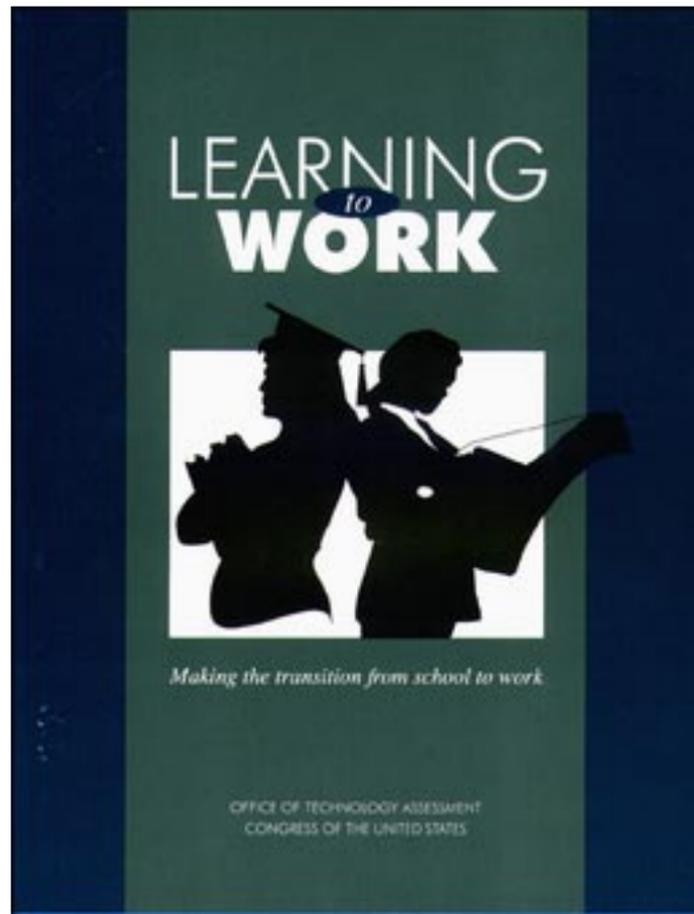


*Learning To Work: Making the Transition  
From School to Work*

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# Foreword

Over the past decade, public attention has been drawn to the difficulties that many young adults are having in finding their way in the changing economy and earning a decent living. A broad movement is emerging across the country to better connect school with career opportunities and further education to help these young adults succeed. In 1994 Congress responded by passing the School-to-Work Opportunities Act (STWOA), which assists states and localities in establishing comprehensive school-to-work transition systems.

The expansion of work-based learning is one aspect of this reform movement. For those in fields of health where internships are common or in the skilled trades where apprenticeships exist, work-based learning will be a familiar concept, but for many others it will not be. STWOA aims to combine learning in school with learning in the workplace in new ways that make it a common feature of the educational and career preparation of young people.

Soon after the school-to-work legislation was passed by Congress, OTA was asked by the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources and the House Committee on Education and Labor (now the Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities) to assess the potential and problems of work-based learning as a component of school-to-work.

As the report shows, work-based learning has considerable promise but will be difficult to implement. Work-based learning can potentially help students see the relevance of their academic studies later in life, allow students to explore career options, and help them develop needed occupational skills. But the implementation of good work-based learning programs will require considerable effort on the part of schools and participating businesses. Whether many businesses can be recruited to participate remains to be seen.

Throughout this study, the advisory panel, contractors, and many other people were very helpful in developing the issues addressed in the report, identifying sources of information, and providing feedback. OTA appreciates their substantial contributions. Their participation, however, does not necessarily represent an endorsement of the contents of the report, for which OTA bears sole responsibility.



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**Note:** OTA appreciates and is grateful for the valuable assistance and thoughtful critiques provided by the advisory panel members. The panel does not, however, necessarily approve, disapprove, or endorse this report. OTA assumes full responsibility for the report and the accuracy of its contents.

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