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History

*A pioneer showcase of venture philanthropy and social entrepreneurship.*

### **The Beginning**

RTI is the result of a talent investment made by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, which provided a grant in 1980 to support two years of work by Bob Taggart after he left the position of administrator of youth programs in President Jimmy Carter's U.S. Department of Labor. The original Mott-funded project produced two influential policy books, national legislation to broaden youth employment programs to address more comprehensive youth development, plus a blueprint and preliminary work on an ambitious K-adult self-paced learning system based on the Job Corps' education component.

### **Incorporation and Growth**

Remediation and Training Institute was incorporated as a tax-exempt 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization in 1982 to continue the work made possible by Mott Foundation's grant. The Ford Foundation provided multi-year core support grants. This Ford support funded completion of the learning system (called Comprehensive Competencies Program, or CCP, for many years), ongoing system improvements, dissemination through an innovative franchise model, technical assistance to users, and research and evaluation activities.

RTI brokered direct Ford grants to national intermediary organizations also. These national organizations competitively selected local affiliates to receive and operate "CCP learning centers." RTI trained and certified the national organizations, and many of their local-affiliate practitioners, as trainers. Building the capacity of intermediary organizations to manage training and technical assistance within their networks has always been central to our methods. We stay small and focused by working with partners.

Mott Foundation, UPS Foundation, Public Welfare Foundation and the ever-generous Ford Foundation each funded key projects over the next several years. These grants made it possible to design a school-based learning center and pilot it in partnership with **IBM**, develop English-As-Second Language (ESL) and citizenship competencies curriculum, and to establish adult literacy programs with employers and in community settings. RTI is

one of the rare nonprofit organizations that successfully leveraged philanthropic investments to achieve self-sufficiency for its core activities.

By the late 1980s, hundreds of CCP learning centers were established in a variety of settings. In response to growth, RTI created its own intermediary, called **United States Basic Skills Investment Corporation** (U.S. BASICS), to manage and support the growing number of users, while the parent RTI focused on research, development and improvements. U.S. BASICS operated as a division of RTI until 1990 when it was spun off as an independent nonprofit with a non-exclusive license to market the copyrighted CCP curriculum and computer systems and to support the network of CCP users, which had grown to the hundreds under RTI's leadership. (Today, U.S. BASICS continues offering an earlier version of RTI's Comprehensive Competencies Program under the name "U.S. Basic Skills Learning System.")

RTI expanded in the 1990s to Australia, United Kingdom, Jamaica, Brazil, Ethiopia, and South Africa while it continued to grow within the U.S. Through a partnership with EDL Foundation, RTI's competency-based learning curricula and systems became widely available in South Africa, primarily in employment training programs. In the U.S., RTI collaborated with the retail industry and shopping mall developers to design mall-based high school career academies and retail skill centers based on industry skill standards; with schools and community partners to establish dropout prevention and recovery "small schools", and; with jails for juvenile inmate education.

### **Today's Strategy - Partnership, Networks, Best Practice Models**

Today's Extralearning Online, successor to the Comprehensive Competencies Program and EXTRA learning systems, is an individualized, self-paced, competency-based instructional system addressing beginning through high school academic competencies, plus life skills, employment and functional competencies, at all ability levels.

Extralearning Online delivers our curriculum -- plus award-winning third-party educational content -- over the Internet on an affordable subscription basis.

RTI offers this system on a nonprofit basis to regular and alternative schools, colleges, job training programs, corrections and welfare agencies, community based organizations and private employers.

RTI is working with several partners to pilot, refine and replicate models and practices that extend the reach of learning opportunities. **Current projects** include:

- Statewide Foster Youth Transition Program
- Workforce Investment Act Youth Programs
- Sports and Learning Programs
- Community Learning Programs in Housing Projects
- Quantum Opportunity Program Replication and variants

- Smalls School/Alternative School/Charter School Projects
- City-wide Community of Learning Initiative

Through partnerships, RTI assures the availability of Extralearning for all public purposes at the lowest possible cost for the most disadvantaged learners. It provides technical support for all users and maintains a network of practitioners for training and technical assistance. It develops new courses each year, updates software systems, applies new technologies, and integrates commercial web-based educational content as they become available.

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