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**ABSTRACT**

The demonstration project described in this report is designed to explore the value of job clubs in preparing two-year college students with disabilities for the transition from school to work. The demonstration sites were Chicago City-Wide College (CCC), Columbus Technical Institute (CTI) (Ohio), and the Community Colleges of Rhode Island (CCRI) (Warwick, Rhode Island). National Center for Research in Vocational Education staff began the project by providing necessary resource materials, basic activity guidelines for the job clubs, an orientation meeting for the directors of the offices of disabled student services at the sites, and ongoing support. Project evaluation was conducted through monthly reports, final reports, site visits, and a final meeting. A total of 74 students with disabilities are served by the three sites. The job clubs at CTI and CCRI served students with a diverse array of disabilities, while the CCC job club served students with developmental disabilities. Because of the nature of the problems of its enrollees, CCC had the least success in helping students to find employment. CTI placed more emphasis on job development than the other two sites. At CTI, 10 of the 13 members completing the job club found employment, while at CCRI, 11 of 20 completers found work. CCRI's job club more closely resembled a typical job club than did the other two; i.e., CCRI did not give unusual emphasis to direct placement or personal counseling. Results of pre- and posttests suggest that students who completed the job club activities learned considerably more about job-seeking skills and the world of work than they had when they entered the job club. The study concluded that job clubs for students with disabilities appear to be a practical, effective solution to the transition problems of these students. (KC)

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USING JOB CLUBS  
TO ASSIST  
IN THE TRANSITION TO WORK  
OF POSTSECONDARY STUDENTS  
WITH DISABILITIES

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James P. Long

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## FOREWORD

Job clubs have been used for more than 10 years to help all kinds of people find worthwhile employment. This demonstration project was designed to explore the value of job clubs at three 2-year colleges to help college students with disabilities make the transition from school to work. Project findings, which include the approaches used by the three demonstration job clubs, should be of keen interest to administrators, practitioners, and policymakers concerned with the delivery of counseling and placement services to community college students with disabilities.

Appreciation is expressed to the three colleges, their staff, and their students, whose participation in the demonstration job clubs made the project possible. They include, from Chicago City-Wide College, Mr. Dan Woodyatt, Manager, Vocational Training Program, and Ms. Forrest Henry, Job Club Coordinator, at the Center for Disabled Student Services. At Columbus Technical Institute (Columbus, Ohio), thanks go to Ms. Linda Wetters, Director of Handicapped Student Services; Ms. Phyllis LaFontaine, Job Club Co-coordinator; and Mr. Russell Neds, Job Club Co-coordinator. Thanks are also due to Ms. Julie M. White, Director, and Ms. Nancy Noonan, Job Club Coordinator, both of the Access to Opportunity Program at the Community College of Rhode Island (Warwick, RI).

In addition, the National Center wishes to acknowledge the leadership provided to this effort by Dr. Robert E. Taylor, recently retired Executive Director. Appreciation is also

expressed to those who reviewed the draft of this report. In addition to staff at the three demonstration sites, the reviewers are: Dr. Nathan H. Azrin, Professor, Department of Psychology, NOVA University, Fort Lauderdale, FL; Dr. Jane E. Jarrow, Executive Director, Association of Handicapped Student Services Programs in Postsecondary Education, Columbus, OH; and Dr. Louise Vetter, Senior Program Specialist, and Ms. Nancy Puleo, Program Assistant, both of the National Center.

Dr. James P. Long served as project director, and Ms. Connie Faddis as program assistant. The project was under the supervision of Mr. Harry N. Drier, Associate Director, Special Programs Division. Ms. Marcia Chambers participated in and provided valuable input during the start-up phase of the project. Ms. Margaretha Vreeburg Izzo assisted with review and dissemination activities. Margaret Barbee provided clerical support. Editing was performed by Judy Balogh of the National Center's Editorial Services.

Chester K. Hansen  
Acting Executive Director  
The National Center for Research  
in Vocational Education



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The transition from school to work is especially difficult for persons with disabilities. Community college students with disabilities may have access to special services through a college office of disabled student services, but low perseverance in their job searches is common among 2-year college graduates with disabilities.

This project was designed to try out the job club concept at three 2-year college demonstration sites to see if job clubs would provide an effective, attractive approach to helping students with disabilities develop good job-seeking skills, world-of-work savvy, job placement contacts, and job search perseverance and success. The demonstration sites were Chicago City-Wide College, Columbus Technical Institute (Ohio), and the Community Colleges of Rhode Island (Warwick, Rhode Island).

National Center staff began the project by providing necessary resource materials, basic activity guidelines for the job clubs, an orientation meeting at the National Center for the directors of the offices of disabled student services at the sites, and ongoing dialog and support to the sites via letters and telephone calls. A National Center staff member also made a formative evaluation visit to each of the sites and collected observational and informal interview data. Each site prepared monthly progress reports, a site final report, and an employment data report 2 months following the termination of the job club meetings. National Center staff analyzed these data, as well as

input from site personnel at a debriefing meeting at the National Center, and prepared this report for the sponsor.

The project functioned primarily as an informal demonstration project, trying out the job club concept in order to determine (1) its general applicability and (2) the various approaches that do or do not work well in the 2-year college context. Each site had its own goals and resources, so each demonstration job club used unique approaches, within the general job club guidelines set by the National Center. As a result, most findings are qualitative rather than quantitative.

The number of students with disabilities served by the three sites totaled 74, with an average of 25 students per site. The job clubs at Columbus Technical Institute (CTI) and the Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) served students with a diverse array of disabilities. At Chicago City-Wide College (CCC), the job club specifically served students with developmental disabilities who were completing or had completed a special 4-month vocational training program.

Both CTI and CCC aimed at helping graduating students obtain full-time, permanent employment. CCRI, whose job club was not limited to those at or near the termination of a degree or certificate program, also included part-time, summer, and other temporary employment among its work goals. The philosophy at CCRI was that students with disabilities could improve their chances of obtaining desirable full-time, permanent employment by first developing a result based on part-time work experiences.

Because two-thirds of CCC's job club members had developmental disabilities and nearly all were disadvantaged, special problems arose related to motivation, self-esteem, independent decision making, self-expression, and a grasp of the requirements of the work world. To meet these challenges, the CCC job club coordinator modeled the job club sessions on a work world atmosphere. In addition to job-seeking and job-keeping skills, this job club emphasized community survival skills. Considerable personal counseling beyond the job club sessions was provided to the members, and job club staff accompanied members on many visits to work sites to assist them in filling out job applications.

CTI placed more emphasis on job development than the other two sites by splitting the job club coordinator position into two part-time positions, one devoted mainly to training and counseling activities and the other to locating and developing potential job openings for the members. Both coordinators attended all job club meetings and worked closely with each other and the students.

Overall, CCRI's demonstration job club more closely resembled a typical job club for a general population than did the other two. Although the coordinator provided personal counseling to the members, and the members received training in the use of the college's Automatic Career Services computer system (a job opening database), CCRI did not give unusual emphasis to direct placement assistance or personal counseling.

Chapter 3 of this report discusses the specific activities at the three sites that were part of starting up the job clubs. For this phase of the job clubs, the overall findings are as follows:

- Advisory boards for the job clubs were helpful but not necessary.
- The job club coordinators needed backgrounds in instruction and/or counseling and had to be willing to spend substantial time outside of the job club meetings counseling individual students.
- The work of coordinating the job clubs required the cooperation (and sometimes assistance) of other staff persons in the college office of disabled student services and the college placement office.
- Since the job clubs used existing facilities, the major cost was for staff salaries.
- Materials needed to run the job club training activities were available, but coordinators did adapt some materials and develop some others.
- Linkages with outside agencies and organizations, most particularly with local employers, were crucial to helping members locate potential job openings.
- Recruitment for the job clubs did not start soon enough before the meetings began and each club suffered some attrition of members during operation.

Chapter 4 examines the activities and concerns involved in operating and assessing the demonstration job clubs. The overall observations for the three sites are as follows:

- Pretesting of job club members' job-seeking skills and world-of-work savvy should probably not have relied on student self-reports, as students tended to overestimate their knowledge and skills in this areas.
- Job club members learned how to use a wide variety of job search resources and strategies, including use of want ads, the Yellow Pages, personal contacts, job fairs, and others.
- Use of outside speakers, particularly employers to discuss employer expectations and employed peer speakers to share their job-hunting and work experiences were informational and motivational high points for all three demonstration job clubs.
- Mostly because of cost and supervision problems, none of the demonstration sites used a phone bank for their job clubs. Instead, members were given access to the coordinators' phones to make job query calls.

- All job club members required assistance, sometimes extensive, in preparing resumes, cover letters, and other written materials needed for a successful job search.
- All job club members required help, also sometimes extensive, in developing good interview and telephone skills. For both needs, role-playing and mock interviews were invaluable. Videotaping of mock interviews at two sites proved very helpful to students reviewing them afterwards.
- Placement assistance was absolutely necessary at all three demonstration sites. Assistance took a number of forms, some more intensive than others, but it appears that job clubs for the disabled will require more emphasis on this activity than do job clubs for a general population.
- For students with disabilities who have had little or no work experience and for those with developmental disabilities in particular, training in job-keeping skills (in addition to job-seeking skills) was critical.
- Job club officers were not necessary--or even desired --in any of the demonstration site job club groups.
- Coordinators at all three sites reported needing to spend extra time and effort, especially at the beginning of the job clubs, on helping the members develop positive attitudes and motivation for their job search and for themselves as future workers.

Results of the pre- and posttest instrument generally suggest that students who completed the job club activities learned considerably more about job-seeking skills and world-of-work savvy than they had when they entered the job club. This outcome was corroborated by the club coordinators.

Employment rates resulting from the job club activities varied from site to site. Two sites reported some members obtaining jobs before the clubs ended. CTI, which placed the strongest emphasis on direct placement assistance for full-time, permanent

jobs, helped 10 of the 13 members completing all job club activities find employment within the 2-month employment data collection period. At CCRI, where most job club members had part-time or summer jobs as their employment goals, 11 members (of 20 completing the club) found jobs within the 2-month period. Two of the jobs were full-time permanent work and nine were part-time or seasonal work.

Both CTI and CCRI reported that these employment rates are significantly higher than for their other students with disabilities who were also seeking work. In addition, the jobs found by the job club graduates tended to be for better quality jobs with higher incomes than those obtained by peers who had not attended the job clubs.

CCC, whose job club served students with developmental disabilities, did not have as much success in helping its members find employment. Of the 17 members who completed the job club, 7 found placement within 2 months. Four of these jobs were full-time employment with good benefits--important for persons with developmental disabilities, many of whom could otherwise not move into independent living circumstances. CCC's job club members were a particularly high-risk group, as the college's Vocational Training Program job coaches had already tried and failed to place these members.

Advantages for students with disabilities in completing a job club went beyond increasing their likelihood of employment. They were able to see that others like them are succeeding in the work world. They received group support, feedback, and encouragement

that helped them feel more secure not only as job seekers but as future, productive members of the work world. And they learned a great deal more about themselves and their options as they improved their basic communication skills.

Advantages also accrue to colleges. A job club is an effective way for colleges to serve this hard-to-place student population, because it can free an office of disabled student services from providing specialized placement services, job counseling, workshops, and so forth. Job clubs are also a good way for such a department to build up networks with the community that it does not have. Finally, job clubs can incidentally function as recruitment vehicles for the college by developing or enhancing its contacts and its reputation in the community as a trainer of quality employees.

Though further, rigorous research is needed to confirm the findings of this demonstration project, job clubs for students with disabilities appear to be a practical, effective solution to transition problems of these community college students.

## CHAPTER I

### OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT

#### The Transition Problem

Every year, the nation's postsecondary schools enroll some 300,000 students with disabilities.<sup>1</sup> Although the number of these students graduating from college increases each year, between 50 and 80 percent of working age adults who report a disability are jobless (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights 1983).

The transition from school to work is an especially difficult challenge to persons with disabilities. Often, their opportunities to work depend upon the availability of special equipment, special transportation, job accommodation, and/or extensive family support systems.

Many of these persons are further hindered in their job search by a lack of experience in dealing with the world of work, including the often frustrating business of finding a job. Even people who have had prior work experience frequently have a poor grasp of job-seeking skills, including effective resume writing and interviewing techniques. They do not know how to locate potential job openings, or where to start. Many persons with disabilities also do not know when or how to discuss their disabilities in relation to work.

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<sup>1</sup>This estimate is based on percentages of all students with disabilities who are enrolled in various postsecondary training settings, as determined by Brodin and Elliott (1984).



Many job seekers with disabilities have encountered negative attitudes or outright discrimination among potential employers. They are confused about their rights in these cases. Most threatening, however, is the fear that they will lose irreplaceable disability insurance coverage and benefits by going to work.

Most students with disabilities have no role models or peer support to boost their belief in their ability to be productive workers (Grinder and Forman 1982). Even if they do find jobs, they may not know what it takes to retain them. As a result, many of these people, regardless of how well trained they have become, suffer from negative attitudes, poor self-esteem, and low motivation--and consequent unemployment.

The majority of these college graduates want to become employed. And they make good workers when they do find work (Stout and Krulwich 1982). This is particularly true of persons with disabilities who complete training at 2-year colleges, where most programs focus on preparation for work.

More and more 2-year colleges provide special services, including assistance with placement, through an office of disabled student services. Yet many of these departments report low attendance by all students at workshops on job-seeking skills and poor perseverance in job searches. A need exists for more effective, attractive approaches for helping students with disabilities to develop good job-seeking skills, world of work savvy, job placement contacts, and a belief in their ability to succeed in the work world.

### The Job Club Solution

Job clubs have been used to help people find work since the early 1970s. One very early effort was a job-finding club developed by the National Office of Program Development, which has served thousands of unemployed persons since 1972 (National Alliance of Business; n.d.). Job clubs have been used to help a variety of populations overcome barriers to finding work. For example, Azrin (1978) found that people on welfare, some of whom had been unemployed for years, benefitted from participation in job clubs. Ashley and Zahniser (1984) surveyed a variety of transition programs and learned that job clubs are effective ways to help displaced miners, steelworkers, and other persons recently laid off to find new work.

A job club is "the activity of an individual as part of a group of fellow job seekers, working together under the instruction and encouragement of a leader who provides support, information, facilities, and supplies" (Azrin and Besalel 1980, pp. 1-2). In effect, a job club is a temporary alliance of job seekers who meet regularly to provide aid and mutual reinforcement to each other's job search, with the guidance of a job club coordinator who provides training and counseling in job-seeking skills.

The aim of a job club is not only to help the members find good jobs, but also to help them develop job-seeking skills to a point where, should the situation reoccur in the future, each member would be able to conduct a new job search without the aid

of the club. Important to these aims is the philosophy that the job club provides know-how and encouragement, but the ultimate responsibility of hunting and securing the job is the member's own. With these approaches, job clubs have proven to be cost-effective ways of helping people--even people faced with unusual barriers--find employment.

Brolin and Elliott (1984) found that community colleges are good sites for providing people with disabilities with transitional services for employment. As Sorrells (1981) points out, "Because a greater number of disabled students are participating in these programs, many community colleges have become 'experts' in finding ways to meet the special needs of students with handicaps" (p. 2). Two-year colleges already serve as transitional sites for many persons who later transfer to 4-year institutions (Caparosa 1985).

Azrin and Philip (1979) found that job clubs work for persons with disabilities. But, before this project no one had attempted to apply the job club concept systematically in a 2-year college setting to help students with disabilities. The concept seems to hold promise, as a club is a familiar notion to college students, where student organizations are abundant.

The National Center for Research in Vocational Education (NCRVE), The Ohio State University, developed the project reported here in order to demonstrate the job club concept at three 2-year college locations and thereby determine whether the concept has value for helping students with disabilities find employment.

## Project Methodology

This section examines the project objectives and the three phases of project activities.

### Project Objectives

The National Center's project had two primary objectives, as follows:

- To establish, operate, and evaluate three separate examples of a demonstration postsecondary job club for students with disabilities in order to foster and promote the students' transition from school to work
- To disseminate to the field the results of the experiences with these job clubs in order to encourage their replication at other postsecondary schools

In addition, the objectives of the three demonstration job clubs, as specified by the National Center, were as follows:

- To serve as a support system for individuals with disabilities who are seeking meaningful employment
- To provide peer group support for individuals with disabilities
- To teach basic job-finding skills in a nonthreatening environment
- To provide individuals with disabilities with vocational guidance services
- To introduce individuals with disabilities to the world of work in a nonthreatening manner
- To discover, as a national pilot program, what works and what does not work in a 2-year college job club for students with disabilities

It should be noted that the sponsor did not request that a scholarly research study be conducted. Instead, the project was to function primarily as a demonstration operation, trying out the job club concept informally in order to determine its general

applicability. Therefore, data collection and reporting was largely informal and the report relies more heavily upon observations by National Center staff and on comments and self-reports by participating job club staff and members.

The operation of the National Center project involved three phases of activities, which are discussed in the following sections.

### Phase I Activities

The first phase of the project was performed primarily by National Center staff in order to set the stage for operation of the demonstration job clubs. These activities included (1) selecting the sites for the demonstration job clubs, (2) identifying and adapting existing job club materials for use by students with disabilities, and (3) capacitating the sites to initiate job club operation.

Selecting the sites. National Center project staff developed the criteria for the selection of three 2-year colleges as demonstration job club sites. A Request for Proposals was prepared and sent to 14 candidate sites that had previously expressed interest in participating in the project. National Center staff then evaluated the resulting proposals and selected the following sites:

- Chicago City-Wide College; Chicago, IL
- Columbus Technical Institute; Columbus, OH
- Community College of Rhode Island; Warwick, RI

Each of these sites demonstrated (in proposal form) an appropriate grasp of the job club concept, the needs of students with disabilities, and the needs of the project. Each college already had a substantial population of students with disabilities, an office of disabled student services to lend expertise, and a willingness to commit college funds (in addition to the subcontract funds from the National Center) for the job club as necessary. Chapter 2 offers profiles of each of the selected colleges and its demonstration job club.

Adapting existing materials. National Center staff assembled existing job club materials available at the National Center. Staff also conducted a literature search and collected additional pertinent materials. Some materials required modification to make them applicable to job clubs for college students with disabilities. Staff performed these modifications and added the materials to those previously judged appropriate. The project then packaged these materials for use by the job club sites.

Capacitating the sites. National Center staff conducted a 1-day project orientation workshop for representatives from the three demonstration sites. The representatives were those in charge of managing (but not necessarily coordinating) the demonstration job clubs.

The workshop, which involved considerable group discussion, covered the following topic areas:

- Origin and description of the overall project
- Project expectations of the three participating colleges

- Job club objectives
- Resources available for operating job clubs
- Possible job club activities on the campuses
- The operational criteria for the job clubs
- The records to be maintained by the sites for project evaluation purposes

In the process, the site representatives discussed and National Center staff developed a pre- and post-assessment instrument (see appendix A), based on an existing instrument from one of the sites. It was agreed that this instrument would be administered to all job club members to estimate their entering and exiting job-seeking skills and knowledge.

Following the orientation workshop, all resource and evaluation materials were sent to the sites for their use.

### Phase II Activities

Phase II activities were performed on the campuses of the individual demonstration job clubs. To keep the National Center informed of the job clubs' progress, each site submitted monthly reports. In addition, National Center staff maintained contact with the sites via frequent telephone calls and made at least one visit to each college.

The activities the three colleges performed in this phase of the project included (1) establishing the local linkages crucial to the successful operation of the job club, (2) organizing the job club itself, and (3) operating the job club.

Establishing local linkages. The job club coordinators at each site worked with other college staff to establish lines of

communication and cooperation with a variety of internal and external organizations or agencies. Internal organizations typically included the college placement office, career counselors, and student organizations.

External organizations included state and local departments of employment, community service organizations for persons with disabilities, supportive local employers, trade unions, community legislators and other local representatives, the media (e.g., newspapers, television stations), and other groups willing to lend support to the job club. Support came in many forms: placement information and assistance, direct offers of job interviews from some employers, guest speakers to the job club, sponsorship of job fairs, and so forth.

Organizing the job club. Part of the National Center's design for the demonstration job clubs included giving all three sites a great deal of freedom in designing and operating the job clubs. In this way, it was hoped that the sites would develop unique approaches to the structure and process of job clubs, resulting in more extensive insights into what works well and what does not. Nevertheless, the National Center did require each site to address the demonstration job club objectives stated earlier.

In addition, the National Center stipulated certain structural requirements for the formation of the job clubs at the sites, including the following:

- Recruitment of a minimum of 25 students with disabilities to participate in the job club



- Assignment of a job club coordinator
- Conduct of a minimum of 12 job club meetings
- Establishment of an advisory group for the job club
- Identification of student leadership for the job club
- Establishment of a record-keeping system to gather data on the job club members (including employment data following the termination of the job club)
- Establishment of guidelines for job club continuation following the termination of the subcontract with the National Center

Operating the job club. The National Center specified that each demonstration job club offer training sessions or other assistance, within the scope of standard job club activities, to assist the members in their job search.<sup>2</sup> The following "laundry list" of activities was suggested to the sites:

- Resume writing strategies and techniques
- Job interviewing strategies and techniques (to include role-playing and mock interviews)
- Vocational assessments that provide a basis for setting long-range goals
- Exploration of job opportunities
- Use of telephones to make job search inquiries
- Brainstorming with other job club members on local job opportunities
- Field trips for job club members to visit employed persons with disabilities at their job sites
- Arrangements for representatives of employing organizations to speak to job club members
- Arrangements to have visiting speakers from supportive services inform job club members of career/job opportunities

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<sup>2</sup>For information on the activities of a typical job club for a general population, refer to Azrin and Besalel (1980).

- Assistance to job club members in exploring all options, perhaps by the use of special tools/devices for job accommodation
- Promotion of options for internal college instructional accommodation for students with disabilities
- Utilization of computerized career information or career planning systems
- Other activities as suggested by local creativity

Chapters 3 and 4 examine how the three sites addressed these training and assistance needs, as well as how well their differing approaches seemed to work.

### Phase III Activities

The last phase of the project was performed by the National Center, based on information supplied by the three colleges. These activities included (1) developing and evaluating the job club project model using data gathered from each site and (2) disseminating the project model and findings to the field to promote replication.

Evaluating the demonstration job clubs. National Center staff conducted a formative evaluation of each demonstration job club by traveling to each site at about halfway through the job club sessions. During the site visits, the National Center staff person discussed the demonstration job club with the coordinator and other college staff, and observed a job club meeting. Notes taken during the site visits valuable information and insights about the operations of each demonstration job club. In addition, National Center staff were able to offer substantive feedback to each site about various aspects of the job clubs.

Each site submitted both monthly reports and a final report. The final reports reiterated the job club activities, discussed general findings and insights, and analyzed and condensed the results of the pre-and post-assessment instrument. Contents of the site final reports have been incorporated into this report.

In addition to the monthly and final reports, each site collected employment data on the job club members. These data were necessary to perform an informal summative estimation of the overall effect of the demonstration job clubs on achieving the ultimate objective of any job club: helping the clients find good jobs. Each site also provided employment information on its other college graduates with disabilities (who did not attend the job club), for general comparison purposes.

All of this information and data were organized and analyzed by National Center staff in order to prepare this report. The resulting draft report underwent review for accuracy by appropriate staff at each of the three sites. In addition, the report underwent both an internal and external review for quality, according to the National Center's review policy. The findings, along with a model for a job club for college students with disabilities, appear in chapter 5.

Disseminating the findings. This final project report will be submitted to the ERIC Clearinghouse for inclusion in the ERIC document dissemination system. The ERIC system makes documents such as this available as microfiche or paper copy at no cost or at a nominal charge.

In addition to the final report, National Center staff have prepared an article based on the project findings. The article, suitable for an educational journal, will be submitted to The AACJC Journal or another appropriate journal. In this way, the basic outcomes of the demonstration project will reach thousands of community college staff--the group most likely to be interested in replicating the model job club.

Finally, a request has been prepared to present the project findings at a national convention next year. The findings were not available in time for acceptance at an appropriate 1986 convention, but project staff plan to submit the proposal for the 1987 national convention of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC) or another appropriate convention, such as the national convening of the Association of Handicapped Student Service Programs in Postsecondary Education in Washington, D.C., in 1987.

## CHAPTER II

### PROFILES OF THE DEMONSTRATION JOB CLUB SITES

#### General Description

As discussed in the research methodology section in chapter 1, the National Center selected three community colleges to establish demonstration job clubs for students with disabilities: Chicago City-Wide College (CCC), Columbus Technical Institute (CTI), and the Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI). Each college serves sizable metropolitan areas with diverse employment opportunities in the communities. Each college has a special unit dedicated to providing assistance to students with disabilities.

The job clubs at CTI and CCRI served students with a diverse array of disabilities. Most students were completing or had completed an associate degree or 1-year certificate program. The job club at CCC was aimed specifically at students with developmental disabilities.<sup>1</sup> These students were completing or had completed a special 4-month cooperative training program to give them job skills.

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<sup>1</sup> The 1978 Rehabilitation, Comprehensive Services, and Developmental Disabilities Act (P.L. 95-602) defines a developmental disability as one that (1) is attributable to a mental or physical impairment manifested before age 22 and likely to continue indefinitely; (2) results in substantial functional limitations in three or more of the following areas of major life activity: self care, receptive and expressive language, learning, mobility, self-direction, capacity for independent living, and/or economic self-sufficiency; and (3) reflects the person's need for a combination and sequence of special, interdisciplinary, or generic care, treatment, or other services that are of lifelong or extended duration and individually planned and coordinated (Kiernan and Stark 1986, p. 14).

The job club members at all three sites were of diverse ages, ranging from 19-40 years old. Their average age at CTI and CCRI was 27, with the average age at CCC being somewhat younger, 22. The students at the sites had been disabled for various lengths of time, ranging from birth to as recently as 2 years ago. About half (54 percent) were men and the other half (46 percent) were women.

The job club students represented a mix of differing levels of self-confidence, abilities, academic skills, leadership skills, and so forth, as would occur with any random group of community college students. About 60 percent of the members had had no prior paid work experience, but a few had had up to 18 years' experience. At CTI and CCRI, a number of job club members were older students, often former workers who were now adjusting to their disabilities resulting from an injury or illness. These students tended to exhibit higher levels of leadership and initiative than other students. On the other hand, they also had their share of problems adjusting to college, as most of them had never planned to attend college until they became disabled.

Each of the demonstration job clubs was designed and operated independently by the college's unit serving students with disabilities. Though each demonstration job club drew its basic structure from the general specifications outlined in the National Center's request for proposals from the sites, no two demonstration job clubs were alike. Because three-quarters of CCC's job club members were developmentally disabled, this job club had some unique goals, priorities, structures, and problems.

Although each site initially recruited more students than the required 25 for its job club, some attrition occurred in each case. Ultimately, the number of students served by the job clubs totaled 74, with an average of 25 students per site.

The remainder of this chapter offers profiles of the three demonstration job clubs. Information on each site includes information on (1) the job club contact person, (2) a general overview of the college, (3) the demonstration job club objectives, (4) a general description of the job club, and (5) its distinctive features.

## JOB CLUB SITE: CITY COLLEGES OF CHICAGO

### Contact Person:

Daniel Woodyatt, Manager  
Vocational Training Program  
Center  
Disabled Student Services  
Chicago City-Wide College  
City Colleges of Chicago  
30 East Lake Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60601  
(312) 984-2872

Forrest Henry, Job Club  
Coordinator  
Vocational Training Program  
Center  
Disabled Student Services  
Chicago City-Wide College  
City Colleges of Chicago  
30 East Lake Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60601  
(312) 984-2872

### Overview of Site:

The City Colleges of Chicago, of which Chicago City-Wide College is a part, is the nation's second largest public comprehensive community college district, serving 125,000 students annually. The Center for Disabled Student Services of the Chicago City-Wide College provides a full range of services to adult students with disabilities, including specialized educational programs, student support services, vocational training programs, and counseling and placement services. Approximately 2,000 students with disabilities are served by the center each year in integrated college programs.

The center also provides specialized vocational training programs for persons with disabilities who cannot benefit from regular college classes in meeting their career goals. Such training is located on the work floors of a number of employers throughout Chicago and includes hotel services, clerical services, hospital services, maintenance/laundry services, and food services.

### Job Club Objectives:

CCC's job club taught self-directed job search skills in order to enable these students to represent their capabilities and functional limitations to potential employers, thereby enhancing employer emphasis on ability as opposed to disability. The employment goals aimed specifically at full-time permanent jobs, because part-time jobs seldom have fringe benefits, long-term job security, or career advancement opportunities.



### **Job Club Description:**

Twenty-six participants attended CCC's two job clubs. One job club ran from March through April, and the other ran from May through June, each for 8 weeks. Job clubs met three times a week for a total of 6 hours a week. Participants' disabilities involved persons who were developmentally disabled (20) and hearing impaired (6). Most of the participants were also economically and educationally disadvantaged. The job clubs concentrated on serving students who had recently completed or were about to complete the specialized vocational training programs offered through the college's Disabled Student Services.

The job club atmosphere and procedures simulated the professional work world as much as possible. Activities were designed to help participants develop self-esteem, a positive outlook, appropriate work world habits and attitudes, independent job-seeking skills, and job-keeping skills. The activities included the use of want ads and the Yellow Pages to locate job opportunities, a slide-tape to model interviewing skills, speakers, preparation of resumes (including a "pocket crib sheet" to take to interviews), discussion of employer expectations, completion of job applications, learning how to dress for interviews and for work, and so forth. The second job club used videotaping of mock interviews to aid participants in improving their interviewing skills. Extensive individualized counseling sessions were available to students who needed extra help.

### **Distinctive Features:**

CCC's job club was significantly different from the other two sites, largely because two-thirds of the CCC job club participants were developmentally disabled and nearly all were disadvantaged. This posed special problems related to motivation, self-esteem, independent decision making, self-expression, and a grasp of the requirements of the work world. Also, a number of participants lacked sufficient finances to pay for transportation to the job club sessions or job interviews.

To counter these problems, the job club coordinator deliberately modeled a work world atmosphere in the sessions. She continually emphasized and reinforced an "I can" attitude among the participants. She also provided or arranged for substantial individual counseling and assistance where needed. A part-time aide was hired to assist the coordinator with the job club sessions and with necessary related paperwork. The job club emphasized community survival skills in addition to job-seeking and job-keeping skills. Finally, the coordinator found additional funds to provide transportation costs for participants who could otherwise not attend sessions or travel to job interviews.

## JOB CLUB SITE: COLUMBUS TECHNICAL INSTITUTE

### Contact Person:

Linda Wetters, Director  
Handicapped Student Services  
Columbus Technical Institute  
550 East Spring Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43215  
(614) 227-2629

### Overview of Site:

Columbus Technical Institute (CTI) is the largest 2-year technical college in Ohio. It serves 8,000 students annually with 32 associate degree programs. CTI's Handicapped Student Services unit provides transitional services to assist persons with disabilities to meet their educational and career goals. Each year, it serves 150-175 students with disabilities, most of whom are deaf/hearing impaired, blind/visually impaired, or learning disabled. Although students with disabilities have access to a wide range of services, no specialized job search or placement services were available prior to the demonstration job club.

### Job Club Objectives:

The job club has enabled CTI to extend its Handicapped Student Services programs to include job development/job placement activities. The job club sought to assist participants to acquire job development skills that result in the successful placement of students in their fields of choice. Employment goals for the job club focused strictly on placement in full-time permanent positions.

### Job Club Description:

Twenty-five participants attended the weekly job club sessions for the 12-week program. To get around scheduling difficulties, the job club was split into two groups, one that met weekly in the afternoons and one that met weekly in the evenings. Disabilities represented included visually impaired (6), hearing impaired (5), orthopedically impaired (6), learning disabled (2), and 6 others (i.e., epileptic, brain injured, speech impaired, alcoholic/felony conviction). Participants included recent CTI graduates as well as students whose graduation was soon approaching.

Job club activities focused on employer expectations, community services relevant to employment for persons with disabilities, resume writing and filling out job applications, organizing the job search, use of want ads and other job opportunity resources, relevant legal issues, learning how to dress for interviews and work, and so forth. Speakers and informal rap sessions were major activities. The job club used few handouts. Mock interviews were held on a one-on-one basis with a job club coordinator and were not videotaped. Use of individual counseling sessions was intensive.

#### **Distinctive Features:**

The job club coordinator responsibilities were shared by two part-time coordinators. One coordinator focused most of his energy on job development, placement, and working with local employers. The other coordinator focused mainly on helping the job club participants develop and refine their employment goals and job-seeking savvy and skills. Both coordinators attended all general job club sessions and worked closely with each other and with the participants.

CTI's job club recruitment used a "kick-off" dinner to introduce potential participants to the job club concept, activities, and staff. Several times throughout the job club program, the college hosted a catered dinner for the afternoon and evening job club groups to encourage an exchange of ideas and experiences. Speakers to the job club could not always attend both afternoon and evening meetings, so CTI videotaped the speeches for playback to the other group.

## **JOB CLUB SITE: COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF RHODE ISLAND**

### **Contact Person:**

Julie M. White, Director  
Access to Opportunity Program  
Community College of Rhode Island  
400 East Avenue  
Warwick, Rhode Island 02886-1805  
(401) 825-2305

### **Overview of Site:**

The Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) is the largest public 2-year degree-granting college in New England and serves over 12,000 students at its campuses at Warwick and Lincoln. Since 1977, the college has provided a comprehensive range of services to students with disabilities through its Access to Opportunity Program. Relevant staff include counselors, a reading/writing specialist, tutors, sign language interpreters, and note takers. Adapted equipment for persons with disabilities is also available.

### **Job Club Objectives:**

CCRI expected that, at the end of the demonstration job club project, 80 percent of the students with disabilities who were job club participants would secure employment. Without job club, the success rate is less than 50 percent. Employment goals included full-time permanent jobs, temporary, summer, part-time, volunteer, co-op and internship, and work-study jobs. This was because the job club staff felt that persons with disabilities need to get as many kinds of work experiences as possible, and that many such students can benefit from the job club before they are ready to seek full-time permanent work.

### **Job Club Description:**

Twenty-three participants attended some or all of the weekly job club sessions for the 12-week program. Members' disabilities included physically disabled (9), deaf (3), emotionally disabled (4), blind (3), visually/hearing impaired (2), and learning disabled (2). Members included both students who were about to graduate from CCRI as well as students who were not graduating in 1986.

The job club focused on developing job readiness skills and assisted members in initiating and completing individual job searches. Activities focused on employer expectations, the role of the employee, use of want ads and other job opportunity resources, telephone and interview skills, resume writing and filling out job applications, job-related vocabulary, and relevant legal issues. Activities included speakers, videotaped mock interviews, use of a specialized videotape and handouts, workshops, and individualized counseling, among others.

#### **Distinctive Features:**

Mock interviews were videotaped to enable participants to see and evaluate their own and others' interview skills. A commercially available videotape, Profiling Careers of Disabled College Graduates (1985), was shown to the job club members. Members attended both a general college job fair and a "Job Fair for the Handi-Capable." Members produced a booklet, Transition to Employment: A Guide for the Disabled Job Seeker (Community College of Rhode Island 1986). They also received training in the use of the college's Automatic Career Services computer system containing daily updates of job openings on file with the Job Placement Office. Several members taped personal employment requests that appeared on the "Job Hunt" segment of a local television news program.

CHAPTER III  
STARTING UP THE DEMONSTRATION JOB CLUBS

Introduction

As with most programs that serve persons with disabilities, job clubs require careful organization and effort to set up and operate effectively. This chapter examines the planning, organization, and staffing activities of the three demonstration job clubs--in other words, the crucial components of a job club with which the planners at each demonstration site dealt, up to the point of the first job club meeting. Chapter sections discuss the following elements of job club start-up for the three models:

- Advisory boards for job clubs for the disabled
- Employment goals for the job clubs
- Job club coordinators
- Support staff/other help
- Job club costs
- Meeting space and materials
- Outside linkages
- Recruitment of job club members

Other job club activities that commenced with the first meeting are discussed in chapter 4.

Advisory Boards for the Job Clubs

Both Columbus Technical Institute (CTI) and the Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) made use of their existing advisory boards for their disabled student services department to serve as

the advisory boards for their demonstration job clubs, as well. Members of these boards included representatives of local agencies that work with persons with disabilities, local employers, graduates of the college who have disabilities, independent counselors, administrators or practitioners of other schools serving persons with disabilities, and, of course, faculty and staff from the college (including the ex officio staff from the disabled student services office).

CTI and CCRI utilized their advisory boards to help define the specific objectives of the job club, develop important policies and procedures prior to start-up, and the like. External board members were valuable resources for linkages to pertinent agencies and organizations, and in some cases also provided useful information about potential job leads for the job club members.

The advisory board for Disabled Student Services at Chicago City-Wide College (CCC) was in the process of being reorganized at the time that the job club was being developed. Disabled Student Services staff felt that it would be better to operate the demonstration job club without an advisory board, under the circumstances. The reorganized board was not in place in time to assist the job club. Staff did confer, however, with a number of people who are candidates for a future advisory board, as well as with persons who had served on the disbanded board.

## Employment Goals for the Job Clubs

The three demonstration job clubs chose to set different goals for the employment outcomes of their members, as follows:

- The job club at CTI, which was designed to serve students with diverse disabilities, aimed strictly at helping graduating or recently graduated students obtain full-time, permanent paid employment.
- At CCC, the job club focused on serving students with developmental disabilities who had completed or were completing a 4-month cooperative training program offered by the college. To help these students achieve economic self-sufficiency, CCC's job club employment goals aimed specifically at full-time, permanent, paid employment. The club viewed part-time jobs only as an alternative to no placement at all, because they usually offer no fringe benefits, long-term job security, or career advancement opportunities.
- The job club at CCRI served students with diverse disabilities and had diverse employment goals. For graduating students who desired it, the club focused on helping obtain full-time, permanent, paid employment. However, for students who were not about to graduate, the club focused on temporary summer, part-time, and volunteer jobs. These work experiences are considered crucial in helping the nongraduating students develop attractive work histories.

Some graduating students at the sites had disabilities of a degree that made it undesirable for them to seek full-time, permanent, paid employment, because this would raise their income level to a point where they would lose SSDI or other publicly funded medical benefits beyond the means of a worker's salary to replace. Such disincentives to securing paid employment raise interesting public policy issues. However, many such students desire to work in occupations where their abilities will be put to good use and where they will have satisfying interactions with other people,



even if not for pay. In such cases, at least one of the job clubs (i.e., CCRI) was willing to aid the students in obtaining placement in volunteer, unpaid positions in business, industry, or in community organizations.

### Job Club Coordinators

Information collected on job club coordinators concerned the coordinators' various roles and the qualifications needed to coordinate a job club effectively for students with disabilities.

### Coordinators' Roles

Those involved in the planning and operation of the demonstration job clubs agree that the coordinator is probably the most important element of a successful job club for the disabled. As evidenced or reported by the coordinators at the three sites, the job club coordinator filled a variety of roles, including the following:

- Planner and organizer of job club syllabus, schedule, activities, guest speakers, site visits, special services, and so forth.
- Primary source of training and information on job-seeking skills and savvy.
- Administrator of the job club budget, supervisor of any part-time job club staff, liaison with other disabled student services, and so forth.
- Author/adaptor of job club materials.
- Planner and/or conductor of job club recruitment, screening, enrollment, member assessment, and record keeping.
- Placement assistance via all available means, including providing one-on-one help to job club members in locating job openings, aiding them with referrals, working with the college placement staff, collaborating with local agencies and employers to locate and/or develop potential jobs, and so forth.

- Facilitator (and sometimes devil's advocate) at club meetings to keep the discussions on track or to bring out new information.
- Counselor, on an individual basis, with job club members to assist them with identifying their skills and interests, defining realistic job and career goals, developing and refining their resumes, developing and refining their job-seeking skills (e.g., interviewing skills, telephone skills), coping with and finding solutions to personal problems that affect their job-seeking efforts, and so forth. A job club coordinator must get to know each member's strengths and weaknesses and work with each member to emphasize the former and overcome the latter.

Curiously, staff at two of the three job club sites had what appear to be contrasting opinions about the attitude that the coordinators should bring to their roles. At CCRI, the coordinator believed in establishing close, trusting rapport with the members, taking a deliberately nonthreatening attitude. At CCC, where most of the job club members had developmental disabilities, the coordinator consciously set herself up as an authority figure. Acting as a proxy for employers, the CCC coordinator told the members, "I am the boss, just like you will have a boss when you get a regular job." This coordinator felt that her role involved (1) helping the members get rid of their negative attitudes about themselves as employees in the work world and (2) helping the members as much as necessary to get a job "without handing it to them on a silver platter."

All three job club coordinators agree that providing individual counseling on a flexible schedule is a critical role. All the coordinators emphasized their availability to work with each member and to act as a support person.

CCRI and CCC each hired one coordinator to run their demonstration job clubs. In both cases, the coordinator fulfilled all of the roles necessary to operating the job club. CTI, on the other hand, split the coordinator's responsibilities and hired two part-time co-coordinators.

The split in coordination responsibilities at CTI was the result of input from the job club advisory board and from students with disabilities served by Handicapped Student Services. One of CTI's co-coordinators focused on conducting the traditional job club activities with the students, including providing both group and individual help with writing resumes, cover letters, job applications, and so forth. The other co-coordinator concentrated mainly on job development; that is, his primary responsibility was to work with potential employers to uncover and develop placement opportunities for the club members. Both co-coordinators attended all job club meetings and both worked with students on a one-on-one basis, as needed.

CTI's job development co-coordinator found that he needed to "educate" many potential employers. Employers tend to be business people who do not have a human services mentality. For this reason, the co-coordinator reported that he had to assist employers in looking for qualified people with disabilities. The co-coordinator also found that he needed to get to know the job club members well, so that he could tell a potential employer, for example, "Look, so-and-so probably can't give a good job interview, but he or she can do good work for you." CTI's job club also worked with the college placement office and local agencies

and organizations for the disabled in seeking placement opportunities. CTI staff felt that it was crucial to the success of the job club to have a co-coordinator concentrating specifically on the task of job development.<sup>1</sup>

Job club staff at all three sites agree that job clubs require two different kinds of activities. One activity concentrates on developing members' job-seeking skills and world-of-work savvy. The other concentrates on job placement. The type of skills and the time required to perform these two functions are so diverse that one person is not able to perform both effectively. Extra staff assistance--in the form of a co-coordinator for job development, as used by CTI, or in the form of special, concentrated assistance from some other placement specialist--will inevitably be necessary to operate the job club effectively. For these reasons, the following section on coordinators' qualifications should be viewed as a general guideline only.

### Coordinators' Qualifications

The coordinators at each of the three demonstration job club sites had differing backgrounds and somewhat different philosophies regarding their roles, but they also had some interesting commonalities (e.g., all of the coordinators except CTI's job

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<sup>1</sup>CTI found that having a job club co-coordinator who concentrates on job development has additional marketing and feedback benefits for the college. As part of his activities, the coordinator takes materials from the various college departments and CTI's Industrial Outreach program and shows them to employers. The employers often comment on the program content--valuable information that the coordinator can then feed back to the departments.

development co-coordinator had had classroom teaching experience of some kind).

Interestingly, only CCC's job club coordinator had had previous professional experience serving persons with disabilities. Lack of such experience did not seem to detract from the effectiveness of the other coordinators, however. In fact, CCRI's job club coordinator felt that her lack of professional experience with persons with disabilities was an advantage, because she tended not to concentrate on the students' disabilities, but rather to treat the job club members "as people."

The co-coordinators at CTI had similar experiences. In fact, they found it useful not to come from a human services background, because they were able to see the job club members' strengths, job readiness, and weak areas more clearly. The regular staff of the college's Handicapped Student Services had worked with the job club members as college students, and reported finding it "difficult to bridge the counseling relationships already developments with the students and move into the more structured activities of job development and placement." This suggests that regular staff of disabled student services departments, or persons with specific backgrounds in human services, may not make the only good job club coordinators, particularly in the area of job development.

CTI provided training for the newly hired job club co-coordinators "on attitudes toward disabilities, reasonable accommodations, Section 504 [legal rights], and the philosophy of this department." This training proved effective for the co-coordinators' interactions with job club members.

When surveyed prior to the inception of the job club, CTI students with disabilities said they preferred a job club coordinator with solid business and training experience to someone with experience counseling the disabled. For this reason, one of CTI's co-coordinators was hired in part for his business background. This strategy proved itself when the co-coordinator dealt with potential employers, because he was able to "sell" the job club members' abilities in a way that the employers understood. The co-coordinator's business background also added to his credibility with employers, who were more willing to talk to him about possible job openings for the job club members. The only problem this co-coordinator had involved some minor misunderstandings about what jobs are appropriate for persons with particular disabilities.

CCC's job club staff offered a list of qualifications for an effective coordinator of a job club for persons with developmental disabilities, but the list could as readily be used to evaluate coordinator candidates for any job club serving people with disabilities. The desired qualities include the following:

- Good leadership and interactive skills, perhaps with a school teaching background (some instructional experience may be helpful).
- Good organizational skills.
- Some counseling experience.

- Awareness and knowledge of the job club population and its members' needs, including some experience from workshops, personal research, or training related to people with disabilities. A relevant degree may help but is not necessary. (Appropriate training may be provided after hiring, as was done with the co-coordinators at CTI.)
- Knowledge of how to motivate these students, and an "I can" (versus an "I can't") attitude both about oneself and the students.
- Determination, a "go-getter" personality, and, if possible, good marketing skills, because many doors are closed to students with disabilities.
- Creativity, because the standard resources are not adequate for meeting the needs of students with disabilities.
- Awareness of social services available for persons with disabilities (knowledge could be from volunteer experiences).
- An appropriate attitude toward working with students with disabilities.
- A good, realistic grasp of the business world, the labor market, and the local social and economic climate.
- Knowledge of and experience with networking.
- Honesty and frankness in dealing with students "above the table"--that is, the willingness to be "hardnosed" when necessary without being afraid to work with students with disabilities.
- Some knowledge of how to deal with medical problems and emergencies (e.g., epileptic seizures), as well as some medical terminology in order to understand disabilities, medications, and the like.
- Some knowledge of basic mechanics, machines, and so forth, to help with working with mechanical aids for persons with disabilities.
- Commitment to the job club, with the realization that it requires much individual work with students and that it is often more than an 8-hour-a-day job.

### Support Staff and Other Help

In addition to hiring the job club coordinator(s), all three of the demonstration job clubs found it necessary to make various other kinds of support available to the job clubs. These included the following:

- At all three sites, sign interpreters for hearing-impaired students attended all job club meetings and also attended these students' individual counseling or training sessions, as needed.
- All three sites provided assistance with writing and typing resumes, cover letters, and the like. At least one of the sites provided job club members with some instruction in using a word processor.
- Each site found it necessary to provide personal assistance to at least some job club members in filling out job applications. In some cases, the coordinators recruited other staff already employed in disabled student services to help with this task. All but two job club members at CCC required such assistance, and staff accompanied the members to the actual job sites to help them fill out the job applications.
- CCC's job club coordinator hired a part-time job coach from CCC's training program for 20-30 hours a week to assist with small group activities at job club meetings, to do legwork, and to help with the job club paperwork.
- CCC's job club members (most of whom had developmental disabilities) had limited or no academic skills and required considerable individual help with writing resumes, cover letters, and so forth. To resolve this, in-house resources (e.g., a placement specialist, career development staff, and literacy staff on a consulting basis) were recruited. A 6-hour weekly schedule was worked out to give the members the necessary individualized, out-of-classroom instruction.
- In addition to CTI's job club co-coordinators, the department director and a counselor from the college's Handicapped Student Services regularly attended the job club meetings. These four persons formed the planning staff for each subsequent job club session's activities. They also provided adjunct services to the job club members, such as career counseling, which had an impact on the members' successful participation in the job club.



### Job Club Costs

Each site was provided \$10,000 of the grant monies awarded to the National Center to operate a demonstration job club. All three sites reported that their largest single cost was staff salaries and benefits (approximately 75-85 percent of the budget). Another expenditure worth noting was for purchased materials (e.g., videotapes, workbooks, textbooks, newsletters, notebooks, newspapers). One job club paid its speakers a small honorarium; the other two did not. CTI spent some of its budget on catered job club events, which helped boost the member's morale, motivation, and attendance.

The phone bank had been expected to be a significant budget item, but for various reasons (see chapter 4), none of the sites set one up. Instead, job club members were given access to the coordinators' phones or other phones in the college's disabled student services department in order to make job query calls.

Job club meetings were almost always held at the college in a classroom or meeting room, so there was no overhead for meeting space. Job club coordinators were provided offices in the college's disabled student services department.

Because many of CCC's job club members were disadvantaged in addition to their developmental disabilities, the coordinator found it necessary to find emergency funds (not part of the grant monies from the National Center) to support a transportation stipend. The stipend was needed to enable these members to travel to the job club meetings and to job interviews.

## Job Club Space and Materials

Information collected on the physical facilities and materials used in the job club is reported in this section.

### Job Club Meeting Space

Job club meetings at all three sites were held in existing college facilities. At both CCRI and CCC, the rooms used were classrooms set up in typical classroom fashion. CTI held most of its job club meetings in the resource center for Handicapped Student Services. This room has a number of large worktables and plenty of chairs and is normally used by CTI students with disabilities for a number of activities, including studying, meetings, and socializing. The CTI job club co-coordinators reserved time in this room for the job club meetings, as needed.

### Job Club Materials

Two of the job club sites (CCRI and CCC) made heavy use of existing or adapted commercial materials. CTI, on the other hand, used few handouts or other commercial materials, preferring to encourage students to keep their own notes from meetings, to listen closely to guest speakers' comments and advice, and to consult as often as needed with the co-coordinators for help or clarification.

In using published materials, the job club coordinators noted that flexibility is important, as information about newly available materials and resources is coming in all the time. In most

cases, the coordinators did not use an entire publication; rather, they used and adapted them, as needed, for job club use.

The following publications represent some of the major resources found useful by the sites:

- What Color Is Your Parachute (Bolles 1982). CCRI prepared a number of handouts using this popular book on job-seeking strategies.
- Extending Horizons (McKinney and et al., 1985). CCRI found this publication's "support team" worksheet particularly valuable as an early activity for job club members. It helped them keep track of the people and organizations (e.g., church groups) who could help them and with whom they needed to keep contact during their job search. Filling out this worksheet also made the members aware of how much help they had available to them.
- Job Hunting for the Disabled (Marks and Lewis 1983). CCRI used the sample resumes in this book as handouts to guide job club members in preparing their own resumes. Members were also given access to copies of the book for their general use and information.
- In the Mainstream. This newsletter is available from Mainstream, Inc., 1200 15th Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20005.

Both CCRI and CCC also used audiovisual materials for job club activities. They are as follows:

- Profiling Careers of Disabled College Students (1985). CCRI used this commercial videotape to prepare job club members to talk with disabled workers who came to the club meeting as guest speakers. The videotape helped the members formulate questions for the guest speakers. The tape shows disabled people succeeding in the work world. It should be noted that some blind job club members objected to using the tape, as they could not view the disability or position of the people on the screen. The coordinator made a point of stopping the tape and describing this information.
- Job Interview Kit (Wing and Tong 1976) and Unlocking Your Potentials (Moawad 1984). CCC used these slide--tapes for job club meetings focusing on interviewing skills and other interview requisites. The coordinator stopped the slide-tapes frequently to emphasize or

clarify points and to encourage questions and discussion. The slide-tapes are for a general audience and do not specifically focus on interviewing skills for persons with disabilities.

Complete references for these and other useful materials appear in the references list of this document.

### Establishment of External Linkages

Critical to making the job club work at all of the demonstration sites was establishing lines of communication and cooperation with outside agencies, organizations, employers, and individuals who shared the colleges' interest in helping students with disabilities find good employment.

CCC's Vocational Training Program, from which most of its job club members were drawn, already had in existence many cooperative arrangements with city and state agencies and organizations, as well as local employers through whose auspices the CCC students received cooperative training. Other linkages CCC established especially to enhance job club activities included the Amoco Corporation (which helps train "special citizens" to find jobs and provided the club with materials and guest speakers), the American Spanish Institute (an Hispanic support group that assisted the job club members--Hispanic and otherwise--in locating employment openings), Project Match of Northwestern University (exchanged ideas and services with the job club, particularly for placement assistance for inner city disadvantaged and minority citizens), Lighthouse for the Blind (helped develop materials and strategies for working with the visually impaired members), and others.

CTI likewise had many longstanding relationships with external groups and individuals through its Handicapped Student Services office, and it strengthened these linkages during the job club program. These linkages included the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (provided a speaker and other assistance), the Central Ohio Minority Affairs Recruiters (provided leads to potential employers), the TransAmerican Occidental Insurance Company (provided assistance with mock interviews), the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services (provided placement assistance), and numerous other local and state agencies and organizations. Linkages specifically aimed at developing job openings included a long list of employers, such as Rockwell International, Midland Mutual Insurance, Buckeye Union Insurance, United Parcel Service, Community Mutual Insurance, Columbus and Southern Ohio Electric, Bank One, Merrill Publishing, CVI Inc., Ashland Chemical Company, Kroger Company, Battelle Memorial Institute, Blue Cross of Central Ohio, Copco Paper, the Kobacker Company, and Broadcast Video, among others.

As with the other two sites, CCRI's job club built upon linkages that already existed through its Access to Opportunity program for students with disabilities. One of the club's most productive relationships developed with a local program, Projects With Industry, which matches resources of qualified individuals with disabilities with the employment needs of the business community. Projects With Industry provided CCRI's club with placement assistance and sponsored a "Job Fair for the Handi-Capable," which most members attended. Other job club linkages included the Rhode

Island Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, Volunteers in Action, Channel 12 (local television station that airs newscast segments entitled "Job Hunt"), State Services for the Blind, the Rhode Island Association for the Deaf, the University of Rhode Island Department of Handicapped Services, and the like. Outreach to local employers was also extensive.

### Recruitment of Job Club Members

At CCRI, potential job club members were referred to the job club by staff of the Access to Opportunity office, the college department that serves the special needs of students with disabilities. CCRI's job club coordinator interviewed 32 potential members to determine their job-seeking skills needs and their interest in and availability for attending the full job club program. Of these, 23 were enrolled in the job club.

At CCC, recruitment of students was handled by staff of the Vocational Training Program operated by CCC's Center for Disabled Student Services. All incoming students to the vocational training program were informed about the job club. The intake staff and training program staff then made recommendations to the job club coordinator regarding which students to encourage to take part in the job club. Some students already had work skills and did not actually participate in the training program, but did take part in the job club in order to acquire job-seeking skills and assistance. Total recruitment was 26 members.

CTI approached recruitment via a number of paths: (1) circulating posters and announcements throughout the campus, (2)

notifying all college faculty via fliers to ask for referrals of students for the job club, and (3) notification by letter of all recently graduated alumni with disabilities. The coordinators also hoped that word-of-mouth would attract some students. However, these approaches were not completely successful, and CTI did not obtain the response it had anticipated.

Even so, 30 CTI graduates or near-graduates with disabilities attended an invitational "kick-off" dinner for the job club. At the dinner, the prospective members were introduced to general job club goals and activities, the new co-coordinators, and job club procedures. A total of 25 students enrolled and participated in the job club. It should be noted that one of CTI's job club requirements was that the prospective member had to have had career counseling (through Handicapped Student Services) prior to enrolling in the job club.

The director of CTI's Handicapped Student Services said that if CTI were to revise its job club recruitment procedures, it would focus on more concentrated recruitment of members at the start of the quarter. The fliers sent to college faculty did not get to them in time for many referrals to be made, nor was word-of-mouth about the job club an effective recruitment approach. The CTI staff now feel that it may be better to start with a large job club enrollment and let attendance fall off due to attrition, rather than to start with a small core of members (as CTI did) and try to expand enrollment.

## Summary

Setting up a job club for students with disabilities requires that a considerable number of decisions be made "up front" and that an array of resources be gathered. An advisory board is a valuable resource for much critical decision making, including determination of the job club's specific employment goals, desired qualifications and roles of the coordinator(s), budgetary expenditures, and job club member recruitment strategies. The coordinators themselves will probably have to make decisions about what additional staff and other support may be needed, where club meetings may most appropriately and conveniently be held, what the job club program should involve, what materials may be most useful for club activities, and which of the referred students can best make use of the job club experience.

The coordinators must also address the particular requirements of operating within a postsecondary school environment (e.g., obtaining administrative approvals, obtaining the funding, linking with faculty and with student organizations, requisitioning the meeting and office space and needed materials, hiring and/or training of staff, scheduling meetings around students' class schedules, and so forth). Most of these activities must occur prior to the first job club meeting. Many other activities can begin only when the club actually starts.

Chapter 4 reports on the activities of the three demonstration job clubs once they became operational. In addition,



appendix B offers a checklist, based on reports from the demonstration sites, of the types of activities to which job club staff must attend both prior to and beginning with club start-up.

CHAPTER IV  
OPERATING, REFINING, AND ASSESSING  
THE DEMONSTRATION JOB CLUBS

Introduction

Once the demonstration job clubs for the disabled were underway, many kinds of activities had to be conducted, some of them within the same time frame. First in the job clubs' mission was delivering the needed training in resume development, job search strategies, interviewing skills and savvy, and the like. Equally important was assisting the members with job placement--locating and pursuing potential job opportunities. Coordinators also provided individualized assistance and counseling for the members, as needed. Appropriate guest speakers were recruited and other activities arranged.

In addition to these tasks, job club coordinators also had to focus on the operational needs of the club. The job-seeking skills and work-world knowledge of the job club members had to be assessed in order to guide individualized training and counseling. The coordinators also needed to gauge the club members' relevant attitudes (e.g., self-esteem, attitude toward work, positive or negative perceptions about job-seeking) and gear the job club activities and discussions accordingly. How the clubs functioned and how its members, staff, and guest speakers interacted had to be determined and adjusted, as needed.

Other issues that had to be resolved were scheduling and attendance problems. Some provisions had to be made to give the members access to telephones for making inquiries about possible job openings or interviews. At the conclusion of the job club program, the members' progress had to be measured by comparing their job-seeking skills and knowledge at departure to their skills and knowledge when starting the club. Ideally, the members were also asked to give feedback on the quality and content of the club activities and services. Finally, follow-up had to be conducted on the employment success of the exited members and other data had to be collected and analyzed in order to assess the effectiveness of the job club concept for community college students with disabilities and guide development of a model for replication.

This chapter examines these and other activities and concerns reported by the three demonstration job clubs, as follows:

- Pretesting/assessment of members' skills
- Job search strategies and practices
- Phone bank
- Speakers and peer "mentors"
- Group site visits
- Resume preparation and other writing activities
- Interview and telephone skill development
- Individual counseling needs

- Placement assistance
- Job-keeping skills development
- Special job club activities
- Job club officers
- Job club structure and interactions
- Attitudes and motivation
- Scheduling and problems with attendance
- Posttesting/evaluation

#### Pretesting/Assessment of Members' Skills

All three of the demonstration job clubs used the Job Clubs Pre/Post Assessment instrument developed by the National Center in collaboration with the demonstration site representatives (a copy of the instrument is reproduced in appendix A). The instrument was designed to (1) give the job club coordinators some idea of the entering level of job-seeking skills and knowledge of each job club member; (2) collect some basic information on how much and what kind of employment the members had previously had, what their short-term employment plans were, and whether they already had a resume; and (3) enable the coordinators to compare the members' incoming skills and knowledge with their exiting skills and knowledge in order to estimate the success of the job club training experiences.

Two of the coordinators reported finding the Pre/Post Assessment instrument useful for intake assessment. The results of the pretest helped the coordinators tailor the club activities to the general and specific needs of the members. The instrument results

also helped give the members a sense of their growth in job-seeking skills and knowledge.

One coordinator, on the other hand, felt that members tended to overestimate their skills on the pretest. Another coordinator agreed with this but felt that having the members attempt to assess their skills was still a useful exercise because it helped them think about what they needed to learn in the job club. The coordinator who had reservations about the validity of the instrument augmented its use by rating the members' skills and knowledge herself, both before and after the job club treatment.

In addition to the pretest, at least one of the demonstration job clubs administered other relevant assessment instruments. The Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) administered the Harrington O'Shea Career Decision Making System instrument (Harrington and O'Shea 1982) to the job club members as a group. The coordinator then met with the members individually to interpret the Harrington O'Shea results, fill out an inhouse assessment/recommendation form, and establish the members' individual employment goals.

### **Job Search Strategies and Practices**

Information collected about the demonstration sites' training in job search strategies and practices are examined in this section.

#### **Want Ads and Other Public Listings**

All three demonstration job clubs made extensive use of newspaper want ads as part of the members' job search strategies.

At Columbus Technical Institute (CTI), the job club set time aside at every meeting to look at the weekly (usually Sunday) newspaper classified ads. Members were also encouraged to do this on their own.

The coordinators at all of the sites helped the members to learn how to locate the want ad sections focusing on the members' particular interests and job skills. Neighborhood newspapers were also scanned because these are often better sources of local jobs for disabled workers, who may not be able to commute long distances. At one job club, a local job directory was available each week at no cost. The Chicago City-Wide College (CCC) job club coordinator showed club members how to use the Yellow Pages to locate employers that need workers with the members' particular job skills.

The coordinators urged (and sometimes assisted) the members to make as many job contacts as possible. CCC, for example, urged each member to make at least three contacts with employers each week about job openings. Job club coordinators helped members learn how to record all of their job contacts in order to keep track of their job search progress.

### Job Fairs

Job fairs presented good opportunities for club members to investigate job openings. At both CCRI and CTI, a number of members made job contacts at college job fairs. In addition, CCRI's job club coordinator met with a local organization, Projects With

Industry, to help support a "Job Fair for the Handi-Capable," which was hosted by the organization.

### Phone Bank

An expectation of the National Center for the demonstration job clubs was the establishment of a phone bank for use by members in locating possible job openings, making appointments for job interviews, and following up on job contacts. For a variety of reasons, however, none of the three sites set up a formal phone bank. Institutional, supervision, and cost problems were the main reasons. For example, CCC's Center for Disabled Student Services will soon be moved to a new facility, and the institution was reluctant to pay to install phone jacks in a room that will be vacated by the center. At another site, college administrators expressed concern about supervising and locking up the phone bank room to avoid unauthorized use of the telephones.

All three job clubs dealt with the lack of a phone bank by providing members with access to existing telephones in either the coordinators' offices or in the disabled student services departments. At CCRI, for example, members were told they could use the coordinator's phone to follow up on job leads. Instead of inhibiting the members' use of the phone, this arrangement actually enhanced it, because members found they could get immediate advice and encouragement from the coordinator. In addition, the arrangement allowed the coordinator to monitor the members' telephone skills. The coordinators uniformly reported that the members made

substantial use of the phones for job queries and follow-up, and none reported problems from lack of a designated phone bank.

### Speakers and Peer "Mentors"

This section discusses the types of speakers used by the demonstration job clubs.

#### Employers

All three demonstration job clubs made extensive use of guest speakers to inform and train club members. One use of guest speakers was having local employers address the club about employer expectations, and then respond to members' questions. For example, CCC invited a speaker from the City Colleges of Chicago's Business Institute to talk about employer expectations. College placement officers also discussed this topic. CCRI had a disabled maintenance supervisor discuss employer expectations both from the perspective of a supervisor and that of a disabled employee.

Employer speakers not only bring authority to the information they convey, they also can provide employment opportunities or make referrals for job club members. One coordinator felt that a valuable strategy would be to tie an employer's talk to a visit by the club to that employer's company site; this was not possible at that time, however.

#### Peers

Several of the demonstration job clubs initially planned to have college graduates with disabilities who are currently employed act as peer mentors for the club members. This did not



prove feasible, mainly because the potential mentors were unable to schedule time away from their jobs and other commitments to work closely with the job club. Instead, the clubs invited the disabled graduates to speak to the members on a one-time basis.

For example, CTI invited three former graduates to speak to the job club. These graduates had had particularly rough roads to employment but are now successfully and gainfully employed. In addition to the valuable information they conveyed, these speakers served as prime examples of confident, employed, successful people who happen to have disabilities.

Peer speakers need not necessarily be graduates of the college. At CCRI, two job club speakers were persons with disabilities who had been employed as teachers for some time. These speakers shared their job search experiences of years ago and contrasted them with how current legislation might change their job search now. They also discussed the need for positive attitudes in light of work-world realities. Their emphasis was on how, in the right job, a worker with disabilities is not handicapped--she or he is just as good an employee as a person without a disability, because a "normal" person might be just as "handicapped," for instance, when dealing with someone who speaks a foreign language.

### Other Speaker Roles

Guest speakers served a variety of other informational and service needs. At CCRI, a placement officer served as proxy for the employer in the job club's mock interviews. The coordinator

felt that having someone unknown to the members serve in that role made the mock interviews more realistic, since job seekers seldom know the person with whom they will interview. In addition, a placement or personnel officer often has experience in giving interviews and will ask appropriate questions. Other guest speakers provided useful, credible information on such things as job search strategies, interview dress and etiquette, legal issues affecting job seeking and employment for persons with disabilities, and so forth.

### Strategies for Using Speakers

CTI took a consciously informal approach to job club meeting interactions and encouraged guest speakers to speak "off the cuff" rather than prepare formal presentations. CTI's co-coordinators also asked speakers to be prepared to respond to an abundance of questions from members throughout the meeting, most of which was usually devoted to interaction between speakers and members. Speakers' presentations at CCRI were slightly more formal, but the question-and-answer periods following the presentations were informal and open.

CCRI reported scheduling six visiting speakers for its job club; the students would have liked more. CCC, likewise, expressed interest in increasing the number of guest speakers addressing its club, and in establishing a speakers' bureau from which to draw speakers to talk to the job club. This speakers' bureau would include employers, employed persons with disabilities, and others.

At CTI, the job club was split into one group meeting in the day and another group meeting in the evening. This often made it impossible for a speaker to address both groups. When this happened, CTI arranged to have the speaker's presentation at one club meeting videotaped so it could be shown to the other group later.

One job club paid its speakers a small honorarium. The other two clubs did not pay the speakers. However, where a club meeting immediately followed the lunch hour, at least one of the job clubs did invite its speakers to a paid luncheon with the coordinator prior to the meeting.

### Group Site Visits

All of the demonstration job clubs had initially planned to organize visits for the members to local business or plant sites to give them a firsthand look at work sites and, where possible, visit with workers with disabilities on the job. An ideal site visit, for instance, would be to a company that is owned or operated by an employer who addressed the job club as a guest speaker. In addition, the site should be one with a diversity of job types and environments.

Unfortunately, none of the job clubs was able to implement such plans for the site visits. Lack of time and funds for transportation were major factors. For instance, CCC had planned to conduct site visits within immediate proximity to the college in order to get around the problem of transportation costs, but the unanticipated need for club members to have program staff travel with them to employment sites to help fill out job applications

devoured the time that was to have been devoted to the group site visits. CTI's job club did visit local civil service testing sites for state and county positions, but no site visits were made that related to job content. Finally, CCRI had one on-site visit scheduled with an employer (the Bostitch Company), but had to cancel it because the date set for the visit conflicted with finals week at the college, and members could not attend the visit.

### Resume Preparation and Other Writing Activities

The job clubs each provided training and assistance to members for the variety of writing activities required in a successful job search: filling out job applications, drafting and refining a resume, writing cover letters, writing thank you letters, and so forth. The coordinators generally arranged for typing of these materials for members who could not otherwise get them typed. In a number of cases, the job club also helped members get copies of their resumes, letters, and other necessary documents.

### Job Applications

Both CTI and CCC found that most members did not know how to fill out job applications. This was particularly a problem for the students with developmental disabilities, as well as for those with deaf/hearing impairments, many of whom did not understand the language on job application forms. Students with blindness/visual

impairments, of course, needed assistance filling out applications, but so did many of the other students. Quite a few of the job club members had the misconception that they did not need to fill out a job application--that getting a half-hour interview, without an application, would be enough to net them a job.

CTI dealt with this problem by bringing in a college personnel officer to answer members' questions and make recommendations about filling out job applications. For example, the officer recommended that the members respond to an application form question, such as "Are you handicapped? Y/N," with a "yes" response. He emphasized that an applicant should never lie on a job application, because the applicant usually must sign a statement on the form asserting that the information provided is true. On the other hand, it is illegal for a job application to ask, "Are you handicapped?," and students discussed a number of options to responding to this question. The CTI job club co-coordinators also provided one-on-one assistance to members needing extra help filling out job applications.

CCC's job club members, most of whom have developmental disabilities, had serious problems with filling out job applications. Ultimately, the problem was resolved by recruiting student services staff to help the job club coordinator and to travel with the members to actual employment sites to aid them in completing the applications.

CCRI had fewer problems with members filling out job applications. One strategy the CCRI coordinator used was to obtain job

application forms from local businesses to use with the job club members as practice samples.

### Resumes

Each demonstration job club devoted considerable time to helping the members prepare resumes. Coordinators or guest speakers discussed what a good resume should contain and provided handouts with sample resume formats, appropriate resume vocabulary (e.g., "power words"), samples of "bad" resumes (e.g., poor photocopying, too verbose, poor format), and an inventory of basic information that should appear on a resume. Generally, members used these materials to prepare a rough draft of a resume. Blind members worked with readers. Members were encouraged to phone or meet with the coordinator for advice while preparing the draft. When the draft was completed, they met with the coordinator to modify and refine the resume.

Coordinators and/or guest speakers advised the members on several aspects of their resumes. They emphasized that the members be honest--but not humble--about their skills (the same advice was given for interviews). They also recommended that members do not mention their disability on the resume. In some cases, they recommended that the disability be mentioned in a cover letter, particularly if an interview would involve problems of accessibility or would require the use of a sign interpreter.

At CCC, in addition to developing a complete resume, each job club member received help developing a "pocket cribsheet" (one-page) resume to take along on interviews.

At CCRI and CTI, the job club coordinators and student services staff agreed to provide references for club members, but encouraged the members to use other people, such as persons for whom they had worked (even if only as volunteers), or college professors from whom they had taken courses. The coordinators reminded the members to clear this with each person they wished to use as a reference before doing so.

### Cover and Thank You Letters

All three job clubs provided practice or handouts on writing appropriate cover letters. CCRI devoted a small portion of a meeting to this topic and provided a basic business format and outline. However, none of the sites spent very much time on this activity.

CCRI stressed the importance of follow-up letters, especially to confirm information about job openings or interviews obtained during telephone calls. In addition, all of the sites urged job club members to draft short, straightforward thank you letters following interviews.

### Interview and Telephone Skill Development

This section looks at information from the sites on the use of mock interviews and training telephone skills and other follow-up.

### Mock Interviews

All three demonstration job club sites gave members information and practice in interviewing skills. Practice took the form

of mock interviews. Because of the time needed for each member's mock interview, the interviews usually took up part of several club meetings. At CTI, however, the mock interviews were held on a one-on-one basis with the co-coordinator in her office, and members scheduled those interviews at times other than club meetings.

CCRI had a college placement officer conduct the mock interviews. The coordinator felt that having a stranger do this was useful, because it was realistic--persons going for job interviews seldom know the interviewer personally. CCC likewise had a college staff person unknown to the job club members conduct the mock interviews, for much the same reason. The CTI co-coordinator, on the other hand, felt that having one-on-one mock interviews enabled the members to evaluate their own skill and get immediate feedback and practice to improve their performance.

Two of the three demonstration sites videotaped the mock interviews. Reviewing the videotapes helped the members examine their performance, such as nervousness, specific verbal responses, need for elaboration, asking questions of the interviewer, body language, and whether they successfully minimized their disability and maximized their ability to perform the job.

In addition to the mock interviews, each of the job clubs devoted some time to "dressing for success," both for interviewing and for dressing once on the job. CCRI's coordinator also advised members to have someone else check their appearance before going on an interview. This was especially important for individuals with visual impairments. All of the coordinators urged members to



come to the mock interview session dressed as though they were going to a real interview.

### Telephone Skills Training

Two of the demonstration job clubs provided specific training in the form of role-playing for using the telephone as a tool in pursuing job opening information, interviews, and follow-up. At CCRI, the members were given a practice session on telephone skills. Because they could use the telephone in the coordinator's office, the coordinator could also monitor the members' performance and give specific advice or provide additional practice.

At CCC, role-playing was considered a must for the job club members. The technique was used to teach members how to use the phone well, what to say during initial job contacts, and so forth. The coordinator felt that practice was critical to a job club whose members consisted mostly of persons with developmental disabilities. Prior to the formation of the job club, many CCC special training program graduates failed to get jobs because of presentation problems--that is, they could not use the telephone or participate in job interviews well enough to get appointments or convince employers they could do the work.

### Follow-up

At least one of the job club coordinators, the coordinator at CCC, followed up personally on members' job contacts. The coordinator usually telephoned the employer and asked for feedback on the member's presentation, particularly after interviews. If appropriate, the coordinator passed this information back to the

member to help the person improve his or her performance. In addition, the coordinator sometimes picked up general information on job openings at that time and passed the information along to the program placement staff.

### Individual Counseling Needs

Job club coordinators at all three sites found that they needed to meet with members frequently on an individual basis. The CTI co-coordinators found that students with disabilities needed a lot of intervention and individual attention, in addition to the group dynamics of the job club. The members also needed one-on-one assistance with filling out job applications, preparing resumes, and identifying their work skills.

The CTI co-coordinators found it necessary to hold individual counseling sessions to help members realistically evaluate their interpersonal skills and their expectations about employment. In addition, all but one job club member sought individualized help in resume development. The co-coordinators believe that, without this special attention, many of the members might never have completed a resume.

The coordinators at each site worked individually with visually and hearing impaired members to help them prepare for job interviewing. They discussed such things as making eye contact, body language, dress, and where a sign interpreter should sit.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ideally, a sign interpreter should sit somewhat behind and to the side of the interviewer--that is, where the interviewee can see the interpreter but where the interviewer will not be distracted by the signing.

Finally, all of the coordinators emphasized the need to be willing to meet with members individually to help them catch up with job club information or training they may have missed by being absent. CCRI's coordinator recommends that, in addition to individual make-up sessions, a special group make-up session be offered.

### Placement Assistance

At each site, the college placement office (whether college-wide or specific to the college's department of disabled student services) collaborated with the job club to help members locate job opportunities. However, not every site relied strictly on the placement office to locate or develop job openings. The following sections examine the specific approaches used by the three demonstration job clubs.

#### Chicago City-Wide College

At CCC, the job club obtained the assistance of two job coaches who are part of the Center for Disabled Student Services' special Vocational Training Program. The coordinator and coaches did networking and gathered resource information about the local job market opportunities. These coaches usually work with the 4-month training program to help locate co-op jobs for training and to help graduates of the training program who do not take part in the job club.

The job club also networked with a variety of local agencies and organizations to help locate job opportunities for the members.

### Columbus Technical Institute

The CTI job club approach to job placement was unique in that one of CTI's club co-coordinators assumed primary responsibility for developing job opportunities for the members. The co-coordinator contacted numerous local companies via a letter, requesting a 30-minute appointment to "personalize" the job club's efforts to the company's employment needs. The co-coordinator then worked with over 50 receptive employers to locate or create job openings for the CTI graduates with disabilities.

When working with the employers, the co-coordinator was able to do a job analysis for the employer and make realistic recommendations for accommodation at the work site for a potential worker's disability. The single most important factor in this approach was projecting a professional, organized, and personal face for the job club. The co-coordinator also found it particularly critical to work directly with employers to develop job opportunities for the blind or deaf, because employers were more reluctant to hire people with these disabilities than those with any other disability. CTI's co-coordinator concentrated on "educating" employers and on matching the job club members to specific types of job opportunities.

### Community College of Rhode Island

At CCRI, job placement for the job club members was assisted by the job placement coordinator for the college. Placement contacts were also made with outside agencies and organizations to

locate job opportunities of all sorts, including full-time permanent paid jobs, part-time jobs, summer jobs, field placements in cooperative programs, volunteer positions, and so forth. The college financial aid office additionally provided work-study job listings for members interested in getting job experience while still in college.

### Job-Keeping Skills Development

Although all three sites agreed that job club members with disabilities could use training in job-keeping as well as job-seeking skills, CCRI and CTI spent minimal time on this topic area. CCRI did devote part of a training session on employer expectations to job-keeping skills, and a guest speaker from the New England Telephone Company addressed these issues in her presentation to the job club. Overall, however, CCRI's job club members seemed to be aware of the factors (e.g., low absenteeism, promptness, reliability, getting along with co-workers) that are vital to keeping a job.

CCC, on the other hand, focused as much on job-keeping skills as on job-getting skills for its members with developmental disabilities. Job-keeping skills and savvy are a particular problem for these people, most of whom have never had any experience with the work world. Many employers of CCC's graduates with developmental disabilities have a policy of treating these employees as they treat all other employees--on a "tough but fair" basis. Therefore, the CCC job club had to prepare its members to

function in a normal work environment where they cannot expect privileges or extra help.

Typical problems with persons with developmental disabilities included misinformation or a lack of understanding about employer expectations, inappropriate job behaviors (e.g., tardiness, absenteeism, working to deadlines), inexperience with working relationships, trouble staying on task, and so forth. To help the members overcome these problems, the CCC coordinator emphasized preparing the members to become responsible and realistic about the work world by requiring appropriate behaviors from them in the job club setting.

For example, CCC job club members were urged to come "dressed for work" to every club meeting--whether it involved a mock interview or not--to help get them accustomed to dressing for work. Job club staff and members also addressed each other on a last name basis at the meetings in order to prepare the members for professional behavior in business environments. Both the coordinator and guest speakers conveyed substantial information to the club members about employer expectations, appropriate behaviors on the job, and good work ethics.

### Special Job Club Activities

Although all three demonstration job clubs delivered training and information in basic job-seeking skills and approaches, each site also developed unique activities to augment the effectiveness and enjoyability of the program. The following are special activ-

ities that reflect the creativity possible within the framework of a job club for community college students with disabilities:

- Both CCRI and CTI involved job club members in publishing their own club newsletter. The activity provided opportunities for the members to develop leadership and assertiveness skills, as well as good communications skills. At CTI, a graphics design major in the job club prepared several logo designs for the newsletter, and the members as a group selected one of them. CTI sent its monthly job club newsletter to all members and also to potential employers. Newsletters typically contained workshop presentation summaries, announcements, information about employer contacts, and updates on members who had obtained employment.
- Four members of CCRI's job club formed a steering committee that undertook a special project with the coordinator to produce Transition to Employment: A Guide for the Disabled Job Seeker (Community College of Rhode Island 1986). The booklet focuses specifically on information about local support services and the like. It will be made available to all CCRI students with disabilities through the Access to Opportunity Program offices.
- CTI began its job club activities by hosting a "kick-off" dinner for prospective members. At the dinner, the potential members met the staff and had the opportunity to learn about the job club, its planned activities, and its goals. CCRI likewise hosted luncheons at the first and last job club meetings.
- At CTI, the site's two job clubs (the day and evening groups) got together every 6 weeks or so to share a catered dinner and exchange ideas and information. Typically, the afternoon group stayed a little later and the evening group came a little earlier. Attendance was always good, as having food seemed to make the meetings special and acted as a motivator for attendance. The catering was paid for with the job club funds.
- One CCRI job club member took personal initiative and went to the college's Design Department to ask about the best color combinations for clothes for a job interview. The member then shared his findings with the group at the next club meeting.
- At CTI job club members practiced explaining the use of special equipment they need on the job. By explaining this information to the rest of the job club

group, they learned how to explain their special equipment needs to prospective employers. Also, members were encouraged to take pictures of the special equipment along with them on interviews to show to employers.

- CCRI's job club helped support a special "Job Fair for the Handi-Capable," sponsored by a local organization, Projects With Industry. The job club coordinator recruited both job club and other people to distribute posters for the job fair.
- In addition to training club members in job-seeking and job-keeping skills, CCC's coordinator also gave some time to helping the members develop community survival skills.
- A unique activity originally planned for CTI's job club (but dropped from the agenda due to lack of member interest) was a working clothes style show. The style show would have had members model clothing appropriate for interviewing for different kinds of jobs. CTI plans to sponsor this event through its Disabled Student Services department sometime soon and videotape it for future job clubs.
- CCRI trained its job club members to use the Guidance Information System (GIS). GIS gives students information about careers and enters the members in an appropriate job placement bank.
- CCC developed a job availability list of its job club members and sent the list to outside placement agencies. The list contained capsules (one-two sentences) on job club members' skills.
- CCC and CTI presented job club members with a certificate of completion for the job club. They also presented certificates of appreciation to participating employers.
- CCC's job club coordinator plans a future activity in which she will go to CCC's cooperative Vocational Training Program sites and discuss with students what they need to be aware of and learn on the job (e.g., good work habits and attitudes). This will help the students--many of whom may later participate in a CCC job club--work toward job placement and the awareness crucial to job readiness. Students will also participate in a graduation exercise and their accomplishments will be placed in CCC's monthly newsletter, Center Highlights.



### Job Club Officers

None of the demonstration job clubs elected officers from among the membership. The main reasons included disinterest among the members in a formal internal structure and the apparent inability of some job club members (particularly at CCC) to grasp the need for or roles of such officers.

At CCRI, the job club elected a steering committee of four members in lieu of officers. They took this approach because they agreed that they did not know each other well enough, at the beginning, to elect officers. This is a typical problem among students at a community college.

### Job Club Structure and Interactions

This section examines the differing job club structures and consequent styles of group interactions for each of the demonstration sites.

#### Chicago City-Wide College

CCC's job club structure closely paralleled a classroom atmosphere, with an emphasis on lecture accompanied by some group discussion. The coordinator felt that this approach was necessary for the members with developmental disabilities, many of whom had problems with attention span, communication skills, and the like. The members exhibited some reluctance to engage in discussions.

The CCC coordinator expressed a need to redesign the job club structure so that 1 hour a week of job club meeting time could be devoted specifically to a "rap session" among the members without

the coordinator's presence. Similarly, she felt that 1 of the 3 days a week that the job club met would have been better devoted to field work (i.e., actual job search) than to classroom work.

Much of CCC's early job club activities focused on helping the members build self-esteem and a positive outlook. It was also important to help the members set concrete goals for themselves, both for the job club activities and for their job search. Once progress had been made in these areas, it was possible to begin teaching the members job-seeking skills. The coordinator felt that this delay could be avoided in the future by conducting an orientation program prior to the beginning of CCC's special Vocational Training Program to help students focus their wants, needs, and goals. This would be better than waiting until the students completed the training program and entered the job club.

In conducting the job club meetings, CCC's coordinator deliberately set herself up as a proxy for employers. She felt that it was important, with this population, to establish a businesslike atmosphere that simulated the workplace. Both the coordinator and members addressed each other as "Mr." or "Ms." The coordinator also felt it crucial to set the ground rules, from day one, regarding the club's goals, expectations, and need for personal commitment.

### Columbus Technical Institute

CTI's job club meetings tended to be minimally structured and informal. No staff member was ever formally in charge of the meetings. Free, informal interaction was stressed for everyone, and all members were made to feel like full partners who could say

whatever was on their mind. Information sharing among the members typically included (1) a report on the various employer contacts the members had made that week, (2) positions available in which other members might be interested, (3) tips on logging job contacts, and (4) a discussion of problems encountered in the members' job searches. One member shared her record-keeping system for her job search. The members also offered support and positive encouragement to those whose job search seemed to have hit a snag.

Each meeting did have an agenda, which was used mostly as a checklist to ensure that nothing important was overlooked. The club co-coordinators encouraged guest speakers to speak "off the cuff," following with a question and answer period, which usually elicited lively group discussion. On some occasions, the co-coordinators acted as devil's advocates during a discussion or asked leading questions in order to bring out more information.

During the first few meetings, the co-coordinators asked members to give individual presentations. This helped the members become more involved with the job club process.

### Community College of Rhode Island

CCRI held its job-seeking skills training sessions separate from the job club meetings. The college placement office offers job-seeking skills workshops as an ongoing activity for all students. The job club members were expected to attend these workshops, as they were considered critical adjuncts to the club activities.

The club meetings lasted approximately 2 hours each. The first half hour was usually devoted to unstructured member interaction, followed by 1 to 1-1/2 hours of structured activities.

The coordinator, who had not had previous professional experience working with people with disabilities, found that they do not automatically form a cohesive group. In fact, some individuals seemed to be ignorant about and have biases toward people with disabilities different from their own. This created some initial difficulties for job club unity.

To counteract this problem, the coordinator used group ice-breakers and encouraged the members to interact on a first name basis. Her approach was to start with individuals in a room who begin to sit together more closely and eventually evolve into a cohesive group. She found that the older members who had not been disabled all their lives tended to be more motivated than others and also more willing to take some leadership in group interaction.

The coordinators at both CTI and CCRI tried to boost group participation by urging members to sign up to lead individual activities each week. The effort was more successful at CCRI, although the coordinator found that she had to "structure a disengagement" from leading all of the early activities herself. She did this by giving a great deal of support and leadership at the beginning and gradually turning responsibilities over to the job club members, in increments.

CCRI's coordinator also learned that it was important when working with a new job club group to gauge their needs and adjust

to them, and to be willing to try something else when needed. She found that some of the best job club content wasn't planned--or plannable. Lively rap sessions seemed to occur spontaneously. This occurred most often when speakers and members focused on the need for the members to develop positive attitudes about themselves, their job search, and their ability to be successful in the world of work.

### Attitudes and Motivational Issues

The coordinators of all three demonstration job clubs placed considerable emphasis on developing members' positive attitudes and motivation. All agreed that it is vital to establish, as a baseline, the attitudes that no one in the job clubs is a loser--that all members have skills that they do not even realize they have, and that disabilities are not in the person, they are in the environment. The coordinators also agreed that it was important to emphasize positive reinforcement of desirable behaviors in order to motivate the members.

The coordinators learned that the topic of positive attitudes had to be addressed early in the job club. So did the members' realization that they needed to get underway with their job search. At CCRI, for instance, some club members did not become seriously motivated to pursue their job search until the end of the job club began to loom (i.e., three-four meetings left).

CCC, with its job club for the students with developmental disabilities, had particular problems with attitudes and motivation. The coordinator had a unique challenge in that she had to

balance the need to boost the members' self-esteem with her plan to act as a proxy for employers in order to instill professionalism into the members' attitudinal and behavioral repertoires.

CCC's job club approach focused considerable early attention on helping the members build self-esteem and a positive outlook--the realization that "things don't always have to be bad for me" and "I'm important, I can do useful things too." The coordinator emphasized that the members' only real handicap was saying "I can't" too often.

The coordinator also made clear to the members that she would not accept excuses from them for inattention or incomplete assignments. She insisted that the members keep their attention focused on the job club activities, reminding them frequently that "employers won't accept excuses either." Many of the members also had a counterproductive attitude of "Where's my job?"--believing that merely belonging to the club would somehow deliver a job for them automatically without an effort on their part. The coordinator continually had to emphasize to the members that the purpose of the job club was self-empowerment, a concept with which most of them had apparently had little experience.

At the same time, the coordinator expressed high expectations to the club members. Her belief was that the members had had too many limitations imposed on them already. She told the members to do their best, because when they did, they could never really fail.

### Scheduling and Problems with Attendance

As might be expected in a community college environment, two of the three demonstration job clubs experienced problems trying to schedule job club meetings convenient to all of the participants. Students were frequently bound up in schedules that included classes, part-time jobs, single-parenting responsibilities, college field placement activities and so on.

At CCRI, this problem was partially resolved by scheduling individual meetings between the members and the job club coordinator for those missed an occasional meeting. Both CCRI and CTI split their job clubs into two groups. CCRI's groups met on Tuesdays at noon and Wednesdays at 10 a.m. At CTI, one group met in the afternoon and one in the evening. Although this approach split the support groups, it allowed all members to participate.

At CTI, some students moved back and forth between the day and night groups as their personal schedules allowed. Unfortunately, because each group was so small, the meetings sometimes had too few people for workable group dynamics. CTI staff believe that more regular participation might occur in future job clubs if the club meetings are scheduled for 1 night a week, or perhaps if the meetings are held once every other week, early in the evening.

Overall, poor attendance at job club meetings was probably the biggest problem the CTI job club encountered. Staff feel that it is difficult to get good attendance on a commuter campus. In

addition, the timing for organizing the job club (February) negatively affected attendance. Spring quarter at CTI tends to have low enrollment, and the improving weather lowers attendance. Thus it was difficult to get enough students with disabilities to come regularly enough to make the club operate smoothly. The CTI staff felt that recruitment and attendance would probably be better if the job club started in the fall quarter.

CTI did resolve some of its attendance problem by urging members to maintain contact with the co-coordinators by telephone when other responsibilities kept them from attending the meetings. The staff also emphasized to the members how important attendance was and contacted individual members by phone to remind them of meetings. At meetings, the co-coordinators also emphasized "success stories" when one of the members got a job offer. This always had a positive impact on attendance. The CTI staff felt that it may be necessary, when attendance slacks off, to have staff telephone all of the members every week and remind them about the job club meetings. Follow-up can be crucial.

CCRI also had a problem with attendance when the job club meetings continued beyond the end of the quarter (when classes ended). The coordinator resolved this by continuing to schedule individual meetings with members and by establishing an optional or informal meeting time on a weekly basis for those unable to attend the regular meetings.

CCRI staff felt that a job club program should not be limited to one semester or one quarter. Extending the meetings into other times of the school year would make it possible to serve



more students, or students on more than one campus. This expanded service would justify the additional time and would provide a better quality job club experience for all members.

CCC job club staff also felt that one quarter was not enough time for a job club to accomplish everything. This was especially so for the members with developmental disabilities, who had a great deal to unlearn before they could successfully acquire job-seeking and job-keeping skills. For this population, a 4 to 6-month job club may be needed.

The job clubs of CCC and CTI both focused on serving graduates or near-graduates of their colleges, but CCRI also served students who were not near graduating. As a result, CCRI job club staff believe that a job club should be an ongoing activity. Job clubs could be especially valuable at the end of the first year of a 2-year degree program as students find summer employment and build up a good work record. Second-year students could then use the job club to refine their job search skills, and these students would become the natural leaders in the second-year job club. This approach could conceivably help the job club program become a more independent operation, relying more on the students themselves and less on direction and motivation from the coordinator.

### Posttesting/Evaluation

At the conclusion of the job club meetings, all three demonstration job clubs administered the Job Clubs Pre/Post Assessment

instrument to all members completing the treatment. The instrument was the same one administered to the members at the beginning of the job club. The purpose was twofold: (1) to enable the members to compare their self-assessments and evaluate their progress in acquiring job search skills and work world savvy and (2) to provide some evidence for program use on the impact of the job club treatment. The outcomes of the Pre/Post Assessment administration for the three sites are discussed in chapter 5.

Each of the sites also collected data on employment success rates for the job club members. These data are also reported in chapter 5.

CCRI conducted an additional, inhouse assessment of its job club treatment by asking members to complete a job club evaluation form. The forms were filled out and returned to the coordinator. The college encountered problems, however, in getting the members to return the forms. This was partially resolved by mailing members more evaluation forms with self-addressed stamped envelopes for their return.

### Summary

The operation of a job club at all three sites required attention to both the group and individual needs of the members, as well as to the administrative and logistical needs of the program. Members required training and individualized counseling to help them identify their skills and employment goals, fill out job applications, prepare resumes, make productive job contacts, develop effective interviewing skills, and acquire the attitudes

necessary for a successful job search and for job retention. While delivering these kinds of assistance, coordinators also had to remember that the goal of a job club is the members' self-empowerment: when they leave the job club, the members ought to be able to develop their own networks, their own support groups, and their own job search strategies and materials, should they need to.

In addition to meeting the members' training and counseling needs, the job clubs found it crucial to offer the members convenience. Coordinators scheduled club meetings and activities and individual counseling sessions at times that encouraged attendance. They found that resources such as access to telephones for job queries were a plus.

The coordinators also tried to help the members develop positive, appropriate attitudes, self-esteem, and motivation. They found it important to find ways to stimulate the members' involvement with both the job club group activities and with their personal job search.

Finally, each demonstration job club evaluated its own effectiveness to determine whether job clubs for students with disabilities are an appropriate program for community colleges to support and to help determine the programmatic strengths and weaknesses in order to develop an ideal model for dissemination.

The operational activities of the three demonstration job clubs examined in this chapter reveal that many options exist for meeting the needs just discussed. For instance, each of the three job clubs used different approaches to assisting members with

locating promising job openings. Each site had a different approach to fostering group interactions during meetings. Each had a unique philosophy guiding how the coordinator worked to motivate the members' attendance, participation, and persistence in their job search.

Some common approaches to activities also surfaced, as did some common problems. All three sites initially proposed to set up phone banks for instance, and all made office phones available when the phone banks proved unfeasible. Using role play to help members develop telephone and interview skills was a successful common approach, but it took different forms at each site (e.g., videotaping, group mock interviews, one-on-one mock interviews with the coordinator). All three job clubs taught members how to use want ads to locate job openings, but each site offered training or contacts with other, divergent resources, as well. Even a casual perusal of the chapter reveals the rich creativity of the job club staff in finding motivating ways to deliver club services.

Chapter 5 examines both quantitative and qualitative outcomes of the three demonstration job clubs and analyzes the overall effectiveness of the concept of job clubs in 2-year colleges for students with disabilities. It concludes with recommendations for future programs in this area.

## CHAPTER V

### OUTCOMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Introduction

As stipulated by the federal grant supporting this project, the primary aim of the work reported here was to operate three demonstration job clubs, rather than to conduct a research project. Accordingly, a major objective of the project was to try out different approaches to conducting a job club for students with disabilities in order to get a sense of whether the concept is useful in a 2-year college setting for this population. However, another objective was to find out, in general, which approaches seem to work well and may be replicable at other 2-year college sites.

This chapter first examines how well the three demonstration job clubs did, overall, in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Since formal evaluation was not the purpose of the demonstration project, the quantitative outcomes reported here were not subject to strict data collection or analysis procedures.<sup>1</sup> Qualitative evidence draws mostly from the observations and statements offered by the job club staff and members regarding the value of the program.

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<sup>1</sup>A federal follow-up grant to be conducted by the National Center in 1986-87 will utilize strict research methodology and quantitative data analysis techniques to determine the precise efficacy of job clubs in 2-year college settings for persons with learning disabilities.

This chapter also looks at the special kinds of problems encountered in planning and operating job clubs for students with disabilities. The replicability of the job club concept for this population and in this setting inevitably depends on whether most of these problems can be avoided or adequately resolved.

The final two sections of the chapter offer recommendations for the utility and practice of job clubs for 2-year college students with disabilities. First, a model and operational options are presented for use with future job clubs of this nature, based on the best features and experiences of the three pilot sites. General recommendations on policy, practice, and further research conclude the chapter.

### Quantitative Outcomes

This section reviews the quantitative outcomes of the demonstration job clubs in terms of pre- and post-assessment results, job contacts, and employment success.

### Pre- and Post-Assessment Outcomes

Each of the job clubs was asked to administer a special pre-and post-assessment instrument to all members upon their beginning of participation in the club, and again at its termination. Usually, the instrument was administered at the first formal job club meeting, and again at the last scheduled meeting (although some members did take the posttest instrument home and complete it there following the last meeting).

Data from the pre- and post-tests were examined to determine how much of a difference, in general, participation in a demonstration job club made in the members' levels of job-seeking skills and knowledge of the world of work. In addition, the instrument asked entering members about their employment goals.

As shown in table 1, the 74 respondents to the pretest rated their incoming levels of job-seeking skills and knowledge fairly highly. Those who estimated that they knew "pretty much" to "a lot" about the job-related skills ranged from a low of 18 percent (on how to use special aids) to a high of 75 percent (on how to get along with co-workers and supervisors). The overall average of the members estimating that they knew "pretty much" to "a lot" was 40 percent.

Table 2 reports the posttest outcomes. By the conclusion of the job clubs, the 44 respondents who estimated knowing "pretty much" to "a lot" about the job-related skills ranged from a low of 38 percent (also on how to use special aids) to a high of 91 percent (again, for how to get along with co-workers and supervisors). Overall, 63 percent of the members estimated that they knew "pretty much" to "a lot" about job-related skills by the time the job clubs terminated.

All 25 of the job-related questions on the pre- and post-test showed increases in knowledge or skills gained, for an average overall gain of 23 percent in the "pretty much" and "a lot" knowledge categories. In other words, by the end of the job club experience, there was a 23 percent increase in reports of high levels of job-related knowledge or skills.

A prime example of the positive effects of the job club are the pre- and post-test responses to the question about how to do well in a job interview (question 8 on tables 1 and 2). There was a 32 percent increase in the number of members who reported high levels of knowledge and skills related to job interviews, with 41 percent claiming to know "pretty much" or "a lot" when entering the job clubs, and 77 percent claiming these knowledge levels by the time they left the job clubs. Similarly, there was a 30 percent increase in the number of members who reported high scores for question 5 (how to write cover letters and follow-up letters) and for question 19 (how to use community employment services). Question 16 (how to get letters of recommendation from others on your behalf) showed a 32 percent increase. These comparisons reveal that the demonstration job clubs were generally associated with self-reported improvements in the members' job-seeking skills and knowledge of the work world.

It should be noted that conclusions based on these data are not precise. This is partly due to the fact that fewer job club members completed the posttest than completed the pretest. Job club coordinators also reported that members had a tendency to overestimate their entering skills and knowledge. The coordinators felt that the members "didn't know what they didn't know." What this implies, however, is that even wider gaps exist between the members' entering and exiting capabilities. That is, if members overestimated their skills when entering the job club, they probably would have reported learning even more during their job club experiences than the instrument measured.



TABLE 1

**TALLY OF PRETEST RESULTS OF ALL  
THREE JOB CLUB SITES (N = 74)**

<u>How Much Do You Know About the Following Job-Related Skills?</u>	<u>Likert Scale Results</u>					<u>Total Percentage of 4 and 5</u>
	1 = Nothing	2 = A Little	3 = Some	4 = Pretty Much	5 = A Lot	
1. What employers expect of workers.....	6%	8%	28%	28%	30%	58%
2. How to use want ads and other job leads...	6%	17%	34%	34%	9%	43%
3. How to write a resume.	20%	31%	13%	28%	8%	36%
4. How to write cover letters and follow-up letters.....	34%	22%	21%	18%	5%	23%
5. How to present a strong image.....	10%	18%	25%	28%	20%	48%
6. How to use the tele- phone for job hunting.	21%	18%	24%	16%	15%	31%
7. How to get a job interview.....	9%	21%	33%	25%	12%	37%
8. How to do well in a job interview.....	6%	22%	31%	33%	8%	41%
9. How to dress for success.....	3%	11%	19%	30%	30%	60%
10. What special vocabu- lary you need in the world of work.....	29%	24%	28%	18%	11%	29%
11. How to talk about your skills and interests.....	11%	22%	29%	29%	9%	38%
12. How to discuss your special need or handi- cap with employers....	18%	16%	31%	18%	18%	36%
13. How to fill out a job application.....	3%	10%	23%	40%	28%	68%

Table 1--Continued

<u>How Much Do You Know About the Following Job-Related Skills?</u>	<u>Likert Scale Results</u>					<u>Total Percentage of 4 and 5</u>
	1 = Nothing	2 = Little	3 = Some	4 = Pretty Much	5 = A Lot	
14. How to take an employ- ment test, such as a typing test, if you need to.....	26%	18%	19%	29%	10%	39%
15. How family and friends can help with job leads.....	8%	17%	30%	29%	12%	41%
16. How to get letters of recommendation from others on your behalf.	13%	18%	29%	21%	15%	36%
17. How to find out more about a particular job	11%	26%	27%	27%	7%	34%
18. How to get along with co-workers and supervisors.....	6%	4%	15%	40%	35%	75%
19. How to use community employment services...	21%	13%	36%	20%	11%	31%
20. How to organize your job hunt.....	18%	22%	20%	30%	10%	40%
21. How to have a posi- tive attitude about job hunting.....	7%	19%	25%	25%	24%	49%
22. How to use special aids you need, such as an Optacon, Braille writer, Phonic ear, sign language inter- preter, and so forth..	26%	8%	20%	9%	9%	18%
23. How to identify your own skills and interests.....	9%	24%	28%	28%	11%	39%
24. How to develop a career plan.....	19%	25%	31%	21%	4%	25%
25. How to use community support services after you start working.....	21%	18%	37%	20%	4%	24%

TABLE 2

**TALLY OF POSTTEST RESULTS OF ALL  
THREE JOB CLUB SITES (N = 44)**

<u>How Much Do You Know About the Following Job-Related Skills?</u>	<u>Likert Scale Results</u>					<u>Total Percentage of 4 and 5</u>
	1 = Nothing	2 = A Little	3 = Some	4 = Pretty Much	5 = A Lot	
1. What employers expect of workers.....	N/A	5%	12%	53%	30%	83%
2. How to use want ads and other job leads...	6%	2%	28%	26%	37%	63%
3. How to write a resume.	6%	10%	24%	30%	29%	59%
4. How to write cover letters and follow-up letters.....	6%	22%	19%	29%	24%	53%
5. How to present a strong image.....	4%	6%	14%	35%	40%	75%
6. How to use the telephone for job hunting.	9%	13%	31%	12%	34%	46%
7. How to get a job interview.....	2%	13%	18%	49%	15%	64%
8. How to do well in a job interview.....	N/A	8%	14%	50%	27%	77%
9. How to dress for success.....	N/A	7%	11%	20%	62%	82%
10. What special vocabulary you need in the world of work.....	4%	12%	41%	33%	21%	54%
11. How to talk about your skills and interests.....	N/A	9%	24%	53%	14%	67%
12. How to discuss your special need or handicap with employers....	9%	8%	34%	25%	24%	49%
13. How to fill out a job application.....	2%	2%	7%	31%	58%	89%

Table 2--Continued

<u>How Much Do You Know About the Following Job-Related Skills?</u>	<u>Likert Scale Results</u>					<u>Total Percentage of 4 and 5</u>
	1 = Nothing	2 = A Little	3 = Some	4 = Pretty Much	5 = A Lot	
14. How to take an employment test, such as a typing test, if you need to.....	19%	17%	18%	15%	31%	46%
15. How family and friends can help with job leads.....	2%	7%	32%	24%	34%	58%
16. How to get letters of recommendation from others on your behalf.	5%	7%	20%	27%	41%	68%
17. How to find out more about a particular job	2%	9%	30%	30%	29%	59%
18. How to get along with co-workers and supervisors.....	N/A	2%	7%	26%	65%	91%
19. How to use community employment services...	6%	11%	22%	35%	26%	61%
20. How to organize your job hunt.....	6%	15%	28%	31%	17%	48%
21. How to have a positive attitude about job hunting.....	N/A	4%	19%	33%	44%	77%
22. How to use special aids you need, such as an Optacon, Braille writer, Phonic ear, sign language interpreter, and so forth..	28%	7%	19%	17%	21%	38%
23. How to identify your own skills and interests.....	N/A	4%	36%	36%	24%	60%
24. How to develop a career plan.....	6%	25%	27%	39%	7%	46%
25. How to use community support services after you start working.....	6%	14%	26%	34%	19%	53%

The Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) conducted a student evaluation of its job club in addition to the pre- post-assessment instrument used at all three sites. Cumulative data from that evaluation appear in table 3. CCRI's findings corroborate those of the Job Clubs Pre/Post Assessment instrument. That is, most of the program completers reported learning a considerable amount about job search skills and the world of work through their job club experiences.

### Job Contacts

The frequency and average number of the club members' job contacts serve as a rough gauge of the intensity of their job searches. Members at all three sites averaged two to three job interviews per week. The average number of job-related telephone contacts differed across sites, however. At the Chicago City-Wide College (CCC), job club members averaged eight phone contacts per week. At CTI, phone contacts averaged five. The job club members at CCRI had the least intensive push, with an average of three phone contacts per week.

Besides these telephone contacts, some members made contacts at job fairs and in person while filling out job applications. A number of members reported that had they been conducting their job search on their own, without the job club, they would not have made as many job contacts in the 12-week period as they made.

TABLE 3

COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF RHODE ISLAND  
TALLY OF EVALUATION RESPONSES  
(N = 18)

Student Evaluation of Perceived Benefit and Satisfaction

1. As a result of the job club/weekly training sessions, did you learn more about the following:

	A Lot More	A Little More		Not At All	
	5	4	3	2	1
a. employers expectations.	33	39%	22%	06%	N/A
b. the role of the employee	33%	39%	17%	05%	06%
c. want ads	33%	11	33%	11%	11
d. telephone skills	17	28%	33%	06%	11%
e. resume writing	56%	28%	17%	N/A	N/A
f. filling out job applications	33%	39%	17%	06%	N/A
g. presenting a strong image	50	44%	N/A	06%	N/A
h. interviewing techniques	28	39%	17%	06%	06%
i. dressing for success	67%	11%	17%	05%	N/A
j. job-related vocabulary	44	17%	33%	06%	N/A

	Very	Somewhat		Not At All	
	5	4	3	2	1
2. Were the job club/weekly training sessions helpful to you in preparation to do a job search?	39	44%	11%	N/A	N/A
3. Was the job club supportive while doing the job search?	39%	39%	N/A	06%	06%
4. Was the job search helpful to you in looking for work?	39	28	06%	06%	N/A
5. Would you recommend to other disabled students that they join the job club and weekly training sessions?	<u>yes</u> - 100%		<u>no</u> - 0%		

## Employment

Because the purpose of a job club is to improve its members' chances of obtaining employment, the number of members who achieve their employment goals is a crucial measure of the club's success. Data were collected at each site on how many members obtained employment within a brief period of about 2 months following the termination of the job club. The colleges also gathered data on the employment rates of other students or graduates with disabilities who were not job club members. A general comparison was then made to determine, overall, whether the job club seemed to improve its members' chances of finding employment.

Each of the demonstration sites reported some job club members obtaining jobs before the club ended. CCC and CTI each had members who found permanent, full-time paid employment during the job club treatment. At CCRI, 10 members found work before the club ended, although many CCRI members had part-time or summer jobs as their employment goal, and only 1 of the jobs was a full-time permanent position.

Employment data from the post job club follow-up reveal that CTI, which had an especially strong focus on placement, had excellent success in helping its members find full-time, permanent jobs within 2 months of the end of the job club. Of 13 members completing all job club activities, 10 of these became employed by the time of reporting.

CTI's job club staff found that, when job club members' employment patterns were compared with those of their peers who had not received the job club treatment, job club members found

better jobs than their peers. Placements were at a higher employment level than those found by peers without job club experiences, and salaries were higher, too (\$12,000-15,000 were typical starting salaries). In addition, the job club graduates found their jobs sooner--within 1-2 months after graduation--as opposed to the 6-8 months it usually takes their peers to find work (if they find work at all).

At CCRI, where many of the job club members had part-time or summer jobs as their short-term employment goals, 11 members found jobs (out of 20 completing the job club) within 2 months of the end of the club. Nine of these jobs were part-time or summer employment, and two were full-time, permanent work. At least one student is also working "under the table" in a private home because the person's working threatens his or her SSDI. Of the nine who have not found work within 2 months of job club termination, seven had SSDI or similar disincentives to employment, or had emotional disabilities that, according to the CCRI job club staff, make those persons "not ready to move on to being success stories."

Overall, more CCRI job club members got work (especially summer work) than their peers who were also seeking such work but did not participate in a job club. In addition, the jobs obtained were better jobs than students would normally obtain without job club assistance. CCRI job club staff believe that these seasonal working experiences, combined with the job club experiences, will greatly improve the job club veterans' likelihood of finding good-paying, full-time permanent employment when they graduate from



CCRI. A great many CCRI graduates with disabilities typically do not go to work because they are unable to find jobs that provide sufficient income and benefits to compensate for the loss of SSDI or other medical benefits.

At CCC, of the 17 members who completed the job club, 7 found placement within 2 months of the club's end. Of these, four found full-time employment with firms, and three became self-employed in part-time work such as babysitting. An additional two members learned, through their job club experiences, that they wanted to seek further training before trying to enter the job market.

CCC's job club members were a high-risk group in terms of finding placement, as CCC's Vocational Training Program job coaches had already tried and failed to place most of the members with developmental disabilities. Nine of the members dropped out of the job club before it finished, two for reasons of pregnancy. One of these who became pregnant had had a job but quit both it and job club. For four members to find full-time work within 2 months of the end of job club is a higher than usual success rate for this high-risk population. In addition, all of the four jobs were for permanent employment with good benefits--major emphases for CCC's job club, where a goal was employment that would get the members into independent living circumstances, most for the first time in their lives.

Employment outcomes of the demonstration job clubs suggest considerable value in job clubs for community college students with disabilities. It should be noted, however, that the employment rates do not tell the whole story. Job club members who may

yet obtain employment after the 2-month employment data collection period could not yet be counted. Alternatively, this study has no way to determine whether members who did obtain full-time permanent employment will keep their jobs for long. Also, employment rates do not measure the relative quality of the jobs. Finally, employment rates directly following the job club treatment do not measure whether the club developed the members' ability to conduct successful job searches in the future. Only a long-term longitudinal study with outcome measures beyond the collection of mere employment rates could determine all of these outcomes.

### Qualitative Outcomes

Most of the anecdotal information about the demonstration job clubs' content and approaches was collected by National Center staff during visits to the sites, reported in the sites' monthly reports, or volunteered by exiting job club members. Overall, job club members had positive feelings about the value of their job club experiences (e.g., see questions 2-5 in table 3). The coordinators at each site felt that they had learned things during the demonstration that would prompt revisions in future job clubs, and all three colleges are committed to offering the programs in the 1986-87 school year.

Though all three models deviated in various ways from the standard job club design (primarily by offering more services and support from staff than would typically be available) all of the coordinators agree that a job club is better for students with disabilities than merely offering workshops on job-seeking skills.

One reason is that most students (disabled or not) do not go to the trouble of attending the workshops, or do not attend them consistently enough to develop a comprehensive repertoire of job search skills.

Here are some of the reported major advantages of a job club for community college students with disabilities:

- In a job club, students with disabilities are able to see that others like them are succeeding in the work world, and they have the opportunity to find out what their peers go through while "pounding the pavement" for a job.
- A job club provides the group support, feedback, and encouragement that members need to persevere in their job search, especially after they meet with initial disappointment. Members can vent their frustrations and help motivate each other. When a member does get a job, this revitalizes the others' interest and determination.
- A job club can help members find better jobs (with higher salaries and better benefits) than they would find if they conducted their job search without the support and information available through the club. It often keeps members from lowering their standards for taking jobs. Job clubs also help members find these jobs faster than they would normally.
- The job club experience can help persons with disabilities develop a broader sense of kinship with their peers, even though they may come into the job club with biases and ignorance about people with disabilities other than their own.
- A job club can help some students realize that they are not serious about pursuing a job, yet. It can also help some students realize that they should find part-time, summer, or volunteer work in order to build up a good resume of work experiences before looking for a full-time, permanent, paid job.
- A job club offers a chance for members to talk informally about their job-hunting experiences, share their insights and personal strategies, exchange information about job opportunities of which they know, and focus attention on their individual job-seeking problems.

- Job club members learn a great deal about themselves and their options while they develop and refine their job-hunting goals and analyze their work-related skills to complete a resume and prepare for interviews.
- A job club teaches members job-seeking skills and strategies that not only enable them to find jobs now, while they have the club's support, but also to conduct successful job searches when they need to do so in the future--when they will not have the club's support.

In all three cases, the support aspect of the demonstration job clubs was more intensive than that usually reported in job clubs established for other populations of job seekers. The members often needed more attention and services than would be offered in a job club for a different population. Nonetheless, the coordinators and members agreed that the job club experience was invaluable to students with disabilities.

Advantages also accrue to 2-year colleges that provide job club experiences for their students with disabilities. Here are some of the benefits for the colleges, as reported by the demonstration job club staff:

- A job club for students with disabilities is an excellent vehicle for serving this hard-to-place population. This was particularly true for CCC's high-risk population of students with developmental disabilities, but it was also true for other hard-to-place students, such as those with hearing or visual impairments.
- A job club is an effective way for a department of disabled student services to build up networks it does not have. This is particularly true in the case of building good communications and working relationships with local business and industry. Good public relations with the community will also result.
- A job club can incidentally function as a recruitment medium for the college. By increasing the number, quality, and speed of placements for graduates with

disabilities, the college can build up an excellent reputation for service to this population. Employed graduates with improved work-world self-esteem, dress, hygiene, and presentation skills can also boost the college's reputation. In addition, job club staff who work closely with employers may also pique the employers' interest in other services the college offers, resulting in, for instance, employers sending workers (disabled and otherwise) back to the college for more training.

- Providing a job club for students with disabilities can free a department of disabled student services from the responsibility of providing departmental placement services, workshops, and so forth. All of these needs can be served by the job club.
- Job club products (such as CCRI's job club booklet Transition to Employment: A Guide for the Disabled Job Seeker) can serve as templates for placement materials to be made available to all students at a college.

### Special Challenges of Job Clubs for Students with Disabilities

As mentioned earlier, job clubs for community college students with disabilities have their own unique challenges. Some of these relate to the students' special needs, some to their backgrounds and resources, some to their attitudes, some to employers' attitudes, and some to legal issues. Any job club that proposes to serve persons with disabilities must be prepared to devote extra effort, activities, and support to dealing with these challenges.

### Special Needs

Aside from the obvious accommodations that a job club for the disabled must make for its members (e.g., availability of a sign interpreter or reader), a club must deal with a number of problems that may arise in preparing such persons for the specific task of

a job search. When these people look for work, they often have to pay more than others for such things as transportation to interviews, may need to hire readers or interpreters to go with them for an interview (or to fill out a job application), and may have to be more willing to relocate to get a job. In effect, their job search often requires extra money, extra patience, and extra flexibility. For the job club, this translates as a need to provide extra support, some of it beyond the usual level of support given by a job club, such as sending staff or interpreters along with members to fill out job applications or attend interviews, providing transportation or a transportation stipend, and the like.

Persons with disabilities need other kinds of extra assistance in order to be able to get and conduct successful interviews. For example, members with visual or hearing impairments have special problems with interviewing. So do persons with developmental disabilities. Employers are more reluctant to hire these people than those with other disabilities, in large part because these persons often lack the communication skills needed to give good interviews. This requires a job club to deliver extra training and provide considerable staff attention to helping these members learn to present themselves effectively. Extra assistance with locating appropriate job opportunities is also necessary.

Unfortunately, there is a danger that, in providing a lot of individualized attention to the members, a job club may hinder one of its most important features: developing good member inter-

action, group identity, and group support. This may be a particular problem where a strong department for services to disabled students already exists and where students with disabilities have come to expect individualized--rather than group--services. Striking an appropriate balance between meeting the individual counseling needs of the members and encouraging the group support aspect of the job club is a delicate but necessary task for the coordinator.

### Members' Backgrounds

Coordinators of the demonstration job clubs have noted that job club members with disabilities often are not like typical community college students, nor are they like students with disabilities who go on to 4-year colleges. Many persons with disabilities who come to community colleges are on financial aid and they tend not to be college-oriented (e.g., no Scholastic Achievement Test scores). Some of the members did not plan to and may never have attended any kind of postsecondary institution had they not become disabled. As a result, the job club members often do not have the motivation and academic/study skills of "college-mature" people. Some whose disabilities were not lifelong discovered that their predisability coping skills no longer work in the new learning environment.

Coordinators became aware that the members' problems at home, problems with finances, and personal problems sometimes affected them more than their disabilities. Such problems inevitably affect the members' ability to conduct a successful job search and

keep a job. For example, at CTI, unsolved job club problems mostly related to members' personal problems (e.g., drug abuse, alcoholism, pregnancy, felony convictions). At CCC, most of the job club members came from a disadvantaged socioeconomic background, lived on public assistance of some sort, and had to depend on family members or others to help them manage their finances. Providing personal counseling for these problems or referring members to appropriate agencies for extra counseling will probably be an important adjunct to job club activities for this population. For some of the economically disadvantaged members, it may also be necessary to provide some kind of stipend to assist with transportation and other job search costs.

### Members' Attitudes

Many of the job club members had unusual problems with self-esteem, motivation, independent decision making, and the like. Negative attitudes or misinformation about the world of work and their own ability to get and be successful in jobs were other major hurdles that the job clubs had to help the members overcome. Early job club activities always involved some unlearning of old attitudes and erroneous information or impressions. Often, the members' counterproductive attitudes were strongly related to personal problems (such as those mentioned earlier) in their lives.

The CCC job club coordinator found that hearing-impaired job club members had particular problems with low self-esteem and low motivation that hobbled their ability to carry out their job



search independently. But some persons with other kinds of disabilities often had similar attitudinal problems.

All three demonstration job clubs found that members with one type of disabling condition tended to have significant misinformation about and biases toward persons with other types of disabilities. This created initial problems with group cohesiveness in the job clubs. These negative attitudes had to be overcome, mainly through discussion and person-to-person experience, before the job clubs began to become actual clubs in which the individuals worked together to share information, experiences, and mutual encouragement.

The coordinators took a variety of approaches to helping the members replace their negative attitudes with positive ones, including providing individual counseling, soliciting family support, using motivational filmstrips, bringing in peer speakers who were successful employees, and so forth. One coordinator also found it helpful to point out to members that a disability (even one that resulted in employer discrimination) may not be the reason for not getting a particular job. Instead, a member simply may not fit the job. Finally, one coordinator also pointed out that a job seeker with disabilities did not have to take a job if it was offered, if the person did not feel good about the offer. That they had a choice was a new realization for most of the job club members.

## Employers' Attitudes

Several of the job club coordinators found that employers are not receptive to hiring persons with disabilities, particularly those who have hearing impairments, visual impairments, and/or developmental disabilities. At CCC, for example, the job coaches found it particularly difficult to get employers to interview job club members with developmental disabilities, because the employers distrusted such persons' ability to deal with safety concerns, with communications with the public, and with adjusting to work rules and regulations. Actually, though, many employers seemed reluctant to hire members with any significant disabilities.

CTI's co-coordinator for job development found that he had to educate employers about the advantages of interviewing and hiring persons with disabilities. That "education" included pointing out that the job club members are more likely to be loyal to a company than many workers without disabilities (because the members will value the jobs more highly) and will be every bit as productive if given the appropriate job accommodations. The coordinator also informed employers of the advantages of working with Affirmative Action, which enables companies to expand their potential contract markets to many state and federal sponsors. In addition, the coordinator educated employers about accommodations in the workplace for persons with various disabilities.

When preparing an employer for interviewing a job club member, the CTI co-coordinator provided the employer with specific

information about the member's needs, appearance, the business or industrial machines the member had been trained to operate, and the like, so that there were "no surprises" for the employer at the interview. This was especially crucial for members who had had no previous work experience and who had very visible disabilities. Sometimes the coordinator found it necessary to point out to some companies that their public statements (in terms of recruitment of persons with disabilities) did not seem to match their actual hiring policies.

All three sites also found it helpful to link up with public agencies and private organizations dedicated to aiding persons with disabilities. Such agencies and organizations often were in contact with companies interested in hiring persons with disabilities and often were able to add their influence to appeals to employ the disabled.

### Legal Issues

Many people with disabilities could lose their Social Security benefits (including Supplemental Security Income or SSDI) when they become employable or employed. Losing these benefits (especially the medical benefits) is a serious disincentive to employment, particularly part-time or full-time temporary work. Once off these programs, it is very difficult to get back on--a Catch-22 for job club members who find work but fear layoffs.

Clearly, the real problem lies with the legislation or regulations governing the benefits. But until the problem is resolved at the source, job clubs for persons with disabilities will need

to devote time to clarifying these work-related legal issues for members. For some, a working income may never be able to replace SSDI medical benefits, in which case they may wish to focus their job search on finding fulfilling volunteer positions.

Another legal area to be examined is under what particular circumstances workers with disabilities will be able to get government programs to pay for accommodations, equipment, and other special aids the workers will need on the job.

### A Job Club Model for Community College Students with Disabilities

The evidence gleaned from the three demonstration job clubs strongly suggests that the job club concept--with some appropriate modifications--has considerable value for helping community college graduates with disabilities develop the skills and attitudes they need to find good jobs. This section of the report proposes a model for a job club for community college students with disabilities, based upon the experiences of the three demonstration job clubs.

Unlike job clubs for a general population, a job club for community college students with disabilities relies very strongly on support from the college and linkages with the community. Figure 1 shows a model of the structure of such a job club.

As can be seen in the figure, at the core of the job club are the interactions among the job club members and between the members and the coordinator. The members share information about their job search strategies and potential job opportunities. They also provide feedback and encouragement to each other during the

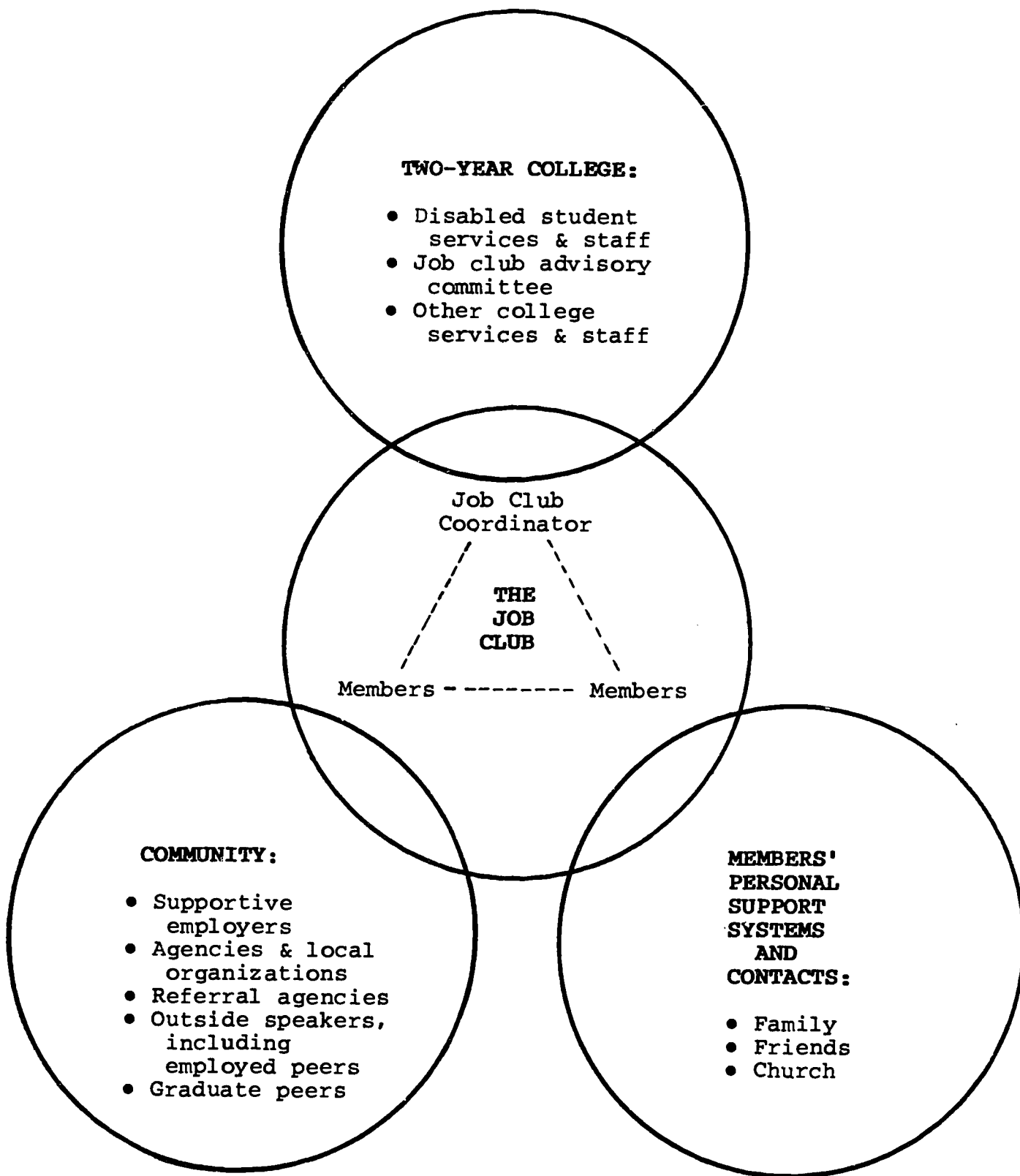


Figure 1. Major actors in the model job club

job search process. Similarly, feedback and encouragement to members are offered by the job club coordinator, who also supervises job club activities, trains the members in job search and job-keeping skills, and provides individual counseling.

These practices are consistent with standard job club models, which focus mainly on the peer support aspect of the club. Unfortunately, the three demonstration job clubs did not seem to develop the level of group identity and interaction that an ideal job club develops. Because of the special challenges facing persons with disabilities when looking for a job, a job club for this population must provide extra structure and support from the coordinator, the college, the community, and the members' own personal support systems.

The college provides the job club coordinator and most of the material and personnel support, including a place to meet, materials, phones, auxiliary staff (e.g., sign interpreters, career counselors, placement officers, typists for resumes, and audio-visual specialists to operate equipment), and the like. The college office of disabled student services usually serves as the locus of job club management, because the staff and students are already familiar with each other and because office staff understand the students' special needs. A job club advisory committee helps plan the job club goals and the advisors may also fill other roles, such as guest speakers for the club or evaluators of the program's effectiveness.

Equally important for the job club are good working relationships with the community. This especially means linkages with

state or local agencies and organizations that devote some or all of their resources to assisting persons with disabilities to lead active, productive lives--including helping them find good jobs. Job club linkages with supportive employers are crucial and must be cultivated constantly. Also, some outside groups are excellent resources for speakers on employer expectations, filling out job applications, doing well in job interviews, relevant legal issues, and so forth. Linkages with agencies that provide individual counseling for personal problems (e.g., drug abuse, pregnancy) are also important for referring job club members with needs that affect their job search but are beyond the venue of a job club. Finally, graduates of the college who have disabilities but are successfully employed are a vital source of peer motivation for the job club members.

Each member's personal support systems and contacts must be cultivated and, if appropriate, contacted by the coordinator. Persons with disabilities especially need the support of family, friends, church groups, social groups, and so forth. In addition, the members' support group may be a valuable source of information about job leads.

Figure 2 shows the five major tasks of the process model for the job club: (1) planning and organizing the job club program, (2) establishing the internal support systems, (3) establishing the external support systems, (4) operating the job club, and (5) evaluating and improving the program. A checklist of the specific kinds of activities involved in these major tasks appears in appendix B. Additional information about these activities and

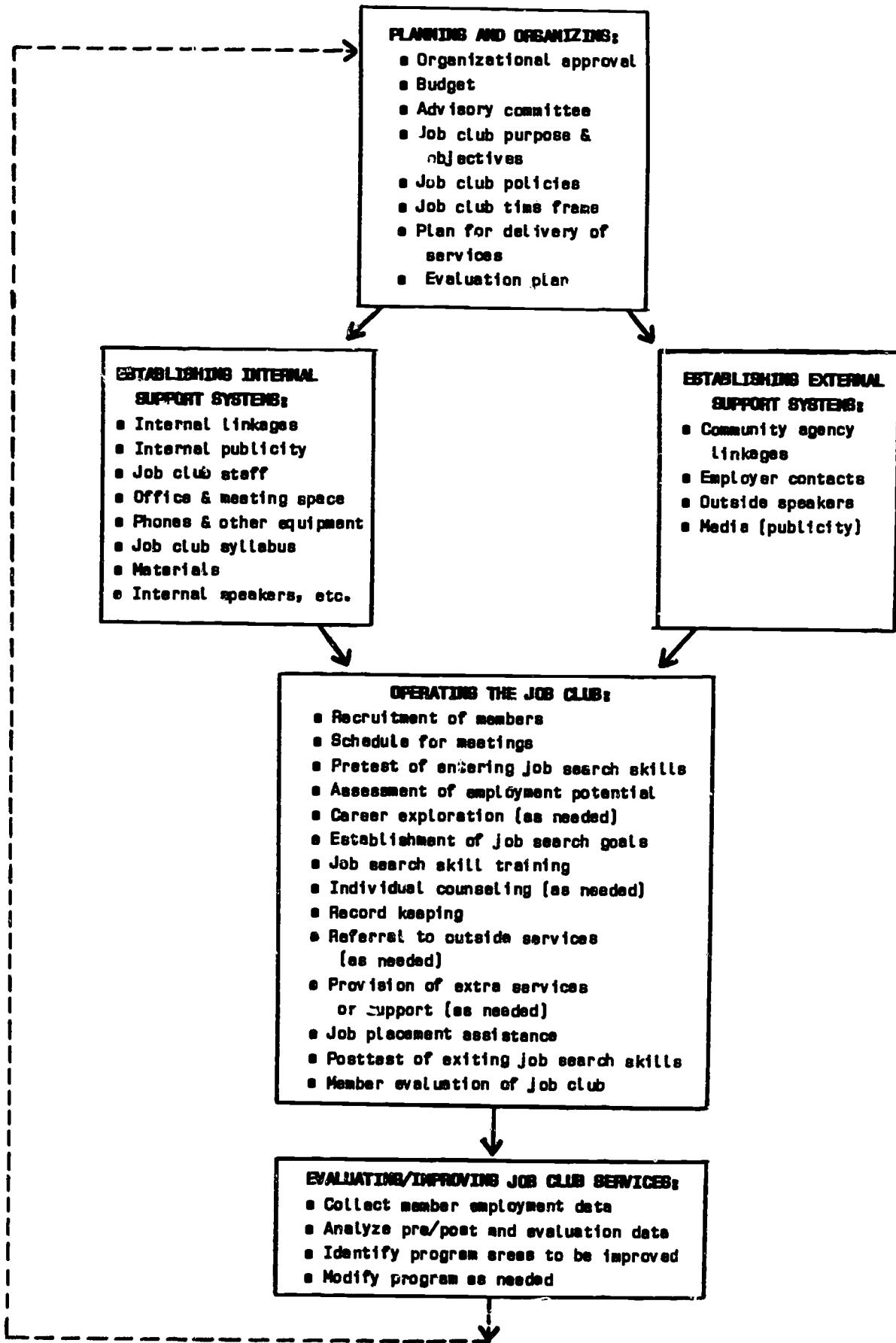


Figure 2. Process model of the job club



related options may be found in chapters 3 and 4 and in the earlier sections of chapter 5.

**Planning and organizing.** College staff--typically the director of the disabled student services department or someone in a similar position--takes responsibility for introducing the concept of the job club for students with disabilities to the college administration. This may involve preparing a proposal or other presentation in order to obtain administrative approval and institutional support. Once the program is approved and has a budget, a job club advisory committee should be convened.

The advisory committee, together with the person who initiated the program and any other appropriate personnel, should take primary responsibility for developing the basic parameters of the job clubs, including the following:

- The job club purpose and objectives
- Job club policies
- A plan for the delivery of the job club and related services
- A time frame for job club operation
- A plan for periodic job club evaluation and improvement

The advisory committee may also have input into the hiring of the job club coordinator(s), establishment of internal and external linkages, and so forth.

**Establishing internal support systems.** The job club coordinator and staff of the disabled student services office have major responsibility for setting up the aspects of the job club that pertain to the college and its resources. Internal linkages with

other departments must be established. The job club must be publicized to the students and faculty. Any additional job club support staff (e.g., sign interpreters, aides) must be identified and/or hired. Meeting and office space, phones, and other equipment must be located and reserved. The coordinator must also develop or update a syllabus for delivery of job-seeking skills training. Appropriate materials must be identified, obtained, and adapted where necessary. Finally, contact must be made with any college staff or faculty who will serve as speakers at job club meetings. Other developmental needs must be addressed as they arise.

Establishing external support systems. Again, the job club coordinator has the main responsibility for establishing and maintaining external linkages (e.g., employer contacts) crucial to the success of the job club. These linkages may be established through personal contact or via members of the advisory committee or disabled student services staff. All three job club sites identified staff contacts with employers are crucial to the effectiveness of the members' job searches.

Critical groups with which to maintain ongoing communication are state or community employment agencies or organizations concerned with assisting persons with disabilities, employers supportive of hiring persons with disabilities, and individuals (e.g., employment counselors, employed persons with disabilities) willing to serve as informative speakers. In addition, contact with the media (newspapers, television reporters) may reap

benefits in publicizing the job club and increasing its support base in the community.

Operating the job club. Job club operation begins with recruitment and enrollment of the members and scheduling of the club meetings for the members' convenience. Students should preferably have gone through a recent career exploration program, or the job club should incorporate some component to provide career exploration for members.

At the first job club meeting or thereabouts, all members may be pretested to help them think about their entering level of job-seeking skills and knowledge of the world of work.<sup>2</sup> Also important is to work with members to assess their individual employment potential, in terms of their work skills and experiences. The coordinator then works with each member to help establish a realistic job search goal.

Job search skill training activities commence as early in the program as possible. Naturally, needs must be tailored to the particular population and should be approached with flexibility and creativity. Here are important topics an effective job club will cover:

- Stereotypes and beliefs about individuals with disabilities
- Employer expectations, including appearance, attendance, and skills

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<sup>2</sup>Pretesting can serve two purposes. First, it may give the coordinator a rough gauge of which skill and knowledge areas may require more emphasis. It may also provide a baseline from which to estimate how well the job club experience instills these skills, when posttest outcomes are compared to pretest results.

- Job skill identification methods
- A match of job skills with job titles
- Location of job opportunities, including use of want ads, employment agencies, phone books, personal contacts, the hidden job market, and so forth
- Job search strategies and record keeping
- Development of an effective resume
- Development of cover letters, thank you letters, and other written materials
- Use of telephone skills to make job contacts
- Completion of job applications
- Interview skills and appropriate dress
- Relevant legal issues
- Use of personal support systems
- Agency and other support resources

Many techniques are available for delivery of job search skills training, including use of guest speakers, group discussion, use of commercial or inhouse videotapes or slidetapes, role playing, handouts, videotaping of mock interviews, site visits, and so forth. In addition, the coordinator should provide substantial individual assistance to members through one-on-one counseling on an as-need basis.

Crucial to the smooth operation of the job club are several other activities, including record keeping, referral (when needed) to adjunct or outside services, and provision of extra internal services or support (e.g., a stipend for transportations costs) if necessary.

Assistance with job placement is especially important for the job club. This is partly due to unrealistic expectations that external agencies will actually provide substantial placement assistance, or that college placement services will be able to meet special placement needs. In addition, many employers seem hesitant to hire persons with disabilities and must be convinced of the job club members' capacity to become productive workers. A variety of placement strategies were developed by the three demonstration sites. More information on those options is contained in chapter 4.

In concluding the operation of the job club, coordinators may administer a posttest to the members. This will help both the members and the coordinator estimate how much the members learned through the job club experience. An additional exit evaluation form may be administered to enable the members to comment on particular aspects of the job club and make suggestions for future programs.

Evaluating and improving the program. Data from the pretest and posttest (optional) and any other evaluation instrument should be analyzed, along with observational information, in order to uncover any parts of the program that need improvement. In addition, these data and data on the members' employment rate, types of jobs acquired, and number and frequency of job contacts during the job club should be gathered and examined to determine the overall efficacy of the program. These data may be used summaratively, to justify program continuation or additional funding, or formatively, to help improve the program content or practices.

## Recommendations for Policy, Practice, and Research

The following general recommendations for policy, practice, and further research are based on the experiences of the three demonstration job clubs involved in this project and on the broader postsecondary research experiences of the project staff.

### Policy Recommendations

1. Federal and state disincentives to the employment of persons with disabilities (such as the loss of Social Security benefits or insurance) must be reviewed and modified.
2. All 2-year colleges should provide an array of special services (such as job clubs) to students with disabilities.
3. All employers should establish policies for hiring persons with disabilities, especially those who have made special efforts to make themselves employable through education and training such as are offered in a 2-year college.
4. Federal benefits similar to the Targetted Jobs Tax Credit should be authorized and funded as an alternative strategy for assisting with job club placement for students with disabilities.

### Practice Recommendations

5. Federal, state, and private funding agencies should provide additional support for the operation of job clubs for postsecondary students with disabilities, for the purpose of demonstration, research, and assistance to deserving people seeking to secure employment. Funds spent on such programs will ultimately save even more money by helping persons with disabilities become taxpayers.
6. Postsecondary educational institutions should operate job clubs or offices of disabled student services in accordance with model programs described in the literature, not as carbon copies of student service programs offered for the general student body.

7. Colleges should consider targetting job clubs for all students with disabilities, not merely for graduating students of this population.

### Research Recommendations

8. A research program should be undertaken as soon as possible to determine scientifically the efficacy of using job clubs with postsecondary students with disabilities, as demonstrated and described in this report.
9. Follow-up research programs should be undertaken to gather evidence on a longitudinal study basis regarding the efficacy of the job club experience in helping persons with disabilities retain jobs once they are secured.

**APPENDIX A**

**THE JOB CLUBS PRE/POST ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT**



**JOB CLUBS PRE/POST ASSESSMENT**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Age:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Special Need or Handicap:** \_\_\_\_\_

**A. How much previous work experience do you have?**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> none             | <input type="checkbox"/> less than 3 months           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3-6 months       | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 months-1 year              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> more than 1 year | <input type="checkbox"/> miscellaneous part-time work |

**B. Will you be ready to start a job in the summer of 1986?**

yes     no

**C. Do you have a resume and cover letter ready to give to employers?**

yes     no

**D. How much do you know about the following job-related skills?  
(Circle one answer for each skill area.)**

	<i>Nothing</i>	<i>A little</i>	<i>Some</i>	<i>Pretty much</i>	<i>A lot</i>
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1. What employers expect of workers.....	1	2	3	4	5
2. How to use want ads and other job leads.....	1	2	3	4	5
3. How to write a resume.....	1	2	3	4	5
4. How to write cover letters and follow-up letters.....	1	2	3	4	5
5. How to present a strong image..	1	2	3	4	5
6. How to use the telephone for job hunting.....	1	2	3	4	5
7. How to get a job interview.....	1	2	3	4	5
8. How to do well in a job interview.....	1	2	3	4	5
9. How to dress for success.....	1	2	3	4	5
10. What special vocabulary you need in the world of work.....	1	2	3	4	5

	<i>Nothing</i>	<i>A little</i>	<i>Some</i>	<i>Pretty much</i>	<i>A lot</i>
--	----------------	-----------------	-------------	--------------------	--------------

- |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11. How to talk about your skills and interests.....   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. How to discuss your special need or handicap with employers.....   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. How to fill out a job application.....   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. How to take an employment test, such as a typing test, if you need to.....   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. How family and friends can help with job leads.....  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. How to get letters of recommendation from others on your behalf.....   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. How to find out more about a particular job.....   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. How to get along with co-workers and supervisors.....  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. How to use community employment services.....  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. How to organize your job hunt..  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21. How to have a positive attitude about job hunting.....   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22. How to use special aids you need, such as an Optacon, Braille writer, Phonic Ear, sign language interpreter, and so forth..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 23. How to identify your own skills and interests.....   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 24. How to develop a career plan...  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 25. How to use community support services after you start working.....   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**APPENDIX B**

**CHECKLIST OF ACTIVITIES FOR  
STARTING AND OPERATING A JOB CLUB FOR  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

**CHECKLIST OF ACTIVITIES FOR  
STARTING AND OPERATING A JOB CLUB FOR  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

**Phase 1: Planning and Organizing the Job Club Program**

- Obtain institutional administrative approval (and funding, if appropriate) for establishing the job club.
- Develop budget for job club.
- Identify advisory committee members and establish job club advisory committee.
- Establish, with advisory committee and other relevant staff, the job club purpose and objectives, policies, time frame, and program implementation plan.
- Develop program evaluation plan.

**Phase 2: Establishing Internal Support Systems**

- Identify and interview job club coordinator candidates (and candidates for other job club staff positions, if any).
- Hire job club coordinator(s) and other staff (if any).
- Conduct coordinator and staff orientations.
- Allocate office and meeting space and materials.
- Determine arrangements for phones to be made available for use by job club participants for job seeking.
- Coordinate with college placement office regarding assistance in job development/placement for job club participants.
- Coordinate with other college departments or services to provide other assistance (e.g., speakers, videotaping for mock interviews, personnel officer to help conduct mock interviews, etc.) to job club.
- Design and implement job club record-keeping forms and system.
- Develop syllabus for job club activities.
- Announce formation of the job club through appropriate college media and recruit job club participants.

- Identify, obtain, and adapt (if necessary) appropriate job club materials and resources (e.g., books, handouts, slidetapes, videotapes, and the like).
- Arrange for any special needs for job club participants (e.g., interpreter to attend job club sessions, transportation for site visits to employers, transportation funds to assist disadvantaged job club participants, etc.).
- Collect sample job application forms from local companies for use in job club practice session.
- Arrange for any necessary additional support services for job club participants (e.g., resume typing, photocopying, personal assistance with filling out job applications, interpreters to accompany participants with hearing disabilities to job interviews, and the like).
- Arrange for job club participants to receive assistance, training, or use of any special career or placement resources (e.g., a computer-based career guidance system or a computerized placement information system) available at the college.

### **Phase 3: Establishing External Support Systems**

- Contact appropriate community agencies and organizations (e.g., State Office of Employment Services, Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, state or county Department of Disability Services, State Office of Youth Employment, local mental health agencies, Industry Education Council, etc.) and local employers to participate in or support job club activities and placement.
- Contact and schedule outside consultants to address the job club (e.g., company personnel officers, employers, etc.).
- Publicize the job club to establish and extend good college and community relations and support. (Ongoing activity).
- Arrange for site visits to local companies that hire persons with disabilities and support the job club concept. (Optional)

#### Phase 4: Operating the Job Club

- Hold an introductory job club event (e.g., an invitational dinner) with potential or enrolled job club participants to introduce them to the job club concept, activities, and staff. (Optional)
- Enroll job club participants and collect demographic and entry data.
- Hold first official job club session.
- Discuss and adjust meeting schedule with participants.
- Conduct job club training and other activities, such as the following:
  - Administration of a pretest to participants to estimate their job-seeking savvy and experiences
  - Election of officers or a steering committee for the job club from among the participants (optional)
  - Career exploration activities, if members have not previously had such experiences
  - Assistance to participants in evaluating their career skills and potential and developing realistic individual job and career goals
  - Positive attitude session/discussion
  - Identification by participants of their individual support teams (e.g., parents, teachers, ministers, counselors, and others)
  - Discussion and assistance in use of resources (e.g., want ads, Yellow Pages, group brainstorming, networking, and so forth) in locating job opportunities (ongoing activity)
  - Instruction and practice in filling out job applications
  - Discussion and practice of telephone skills for making phone queries and contacts
  - Instruction and discussion on keeping job search records (handout forms are optional)
  - Scheduling of phone use with participants
  - Resume writing workshop/session(s)

- Cover letter and thank you letter development
- Peer speakers (i.e., 2-year college graduates with disabilities who are successfully employed) to discuss the work world, attitudes, and so forth
- Preparation of "pocket resumes" (one page) to take to interviews for personal reference
- Scheduling of individual counseling sessions to help participants refine their draft resumes
- Interview skills/role-playing workshop/session(s)
- "Dress for success" activity for interviews and in the workplace
- Mock interview session(s)--group or one-on-one (videotaping optional), followed by group or individual review and discussion of mock interview(s)
- Scheduling of individual counseling sessions to help participants refine their interviewing skills
- Assistance to job club participants in exploring all work options, including use of special tools/devices for job accommodation
- Speaker from college placement services to inform participants of career/job opportunities
- Scheduling of individual meetings of participants with staff job placement specialist(s)
- Speaker, preferably an employer, to address employer expectations
- Speaker to address legal issues that affect persons with disabilities who are seeking a job or are employed (e.g., issues of access, equity, working while collecting Social Security Disability Insurance benefits, and the like)
- Scheduling of individual counseling sessions on an as-needed basis
- Attendance at or organization of a job fair
- Site visits to local employer(s), particularly where participants can visit persons with disabilities who are successfully employed
- Discussion and practice developing thank you letters and other follow-up

- Group development and publication of job club newsletter (possibly design their own logo)
- Computer demonstrations on use of word processors (for resumes and letters), career guidance systems, computerized placement listings, and other computerized resources at the college
- Taping of participants' short "self-sales pitch" to be broadcast on local television/cable channel for local access "Job Hunt"-type program
- Group project to prepare a job club resource guidebook to assist other students with disabilities in their job search
- Contact employers regarding feedback on participants' job interviews. (Optional)
- Hold make-up session(s) for participants who missed meetings or training workshops. (Optional)
- Administer a posttest on job-seeking savvy in order to gauge the impact of the job club on the participants' knowledge and skills.
- Administer a group or individual participant evaluation instrument on the job club at the termination of the sessions.

#### **Phase 5: Evaluating/Improving Job Club Services**

- Condense data collected on members' job contacts made during the job club
- Collect data on the number of members who get jobs through their job club job search efforts and determine what kinds of jobs they got.
- Meet with the advisory committee to review the participants' posttests, evaluations, employment success rates, and other data in order to (1) analyze the overall success of the job club and (2) identify program strengths and weaknesses.
- Report on job club outcomes to the college administration, if appropriate.
- Modify job club components, based on the analysis of the data, to build on the program's strengths and counteract its weaknesses.



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