing interest in green employment in the workplace," he said. "And green is sexy, let's be candid. It grabs your attention." The green education programs could provide a model for other fields, he says.

Establishing clear high school-to-college pathways is an effort to comply with the Perkins Act, enacted back in 1984, meant to improve and streamline what was once called vocational education.

Eighteen states competed for these first-of-its-type grants to develop educational paths leading to industry-recognized degrees and certificates.

The center for career and technical education is providing $1.1 million for the project, designed to run through the current academic year. The states will cover some costs, though how much is uncertain. The states are expected to have programs in place for the 2010-11 academic year.

The process begins this month, when states meet with federal representatives. Each state has its own focus within the green category.

For Illinois, the focus will be energy, utilities and waste management. "The term 'green jobs' boils down to training workers to understand energy-efficiency and concepts around sustainability," said Brian Durham, senior director for continuing and technical education at the Illinois Community College Board in Springfield.

**The First Issue of Iota Lambda Sigma's *Journal for Workforce Education* will published in the fall.**

Approved by the Executive Council about five years ago, this journal will finally begin to be published twice a year. Those interested in publishing scholarly work should follow the editorial policy outlined below..\

# Iota Lambda Sigma Journal for Workforce Education

## EDITORIAL POLICY

The *Iota Lambda Sigma Journal for Workforce Education* (JWEd) publishes refereed articles that examine research and research-related topics in human resource development, vocational education, career and technical education, preparation for work, and the workplace. The *JWEd* Editorial Board is committed to publishing scholarly work that represents a variety of conceptual and methodological bases. Submission of manuscripts representing one of the following styles is encouraged: (a) empirically-based manuscripts that report results of original research, either quantitative or qualitative, (b) reviews or synthesis of empirical or theoretical literature, (c) editorials and essays derived from original historical or philosophical research, (d) reviews of recently published books, and (e) rejoinders to articles recently published in the *JWEd*. Page costs are not assessed. However, if a manuscript is accepted, authors will be asked either to supply camera-ready tables and figures, or pay for the costs incurred in preparing complex tables and figures for publication.

**MANUSCRIPT PREPARATION.** One (1) electronic copy (on floppy disk, CD, or email) of the manuscript should be submitted to the Editor. The electronic version must be in MS Word version 6 or higher. Manuscripts typically range in length from 20 to 30 double-spaced pages including references, tables, and figures (12,000-36,000 characters in length with 36,000 characters as an absolute maximum). Book reviews, editorials, and rejoinders should be approximately 4-8 pages (approximately 6,000 to 12,000 characters). Text, references, and tables must be prepared according to the guidelines detailed in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (latest edition). The title page should include the title of the article, and the name, affiliation, mailing address, e-mail address, and telephone number for each author. Each manuscript must be accompanied by an abstract of no more than 150 words. The receipt of all manuscripts will be acknowledged within one week of receipt. Manuscripts are subjected to a double-blind refereed review process. Typically, three individuals, including the Editor, review each manuscript. Reviewers' comments and a letter indicating the publication decision will be sent to the primary author approximately 3-4 months following receipt. Manuscripts accepted for publication are usually published within one year of formal acceptance. Since the articles will be published on line, there will be no copies furnished to authors.

Send manuscripts to:

**Dave Netherton, Editor, JWEd**
Department of Occupational and Technical Studies, ED 228

Old Dominion University

Norfolk, VA 23529

E-mail: dnethert@odu.edu

FAX: 757.683.5227

# The Ill-Prepared U.S. WorkForce: Exploring the Challenges of Employer-Provided Workforce Readiness Training

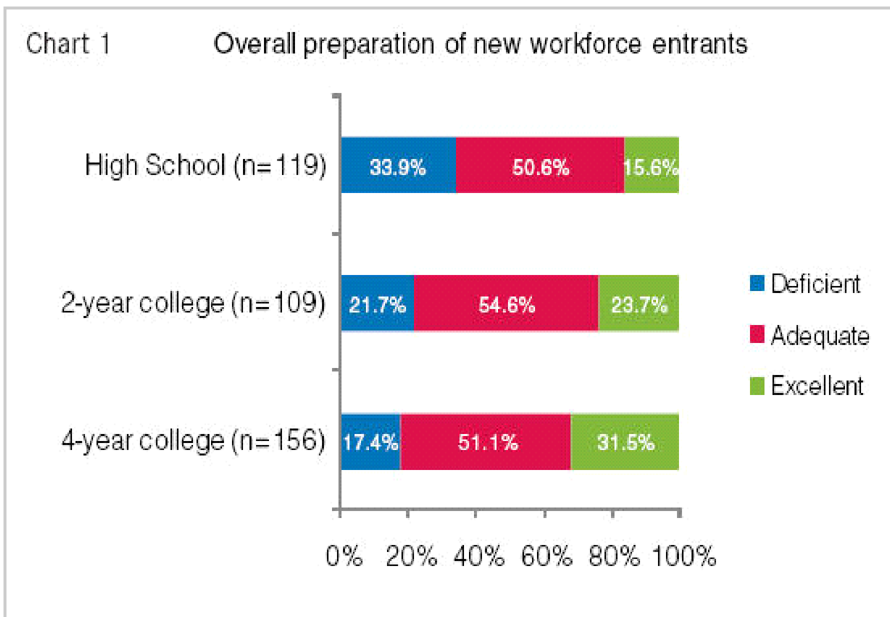
by Jill Casner-Lotto, Elyse Rosenblum, and Mary Wrigh



In a new report prepared by Jill Casner-Lotto, Elyse Rosenblum, and Mary Wright for a consortium of organizations interested in developing the American workforce found that entry-level workers continue to be ill-prepared to being working in today's workplace.

Employers report hiring substantial numbers of new entrants who are poorly prepared, requiring additional company investment to improve workforce readiness skills. And while many employers provide workforce readiness or remedial training to bring their new entrants up to speed, many report less than strong results. The results of the survey accompanying this report raise the question whether compensating for poorly prepared new workforce entrants with on-the-job workforce readiness training is the most effective way to address the readiness gap.

The American Society for Training and Development, The Conference Board, Corporate Voices for Working Families, and the Society for Human Resource Management surveyed 217 employers to examine corporate practices on training newly hired graduates at three educational levels: high school, two-year college, and four-year college. Almost half of the employers surveyed provide workforce readiness (remedial) training programs to erase deficiencies among their newly hired entrants in skills they expect them to have when hired.' Yet, the majority of companies find these programs to be "moderately" or "somewhat successful" at best. And employers are unable to report how much they are spending on programs to improve new entrants' readiness to work.




Equally troubling is that, in several cases, the programs offered do not match company needs. While programs are in place to address training needs in leadership, information technology, and teamwork skills, there are substantial gaps in other applied skills, particularly those applied skills employers say they need the most, as well some of the basic skills like writing and mathematics. Applied skills, such as critical thinking and problem solving, enable new entrants to use the basic knowledge acquired in school to perform successfully in the workplace. Yet, more than 40 percent of employers indicating a "high need" for programs in critical thinking are not offering them.

Companies fall especially short in programs to encourage creativity skills among their new entrants, particularly disturbing since creativity fuels innovation which is considered fundamental to business success in an increasingly competitive global marketplace. And, at the opposite end of the spectrum of skills, yet equally important, there are also considerable gaps in programs to improve basic skills in reading comprehension, writing, and math.

Taken as a whole, the survey results raise critical questions that business needs to address: Do workforce readiness training programs represent the best use of business resources, particularly during these tough economic times? Is the workplace the most efficient place to be spending remedial dollars? And what are the true total costs of a deficiently prepared workforce, considering the lost productivity and time it takes to bring new entrants up to company expectations? Furthermore, if companies aren't tracking the cost of these programs, there's no way to evaluate their impact on the bottom-line measures that matter most to business.

An advisory board composed of training development specialists from major corporations and other training experts helped design the questionnaire and interpret the survey results. Their comments, drawn from an informal sampling of their views, are cited throughout the report.

You can download the complete report for free from the following web site: http://www.shrm.org/Research/SurveyFindings/Articles/Documents/BED-09Workforce_RR.pdf

# Yes, You Can Guarantee Business Results from Training!

*By Robert O. Brinkerhoff and Tim Mooney*



I want you to imagine yourself in this scenario. You are busy working away at your desk planning a major training implementation to support a critical organization initiative, and in walks the CEO, who says to you, "This initiative is vitally important to our business strategy. We are investing millions of dollars in this strategy, and we see training as an integral piece of this initiative. The training must work. Can you guarantee it?"

In that brief second that your career begins to flash before your eyes you think about all the things outside of your control that can cause training to fail, for example:

- the training participants who may not really grasp the importance of the change initiative and therefore won't even use the new skills back on the job
- the managers who may not be willing or able to coach the new skills
- various senior execs who may not be committed to the success of this effort.

And while these concerns are racing through your mind, the CEO asks, "Would you be willing to bet your paycheck on it?"

This scenario dramatizes the challenge that we, as workplace learning and development professionals, face every day. Organizations are counting on their learning investments to pay off, and they are putting the full responsibility on the learning department to deliver the results. At the same, time we fully recognize that training events alone—no matter how well-designed, well-facilitated, or stupendously engaging—will never be enough to guarantee the business outcomes our organizations are banking on.
How can we live up to these expectations and ensure our efforts are delivering the results the organization needs and wants?

We have had the opportunity to work with several leading companies that consistently deliver business results by using an approach that can guarantee business impact from training. The enlightened learning and development professionals from these companies operate with a few simple concepts to help their organizations produce business impact routinely:

- They recognize that turning learning into business results is a process and have moved beyond the mindset of training as an event. They all start by being "business-goal bulldogs" and having a firm grasp of the business goals the training is supporting.

- They act as change agents and lead the charge for building whole-organization accountability for turning learning into results.

- They use evaluation strategically to help drive change and educate their organizations.

Bulldogs are known for being strong, persistent and courageous. They clamp down on something with their powerful jaws and won't let go! Similarly, the business-goal bulldogs in learning and development clamp down on the business issue associated with a project and won't let go of it until they clearly understand the connection between the training and the business goals.

This is not just a superficial connection, such as "we need to do customer service training so we can improve customer loyalty and retention." Instead, the business-goal bulldog establishes a deep business link that explicitly connects the business results to on-the-job performance and then finally to the learning program. Once they clearly understand this step-by-step link, they document the "business case" and ensure that the other key stakeholders—senior execs, training participants, and their managers—are on the same page and are clear on how the training can help them improve their personal and department results.

Organizations that are successful at turning training into business impact operate with the belief that getting results from training is a whole-organization responsibility. They have clearly defined processes for the senior stakeholder, manager, participant, and learning professional. These processes are elegantly simple, but provide step-by-step concreteness. At this point, you may be thinking: "My managers are incredibly busy and under tremendous pressure to produce results; it is impossible to get them to support training." This concern is very real.

Managers are not measured on how well they support training; they are paid to produce results. To overcome this time-and-focus challenge, enlightened learning departments never ask managers to support training. Their processes are carefully geared toward helping managers achieve their departments' goals for which they are being held accountable. This takes us back to the business case for the training.

By being business-goal bulldogs, learning professionals are able to focus the managers' efforts on the results and the few simple behaviors that will help drive those results. The managers are asked to have a brief discussion with their training participants in advance of the training to ensure that their direct reports are clear on why this training is important to the department's (and their own personal) objectives and how they are expected to use the new skills and knowledge back on the job. A similar discussion is held after the training to confirm an action plan for using the new capabilities to drive results.

The third principal lever that these organizations use to drive results from training is evaluation. They take a strategic approach to measurement that is designed not to prove the value of training, but to improve the value of training for the organization. They systematically collect evidence on the entire learning-to-performance process, examining how well all the players fulfilled their roles and followed the process, as well as the results achieved. The evaluation collects evidence to answer three principal questions:

- What benefit did this training provide to the business?
- When the training produced results, why did it work?

# Yes, You Can Guarantee Business Results from Training!

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- When the training failed to produce results, why didn't it work?

This isn't a self-serving exercise to defend the learning department's work, but a balanced approach that examines the learning program, the players' efforts, and the environmental factors that affected the results—the good, the bad, and the ugly. These progressive learning leaders help their organizations use this information to make mid-course refinements in the current implementation and to educate management on how to gain greater business impact in the future.

Members of our user's group have consistently been able to double or triple the business impact of their learning solutions by using this approach. In addition to the benefit of improving the impact of their training, they have used this information to help their organizations tighten up performance management processes, refine their sales processes, and remove barriers for customers. They have transformed their role from training partner to business partner.

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# It's Their Future: Teaching Middle and High School Students About National Debt, the Federal Budget, and America's Fiscal Horizon

**By Andrew L. Yarrow**


**originally printed in *Education Weekly* August 19, 2009**

Sixty years ago, an enlightened group of educators and business leaders, concerned that young Americans knew too little about the economy, created the Joint Council on Economic Education to develop and disseminate curriculum about personal finance, macroeconomics, and public finance to millions of schoolchildren. Ever since, a host of organizations—from Junior Achievement, to an interagency Financial Literacy and Education Commission, to many business groups—have made increasing Americans' economic literacy a priority.

Why is this so important? Aside from depressingly dismal findings about young (and older) Americans' knowledge of personal savings, how markets work, and government budgets and debt, you don't need to be Adam Smith or Ben Bernanke to recognize that, as the "Cabaret" lyricists put it, "money makes the world go around." While our world is defined by many nonmonetary things—beauty and love, family and community, the environment and security, values and learning—we live in a highly complex economy in which financial decisions at the personal, corporate, governmental, and international levels affect almost every aspect of our lives.

Starting in middle and high school, we need to be better informed economically to make sound decisions about personal savings and spending to improve our lifelong economic security. We also need to be better educated about macroeconomics and public finances—to know what does and doesn't promote economic growth, and how and why taxpayer dollars are spent as they are—to thoughtfully evaluate policies that can bolster our national well-being.

Beyond balancing checkbooks and understanding the miracle of compound interest, young people need to learn—and teachers need the curriculum resources to teach—about public finances. How do federal, state, and local governments spend close to $5 trillion a year? How are these decisions made, and what does this say about our priorities? What does it mean that the federal government has a rapidly rising national debt of nearly $11.5 trillion (excluding another $45 trillion in unfunded federal liabilities), with additional debt incurred by state and local governments? And why do these imbalances in public spending—some might say, fiscal irresponsibility—pose such a risk to individual Americans' future well-being? And, without delving too deeply into the wonkish details of entitlement, health care, Social Security, tax, and other budget reforms, what are the economic and moral issues involved in saddling young Americans with trillions of dollars of debt and risking economic calamity for future generations? What should students consider when they think about reforms that would put our nation on a more sustainable economic path?

A set of free curriculum materials about the nature, causes, and potential consequences of America's looming fiscal crisis, developed for high school and middle school teachers, is being rolled out this fall by my organization, Public Agenda, and the Youth Leadership Initiative of the University of Virginia's Center for Politics. These lesson plans—on Social Security, health-care spending and reform, taxes, and the budget process—integrate readings, audiovisual materials, online games and simulations, and student discussions and assignments in ways designed to provide an easy-to-understand overview of U.S. federal finances. They can be downloaded and modified for use in social studies, government, or other subjects at FacingUp.org or the Youth Leadership Initiative.

Eighty years ago, when federal debt and expenditures were relatively minuscule, President Herbert Hoover quipped: "Blessed are the young, for they shall inherit the national debt." Whether they are blessed, cursed, or potential agents of change, young people can benefit immeasurably from learning about public finances, the challenges America faces, and the reform options that can put our nation on a more fiscally sustainable and prosperous course.

Andrew L. Yarrow is the vice president and Washington director of Public Agenda, the author of Forgive Us Our Debts: The Intergenerational Dangers of Fiscal Irresponsibility, and the project director of the Students Face Up to the Nation's Finances teaching initiative. He also teaches modern U.S. history at American University, in Washington, and writes a column for The Baltimore Sun. His e-mail is ayarrow@publicagenda.org.

# Strategic Workforce Planning in an Uncertain World

## The financial crisis has recast the goals for strategic workforce planning, pushing them well beyond forecasting and talent-gap analysis.

By Fay Hansen , http://www.workforce.com/section/09/feature/26/53/34/?src=wfw090901a downloaded Se[tember 1, 2009.

If anyone knows where the economy is headed, it's likely to be Hugh Courtney. He holds a Ph.D. in economics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, was formerly global strategy practice leader at McKinsey & Co. and is one of the world's leading business strategy experts. But here is his conclusion about the recession that struck worldwide in the final quarter of 2008: "The length and impact of the current economic downturn is absolutely uncertain," he says.

That uncertainty poses a problem for the truism commonly used to define the goal of strategic workforce planning: the ability to put the right people in the right place at the right time. "People tend to be overconfident in their ability to predict those 'rights,' so they are systematically surprised," says Courtney, who is now a professor of the practice of strategy and associate dean of executive programs at the University of Maryland's Robert H. Smith School of Business. "The people who are making those 'right' decisions need to face and take seriously the uncertainties their organizations face."

The financial crisis has undercut what Courtney describes as a common bias toward thinking that most business decisions occur at relatively low levels of uncertainty. At these low levels, there is a clear, single view of the future, or a limited set of possible future outcomes, one of which will occur. Under these conditions, forecasting data out along defined trajectories and conducting talent-gap analysis may provide adequate workforce planning.

But for the most important decisions, Courtney says, executives are actually working at much higher levels of uncertainty, with a range of possible future outcomes or unbounded possible outcomes. Effective workforce planning can occur at these higher levels of uncertainty, but when conditions are so in flux, forecasting and talent-gap analysis are useless.

Now that the financial crisis has brought greater clarity about the levels of uncertainty that surround most business decisions, the goals for strategic workforce planning have been recast to include the ability to think rigorously about the seemingly improbable and the unknown. Some companies are now developing the discipline for that thinking as the next step in strategic workforce planning.

Beyond gap analysis

At high levels of uncertainty, companies can use systematic scenario planning that looks at bounding the range of possible outcomes and the corresponding human capital needs of the organization. "This approach outlines the 'no regrets' actions and constructs a hiring plan that signals movement toward those scenarios," Courtney notes.

Even at the highest levels of uncertainty, strategic workforce planning can frame discussions about past structural changes and the profound workforce shifts and new human capital challenges that flowed from them. "Previous financial meltdowns have had a discernible impact on human capital," Courtney says. "Where did the people go and why? How were they retrained? There is usually some anchor you can hold on to."

Aetna Inc. is looking for an anchor. Over the past year, strategic workforce planning at Aetna has focused on expanding the range of thinking about possible futures and their workforce implications. The company, based in Hartford, Connecticut, reported revenues of $31.6 billion in 2008 and employs 35,462 workers.

To launch its strategic workforce program, Aetna tapped Aruspex, the strategic workforce planning solutions provider, and in July 2007 hired away from a competitor company Melissa Cummings, an MBA with no prior human resources experience.

"It is hugely valuable to come into human resources from the outside because you can lead the conversation about how to get the business to play with workforce planning," Cummings says. "A cross-functional business background really helps."

From the outset, strategic workforce planning at Aetna moved beyond data gathering and gap analysis. "Analytics has thrown a veil over what passes for workforce planning," Cummings says. "Data is about what happened in the past. Forecasting is a static vision of the future. We take data and forecasts and build on them with 'what ifs' to create a richer vision. That's the qualitative piece that the enterprise needs."

In February 2008, Aetna launched a series of daylong strategic workforce planning sessions, each attended by different groups of 15 to 20 business leaders. Seven sessions have been completed. Each session begins with an environmental scan that covers dozens of labor supply and demand factors, including global economic and political issues marked by very high levels of uncertainty.

"We filter our thinking through the environmental scan," Cummings reports. "Which factors will have the greatest impact on the business and which carry the highest levels of uncertainty, and how high or low might they go?"

The business leaders prioritize the factors and outline the big themes. "The most compelling development at this point is that you see a couple of key buckets, and one is the economy, which shapes labor pools, the business model and, at the macro level, how much business might be gained or lost," Cummings says.

The participants then construct a simple matrix, with one axis for factors that are out of the company's control, such as the economy, and a second axis for factors within its control, such

## Strategic Workforce Planning

**(Continued from page 7)**

as how the company positions itself geographically. The participants look at alternative scenarios and outcomes for the four quadrants, and then break into four subgroups, with one group assigned to each quadrant.

"One quadrant will look like utopia and one will represent the worst gloom and doom," Cummings says. "For the gloom-and-doom quadrant, we can then ask: Are we working toward prevention? Are we mitigating the risks that we see?"

The four quadrant groups generate reports. "We talk about the themes in each quadrant and that helps us look at possible future needs," Cummings says. "Once you get there, it's easier to see the goals and build an action plan."

**'No regrets' planning**

Recent surveys confirm that companies are using the current crisis to upgrade their workforce. "We know from research on business cycle management that many firms use a downturn to be very aggressive in acquiring talent," Courtney says.

Under current conditions, however, fairly high levels of uncertainty form the context for decisions about talent acquisition. "For workforce planning, companies are now facing multiple possible scenarios, any of which carries the need to develop bench strength," Courtney says.

Given these conditions, Courtney advises companies to ask: What are the "no regrets" moves that we could take no matter what the range of outcomes? "This forces decisions about who to hire and when to make the hire, and what will happen if you don't," he notes.

Courtney will not speculate widely about the human capital changes that might arise from the current crisis. "Beyond the obvious near-term unemployment and retraining issues, too much depends on how long it lasts and whether it is a cyclical or a structural change," he says.

He does see a long-term shift toward greater government regulation that will reach well beyond financial services. "This means that companies will need different skill sets in middle and upper management positions, with more employees skilled in managing regulations and standard-setting," he says. "This is not just a cyclical issue to get us though the downturn, but more of a structural change."

In many companies, strategic workforce planning executives are asked to outline the workforce implications for business scenarios already constructed by top leadership. "But some business scenarios are highly contingent on human resources issues," Courtney notes.

"For example, McKinsey & Co. always starts with its ability to attract and train the best people, and its business scenarios flow from there," Courtney reports. "That's an extreme example. But in a variety of industries, we need to avoid spreadsheet answers and take a more strategic workforce planning approach that looks at competitive advantage. In the best of all worlds, human resources executives are members of the team that is creating the business scenarios."

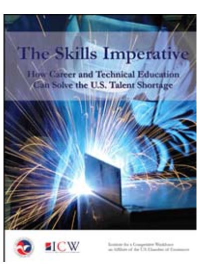
At Aetna, Cummings is still working to align the workforce planning process with enterprise planning. The company's strategic plan reaches out three years and is largely set in June of each year. "The planning function has connected to the workforce planning session output," she says. "The most important step is to hook into finance."

When Aetna's finance function issued numbers for 2009 headcount reductions at the end of 2008, Cummings reviewed the data. "We modeled out the numbers that finance gave us," she says. "That was an insightful exercise that fostered partnering with finance and thinking about alternatives for how the reductions could occur."

Still in its early stages of development and operating with a limited staff, the strategic workforce planning process at Aetna is nonetheless pushing past gap analysis to create a more comprehensive plan.

"We've laid the tracks for thinking about the challenges we face," Cummings says. "The process is based on a methodology designed to create some clarity. In the end, it takes us to a further level of insight and builds connectedness and a common vision. It's the story and the dialog that get you to the future."

Recasting strategic workforce planning to accommodate higher levels of uncertainty is not a temporary response to unprecedented conditions, however. Courtney makes it clear that the only thing that has changed since the 2008 market crash is our perception of risks and uncertainties that were already there.




**New Report**

## The Skills Imperative: How Career and Technical Education Can Solve the U.S. Talent Shortage

**Downloaded on September 17, 2009 from** http://www.uschamber.com/icw/strategies/cte.htm

Because of the growing need of increased skill levels requiring more math, science, communications, and problem-solving skills, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Institute for a Competitive Workforce has published a white paper on career and technical education (CTE). This report outlines the economic context of CTE, the opportunities for the business community to get engaged, case studies and examples where CTE is part of a skill-attainment solution, next steps and recommendations, and further resources for CTE information. A new education and training system with more integration of CTE and core academic courses will be necessary to adequately prepare students for the challenges of their postsecondary training programs. You can find a link to this report at: uschamber.com/icw/strategies/cte.htm

# Top-Notch Teachers Found to Affect Peers

By Debra Viadero



Teachers raise their games when the quality of their colleagues improves, according to a new study offering some of the first evidence to document a "spillover effect" in teaching.

Authors C. Kirabo Jackson and Elias Bruegmann based their findings on an analysis of 11 years of data on North Carolina schoolchildren. The study is due to be published in October in *American Economics Journal: Applied Economics*, a peer-reviewed journal.

The authors and some independent experts said the study results are important, because they carry implications for school staffing practices and debates going on now at the national level over how to structure merit-pay plans for teachers.

"If it's true that teachers are learning from their peers, and the effects are not small, then we want to make sure that any incentive system we put in place is going to be fostering that and not preventing it," said Mr. Jackson, an assistant professor of labor economics at Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y. "If you give the reward at the individual level, all of a sudden my peers are no longer my colleagues—they're my competitors. If you give it at the school level, then you're going to foster feelings of team membership, and that increases the incentive to work together and help each other out."

Studies outside of education have long shown that effective workers can have a spillover effect on their colleagues. Supermarket checkers, for instance, work faster when they are in the line of sight of a productive colleague and berry-pickers tend to calibrate their working speed to that of friends laboring nearby. But studies up until now have not noted the same pattern in teaching, a profession in which it's long been thought that peers work mostly in isolation.

For their study, Mr. Jackson and Mr. Bruegmann focused on mathematics and reading test-score data for students in 3rd through 5th grades, most of whom would have had the same teacher for all of their core academic subjects. They measured teacher quality in two ways: by tracking "observable" characteristics, such as whether teachers were experienced or certified, and by calculating how effective teachers were at raising the test scores of their students. The latter, a "value-added" calculation, was figured using data from teachers' previous students.

## 'Big Enough' Effects

Either way, the researchers found, student achievement rises across a grade when a high-quality teacher comes on board. The effects were twice as strong, though, for the value-added calculations. They show that, for the average educator teaching in a grade with three other teachers, replacing one peer with a more effective one has a spillover effect of .86 percent of a standard deviation on students' test scores.

For math, that equates to roughly one-tenth to one-fifth the size of the impact that is estimated to come from replacing the students' own teacher with a better one, the paper says.

"He [Mr. Jackson] has some pretty good evidence, as good as you can get in an observational study, that when a good teacher shows up in your grade it seems to have a positive impact, and that impact stays around," said Douglas O. Staiger, an economics professor at Dartmouth College in Hanover, N.H., who was not part of the study on peer effects.

Another outside expert, Jonah Rockoff, an assistant professor of labor economics at Columbia University's business school in New York City, concurred. "The effects are big enough that they would matter," he said. "If we think about rewarding teachers based on student outcomes, teachers are going to care about who's teaching alongside of them."

They said the question now is: Do the test scores rise because the new teacher's arrival is motivating peers to do better, because that teacher is helping out other teachers by doing some of the teaching, or because teachers are learning from their new colleague?

In their paper, Mr. Jackson and Mr. Bruegmann argue that peer learning is the likely explanation, mostly because they find that the effects persist over time. In both math and reading, the quality of a teacher's peers a year or two before affects his or her students' achievement, according to their report.

"If it's motivation, when you're no longer surrounded by the peer who's making you work harder, then you shouldn't still be working harder," Mr. Jackson said.

The study also finds that good teachers seem to have the most impact on beginning teachers, as well as those who are certified or have regular teaching licenses.

## Informal Mentors?

Mr. Rockoff said the idea that teachers, especially beginners, are learning from more-effective colleagues on an informal basis could explain why recent studies, including one released this week by Mathematica Policy Research, are finding that formal teacher-induction programs don't seem to be having much effect.

In the new study, which looks at comprehensive teacher-induction programs in 17 districts across the country over two years, researchers at the Princeton, N.J.-based research group found that such programs are not any more effective than business as usual at reducing teacher turnover or boosting student achievement.

In an as-yet-unpublished working paper of New York City teachers, Mr. Rockoff said he also finds "weak" evidence of effects from a formal mentoring program on teacher absences, teacher retention, and student achievement. He did, however, find a link between more hours of mentoring and high student achievement in reading and math.

## Top-Notch Teachers Found
(continued from page 9)

"It's not that new teachers are showing up before and no one is helping them do anything," he said. But another problem, he added, may also be that highly structured mentoring programs—ones that might, for example, require mentors to spend a specified amount of time with all new teachers—might be taking away valuable time that more-skilled beginners might be able to use doing more productive activities, such as planning lessons.

Mr. Jackson and Mr. Rockoff said the new peer-effects findings raise questions about the way schools are staffed, particularly urban schools. Studies have shown, for instance, that teachers in urban schools tend to be less experienced and hold fewer credentials than their suburban counterparts.

"A lot of beginning teachers end up in inner-city schools and move to suburban districts," he said. "Sending the teachers who need the most guidance to be surrounded by teachers who are the least well-equipped might be a problem. We need to make sure we have some high-quality teachers in inner-city school districts."

Experts said more research is needed to figure out exactly how peer effects work among teachers.

"Can we take stellar teachers and move them around?" Mr. Staiger asks. "I'm not sure this paper actually says that. This is kind of the most compelling evidence we have to date that there are these spillover effects, and now we have to try to understand them."

You may purchase this paper on-line in .pdf format from SSRN.com ($5) for electronic delivery.

## *Teachers Forge Facebook Friendships*



The rise of social networking sites has school districts across the country looking into how teachers relate with their students online.

The Sioux Falls school district has adopted restrictions on teachers befriending students on sites such as Facebook. But other districts aren't ready yet to completely sever that line of communication.

The Sioux Falls School District has revised its network and computer systems policy concerning social networking sites. The new policy now states that "Staff shall not invite or accept current District students, except for the staff person's relatives, into any personal social networking sites."

But the Sioux Falls Catholic School District doesn't have such restrictions in place. Instead, administrators say they expect teachers to always behave professionally when online with their students.

Teachers at O'Gorman High School use social networking sites like Facebook as a virtual extension of their classroom. Principal Kyle Groos said, "It has already gone far past the classroom walls, the 4 walls are no longer contained." Facebook can be a valuable educational tool where teachers post homework assignments and online discussions about a subject in school.

O'Gorman relies upon a professional code of conduct to ensure that Internet interaction between its staff and students is kept strictly business.

"When you walk out the door on a Friday night, you don't keep that at the doorstep, that's following you 24-7," said Groos.
Groos says because teachers are aware of their professional responsibilities 24-7, Sioux Falls Catholic schools shouldn't need to add restrictions guarding against improper online relationships.

"We are entrusted with a parent's most precious gift and that's their child and we want to make sure that we don't do anything to break that trust," said Groos.

Even with the rapid spread of technology, Groos says those advances should never outpace ethics.
"The curve of technology is out there like a racehorse, and we're trying to keep up with it."

The friendships forged through Facebook last beyond graduation. Groos says O'Gorman teachers often keep in touch with alumni for input on how to improve their class assignments.

# Reinventing the American High School

**In light of the current and future challenges facing the nation's youth, high school redesign and reform has become a rising issue of importance, capturing national attention. ACTE has released a position statement on high school reform, "Reinventing the American High School for the 21st Century," outlining the organization's vision on what high schools should be and how career and technical education (CTE) can contribute to reform and redesign efforts. Below you will find the paper, executive summary:**

The Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE), on behalf of career and technical education (CTE) professionals in the United States, advocates for clearly focusing American high schools on the goal of preparing EVERY student for full participation in a spectrum of college opportunities, meaningful work, career advancement, and active citizenship. We call upon leaders to make needed changes in school culture, instructional strategies and organizational priorities that will support this new purpose.

CTE is a major enterprise within the United States' P-16 education system. More than 95 percent of high school students take at least one CTE course during their high school career, and about one third of high school students take a concentration of three or more related CTE courses before they graduate. In addition to CTE courses offered within most of the nation's more than 16,000 typical high schools, there are approximately 1,000 regional career technology centers that offer more targeted and technology-intensive CTE programs preparing students, both young people and adults, for further education, and in some cases, for direct entry into the workforce. Further, a large number of high school reform strategies and new small schools employ interest-based programs, including CTE, as a way to increase student motivation and engagement.

Given the magnitude of the CTE enterprise, it is vital that CTE educators and leaders participate in the important discussion about how to redesign American high schools for the needs of the 21st century and bring CTE's resources and areas of expertise to that discussion.

In our discussions about high school redesign, we suggest a number of strengths and resources CTE can bring to the table for overall high school improvement. To provide clarity for the role of CTE, we suggest a three-fold purpose of career and technical education at the secondary school level. CTE should:

- Support students in the acquisition of rigorous core knowledge, skills, habits and attitudes needed for success in postsecondary education and the high-skilled workplace;
- Engage students in specific career-related learning experiences that equip them to make well-informed decisions about further education and training and employment opportunities; and,
- Prepare students who may choose to enter the workforce directly after high school with levels of skill and knowledge in a particular career area that will be valued in the marketplace.

In light of the current and future challenges facing our youth, the members of ACTE believe a new working model for high school is long overdue. We make the following recommendations to help guide the reinvention of the American high school:

**Recommendation 1.**

**Establish a Clear System Goal of Career and College Readiness for All Students**

All students need a strong arsenal of reading, comprehension, reasoning, problem-solving and personal skills to be ready for the world of meaningful postsecondary education and training as well as entry into the high-skilled workplace. Standards should be aligned to the demands of career and college readiness, and all students should be challenged to enroll in a rigorous college and career readiness curriculum. Extra help, including structured transition services, should be provided to support this curriculum, and opportunities for additional advancement across broad areas should be provided. Traditional academic and CTE teachers must share the goal of preparing students for both further education and careers.

**Recommendation 2.**

**Create a Positive School Culture that Stresses Personalization in Planning and Decision-making**

At a minimum, every student should be led through a process of academic and career awareness, exploration, and planning. This should include learning about the economy and career options, self-assessment for areas of interest; deeper exploration of how personal interests relate to career opportunities and gaining education and career decision-making skills; and knowledge and understanding of local, state, and national educational, occupational, and labor market opportunities, needs, and trends. Policies must be in place to ensure that career development and postsecondary planning are core activities within the high school as part of a comprehensive guidance program. Each student, and his or her parents/guardians, should develop an individualized plan for graduation and beyond that will guide the high school experience.

**Recommendation 3.**

**Create a Positive School Culture that Stresses Personalization in Relationships**

Schools remain one of the best opportunities for connecting youth and adults in positive ways, giving students the sense that they are valued and cared for, and reinforcing the message that whether they succeed or fail actually matters to someone. A system goal must be to help every youth become involved in structured activity that strengthens positive relationships with peers and adults and encourages the student's sense of confidence and belonging in school. These activities could include advisory periods, smaller learning communities, co-curricular interest-based activities—such as

# Reinventing the American High School

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career and technical student organizations (CTSOs)—or other activities that provide a positive adult relationship.

**Recommendation 4.**

**Dramatically Improve How and Where Academic Content is Taught**

Teachers and researchers must work together to identify strategies that show promise for helping all students attain proficiency in high-level courses. As each state refines and clarifies its standards for career and college readiness, it should recognize that "academic" skills can be acquired in a variety of settings, not just the traditional academic classroom. The achievement problem is not just one of low-level course-taking; it is also related to unfocused curriculum and instructional methods that are not reaching all students. Integration of academic competencies into CTE curricula and of real-world content and applied methods and examples into traditional academic classes can raise student achievement levels and increase understanding of rigorous concepts. Flexibility must be in place for delivering academic content across the curriculum.

**Recommendation 5.**

**Create Incentives for Students to Pursue the Core Curriculum in an Interest-based Context**

From across the school reform spectrum, there is ample evidence that connecting rigorous academic expectations with the relevance of an interest-based curriculum can help connect students to learning in powerful ways. Interest-based areas can be organized around various broad themes, such as the fine arts, or more specific themes like biotechnology, pre-engineering, hospitality, and finance. There must be resources and policies in place to support the development, implementation, and review of these interest-based areas.

**Recommendation 6.**

**Support High Quality Teaching in all Content Areas**

The No Child Left Behind Act creates mechanisms for assuring that every teacher in the academic core subjects is highly qualified, meaning the teacher holds a bachelor's degree or higher, grasps content at a deep level and can teach that content effectively. The crux of these standards, deep knowledge of content and skills in effective teaching methods, should apply to CTE teachers as well, including those entering the teaching profession through traditional teacher education programs and those transitioning into teaching from business and industry through alternative certification programs. CTE teachers should be able to demonstrate content mastery through a method appropriate to their areas of expertise, utilizing industry-based credentials or assessments aligned with career clusters where available. An expanded focus must be placed on professional development for all teachers in academic and technical integration and contextual teaching strategies.

**Recommendation 7.**

**Offer Flexible Learning Opportunities to Encourage Re-entry and Completion**

True quality high school reform must include effective strategies to re-engage and reconnect young people who have failed or are in danger of failing to complete high school. These young people have been failed by the current high school system. With a national graduation rate of approximately 71 percent, millions of young people are out of school and grossly ill-equipped to compete in the 21st century workforce and economy. To reform high school without a strategy to re-engage these young people who have already dropped out would be to abandon them to, and accept the social costs associated with, bleak futures marked by reduced earning potential, poverty, crime, drug abuse, and early pregnancy. High schools must provide a continuum of flexible interest-based learning opportunities that utilize effective teaching methodologies and are responsive to students' varied needs and life circumstances.

**Recommendation 8.**

**Create System Incentives and Supports for Connection of CTE and High School Redesign Efforts**

In many states and school districts, CTE leaders are providing the major impetus and resources for rethinking the instructional and organizational design of the traditional high school. However, in some locales, superintendents, school leaders and school reform advocates are reportedly overlooking the role of CTE in providing meaning, relevance, and experience in deeply contextualized learning of subject matter.This oversight will limit the effectiveness and impact of the high school redesign agenda. Policymakers at the federal, state and local levels should see academic and interest-based courses as complementary of one another, and create initiatives that support rich, interest-based programs to be built around a core of rigorous academic expectations.

**Recommendation 9.**

**Move Beyond "Seat-Time" and Narrowly Defined Knowledge and Skills**

U.S. high schools operate on a well-established set of expectations for size, time of day and seasons of the year that programs and classes are offered, how instructional material is delivered and what constitutes success in terms of the students' knowledge and skills. In order for our education system to adopt the new goal of getting every student ready for careers and college, we suggest a shift in focus to the underlying principles for what students learn and how we teach it, including what knowledge and skills are measured, how students are asked to demonstrate their knowledge and skills and how school is offered for all young people, particularly for the many students who are currently disengaged and leaving, or have already left, the traditional high school. Clearly, we believe that CTE courses and instructional methodologies have a place in the high school environment, and that there should not be an artificial split between academic coursework and vocational studies, nor should exposure to CTE-type coursework be delayed until late in high school or college. Rather, we believe that all coursework, with clearly articulated standards and expectations, can help build within students the mix of skills, aptitudes and attitudes they will need for success after high school.

Designing American high schools around the needs of students in the present and the future requires honesty, courage, and a willingness to change familiar structures and practices in the best interests of our young people. Real change, made for the right reasons and toward the right mission, will yield dramatically better results and a more hopeful future for America's young people.

## Federal Funding Issues

**August 3, 2009**

On July 24, the House of Representatives passed its version of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill by a vote of 264-153. Only a few minor changes were made to the House bill during the final discussion. You can read more about the bill in ACTE's July 20 Legislative Update. The House was able to pass all 12 of its annual appropriations bills before adjourning for the August recess.

The appropriations process is also moving forward in the Senate. On July 30, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved its FY 2010 spending bill for programs housed under the departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education. In this bill, the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act is funded at FY 2009 levels.

The Senate Appropriations Committee had a much tighter spending cap to work with than the House; therefore, increases are not as prevalent in the Senate's version of the FY 2010 spending bill. Highlights of the Senate's bill include:

- $2.97 billion for state grants for job training
- $105 million for YouthBuild, which is $35 million above FY 2009
- $13.8 billion for Title I Grants for low-income children, restoring $800 million of the president's recommended $1.5 billion cut
- $12.6 billion for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- $700 million for a new school-renovation program

The Senate appropriations bill is expected to go before the entire Senate when Congress reconvenes in September. While there is still quite a bit of work to be done, it seems that House and Senate appropriators are dedicated to completing and passing all spending bills by the September 30 end-of-the-fiscal-year deadline (a feat that has not occurred in a number of years). If appropriations bills are not finalized by the end of the fiscal year, Congress must past a continuing resolution, which allows programs to continue to be funded at the previous year's levels until work can be completed.

## ACTE Publishes A New Issue Brief on STEM Challenges

A new ACTE Issue Brief: *CTE's Role in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math* was published in June 2009

This Issue Brief explores the integral role CTE programs and initiatives play in addressing the STEM challenge and securing America's leadership in innovation. CTE programs offer students a deeper understanding of STEM career pathways, build interest in STEM-related careers by making math and science content more relevant and tangible to students and help grow the STEM workforce pipeline by encouraging more students from under-represented populations to enter these career fields. You can download a copy from http://www.acteonline.org/uploadedFiles/Publications_and_Online_Media/files/STEM_Issue_Brief.pdf

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**Iota Lambda Sigma**
**607 Park Way West**
**Oregon, OH 43616**
**Phone: 419-693-6860**
**Fax: 419-693-6860**

**ILSgrandchapter@aol.com**

David L. Netherton, Editor

Anna Skinner, Secretary-Treasurer

**Iota Lambda Sigma**
Office of the Executive Secretary-Treasurer
607 Park Way West
Oregon, Ohio 43616

Phone: 419-693-6860
Fax: 419-693-6859
ILSgrandchapter@aol.com

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Mark your calendar today for the best professional development event of the year, Nov. 19-21 at the Gaylord Opryland Resort Hotel & Convention Center in Nashville, Tennessee.

**Catch the new rhythm of CTE!** Let ACTE's 2009 Convention preview video show you what you can expect in Nashville—watch and share with your colleagues. You can also see what attendees had to say about the 2008 Convention and view select sessions and presentations from last year to get a taste of the engaging and informative content you'll take away from Nashville.