WORKER TRAINING AND RETRAINING: PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PLANS**


The Alliance for Employee Growth and Development is a cooperative venture among AT&T, the Communications Workers of America (CWA), and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) designed to help individuals improve existing skills and develop new ones. The development of the Alliance, which was founded in June, 1986, and its current activities are described. "Safe landings for outplaced employees at AT&T," by William J. Barkley, Jr. and Thad B. Green describes a similar program devised by National Personnel Services Organization (a division of AT&T) to assist AT&T employees to cope with the effects of downsizing. (Personnel Journal, June 1992, pp. 144–147. $6.00.) Of related interest: "Helping displaced workers: the UAW-GM Human Resource Center" by Diane Feldman (Personnel, March 1988, pp. 34–36. $5.00).


Technical and specialized skills, conceptual skills, and communications skills are in rising demand due to recent restructuring in industries. This book analyzes recent transformations and the implications for training in four sectors: banking, the textile industry, retailing, and business services. Of related interest are the articles "Employee retraining programs" by Paul L. Blocklyn (Personnel, Nov. 1988, pp. 64–66. $5.00), and "Technological displacement: who is responsible for retraining the displaced?" by William B. Rose, Jr., et al. (Industrial Management, July/August 1992, pp. 12–14. $6.00).


* Prepared by Ellen Gilbert, Assistant Librarian, Industrial Relations Library.
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State-financed, customized training programs emerged in the 1960s and 1970s as part of state efforts to attract new business to the state and promote employment expansion in existing businesses. This report is based in part on twenty-four case studies of training projects funded by four state programs. The case studies are presented in the second volume of this report, Evaluating state-financed, workplace-based retraining programs: case studies of retraining projects. (Research Report 91-05. 1992. 169 pp. On request).


According to the Economic Policy Institute, JTPA has not made much difference in the employment, earnings, and productive capacity of the American workforce. A second chance; training for jobs by Sar A. Levitan and Frank Gallo also finds JTPA efforts seriously lacking. (W. E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research. 1988. 220 pp. $16.00.) “The impact of job training programs on the reemployment probability of dislocated workers,” by Yau-Ting, gives JTPA mixed reviews; many states have concentrated too much on short-term job search assistance, rather than investing in programs that offer training and higher probability of reemployment. (Policy Studies Review, Spring/Summer 1991. pp. 31-44. $8.00.)


When a plant shuts down, what choices will the displaced workers have? If they cannot retire, the author observes, they will choose to retrain very rapidly or take their chances without retraining in the local labor market or elsewhere. Human resource programs, she suggests, will move rapidly to recruit the most trainable and the most reemployable individuals from the closing plant, so that retraining can take place while unemployment benefits are still available to retrainees. As a result, a very small proportion of workers will actually take retraining. Although these few workers and some programs will be successful, it will be at the expense of the majority of the displaced workers.


A broad range of new training initiatives governed jointly by employers and unions is examined, including successful efforts in the telecommunications industry, the auto industry, and New York State. Distinctive characteristics of these programs include: negotiated contract language by which they are established; a fund for their operation; jointness in all decisions and as an operating principle; and a range of services such as career counseling, vocational training, and relocation assistance offered to bargaining unit members.

This book is meant as a practical guide for those responsible for implementing Title III of the Job Training and Partnership Act of 1982. It describes important programs and useful strategies for helping dislocated workers find new jobs at good wages. The aspects of the dislocation issue that are examined include: who experiences dislocation and why; the responsibilities of federal, state, and local agencies under the 1988 amendments to JTPA and how Title III can be improved; how to anticipate dislocation; options for initial responses to worker dislocation; job-search assistance; policy and program issues related to retraining; and basic skills training. Many of the chapters contain case studies of effective adjustment efforts and include contact names, addresses and telephone numbers.


This monograph attempts to answer a number of questions involving government training assistance to displaced workers: Do some types of training work better than others? Do some groups of workers benefit more from training than others? To the extent that training improves reemployment prospects, does it work by increasing post-training wage rates or by reducing the duration of unemployment? And, referring specifically to vocational training, how do we know what to train workers to do? Analysis of empirical evidence from a variety of programs suggests that job search assistance should be at the core of adjustment assistance services offered to displaced workers. Evidence on other services, including retraining, is not as conclusive. Leigh is also the author of *Assisting displaced workers: do the states have a better idea?* (W. E. Upjohn, 1989. 172 pp. Text edition $21; paper text edition $12.00.)


Broad economic and social changes in the United States during the 1980s put new emphasis on the importance of training for firms, unions, employees, and policymakers. While traditional training efforts were strengthened, a variety of new experiments were begun, some initiated by employers, some structured as union-management programs, some originating within the labor movement, and some established as public-private partnerships. This volume explores many of the themes that emerged from these developments, and examines their potential impact on the 1990s. Although the main focus is the United States, consideration is also given to relevant approaches to training in Canada and Europe.


In 1988 the Economic Dislocation and Worker Adjustment Act (EDWAA) was passed to amend Title III of JTPA. This report examines how EDWAA may influence the ability of the Employment Service to assist dislocated workers. Two other National Commission for Employment Policy reports are of related interest: Assisting dislocated workers: alternatives to layoffs, and the role of the Employment Service under the Economic Dislocation and Workers Adjustment Assistance Act (1991. 111 pages. On request), and Improving the effectiveness of the Employment Service: defining the issues (1991, 33 pp. On request).


This report concentrates on the problems of displaced blue-collar and non-professional white-collar workers. The best route back to a good job for many semiskilled blue-collar workers is retraining, although even with retraining, initial wages are often lower than on the old jobs.


Some observers of JTPA job training programs have argued that the system places too much emphasis on short-term training for entry-level jobs, and not enough emphasis on jobs with potential for career advancement. To assess the quality of the training provided under JTPA during program year 1988, this study examines how the design and implementation of JTPA services influenced the quality of the training provided to JTPA participants using case examples from fifteen different Service Delivery Areas (SDAs) and forty-three different training programs throughout the U.S. Concluding recommendations identify how actions at the Federal, state, and SDA levels can improve the effectiveness of JTPA training. Of related interest: The Job Training Partnership Act (National Commission for Employment Policy. 1987. 240 pp. o.p.); What's happening with JTPA? A complete analysis of NAB's 1984 survey data (National Alliance of Business, 1985. 45 pp., o.p.), and Worker dislocation, edited by Robert F. Cook (W. E. Upjohn Institute, 1987, 219 pp., $22.00).