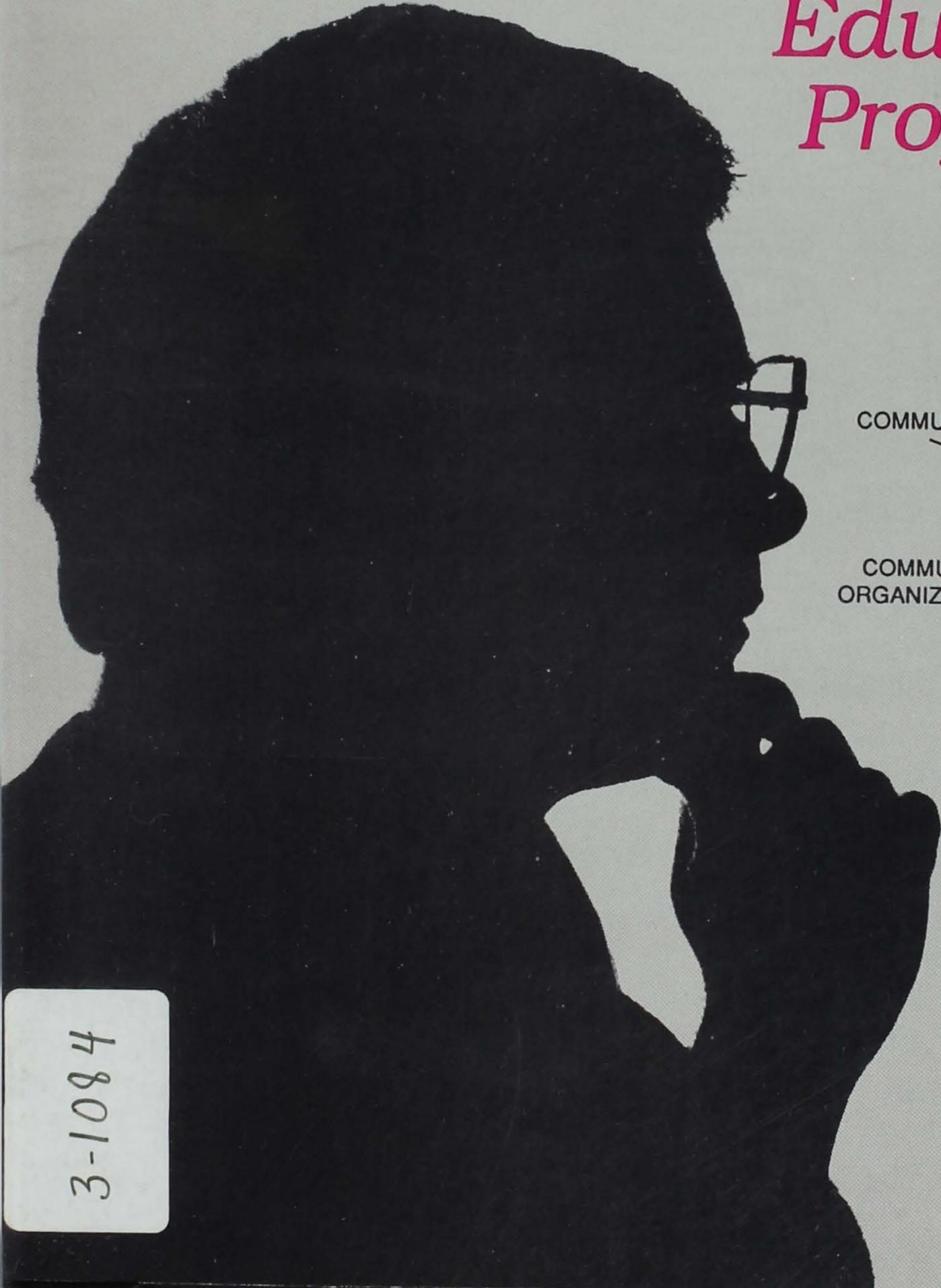


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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

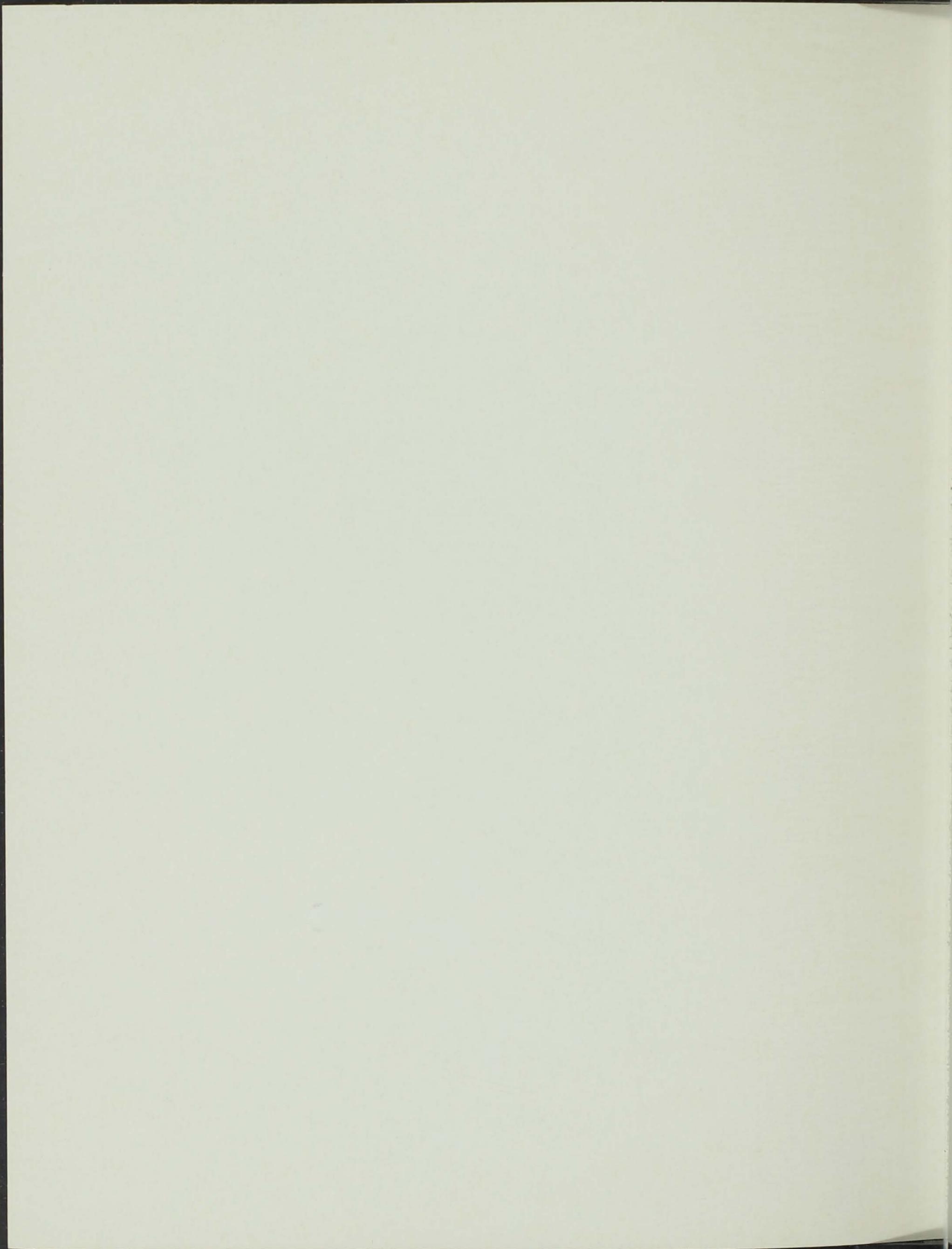
# *A Study of the Impact of Iowa Community College Continuing Education Programs*



*Iowa Department  
of Education*

APRIL 1991

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State of Iowa  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
Division of Community Colleges  
Bureau of Educational and Student Services  
Grimes State Office Building  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0146

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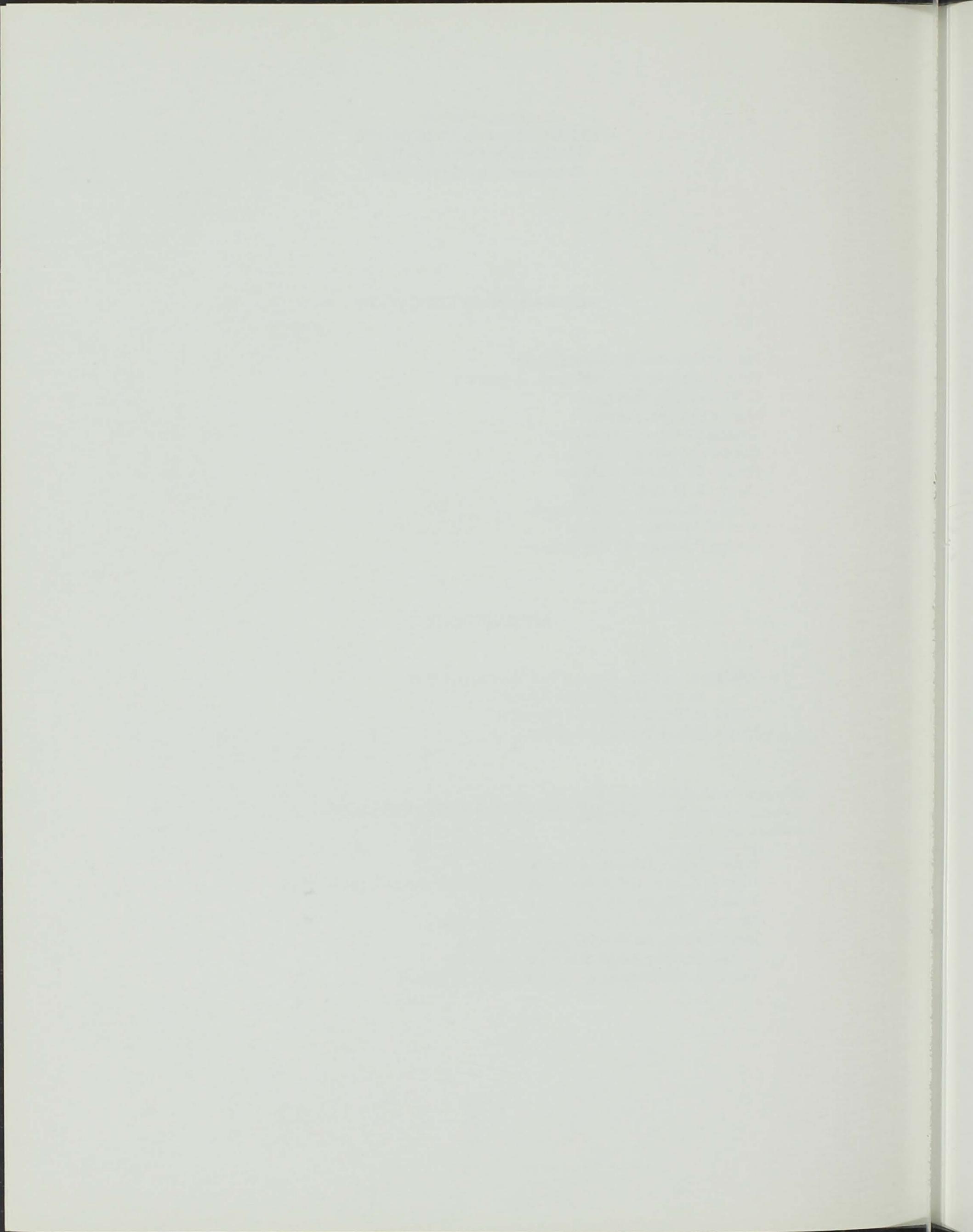
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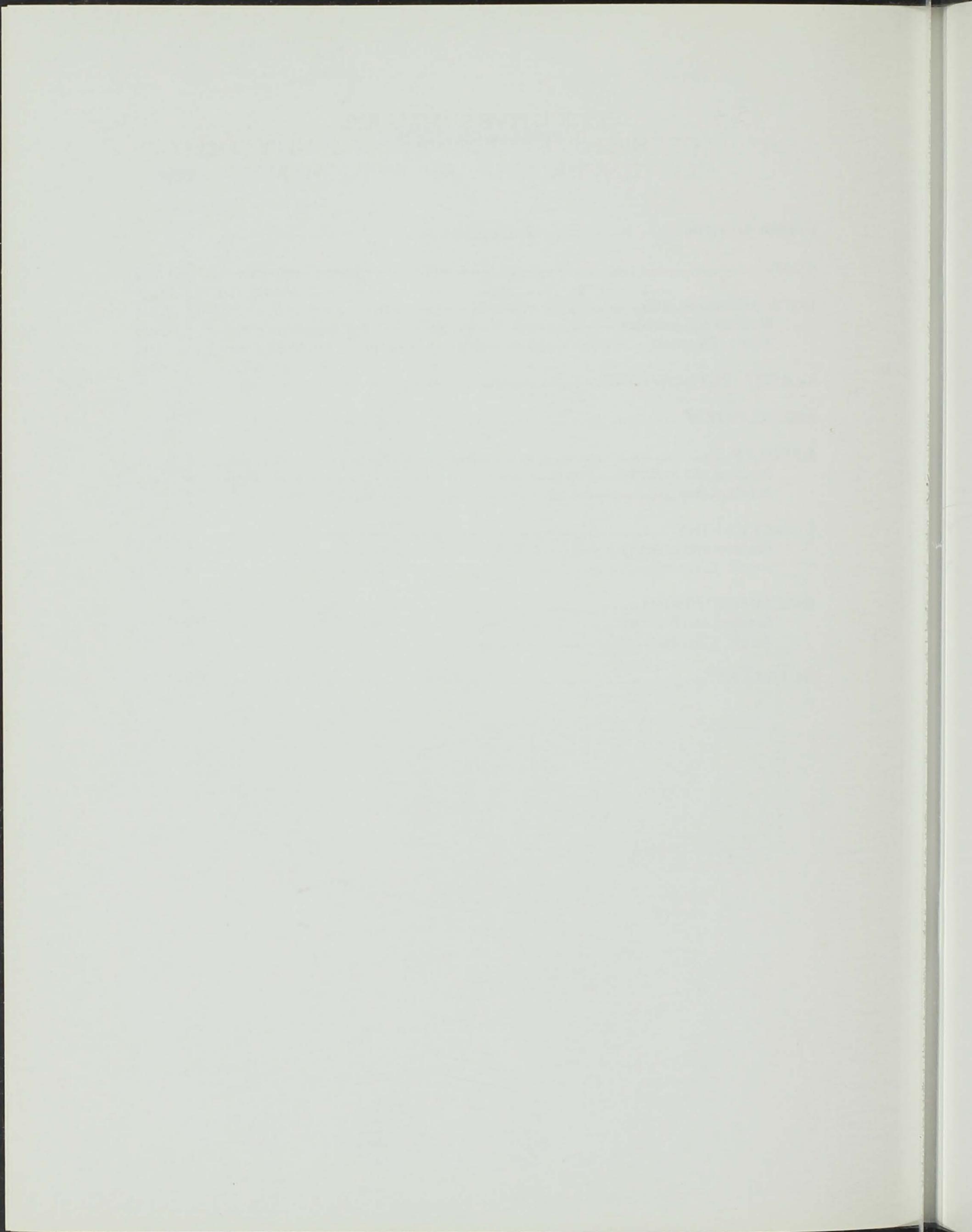
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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: A STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF IOWA COMMUNITY COLLEGE CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAMS

## Introduction

The Iowa Department of Education, in cooperation with Iowa's fifteen community colleges and Drake University, completed an impact/outcomes study of Adult Vocational Training/Retraining programs offered through the Adult and Continuing Education Division of the community colleges. This study is the first in Iowa and one of the few in the nation to examine continuing education impact/outcomes of continuing education instructional programs. The following is a synopsis of the study identifying: (1) goals, (2) continuing education outcome measures, (3) results, (4) conclusions and recommendations.

## Goal

Develop outcome measures that demonstrate the characteristics of quality, economic impact and accountability of the Adult Vocational Training/Retraining Education programs offered through Iowa's Community Colleges Continuing Education programs.

## Outcome Measures

### Business and Industry

1. Develop a profile of businesses and industries served by Iowa's Community Colleges Adult Vocational Training/Retraining instructional programs.
2. Determine employer satisfaction of businesses and industries regularly served by Iowa's Community Colleges Adult Vocational Training/Retraining instructional programs.
3. Determine projected business and industry employee Adult Vocational Training/Retraining needs for the 1990's.
4. Determine ways in which community colleges can provide better service to businesses and industries.

### Adult Clientele

1. Determine clientele background and demographic information.
2. Determine adult clientele satisfaction with Adult Vocational Training/Retraining Instructional programs.
3. Determine primary goals for attending courses.
4. Determine adult clientele ratings for four administrative features of the program:
  - a. Registration procedures.
  - b. tuition payment procedures.
  - c. class location.

- d. class environment. (e.g. lighting, seating, instructional resources, etc.)

## **Target Populations**

There were two primary target populations involved in the study:

1. Businesses and Industries regularly served by Iowa's Community Colleges Adult Vocational Training/Retraining instructional programs.
2. Adult clientele enrolled in Vocational Training/Retraining programs during fiscal year 1990. (July 1, 1989-June 30, 1990).

## **Methodology**

Two separate questionnaires were targeted towards two target populations: (1) businesses and industries served by Iowa's community colleges in Adult Vocational Training/Retraining Instructional Programs, (2) adults who were enrolled in Adult Vocational Training/Retraining Instructional Programs for the last 3-12 months.

A total of 689 businesses and industries were surveyed to determine perceptions relative to the quality of programs offered in conjunction with the community college's training/retraining programs. A total of 500 responded for a response rate of 72.57 percent. The following criteria were applied for the selection of businesses and industries to be surveyed: (1) those businesses and industries that have been regularly served by Iowa's community colleges Adult Vocational Training/Retraining Instructional Programs for the past 2-3 years, (2) those businesses and industries who could provide quality and knowledgeable responses.

A total of 32,626 questionnaires were sent to a representative random sample of the adult population who were enrolled in Adult Training/Retraining courses during the last 3-12 months. A total of 8,753 responded for a response rate of 26.83 percent. During fiscal year 1989, a total of 233,818 adults were enrolled in training/retraining courses. Therefore, a 10 percent random sampling of the target population was considered to be representative.

## **Results**

### **Business and Industry**

The major trends of the business and industry survey results are reported by the four outcome measures.

**Outcome Measure #1: Develop a profile of businesses and industries served by Iowa's Community colleges Adult Vocational Training/Retraining instructional programs.**

1. 35 percent of the businesses and industries surveyed employed a range of 1-49 employees.
2. 33 percent of the businesses and industries surveyed employed a range of 50-199 employees.

3. 31 percent of the businesses and industries surveyed employed a range of 200 plus employees.
4. 63 percent reported a range from 1-20 employees who participated in courses at the community colleges.
5. 20 percent reported a range from 21-49 employees who participated in courses at the community colleges.
6. 16 percent reported a range from 50 plus employees who participated in courses at the community colleges.
7. 69 percent classified their organizations as either: (a) service oriented (30 percent), or (b) manufacturing (39 percent).

**Outcome Measure #2: Determine employer satisfaction of businesses and industries regularly served by Iowa's Community Colleges Adult Vocational Training/Retraining instructional programs.**

1. 56 percent selected the community colleges because of: (a) satisfaction with past performance (32 percent), (b) quality of instruction (24 percent).
2. The two primary goals for referral of employees were: (a) learn new skills (19.5 percent), (b) upgrade employee skills (52.7 percent).
3. 89 percent reported they were "mostly" or "completely" satisfied the courses had met their retraining needs.
4. 95 percent would recommend the community colleges to other businesses and industries with the same training goals.
5. 96 percent were satisfied with the quality of the courses.
6. 93 percent reported the courses met employee training/retraining needs.
7. 84 percent felt the courses were "very" or "somewhat" critical to employee training needs.

**Outcome Measure #3: Determine projected business and industry employee Adult Vocational Training/Retraining needs for the 1990s.**

1. 60 percent projected increased training needs during the 1990s.
2. 36 percent projected no change in training needs during the 1990s.
3. 60 percent indicated a range of 1-24 percent projected increase in training needs during the 1990s.
4. 33 percent indicated a range of 25-74 percent projected increase in training needs during the 1990s.
5. 86 percent indicated they would utilize the community colleges to meet the increased training needs during the 1990s..

**Outcome Measure #4: Determine ways in which community colleges can provide better service to businesses and industries.**

1. The major ways community colleges could provide better services to businesses and industries were: (a) customized training programs (37 percent), (b) consulting services (25 percent), (c) needs assessment surveys (21 percent).

#### **Adult Clientele**

The major trends of the adult clientele survey results are reported by the four outcome measures.

**Outcome Measure #1: Determine clientele background and demographic information.**

1. The average age for persons enrolled in training/retraining courses was 38.7 years.
2. 60.3 percent were between the ages of 31-50.
3. 47.8 percent were male and 52.16 percent were female.
4. 92.3 percent were majority and 6.92 percent were minority populations.
5. 50.7 percent were high school graduates, 18.5 percent had "some college" and 11.5 percent were community college graduates.
6. 45.2 percent were employed full time and 29.5 percent were employed part-time at time of course enrollment.
7. 26.3 percent traveled 1-15 miles and 53 percent traveled 16-30 miles to attend courses. A total of 79.3 percent traveled between 1-30 miles.

**Outcome Measure #2: Determine adult clientele satisfaction with Adult Vocational Training/Retraining Instructional programs.**

1. 82 percent were "very satisfied" (25.6 percent) or "satisfied" (56.4 percent) with overall course quality.
2. 81.4 percent rated the overall quality of course instruction as "very good" (25.4 percent) or "good" (56 percent).
3. 79.8 percent rated the effectiveness of staff in presentation of course material and information as "very effective" (57.7 percent) or "somewhat effective" (22.1 percent).
4. 70.6 percent indicated they would enroll in other continuing education courses at the community colleges.

**Outcome Measure #3: Determine primary goals for attending courses.**

1. The primary goal for attending the courses was to update current skills (57.5 percent).

2. 70.9 percent reported they had "completely" (37.6 percent) or "mostly" (33.3 percent) achieved their primary goal.
3. 83.7 percent would recommend the courses to others with similar educational goals.
4. 70.9 percent indicated the course was "very critical (24.8 percent) or "somewhat critical" (46.1 percent) in relation to employment and/or educational goals.

**Outcome Measure #4: Determine adult clientele ratings of four administrative features of the program.**

1. 74.3 percent indicated the course registration procedures were "very good" (42.4 percent) or "good" (31.8 percent).
2. 72.4 percent reported the tuition payment procedures were "very good" (41.6 percent) or "good" (30.8 percent).
3. 71.1 percent indicated the class location was "very good" (40.4 percent) or "good" (30.7 percent).
4. 81.8 reported the class environment (i.e. lighting, seating, instructional resources) was "very good" (45.2 percent) or "good" (36.6 percent).

## **Conclusions**

### **Business and Industry**

The primary conclusions observed from the findings of the business and industry phase of the study included:

1. **Business and industry respondents are very satisfied with the product that the community college delivers in the area of Adult Training/Retraining.**
2. **There will be an increased need for Adult Training/Retraining during the 1990s.**
3. **These increased needs will continue with present services but expand into the areas of needs assessment and the production of training tailored to specific or customized needs of changing businesses and industries.**
4. **Businesses and industries are satisfied enough to tell others their success stories.**
5. **These services simply are not perceived to be available anywhere other than through the community college.**

The secondary conclusions are presented with reference to the originally developed Outcome Measures that have come to define the Business and Industry study focus on the following four points:

1. **Profile of businesses and industries served:** Approximately one half the businesses and industries profiled had less than one hundred employees while roughly third had over two-hundred employees. Employees served appear at both ends of the continuum of size, large and small.

2. **Employee satisfaction: Community College continuing education Training/Retraining programs are overwhelmingly respected by companies that have utilized them.** These programs are perceived by businesses and industries to provide high quality, convenient offerings which are targeted to and do meet the needs of both companies and employees. Businesses and industries report that they strongly support these programs and say that they are meeting their Training/Retraining needs. Data supports the impression that companies that have used Adult Training/Retraining programs in the past, will continue to use them in the future. These programs are filling a crucial need for employees in upgrading or learning new skills, needs that cannot be obtained elsewhere.
3. **Business and Industry needs into the 1990s.** Almost all of the businesses and industries surveyed see a continuing need for expanded training during the 1990s. Well over one-half of the businesses and industries responded to the survey indicated that a significant increase in Training/Retraining needs is projected for the next decade. The majority anticipated some growth (less than 25 percent) while others believed that the growth would go as high as 100 percent. Three out of four businesses and industries surveyed projected an increase in employee training needs. The majority of those anticipating increased training reported "upgrading of skills" as their primary goal. Nearly all (97 percent) of the companies anticipating need for increased training would recommend the local Community College to their fellow businesses and industries. Those businesses and industries indicating increased training needs were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the quality of training that they had received. Over 85 percent of those surveyed responded that they would likely be using the Community Colleges to meet their training/Retraining needs during the next decade.
4. **Ways the Community College can provide better service.** Training tailored or customized was indicated by those surveyed to meet their main needs during the next decade. Business and industry indicate that they believe the local Community College can meet their expanding needs, especially through assistance in identifying employee training needs and developing training programs to meet these needs.

#### **Adult Clientele**

The primary conclusions observed from the findings of the adult clientele phase of the study included:

1. **The community colleges are serving a representative sample of the Iowa mainstream adults in the training/retraining courses.** The socio-demographic profile reported for outcome measure #1 indicated the same profile as the 1980-1990 census data reported for mainstream Iowa adult citizens. Other research studies conducted on the adult population reinforces the conclusion drawn from the impact study.
2. **The adult clientele respondents are satisfied with the courses the community colleges deliver in the area of training/retraining programs.** The data reported for outcome measure #2 reinforces the conclusion that: (1) course quality, (2) course instruction, and (3) instructor presentation of course material and information were rated "very effective" or "effective". This conclusion is further reinforced by the fact that a significant number (70 percent) indicated they plan to enroll in other continuing education courses at the community colleges.
3. **The major reason for attending training/retraining courses is to upgrade current skills.** The data trends reported in outcome measure #3 reinforce the concept that the area of

training/retraining is the fastest growing segment of education. Numerous references have documented this trend throughout the "trends for the 1990s" section of this study. Moreover, the adult clientele indicated they had "completely" or "mostly" achieved their primary goal of "updating current skills". They also indicated the courses were "very critical" or "critical" to employment and/or educational goals. It is obvious that the community colleges met the employment and/or educational goals of the adult clientele.

4. **The administration of the training/retraining programs was well organized and met adult clientele educational objectives.** The data reported for outcome measure #4 indicated the adult clientele were satisfied with the administration of the courses. The majority of the ratings for administrative features such as: (1) registration, (2) tuition payment procedures, (3) class location and (4) class environment were "very good" or "good".

## Recommendations

### Business and Industry

Recommendations focus upon four distinct areas in relation to the Business and Industry phase of the study:

1. **Economic Development Strategies:** Based on the success shown in the survey, the adult continuing education programs have demonstrated the ability to meet the Training/Retraining needs and upgrading needs of businesses and industries in Iowa, and to do it with quality programming. Today the challenge for the primary provider, adult and continuing education non-credit programs, is to continue to provide service to accommodate increased needs as identified by those surveyed.
2. **Adult Education Programming and Outreach Efforts with Businesses and Industries:** Satisfied customers should be used to market Business and Industry programming. In doing this Community Colleges should expand their programming and services in the area of Training/Retraining to businesses and industries while continuing to focus on specific training needs. Community College adult education programs will, by necessity, work in partnership with businesses and industries in ascertaining the exact focus and scope of these expanding needs. In order to accomplish this mission, Continuing Education programs should secure additional resources so as to enable the expansion of its programs and services. This activity focus will ultimately be achieved only if Continuing Education is an integral part of the state funding formula. To ensure that all of these goals are realized, Community Colleges and their Adult Education Programs (Training/Retraining Programming) must maintain a flexible, locally controlled delivery system).
3. **Legislation and Funding Issues:** Replace and expanding funding of the Carl Perkins Adult Vocational Funds for Training/Retraining and Apprenticeship programs. Over one-half of the companies responding to the survey indicated a need for consultation in the assessment of their training needs. It is recommended that the State of Iowa fund a full time **Training Needs Consultant** position within the Continuing Education Division of each Community College.
4. **Traditional/Nontraditional Course Offering Issues:** Historically the comprehensive and flexible Training/Retraining delivery system provided by the Community Colleges

has been demonstrated to have met the needs of local businesses and industries. This system **must be maintained** and its comprehensiveness and flexibility must be guaranteed. Consistent with this concept, there is a critical need to maintain the funding philosophy that will continue to provide training for business and industry that meets their needs and is provided at a time and place that is appropriate. To guarantee that all of the points that have been enumerated in this recommendation section will be achieved, it is critical that Community Colleges maintain local authority and autonomy in the educational process when determining appropriate training for business and industry.

#### Adult Clientele

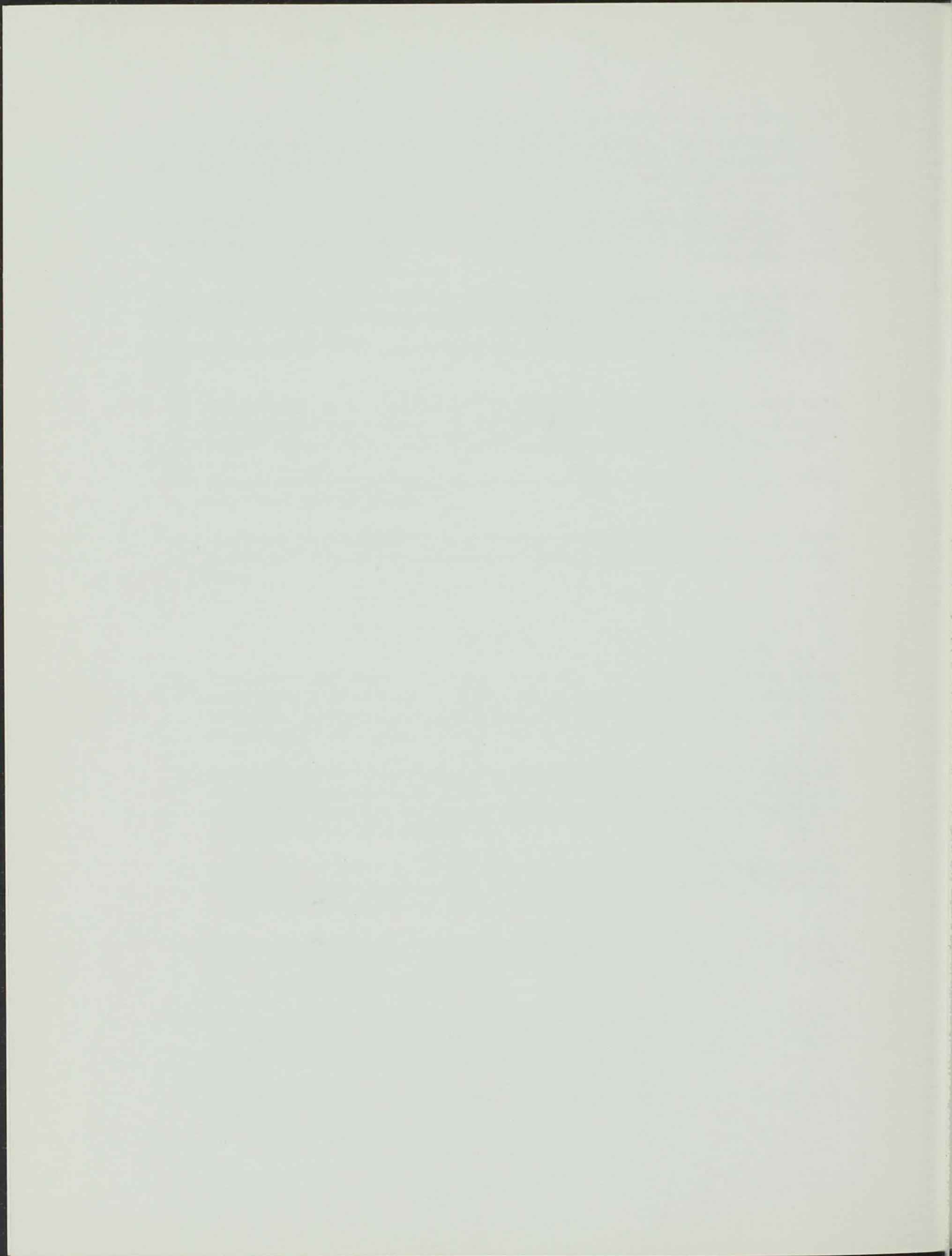
The following recommendations were made as a direct result of the adult clientele phase of the study.

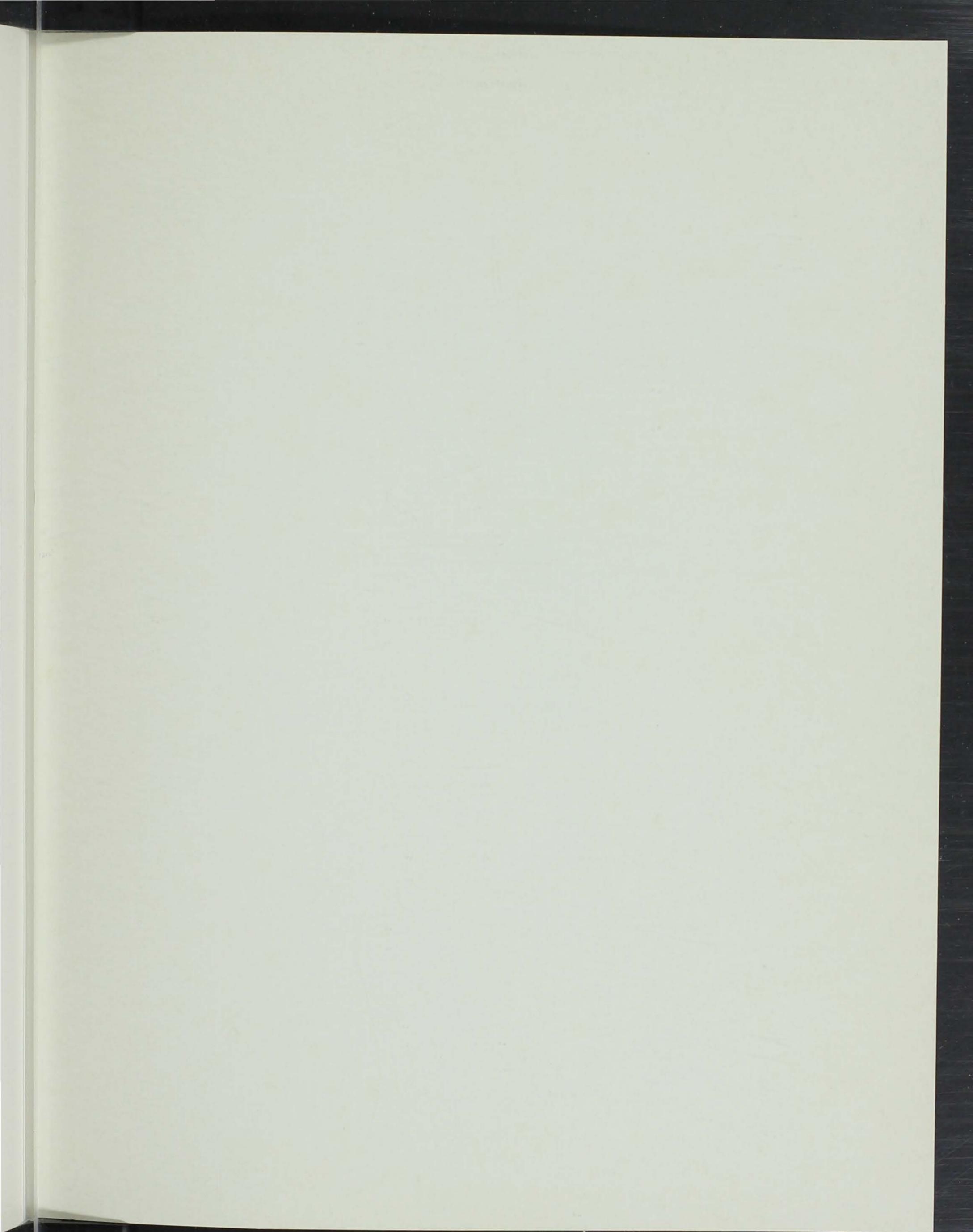
1. **The community colleges should continue to serve the adult citizenry with training/retraining courses.** The literature and field observations indicate the training/retraining programs are the fastest growing segment of continuing education.
2. **The customized training/retraining programs should be expanded into organizations they are not currently serving.**
3. **Continuing education programs should concentrate on linking with telecommunications technology to offer distant learning opportunities to a greater number of Iowa's adult citizenry.**

#### Summary

1. **The present community college continuing education delivery system is clearly accountable to its constituents and has had a significant impact in meeting the educational needs of Iowa's adult citizens. The current trend indicates the same accountability factors will hold constant into the twenty-first century.**
2. **Iowa's Community Colleges Adult Continuing Education Divisions have effectively served the educational/training needs of Iowa's businesses and industries for the past two decades. This effort has been recently enhanced with the addition of Economic Development funding and emphasis.**
3. **A significant and effective linkage system of local community entities (businesses, industries, local educational agencies, etc.) has been developed by Iowa's community colleges to expand programming efforts in the local communities.**
4. **The continuing education programs, offered through Iowa's community colleges, has had a significant impact on economic development strategies and the overall quality of life currently enjoyed by Iowa's citizens.**
5. **Current projections clearly indicate a continued and increasing need for training and retraining programs for Iowa's businesses and industries. The community colleges are in a position to meet these increased demands for training and retraining.**
6. **Flexibility is the key to offering continuing education programs that meet the needs of Iowa's adult citizenry.**

7. Local autonomy, governance and decision making provide the needed flexibility to meet Iowa's educational needs. The present continuing education delivery system must be allowed to continue to function with this framework.
8. A significant number of continuing education programs should continue to be offered as non-credit courses. The educational needs of many adults are better served through non-credit courses.
9. Significant state funding must continue to be channeled into Iowa's Community College Continuing Education Programs in order to effectively meet the future educational needs of Iowa's adult citizenry.





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