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ABSTRACT

This paper examines changing demographics in the American work force during the 1990s and implications for the economy, for America's ability to compete globally, and for industry and education. In response to these workplace and demographic changes, the National Association for Industry-Education Cooperation utilized the technique of networking to identify and select a 200-member respondent panel for a Delphi procedure. The panel included employers, local and state directors of special education, and others. The results of the Delphi process were a ranked listing of 29 items citing implications of, and recommendations for responding to, the changing demographics in the work force. The top 10 items formed an "action agenda" to guide industry-special education's joint response. The 10 items called for cooperative efforts to improve curriculum, adult services, work experiences, and transition; greater emphasis on exposing youths with disabilities to the expectations of the work environment; education of employers and employees about the needs and potential contributions of persons with disabilities; creation of more effective transition programs; and increased emphasis on basic academic competence. Activities to support dissemination of the agenda are described. An appendix contains rank orderings, statistical data, and analysis of the 29 items. (Contains 11 references.) (JDD)

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Final Project Report

Developing Industry-Special Education's Joint Response To Changing Demographics In the Workforce

July, 1992

National Association for Industry-Education Cooperation

Buffalo, New York

Donald M. Clark, Ed. D.

Project Director

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THE CHALLENGE

Changing demographics in the American work force during this decade will have important implications for our nation's economy, our country's ability to compete on a global scale, and for industry and education of all sizes and at all levels. Recent analyses of demographic changes and trends have led many agencies, associations, and organizations to "sound the alarm" and make dire predictions of what the future holds if we fail to respond constructively to these changes.

Changes in the workplace, including significant structural adjustments, will impact not only the number of new jobs available but also the skill requirements of those jobs. The development of a true world market, the rapid industrialization of underdeveloped and third world countries, and the rapid pace of technological development are major forces affecting structural changes (Craig, 1983). According to the National Alliance of Business (1986), from 5 to 15 million manufacturing jobs will be restructured, and an equal number of service jobs will become obsolete. The Hudson Institute report, Workforce 2000, predicted that the 26 million new jobs opening up in the last period of this century would be at higher technical difficulty levels, the majority requiring some postsecondary education (Johnson and Packer, 1987).

Changes in the work force (Hodgkinson, 1986; Johnson and Packer, 1987; and The National Alliance of Business, 1986) are characterized by a decline in population growth, the aging of the population, particularly the baby boomers' generation, and the influx of greater percentages of women, minorities, and immigrants among new entrants to the work force. New growth in the work force will come from those segments of the population which have traditionally been the least well educated and least prepared for work. The diminishing pool of qualified workers means that employers may face serious skill shortages as work force capabilities fail to match workplace needs. The potential impact on our economy could mean continued displacement of workers (Committee for Economic Development, 1987), the growth of an underclass of long-term unemployed, and losses in productivity and world competitiveness (National Alliance of Business, 1986).

As Hoyt (1989) stated, "The changing work force and the changing occupational structure are on a collision course."

What are the implications for persons with disabilities?

Phelps (1986) has suggested that the level and nature of employment options will greatly influence the extent to which handicapped youth are employed in the future. He noted that factors such as immigration policies, international business competition, and the extent to which technology affects the workplace need to be carefully monitored in terms of their impact upon the employment of handicapped youth.

As business responds to changing demographics in the work force, it will be important that persons with disabilities not be overlooked, for they represent a significant resource potential. According to a series of Harris & Associates surveys conducted in 1986, 1987 and 1989 (Heffron and Smeltzer, 1990), of 13 million disabled persons of working age in the United States, only 34 percent work full or part time, leaving 66 percent, or over 8 million unemployed. And, the majority of them want to work. But, only one in ten top managers displayed a strongly optimistic attitude toward disabled people as a potential source of employees.

Educational programs, at both secondary and postsecondary levels, are not preparing students with disabilities for work force opportunities for the present or the future. Heffron and Smeltzer (1990) noted studies which revealed that fewer than 15 percent of special education students were participating in post-secondary education and training a year or more after leaving high school, a strong indication that transition planning for students with disabilities continues to be deficient.

Employers who want to remain competitive in the 21st century will need to engage in affirmative action techniques to ensure an adequate supply of qualified, well-trained employees. In its commissioned study for the U. S. Department of Labor, Opportunity 2000, the Hudson Institute (1988) noted:

The United States' large disabled population will play an increasingly important role in the dramatically shifting work force of the coming century. While for many years a large, hidden population, a new generation of disabled persons are making themselves heard and gaining a new sense of self-respect. Technology has opened many doors to learning, such that with proper accommodations, individuals with disabilities can perform nearly any job that the non-disabled population can.

Employers who have employed disabled persons find they are reliable, conscientious, intelligent, safety-conscious workers. Today, hiring the disabled is not an act of charity, but good business sense. (1988, pp. 143-144).

RESPONDING TO THE CHALLENGE

Potential implications of changing demographics leads to the question, "What are we going to do about it?" Awareness of the potential problem is the obvious first step, and this has happened, as exemplified by the efforts of organizations such as the National Association for Industry-Education Cooperation and the National Alliance of Business. Developing a constructive response or set of responses following this increased level of awareness is the next step which this project report addresses.

The organized approach undertaken by the National Association for Industry-Education Cooperation to develop a constructive response to these workplace and demographic changes (that may potentially increase opportunities for persons with disabilities) may be referred to as issues management, a process derived from futures research. According to Coates and others, "the purpose of issues identification and management is clear -- to anticipate and identify unfolding trends and developments likely to have significant impact on the organization and to frame a positive response that serves the organization's needs in the new reality engendered by the trend or issue." (Coates, Coates, Jarratt and Heinz, 1986). Specific techniques of issues management employed in this project were networking (Coates and others, 1986) and Delphi (Delbecq, Van de Ven and Gustafson, 1975).

Two major project objectives were identified:

1. Develop a joint industry-special education response to the changing demographics in the workforce, and
2. Disseminate the response to the broad national constituencies in industry and special education.

Networking was used to establish the constituencies for the project, for both dissemination functions as well as for establishing the **Delphi** panel. In addition to its own network of state industry-education coordinators in over 25 states and a large number of local industry-education councils in the U.S., Great Britain and Canada, networking was done with various national organizations and associations to develop the delphi panel with representation from rehabilitation, special education at state and local levels, advocacy organizations, labor, business, government and the professions.

The networking activity resulted in the identification and selection of a 200 member respondent panel for the Delphi procedure. The composition of the panel included four major groupings:

- employers -- business and industry representatives from both small and large employers
- local directors of special education
- state directors of special education
- others -- industry-education council coordinators, vocational and rehabilitation professionals, advocacy organization directors, university faculty, Chambers of Commerce members, etc.

Since its original development, Delphi has been used to help identify problems, set goals and priorities, and identify problem solutions. It can also be useful to clarify positions and delineate differences among diverse reference groups. The delphi process can be applied to a wide range of program planning, policy and administrative concerns.

Delphi is a group process which utilizes written responses as opposed to bringing individuals together; it is a means for aggregating the judgments of a number of individuals in order to improve the quality of decision-making. Delphi is essentially a series of questionnaires. The first questionnaire asks individuals to respond to a broad question. (In this project, "What are the implications of changing demographics and changing workplace requirements for disabled youth?") Each subsequent questionnaire is built upon responses to the preceding questionnaire. The process stops when consensus has been approached among participants, or when sufficient information exchange has been obtained. In this project, there were three rounds of questionnaires.

The Delphi process is dynamic. The content of the second questionnaire is derived from the responses to the first one. Responses are sorted into several classifications. Within each classification, similar responses are grouped into one or two to reflect the whole, preserving the integrity of responses as necessary. Items which become the content of the second questionnaire indicate the initial positions of respondents. Items of agreement and disagreement are identified. Items needing further clarification are noted also.

Statements of support and criticism can be made to increase understanding, as dialogue between respondents takes place in the second round. The second questionnaire asks respondents to vote on individual items, and gives each respondent an opportunity to comment on each item. Responses to the second questionnaire provide for establishing the number of respondents voting for each item, individual votes per item, and a total vote for each item. The items are ranked in order of importance, representing the group's collective judgment.

The third round questionnaire may request a second or final vote on each item. The third questionnaire shows each panel member the results of the preliminary voting and provides a summary of earlier comments made per item. In this project, the third round asked for a final vote on each item.

INDUSTRY-SPECIAL EDUCATION'S RESPONSE

The results of the Delphi process included a ranked listing of 29 items citing implications of, and recommendations for responding to, the changing demographics in the work force. Each item was voted on by the panel of respondents. This resulted in a final listing of items based on their importance. The top ten items identified by the Delphi panel of respondents form an "action agenda" to guide industry-special education's joint response to changing demographics in the work force and changing requirements in the workplace.

1. These conditions necessitate far greater cooperative efforts between employers and the schools, between industry and education; real partnerships to improve curriculum, adult services, work experiences, and transition.
2. Place greater emphasis on exposing youths with disabilities to the expectations of the work environment to learn social and work skills essential to success; increase mentorships, cooperative education, summer work experiences, and so on, so they will have actual work experiences.
3. Employers and their employees must be educated about the needs and potential contributions of persons with disabilities to overcome misconceptions and prejudices and increase the comfort levels of co-workers; training programs on diversity; highly visible advertising.
4. Create more school transition programs that are realistic and effective; coordinate with business and industry and adult service agencies; begin programs earlier, no later than 14 years of age.
5. Basic academic competence must be taught, including basic math and English literacy skills, either before skills training, through a functional skills curriculum, or in integrated academic and vocational programs.
6. Career education and guidance must be integrated into each disabled youth's educational program: motivation, orientation, exploration and preparation (K-12), reflecting current work force needs.

7. Linkages among vocational education, special education, vocational rehabilitation, other community agencies serving persons with disabilities and business/industry must be strengthened; e.g., regional consortia to coordinate services.
8. Expand use of supported employment; more worksite training; specific job skills are often best acquired on the job; especially important for local small and franchise businesses; job coaching.
9. Students and their parents must become self-advocates, learn how to use the system; parents and families can promote independence; train parents for this role.
10. A variety of support services must be available to employees with disabilities and their employers, e.g., transportation, counseling, access to assistive devices, interpreting, equipment modification.

The complete results of the third and final round questionnaire in the Delphi process is contained in the appendix section of this report.

This research product articulates industry-special education's joint response to the issues and provides a blueprint for action at federal, state and local levels. As state and local special education administrators and industry representatives implement this "action agenda", the impact on youths with disabilities will be felt in terms of improved services, more efficient and effective coordination of services, and smoother transitions from school to work and from school to postsecondary training and education opportunities.

DISSEMINATION

Activities to support dissemination of information from this project included organization newsletters, professional journals, presentations at national conferences, and direct mailings.

The National Association for Industry-Education Cooperation's bi-monthly newsletter included several articles about the project during the two-year period, 1990-1991. These addressed the initial project announcement, solicitation of participants for the Delphi panel of respondents, and periodic progress reports. Further, a paper on the results of the research project has been accepted for publication in an upcoming issue of the Association's Journal of Industry-Education Cooperation.

Presentations at national conference meetings of professional organizations and associations included: National Association for Industry-Education Cooperation's Annual Showcase Conference, 1991 and 1992; American Association for Counseling and Development, 1991; The President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, 1991; NAIEC Regional Conference, "Creating A Business/Industry-Education Alliance," San Francisco, 1991; and, American Vocational Association, 1990.

Direct mailings of this report were sent to approximately 400 representatives of industry, special education and related fields. These persons included candidates and members of the Delphi panel of respondents and interested professionals who attended the dissemination conferences.

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A P P E N D I X

QUESTIONNAIRE #3 RESULTS
COMBINED

(N = 142)

Each of the following items were identified as the most important items for disabled youth resulting from changing demographics in the work force. The items are listed in their order of importance, based on the final rankings of items by panel members. Notes on each item and a summary of qualifying comments made by panel members are listed below each item.

Final Rank	Vote Count	Items from Questionnaire #2	Notes and Comments
Order	# Voting		
Total Vote			

<u>1</u>	974	1. These conditions necessitate far greater cooperative efforts between employers and the schools, between industry and education; real partnerships to improve curriculum, adult services, work experiences, transition.	
	114		
	111036		
			There was consistent, high levels of agreement on this item (97%) and it was ranked highly by all four groups. Panel members noted that collaborative efforts will be important in the future and that employer ownership processes will increase opportunities for disabled persons.

<u>3</u>	776	3. Employers and their employees must be educated about the needs and potential contributions of the disabled to overcome misconceptions and prejudices and increase the comfort levels of non-disabled co-workers; training programs on diversity; highly visible advertising.	
	108		
	83808		
			There was consistent, almost unanimous agreement on this item (98%), and it was ranked highly by all four groups. Panel members emphasized the need for training and experience but questioned the effectiveness of advertising.

<u>2</u>	913	7. Place greater emphasis on exposing disabled youth to the expectations of the work environment to learn social and work skills essential to success; increase mentorships, cooperative education, summer work experiences, and so on, so they will have actual work experiences.	
	123		
	112299		
			Unanimous, consistent agreement on this item (99%). Ranked highly by all four groups. Panel members saw this as an area in which programming for disabled persons has frequently failed. They stressed more use of the private sector and the importance of gearing these experiences to individual circumstances.



4 707 **8. Create more school transition programs that are realistic and effective; coordinate with business and industry and adult service agencies; begin programs earlier, no later than 14 years of age.**
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 77063

Consistently high levels of agreement (98%) and high rankings on this item. Panel members thought transition planning and services should begin earlier for some disabilities and later for others, keeping in mind the students' functional levels as well as chronological age and maturity.

7 559 **18. Linkages among vocational education, special education, vocational rehabilitation, other community agencies serving disabled persons, and business/industry must be strengthened; e.g., regional consortia to coordinate services.**
 93
 51987

Agreement on this item was very high (94%) and consistent across all four groups. Each group ranked this item among its top twenty rankings. Panel members stressed the need for effective linkages without, at the same time, creating more bureaucracy and red tape.

5 589 **5. Basic academic competence must be taught, including basic math and English literacy skills, either before skills training, through a functional skills curriculum, or in integrated academic and vocational programs.**
 93
 54777

There was very high agreement overall (88%), with Employers being the highest group (97%) and Local Directors the lowest (72%). All four groups ranked this item in their top twenty. Panel members stressed the integrated academic and vocational approach as the most desirable. Some noted that basic academic competence may not be needed nor realistic for some disability groups, e.g., severely mentally handicapped and multi-handicapped, where vocational skills should be taught in line with workplace demands and given greater priority.

6 549 **54. Career education and guidance must be integrated into each disabled youth's educational program: motivation, orientation, exploration and preparation (K-12), reflecting current work force needs.**
 99
 54351

Near unanimous agreement across all four groups on this item (99%). The item was ranked highly by State Directors, Others and Employers. Panel members mentioned future work force needs as well, suggested extending this program to the postsecondary level, and argued for a life skills-related program, including vocational, social, mobility, financial, home living, recreational, etc. Some stated that they see this as crucial to the success of vocational education and transition.

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 24272

16. Students and their parents must become self-advocates, learn how to use the system; parents and families can promote independence; train parents for this role.

There was a very high level of agreement on this item (95%) among all four groups and the item was consistently ranked high by them. Panel members felt that parents could become "case managers" given proper training, perhaps funded by state and federal funds. The difficult part of this is that some parents do not want to participate, lack interest, and are unrealistic about their child's abilities/skills.

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 26892

13. Expand use of supported employment; more worksite training; specific job skills are often best acquired on the job; especially important for local small and franchise businesses; job coaching.

A very high level of agreement (93%) was expressed very uniformly by the respondents. State and Local Directors and Employers ranked this item in their top twenty list. Others did not. Panel members who disagreed with this item or had reservations about it cited poor cost-effectiveness, concern for continuing financial support for job coaching, continued employment after withdrawing support, and expense of this approach. Supporters noted that this program works well with mildly disabled individuals and provides valuable assistance to employers.

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 11055

31. Staff development and inservice training for vocational and special education teachers, college faculty, counselors and employment placement personnel; awareness of disabled, training techniques; require or give incentives.

Panel members expressed very high agreement with this need (95%) and all four groups ranked it among their top twenty. They suggested the need for special education teachers to do more sharing, teaming, and cross-training and programs to help train industry trainers and personnel recruiters. Some panel members objected to incentives and noted that attitudinal change is needed before training will be accepted.

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19404

21. A variety of support services must be available to disabled employees and their employers, e.g., transportation, counseling, access to assistive devices, interpreting, equip. modification.

There was very high and consistent agreement on the need for support services (97%). Panel members noted that this would have to be promoted in the business community, since the community at large and business in particular are not quite ready to handle all of these. Services should be provide only as long as it takes for the person to adapt to the working situation -- not always and forever.

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10. The role of postsecondary institutions needs to be improved and expanded; coordinating and articulating with secondary programs; provide specific training, especially to those underemployed and unemployed.

There was a very high level of agreement across all four groups (94%) and three of the four groups ranked this among their top twenty. Employers did not. Panel members noted that postsecondary institutions, e.g., community colleges could play a role in vocational training and in maintaining employment and self-sufficiency. Some disagreed with this role, however, suggesting that it's best carried out by secondary schools and vo-tech centers.

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4392

33. Traditional teaching methods must give way to innovative techniques, to team teaching, to more public/private partnerships, to career info. systems using computers to match jobs.

Very high agreement was expressed on the need for innovative techniques (93%). All groups except State Directors ranked this item in their top twenty. Panel members were in favor of innovation in teaching and delivery systems (e.g., more computer applications) but they cautioned against innovation for innovation's sake and abandoning "tried and true" methods. Computer matching must have up to date job data and be tied to the local labor market, so that individual abilities can be matched to individual job needs.

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9072

45. Training for employment must become more industry-based and community-based: "buddy system," job coaching, enclaves, supported employment, workplace training must replace traditional vocational education programs.

A fairly high level of agreement was expressed for this item (89%) and all four groups ranked it among their top twenty rankings. Panel members felt that more emphasis is needed on workplace training but that it should supplement vocational education not replace it. For some disabled population groups like moderately and severely handicapped, workplace training may be preferred. A full continuum of training options.

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11. Emphasis must be on providing first-rate vocational education to disabled youth while in high school; guidance by industry representatives; increased academic requirements, emphasizing skills in technology, science, math, and computer science.

This item received a high level of agreement overall (79%) with Local Directors being notably lower in comparison to the other three groups (61%). State and Local Directors and Employers ranked this item in their top twenty. Panel members cautioned that this level of programming cannot be the focus for all disabilities and levels of severity; that higher academic requirements might be a barrier to some. Programs should use "applied" academics and emphasize a range of basic and employability skills, and provisions may need to be made for rural areas where technology and industry are limited.

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6. Target training programs to specific job skills that employers need; respond directly to workplace requirements; focus on skill areas needed in expanding jobs.

There was a high level of agreement (80%) that was fairly consistent across all four groups. All groups, except Local Directors, had this item in their top twenty rankings. Panel members saw specific skills training as important, especially as a short-term concept, but also recognized that more general employability and basic skills were critical for positive long-term effects. They noted that it could be damaging to limit disabled persons by being too narrow and also that many employers prefer to teach specific job skills themselves.

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23. Provide incentives to employers for training and retraining to offset their financial commitment; subsidized wages, tax breaks, legislation to fund on-the-job training and shift disability insurance and benefits to incentives for training.

Agreement on this item was 82% overall, with the lowest level of agreement among employers (73%). Local Directors and Others ranked this item highly. State Directors and Employers did not. Panel members felt incentives are important to reducing cost obstacles and provide an initial selling point. Major opposition to incentives was based on the belief that employers are willing to forego incentives if the money would be spent on educating and training programs to help disabled persons to be "qualified" for work.

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201 **42. Business must inform educators and rehabilitation professionals what they need re: technical skills, academic levels and work behaviors; specify the competencies and ways to develop them; share local, regional and national labor market trends.**
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8844

Very high and consistent agreement on this item (97%). State Directors, Employers, and Others ranked this item in their top twenty. Panel members thought this exchange would make training programs more market driven. Some panel members felt education should be more responsible to find this information, establishing a process where business can do this.

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154 **41. Business and industry need to provide mentoring programs for students and employees; project work ethic, establish expectations; special counseling programs for disabled employees.**
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4312

Very high and consistent agreement on this item (95%) which was ranked highly by Employers, Local Directors, and Others. Panel members felt these programs should be offered in cooperation with education and community/business organizations. Some felt that counseling for disabled should be the responsibility of social service programs provided in the workplace.

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18 **1. This situation presents an unprecedented opportunity to establish disabled workers as an indispensable part of the work force; disabled persons can meet the work force needs of the future; implications are positive.**
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There was a high level of agreement among respondents as a group (79%) but among Employers a little less (67%). Both State Directors and Others ranked this item highly. Panel members felt that disabled persons could meet a significant portion of work force needs, but certainly not all. Other factors, such as the range and characteristics of disabled persons and the supply and demand for workers, would affect the extent to which this would happen. Sensible expectations and applications should be applied.

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75 **20. Follow-up and follow-along systems need to be developed to track students after job placements to maintain students in the workplace, assist as workplace requirements change; evaluate and make program changes based on graduates' success.**
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2025

This item was ranked high by State and Local Directors, but not by Employers and Others. Overall agreement was at 92%, however. Panel members in support of follow-up and follow-along systems cited this activity as important for learning from successes and failures and for helping students remain in their jobs. Those opposed to this activity cited the costs involved, possible duplication with vocational education, and the fact that disabled workers are closely tracked already.

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29. Training programs for prospective special and regular educators need to be improved: focus on career concepts and involve other depts.; better preparation by colleges and univs.

There was very high agreement (93%) on the need for training programs to have a career focus and interdisciplinary approach. State and Local Directors included this item in their top twenty rankings. Panel members recognized that colleges and universities will require some severe/radical changes in attitude and direction, including vocational education's involvement, transition planning, and more interdisciplinary focus.

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30. Emphasis needs to be on early intervention and in the elementary grades; lower pupil/teacher ratios would permit better instruction and guidance which would improve transition.

Agreement on this item was high (78%) overall but lowest among Local Directors (64%). Employers and Others ranked this item in their top twenty rankings. Supporting panel members noted the success of Head Start, the need for career awareness, an emphasis on social skills and peer group acceptance and understanding, and the opportunity for improved/individualized instruction. Dissenting panel members felt research did not support a correlation between class size and improved instruction, and suggested funds go to support more teacher aides and more technology in the classroom.

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19. Counseling and skills assessment must be done regularly and related to the requirements of the business community; include mental and motor skills, student interests and job exploration, and adequate staffing; annually - start at age 12.

State and Local Directors and Others ranked this item highly, while all four groups expressed a high level of agreement (87%). Some panel members were concerned about starting these assessments at age 12, feeling that this might be limiting to youth who are still developing. Others felt the process could begin earlier, especially if the student was clearly identified and needed to build up skills. Relate to IEP and career goals.

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22. Mainstreaming is important to development of social skills critical to success in the transition process and interpersonal relations on the job.

Employers were the only group to rank this item highly, although panel members agreed with this item 90%. Self-esteem, acquisition of social skills, increased awareness among non-disabled students, increased expectations by teachers and coworkers and helping disabled students become part of the system were reasons mentioned by supporting panel members.

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9. Include disabled youth in the new technical education directions in training, especially in telecommunications, information storage and processing, advanced materials, biotechnologies, and superconductivity technologies; give disabled youth access to new technologies.

Generally very high level of agreement on this item (91%) but ranked highly only among the Employers. Panel members recognized that the nature of the disability could prevent full integration at this level but that these areas should be available for those students with the proper interests, aptitudes and academic abilities. They saw these areas as requiring greater expectations but with greater payoffs -- competitive employment with good wages and career opportunities.

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17. Standardized workplace requirements need to be removed; jobs must become more adaptable, e.g., flex-time, at-home-work; modify some job requirements such as reading instructions.

Agreement on this item was high (83%) with Employers showing the least agreement (70%); The item was ranked in the top twenty among Local Directors, but not in any other groups. Panel members noted that employers are willing to do this provided they can see that it's productive; the disabled, as part of a more diversified workforce, should benefit from this increased flexibility in meeting workplace requirements.

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37. We need to look at foreign systems, e.g., Germany's apprenticeship system, and learn from our competitors; current work entry systems are primarily through part-time, temporary work which offers no job security.

Agreement on this item was 77%, reasonably high and consistent among the groups. Employers ranked this item highly; other groups did not. Panel members recognized the value of looking at other systems but also stressed the importance of examining how these systems effectively serve the disabled. Also, we need to look at what works in our system, including learning opportunities available through temporary, part-time work.

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34. The "disabled" need to be defined; distinguish between a handicap and a disability; widely diverse difficulties in meeting workplace requirements; to be disabled should be acceptable.

The overall agreement expressed on this item was 73%, with Employers and Others agreeing more, and State and Local Directors much less. Employers ranked this item in their top twenty. The three other groups did not. Employers noted that definitions in themselves are sometimes limiting factors, asked for a distinction between "handicap" and "disability", and saw a need for national attention to this need. Other panel members suggested this is an educational issue that will be addressed through the Americans with Disabilities Act. Learning disabilities needs to be addressed as the largest category of handicapping condition now being served. Some reacted to continuing "defining" and "categorizing". They felt the public knows the meaning and we should get on with it.
