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ABSTRACT

The report describes a federally funded 3-year demonstration program for the vocational training of urban young adults with severe learning diasbilities who have left high school special education programs. The program, "The Integrated Skills Vocational Training Program," involved the collaboration of a not-for-profit trade school, the City University of New York (CUNY) community college, the CUNY graduate school, and a rehabilitation agency. Training in eight vocational areas (building maintenance, mailroom/reprographics, jewelry manufacturing, upholstery, furniture finishing, custodial services, food services, and data entry) was provided to 47 young adults (out of 276 who expressed initial interest). Students also received training in basic literacy and interpersonal skills. Participants had been out of school a mean of 3 years. Positive change was found using both pre-post tests and periodic competency ratings. Seventy-eight percent of program completers (49% of entrants) obtained competitive skilled jobs, with most earning less than $6 an hour. Issues in providing services to this population are raised concerning recruitment, selection, classroom-based training, and transfer of training. Thirteen appendices provide a sample calendar, lesson plan forms, other program forms, and publicity and dissemination information. Includes 57 references. (DB)

THE TOTAL IMPACT MODEL: A COMMUNITY COLLEGE/TRADE SCHOOL COLLABORATION FOR LEARNING DISABLED YOUNG ADULTS

Final Report

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THE TOTAL IMPACT MODEL: A COMMUNITY COLLEGE/TRADE SCHOOL COLLABORATION FOR LEARNING DISABLED YOUNG ADULTS

Executive Summary

This report describes a federally-funded demonstration program[1] for the vocational training of urban young adults with severe learning disabilities who have left high school special education programs. This population, in which underdeveloped literacy and social skills are reflections of a "hidden disability," has often been overlooked in postsecondary education and training. A model program was set up to provide vocational training leading to competitive, skilled employment for this group. Information pertaining to the operation and outcomes of the program are reported. The intended audience for this report includes vocational rehabilitation personnel, community college and propietary school program directors and administrators, transition researchers, and individuals with learning disabilities and their advocates. This report could serve as a manual for program replication.

Research relevant to the demonstration program is reviewed. Approximately 4% of all American students aged six to 21 years have learning disabilities. Characteristics of learning disabilities persist to adulthood and include reading, spelling, expressive writing and math deficits, along with the emotional effect of years of academic failure. Defining learning disabilities has proved to be more difficult on the theoretical than the operational level. Operationally, learning disabilities have often been diagnosed on the basis of a discrepancy between intellectual ability (average or above average) and academic performance (below average). However, joining the group receiving a diagnosis of learning disabilities are individuals whose intellectual and academic abilities are uniformly low rather than discrepant. Previously described as mildly retarded or as slow learners, these individuals are sometimes referred to as "severely learning disabled." It was this group that received services in the current project.

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[1]"The Total Impact Model: A Community College/Trade School Collaboration for Learning Disabled Young Adults." Grant # G008730105 awarded by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services of the Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education, 1987-1990.

Individuals with learning disabilities of var. ' of severity show impairments in self-concept, especially concerning academic skills. Social skills deficiencies are also manifested that negatively affect the transition to work. Individuals with severe learning disabilities may have unrealistic aspirations, which may at times be fueled by high school teachers or family members who naturally want them to succeed.

High school dropout rates are higher for learning disabled students than for their nondisabled peers. While high schools are offering transition services, they may be starting too late; the dropout rate is highest during ninth grade. Research has shown that learning disabled individuals who graduate from high school have better employment outcomes than those who do not graduate, which has been attributed to persistence rather than to skill levels.

It must be expected that any problem associated with learning disabilities would be intensified for urban students attending public schools. By and large, such individuals are of low socioeconomic status. Home environments may be extremely unstable as a result of poverty, substance abuse, or untreated emotional disturbance. This background constrasts strongly with that of the middle-class learning disabled student who may be attending a private school.

A large number of individuals with learning disabilities leave public schools every year ineligible for regular college programs and also lacking job skills. Many would be appropriate for training in rehabilitation agencies, but this option is often considered undersirable by individuals with learning disabilities and their parents. PL 94-142 has often led to expectations that postsecondary education would be provided in normalized environments, and many individuals with handicaps perceive training in rehabilitation agencies to be a step backwards. While they may be interested in training in a proprietary trade school, such institutions rarely provide adequate support for individuals with learning disabilities. Many such individuals would prefer to attend community colleges but are not able to handle the academic demands. Thus, we perceived a gap in services for this population.

In a previous developed program,[2] part-time vocational training was provided in a community college. While this program resulted in positive outcomes, we felt that the community college alone could not provide comprehensive enough vocational training for this population. Based on this experience, we developed a second model that combined the services of the continuing education department of a community college with those of a propietary school, in which a learning disabilities specialist provided support to participants.

The present three-year project, "The Integrated Skills Vocational Training Program" involved the collaboration of a not-for-profit trade school (Federation Employment and Guidance Services, or FEGS), LaGuardia Community College of the City University of New York (CUNY), and the CUNY Graduate School. A not-for-profit rehabilitation agency, Federation of the Handicapped (FOH), joined the collaboration in the project's third year.

The vocational training was divided into two segments. Participants attended the trade school or rehabilitation agency three full days per week, where they received vocational skills training. The other two days were spent on the college campus for training in job-related basic literacy skills and interpersonal skills. Career counseling and work-study experience were also given at the college. The vocational training segment was sponsored by the state vocational rehabilitation agency (VESID)[3] through already existing procedures. College-based training was sponsored by the federal grant. The grant also provided for a learning disabilities specialist who provided remediation and support in the trade school. Participants spent betwen six and eleven months in the program, depending on vocational training area. A certificate was awarded upon program completion.

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[2]"Redirecting Vocational Training to the Community College: A Purchasable Option for Mildly Handicapped Comsumers." Grant # G008435124 awarded by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services of the Office of Special Programs, U.S. Department of Education, 1984-1987.

[3]Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities, formerly known as the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), of the New York State Education Department.

Eight vocational areas were offered: building maintenance, mailroom/reprographics, jewiery manufacturing, upholstery, furniture finishing, custodial services, food services and data entry. FEGS, FOH, and project staff considered these vocational training areas to be appropriate for the project participants, who had severe learning disabilities, because they had relatively few literacy demands.

Recruitment methods included meetings with and presentations to vocational rehabilitation and special education personnel, direct mailings to special education school leavers, presentations to high school special education students, and contacts with learning disabilities advocacy organizations. Selection procedures took into account three sets of criteria, those of the project, those of the state vocational rehabilitation agency and those of the trade school and rehabilitation agency. Eligible applicants were 17 years or above, had exited or were about to exit high school special education programs, were diagnosed as having a learning disability, and had reading grade levels of third grade or higher. The state agency established eligibility for financial sponsorship, and, with the vocational training site, determined, through an evaluation conducted prior to acceptance, whether the candidate was appropriate for training.

A total of 276 young adults applied or were referred to the program. Of these 47 (17%) entered. An examination of the reasons for non-entry showed that the largest number (59%) of non-entrants did not proceed past the initial contact with the project staff; of this group, the majority (64%) were considered appropriate for the program but did not attend scheduled interviews, and did not respond to follow-up by project staff. Program entrants ranged in age from 17 to 32 years, with a mean age of 21 years. Eighty-three percent of entrants were male, 17% female. The number of years elapsing between school exit and program entry ranged from 0 to 16, with a mean of 3 years. Fifty-seven percent of entrants had neigher a high school diploma nor special education certificate. Thirty percent had a regular diploma but were not considered appropriate for entry to regular community college programs. Full scale WAIS-R I.Q. scores ranged from 67 to 105, with a mean of 77. Many of the students were of low socioeconomic status which compounded the effects of the learning disabilities. Some participants also had mild physical and emotional disorders.

A variety of measures was used to assess students' progress in the program. Pre and post testing of reading comprehension, spelling, writing, arithmetic, and self-concept was conducted using standardized, adapted standardized, and locally developed measures. In addition, the vocational, basic skills and interpersonal skills instructors provided competency ratings every six weeks using locally-developed instruments. The ratings were on a twelve-point scale regarding acceptability for entry level employment.

Positive change was found using both pre-post tests and periodic competency ratings. There was a statistically significant improvement in arithmetic from pre to post. The other pre-post changes were not statistically significant, although change was in a positive direction: 60% of the completers showed an increase in reading comprehension, scores, 65% showed increase in spelling, and 75% in arithmetic, and 80% showed positive change in self-concept from pre to post. Writing skills improved to a lesser degree, although 38%, of the completers showed improvement.

As measured by the periodic competency ratings, performance in all three skills areas (vocational, basic and interpersonal) improved during training. Students' ability levels were higher in the vocational than the other areas. Vocational ratings moved from the "nearly acceptable" to the "acceptable" range of performance, while basic and interpersonal skills stayed within the "nearly acceptable" range although there were increases within that range.

At the time of report preparation, 49% of entrants had completed the program, 10% were still receiving training, and 30% had left the program prior to completion. The reasons for non-completion included poor attendance and punctuality, and behavioral problems. In some cases where individuals were attending as a condition of parole, motivation to attend was very poor. In some cases, low level of cognitive functioning prevented trainees from understanding the reasons why they should attend the program, and from grasping program attendance policies. In some cases, extremely low levels of literacy caused embarrassment and reduced motivation to participate in the college portion of training. On the other hand, there were also cases where literacy levels were higher than usual, again reducing motivation for basic skills training in a classroom setting.

Employment outcomes for the program completers were positive. Seventy-eight percent of the completers obtained competitive, skilled jobs, most in the areas

in which they had been trained. In most cases, employment was full-time. Hourly pay on completion ranged from $4.00 to $10.00, with 72% earning $5.50 or less and 29% earning $6.00 or more per hour. Of the completers who obtained employment, 83% were still working six months following program completion. Fifty percent were still employed in the same job, 33% were in other jobs, 11% were attending another vocational training program and 6% were neither employed nor in school. Program completers developed excellent rapport with project staff during their training and frequently reported in, even two years after they had completed the program. Such contact provided further follow up information. In some cases, individuals had received promotions. The positive employment outcomes support the viability of the project, and argue for replication of the program.

In the course of the project, several issues arose, some of which may have been unique to this particular project, and others that are more general, which would need to be addressed by any program serving young adults with severe learning disabilities. Some of the issues are as follows:

1. Recruitment. The number of individuals recruited for training was smaller than expected. Reasons may include the fact that the program was new and still had to establish its value; lengthy and complicated state rehabilitation agency intake procedures that were difficult for severely learning disabled individuals and their families; inadequate preparation for vocational training in the high schools; inadequate coordination between the high school and the state rehabilitation agency, and lack of understanding of vocational training options on the part of the students' parents and relatives. It is probable that all these reasons operated in combination with each other in explaining the recuitment difficulties encountered. Any new program, particularly when set in an urban area where many disadvantaged individuals are competing for scarce support services, will have to grapple with these issues.

2. Selection. In investigating reasons for non-completers of the program, it was found that most non-completers had attendance or behavioral problems. These problems stemmed from lack of motivation connected to immaturity, low level of cognitive functioning, connection of participation to conditions of parole, and overestimation by students of their own level of ability. It is often easy in retrospect to see who should and who should not have been selected for

participation. However, in some cases, considerable success was demonstrated in cases where this was entirely unpredictable at the beginning of training. Therefore, we concluded that selection procedures were appropriate in that they erred on the side of leniency. In other words, when a case seems borderline for acceptance, the person should be accepted.

3. Classroom-based training. We found that severely learning disabled individuals could benefit from training in a classroom environment. However, in the case of literacy training, this was difficult because of the large variation in skill levels. Basic skills training appeared more effective when done in small groups and individually. We concluded that several basic skills tutors should be substituted for one basic skills instructor, so that all basic skills instruction would take place through tutoring.

4. Transfer of training. While gains were often seen in classroom instruction, it was difficult for some of the more severely learning disabled individuals to transfer their skills to work settings. Future projects should incorporate practice in real job environments. In some cases, such explicit training is necessary if the transition from school to work is to be successful. In particular, practice job interviews should be given in real work settings.

Despite the issues raised, the project enjoyed considerable success in preparing urban young adults with severe learning disabilities for competitive work. For the vast majority of participants, previous work history was inconsistent or nonexistent, and many were neither employed nor attending school upon program entry. For many, participation in the program was of major importance in their development, and in some cases constituted a turning point in their lives. Individuals previously barred from full social participation because of their disability could start to feel a sense of pride and self-worth that comes from joining the workforce.

CHAPTER 1
NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

This report describes a demonstration program for the vocational training of young adults with severe learning disabilities who have left high school special education programs. This population, in which underdeveloped literacy and social skills are reflections of a "hidden disability," has often been overlooked in postsecondary education and training. The purpose of the program was to develop and study a model of vocational training to facilitate the transition from high school to work of this group. Examples of program participants are as follows:

Tom, Rita, Rick and Sam (names have been changed; Tom, Rick and Sam are case studied in Chapter 10) were young adults with learning disabilities who attended special education programs in New York City high schools. None had been able to obtain a regular high school diploma although Tom received a special education certificate. The students' levels of academic achievement and intellectual functioning were low, as indicated in the following profiles:

Name	Age	Grade Level Scores			Full Scale I.Q.
		Reading	Spelling	Math	(WAIS-R)
Tom	19	5.0	2.9	6.9	74
Rita	20	4.6	3.1	4.1	71
Rick	20	4.0	3.9	4.9	65
Sam	25	8.9	7.1	7.1	80

When they left high school, they were not prepared to work in skilled jobs, nor had they been continuously employed, even in unskilled jobs, for any length of time. They needed job training and were clients of the state rehabilitation agency, but the various options that existed did not seem to be appealing or appropriate for them.

Tom, Rita and Rick completed the program but Sam did not. Upon completion, Tom and Rita immediately obtained competitive jobs in the areas in which they had been trained, and were able to retain these jobs. Rick was hired but dismissed after several days, and was not able to obtain further competitive employment.

In order to develop effective transition programs for severely learning disabled students, it is important to understand the reasons for the successes and failures exemplified by these four cases. In attempting to arrive at such an understanding, this report describes the program and its results.

The work described was conducted at the Institute for Research and Development in Occupational Education of the Center for Advanced Study in Education at the Graduate School of the City University of New York. Funding for the project was provided by the Office of Special Education Programs of the U.S. Department of Education.[1]

The rest of this chapter contains a general overview of characteristics of learning disabled adults, to provide a basis on which to consider the findings of the project. Subsequent chapters contain background to the development of the model program, and information concerning the operation and outcomes of the program. Details are provided to assist efforts of others in the field to replicate all or part of the program. The Appendix contains a variety of forms developed by project staff for purposes of intake, training and evaluation of student progress. These forms could be adapted for use in other programs of this type. The intended audience for this report includes state vocational rehabilitation personnel, community college and vocational school program directors and administrators, transition researchers, and learning disabled individuals and their advocates.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section briefly reviews studies relevant to the project population. A summary of the review may be found on pp. 16-17.

Defining Learning Disability

Hammill (1990) has drawn attention to the distinction between theoretical and operational definitions of learning disabilities. Operationalizing the term is

[1]"The Total Impact Model: A Community College/Trade School Collaboration for Learning Disabled Young Adults." Grant # G008730105 awarded by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services of the Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education, 1987-1990.

easier whereas an adequate conceptual definition of learning disabilities remains to be formulated. The difficulty in defining the term has been widely noted (e.g., Keogh, 1987) and in the last thirty years definitions have proliferated. Hammill (1990), in a comparison of eleven definitions, expressed a preference for the definition put forward by the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities (NJCLD), in a 1988 letter to its member organizations. The definition is as follows:

> Learning disabilities is a general term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning, or mathematical abilities. These disorders are intrinsic to the individual, presumed to be due to central nervous system dysfunction, and may occur across the life span. Problems in self-regulatory behaviors, social perception, and social interaction may exist with learning disabilities but do not by themselves constitute a learning disability. Although learning disabilities may occur concomitantly with other handicapping conditions (for example, sensory impairment, mental retardation, serious emotional disturbance) or with extrinsic influences (such as cultural differences, insufficient or inappropriate instruction), they are not the result of those conditions or influences. (NJCLD, 1988, p. 1.)

While definitions differ regarding whether and to what extent they highlight various aspects and causes of learning disabilities, most specify a disparity between academic functioning and intellectual ability or potential (Kavale, 1987). Basically, a learning disability diagnosis depends on a discrepancy between intelligence[2] (average or above) and academic achievement in some areas (deficient). A distinction is made between low academic achievement resulting from low

[2]It needs to be mentioned that an adequate measure of intelligence does not exist. In particular, the appropriateness of I.Q. tests such as the WISC-R and WAIS-R scales (Wechsler, 1976, 1981), which are almost universally used for diagnosing learning disabilities, is in doubt (Siegel, 1989; Stanovich, 1989). Of course, the issue of an adequate measure of intelligence is also germaine to the definition of mental retardation and giftedness. Pending the development of better measures, Detterman's (1982) conceptualization of I.Q. as a general measure of current cognitive functioning (Stanovich, 1989) continues to be used by both researchers and practitioners in identifying learning disabled individuals.

intelligence, and a low academic achievement resulting from a learning disability in a person of at least average intelligence. Mental retardation, along with emotional disturbance, and social and educational disadvantage are excluded as causes of a learning disability. Since the young adults who participated in the transition model described in this report tended to have I.Q.s in the 70's [3], this issue warrants some discussion.

While it has been argued that depressed I.Q. scores may be a result rather than a cause of poor academic achievement (Stanovich, 1986; Minskoff, Hawks, Steidle & Hoffmann, 1989), most research and practice assume that I.Q. scores provide a more or less accurate index of intelligence. There has been discussion of where the bottom end of the "average" range is for the purpose of determining a learning disability. Wechsler (1981) specified an I.Q. of 80 as the lowest score in the "low average" range and 70 as the bottom of the "borderline" range. Siegel (1989) suggested adopting a cut-off of 80, to diagnose a learning disability, while Minskoff et al. (1989) proposed a cut-off of 70 since the I.Q. scores of many school aged learning disabled individuals range between 70 and 85. It is possible that students who were previously labeled "mildly retarded" or "slow learners" are now being given the more socially desirable classification of learning disabled, especially in the public school system (Minskoff, Sautter, Sheldon, Steidle & Baker, 1988). There is a national trend towards a decrease in diagnoses of mental retardation in special education programs, with a concomitant increase in diagnoses of learning disability (e.g., Eleventh Annual Report to Congress, 1989).

While schools appear to apply a cut-off of 70 (Clarizio & Phillips, 1989) students with I.Q. scores below 70 generally being classified as mentally retarded, Minskoff et al. (1987) pointed out that definitions of learning disabilities used by state vocational rehabilitation agencies do not specify a bottom cut-off. The definition of learning disabilities adopted by the Rehabilitative Services Administration in 1985, cited in Chetkovich, Toms-Barker, and Schlichtmann (1989, p. 20), neither mentions intelligence level nor excludes mental retardation as a cause. However, there have been attempts to apply the concept of discrepancy

[3]Unless otherwise specified, I.Q. scores described throughout this report refer to those derived from the various Weschsler intelligence tests, WAIS, WAIS-R, WISC, and WISC-R. (Weschler, 1976, 1981).

when training state vocational rehabilitation counselors to identify learning disabled clients (e.g., Zwerlein, Smith & Diffley, 1984).

Biller and White (1989) have noted that public school special education and state rehabilitation agencies operationalize learning disabilities differently. Special education concentrates on patterns of deficiencies, intelligence-achievement discrepancies and exclusion of alternative explanations for academic failure. In contrast, the rehabilitation agencies focus more on simply describing the academic, neurological, perceptual, and language deficiencies. The result of these different focuses is that an individual might be diagnosed learning disabled in one setting but not the other.

On the basis of current diagnostic practices, whether in special education or in vocational rehabilitation, it appears that most people labelled learning disabled can be of two different types. One type, which could be called "discrepant," consists of individuals who have traditionally been considered learning disabled on the basis of average or above average I.Q. scores coexisting with unexpectedly poor academic achievement. Learning disabilities in this group are specific: weaknesses in some academic areas appear alongside relative strengths in others. Students at the postsecondary level who fall into this group are usually able to matriculate into regular college programs, and have been studied by Cordoni (1988) and Vogel (1986).

The other type also manifests academic weaknesses but I.Q. scores are lower and may fall into the borderline range of intellectual functioning. This type, which could be designated "commensurate," displays low I.Q. scores and uniformly poor academic performance, (for example, fourth and fifth grade reading levels), with an absence of relative strengths. Clients of state vocational rehabilitation agencies are often of this type. (There is probably a third group, much smaller in size, comprising individuals with borderline to low average range I.Q.'s who are virtually illiterate. These individuals display a pattern of discrepancy, since at least minimal reading and writing skills would be predicted from the I.Q. scores.)

Adults with Learning Disabilities

In the 1987-88 school year, approximately 7% (just over four million) of American students aged 6 to 21 years received special education services. Among these students with handicaps, by far the largest group (47%, or about 4% of all

students) were classified as learning disabled (Eleventh Annual Report to Congress, 1989).

Since learning disabilities are most evident in poor academic performance, it was previously thought that they disappeared by adulthood, or when schooling was complete. However, a number of studies indicate that learning disabilities are a lifelong condition, continuing to affect functioning in adulthood. Spreen (1989), in a review of follow-up studies of adults who had been diagnosed learning disabled in childhood, concluded that the adult prognosis was poorest for those who had been severely learning disabled in childhood, although outcomes such as employment were also related to occupational and educational status of the father, and to measured intelligence. Further, Edgar (1988) argued that family social status has a greater effect than type of schooling on the ability of learning disabled and mentally retarded individuals to find jobs. These claim suggest poor employment outcomes for urban learning disabled individuals in particular, who may more often be of low socioeconomic status than their suburban or rural counterparts.

Intellectual and Academic Patterns

It appears that as learning disabled children become learning disabled adults, their intellectual and neuropsychological patterns remain similar. For example, McCue, Shelly, and Goldstein (1986) claimed that both groups displayed better nonverbal than verbal functioning, low academic scores, and attentional deficits. Buchanan & Wolf (1986) found that both learning disabled children and adults experienced low motivation, distractibility, poor self-concept, emotional lability, and poor organizational skills.

Self-report data collected by Hoffmann, Sheldon, Minskoff, Sautter, Steidle, Baker, Bailey and Echols (1987) revealed that learning disabled adults experienced serious problems with reading, spelling, math and expressive writing that were similar to those shown in learning disabled children. Emotional effects of many years of these experiences were expressed in feelings of frustration, lack of self-confidence and self-esteem, and depression. Johnson and Blalock (1987), in studies of the perceptual, language and academic functioning of learning disabled adults, found that patterns of functioning in these areas were similar to those of learning disabled children.

Learning disabled individuals became eligible for state vocational rehabilitation services only in 1981. McCue (1989) noted that between three and five percent of vocational rehabilitation clients are learning disabled although caseloads in some states are as large as ten percent.

McCue et al. (1986), Minskoff et al. (1989) and Faas & Alonzo (1990) have studied samples of learning disabled individuals referred by state vocational rehabilitation agencies for assessment to determine eligibility for services. A summary of ages and profile f intellectual and academic functioning provided in these studies is presented in the following table. All scores are means. I.Q.s refer to WAIS or WAIS-R scores. Reading, spelling and math scores are based on the Wide Range Achievement Test (Jastak & Jastak, 1965) or a revision of this test (Jastak & Wilkinson, 1984) and are reported as grade equivalents. These data were collected in the first two studies but not the third.

	McCue et al.	Minskoff et al.	Faas & Alonzo
Age	24 4	20.3	26 7
Verbal I.Q.	87.1	84.1	98.5
Performance I.Q.	92.4	88.9	95.7
Full Scale I.Q.	88.6	84.5	96 8
Reading	5.6	5.7	---
Spelling	4.3	4.8	---
Arithmetic	4.8	5.6	---

It can be seen that the I.Q. scores in the Faas & Alonzo study are substantially higher than those in the other two. This is probably related to differences in educational levels between the samples. The Faas & Alonzo sample seems to be more heterogeneous than the other two: 35% of subjects were attending a university while 45% appeared to be in a vocational training program. It would appear that few if any college students participated in the McCue et al. (1986) and Minskoff et al. (1987) studies, and mean educational levels of 10.5 and 10.7 years were reported respectively. The latter samples appear to be more typical of adults with learning disabilities receiving vocational rehabilitation services.

Minskoff et al. (1987) argued that their sample formed a homogeneous subgroup, characterized as "severely learning disabled" when compared to samples of learning disabled college students and adults who were followed up after having been diagnosed learning disabled in childhood. They suggested that learning disabled adults be categorized on the basis of severity based on five criteria: level of intelligence; cognitive processing abilities; language abilities; academic achievement level; psychological adjustment; and vocational competence. Studies of learning disabled adults are often hard to compare because of a wide variation in subject characteristics (Smith, 1988) but adoption of these criteria to select subjects would make for easier comparison.

Support for Minskoff et al.'s (1987) contention that learning disabled adults receiving state vocational rehabilitation services form a distinctive group is found in a major national evaluation of services for this population conducted by Chetkovich et al. (1989), who found the following means: age 20.7; verbal I.Q. 83.2; performance I.Q. 93.0; full scale I.Q. 86.6. Median grade level scores were: reading 4 and 5; spelling 3.7; math 5.3. Because of income eligibility requirements, clients of the state agencies tend to be of low socioeconomic status. Severe learning disability is also associated with low socioeconomic status, leading both to poor prognosis in adulthood (Spreen, 1989) and overrepresentation in vocational rehabilitation caseloads.

Severely learning disabled individuals, in whom I.Q. and academic scores are commensurate, do not display the pockets of cognitive or academic strength, sometimes referred to as a pattern of "peaks and valleys," found in the discrepant group. Although there is a lack of research comparing the effectiveness of different teaching methods for learning disabled individuals (Spreen, 1989), practitioners' experiences indicate that the discrepant and severely learning disabled groups learn differently and respond to different interventions. For example, an individual with an I.Q. of 72 probably has poorer retention, less ability to self-reflect, and poorer general comprehension of information than a person with an I.Q. of 100. For the lower functioning student, tasks need to be broken into much smaller increments and taught with more repetition and review.

Cognitive and Social Patterns

A wide range of cognitive and social problems are associated with learning disabilities. Difficulties that particularly affect the transition to employment are summarized in this section. Where possible, studies investigating urban samples are included since they are especially relevant to the demonstration project.

Impaired self-concept has been found in learning disabled children, adolescents and adults (Chetkovich et al. 1989; Chapman, 1988; Rowjewski, 1989; Hoffmann et al., 1987). Chetkovich et al. reported that vocational rehabilitation counselors identified poor self-concept as a major barrier that followed only reading, writing and math skills in its effects on learning disabled clients.

Chapman distingulshed between general and academic self-concept, and found that learning disabled and "normal" children differed only on the latter measure. Silverman and Zigmond (1983) also found a lack of difference on a general self concept measure in a study of adolescents. They suggested that the lack of difference was attributable to learning disabled students' inadequate awareness of the meaning of their disability. Vocational rehabilitation counselors surveyed by Chetkovich et al. indicated that learning disabled clients had less understanding of their handicap than clients with more visable handicaps.

According to Chapman, learning disabled children tend to show decrements in academic self-concept by third grade and then remain stable through high school. The student who has poor academic self concept probably develops into an adult who lacks self confidence. Learning disabled vocational rehabilitation clients surveyed by Hoffman et al. (1987) reported lack of self confidence which the authors attributed to a history of school failure, followed by vocational failure upon leaving school. Since even low level jobs present literacy demands, for example in the application process, low academic self-concept may hinder the transition from school to work. Severely learning disabled job applicants may think poorly of themselves because of their inability to complete an application form, which might cause them to give up.

The building of self-concept and self-confidence is widely recognized as an important feature in the preparation of young adults for employment. For example, Rojewski (1989) reported that, in a school-to-work transition program, young adults benefited from personal growth groups that addressed problems of self-concept, self-esteem, motivation and peer acceptance.

While self-concept is impaired, the incidence of socioemotional disturbances does not appear to be more frequent among learning disabled than normally achieving children, nor do such disturbances increase as learning disabled children get older, except in the case of children with a selective arithmetic deficit (Rourke, 1988).

Social skills are relatively poor in learning disabled adults (Cartledge, 1989; Hoffmann et al., 1987). Cartledge noted social skills problems in three areas: (1) task-related behaviors including following directions, staying on task, attending, volunteering, and completing tasks; (2) social communication skills including greeting others, conversing, listening to others, smiling and laughing, and offering compliments to others; and (3) decision-making skills including accurate perception of personal or social situations, and exercising good judgement. Cartledge noted that social skills problems affected learning disabled adults' ability to participate effectively in job interviews, accept an employer's criticism, provide constructive criticism to a co-worker, or explain a problem to a supervisor. Cartledge suggested that vocational difficulties experienced by learning disabled adults, such as a large number of job changes, and low levels of satisfaction with job situations, may be caused by social deficits.

Social problems in learning disabled adults reported by Hoffmann et al. (1987) included impulsive behavior, lack of independence, problems in establishing and maintaining friendships, and poor conversation skills. The authors suggested that the lack of independence "may be related to learned helplessness that may result from being under the 'protection' of special education" (p. 51) so that, as children and adolescents, learning disabled students "learned" that they were not able to help themselves in school settings; this lack of independence then generalized to other settings.

Learning disabled individuals also tend to have unrealistic aspirations, which hinder the transition to employment. For example, in case study research into the post-school functioning of "mildly learning handicapped" young adults, Zetlin and Hosseini (1989) described an individual with an I.Q. of 70, second grade reading skills and third grade math skills, who was interested in becoming a contractor. He was placed in remedial classes upon enrolling in a program to obtain the necessary license, but felt that these classes were below his level of ability. It appears that it

was only after experiencing job failure that the young man was able to admit the extent of his learning problems and adjust his career goals.

In public school special education programs, teachers rather than students arrange for modification of academic requirements. Students are thus protected from the demands of the real world, and may overestimate their ability to accomplish goals independently (Minskoff et al. 1988). When they leave school, confrontations with the real world can lead to more accurate perceptions of their abilities (Hoffmann et al., 1987). As they become aware of the extent of their problems, they may adjust their career aspirations downwards, as suggested by Zetlin and Hosseini's case, although frustration and depression may also result from the more realistic perceptions (Minskoff et al. 1989). As they become more realistic, learning disabled individuals may become more interested in learning about appropriate job options, for example through career counseling.

While individuals with severe learning disabilities have difficulty establishing career goals, this problem is also found in higher functioning learning disabled students and their non-disabled peers. For example, Price (1988) reported that a group of higher functioning learning disabled high school seniors, with a mean I.Q. of 98, needed vocational counseling. Also, Dowdy, Carter & Smith (1990) found that high school students with learning disabilities (and I.Q. at least in the average range) and their non learning disabled peers had similar levels of ease or difficulty in establishing career goals; 68% and 65% of the two groups, respectively, had made career decisions. Perhaps it is unreasonable to expect individuals, whether disabled or not, to have decided on careers as early as high school. How many readers of this report had made an appropriate career decision, or any career decision, during the high school years? However, the luxury of delaying career decisions is confined to those who choose to and can reasonably expect to enter mainstream postsecondary academic settings. Individuals whose intellectual and/or learning deficiencies prevent such participation need to arrive at appropriate career decisions by the end of high school because it is at this point that they need to join the work force.

Transition from School to Work

Individuals with disabilities find it more difficult than their non-disabled peers to find employment (Edgar, 1988; Brolin & Gysbers, 1989). Brolin & Gysbers

reported that there had been little improvement in employment rates for disabled individuals in the past ten years. Based on the findings that the unemployment rate for individuals with all kinds of handicaps was between 50% and 80% (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1983, cited by Chadsey-Rusch, 1985), the provision of school-to-work transition services to students with special needs was made a priority of the Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs in the 1980's (Will, 1984; Sitlington, 1987).

Learning disabled students in high school special education programs are not being adequately prepared for work by the high schools. After leaving high school, only 40% of learning disabled individuals find full-time jobs, 19% find part-time jobs, and 17% participate in some form of postsecondary education (Eleventh Annual Report to Congress, 1989). While the need for transition services for disabled students is widely recognized, it appears, at least in the case of learning disabled students, that high schools may not start providing services until it is too late. Large numbers of learning disabled students have already dropped out by the time services are provided (deBettencourt, Zigmond, & Thornton, 1989).

Levin, Zigmond and Birch (1985) found a 47% dropout rate for a sample of urban learning disabled high school students, compared with 36% for their school district as a whole. In another study of urban learning disabled young adults, Zigmond & Thornton (1985) found a 52% dropout rate compared with 33% for a nondisabled control group. Most of the dropout in both groups occurred in ninth grade. The learning disabled group had severe learning problems, with a mean I.Q. of 87, and third and fourth grade reading and math levels. Scores for learning disabled dropouts and graduates were similar. Zigmond & Thornton investigated the relationship between high school graduation and employment, and found that for both groups combined, the employment rate for graduates was 83%, compared with 46% for dropouts. Interestingly, they found that the difference between employment rates in learning disabled graduates and nondisabled control graduates was not significant. Within the learning disabled group, high school graduation had a significant effect on employment rate: the rate for graduates was 74%, compared with 44% for dropouts. Zigmond & Thornton suggested that the effect of graduation on employment among learning disabled individuals was not related to an increase in basic skills abilities (as just noted, graduates and dropouts did not differ). Rather,

the authors attributed the ability to stay to graduation to a persistence factor, which they associated with the ability to find and keep a job. In addition, the learning disabled graduates probably also received transition services, which probably had a positive effect on employment rates.

Since most dropout occurs around ninth grade, the enormous effort that many high schools are putting into transition services is not being directed to those who need them most. To make matters worse, when the connection with high school is severed, it is less likely that individuals will seek employment training services through state vocational rehabilitation agencies. For low-income, urban handicapped individuals, these agencies may be the only means to becoming employable. Even students still attending high school are frequently unaware of the existence of state vocational rehabilitation agencies. Dowdy et al. (1990) found that only 45% of a sample of learning disabled high school students had heard of such services.

There are several factors that make the transition to employment more difficult for urban than suburban or rural learning disabled adults. The over-representation of low socioeconomic status (S.E.S.) in urban areas is mirrored in urban learning disabled samples. Associated with low S.E.S. are poor quality education, loose family structure, violence, alcoholism, substance abuse, malnutrition, poor health care, and so on. Poor quality education probably results in lower I.Q. scores, since many of the skills and much of the knowledge required by I.Q. tests are taught in school. Such outcomes will compound the already negative effects of a learning disability, and add to the social service needs of urban learning disabled individuals.

Urban learning disabled young adults may have difficulty making the transition to work because they lack family role models who are employed and/or are engaged in regularly scheduled activities. Rosenthal (1989) stated that work routines and observations and imitation of family members in early childhood are important beginnings of career development. Establishing routines and imitating others may be difficult for learning disabled individuals of any economic background; this difficulty would be intensified in low S.E.S. learning disabled individuals who may not have role models available to them in the first place.

As already mentioned, choice of appropriate job goals is important if transition is to be successful. Neubert, Tilson, and Ianacone (1989) reported the types of jobs in which mildly retarded and learning disabled young adults were placed. I.Q.s in the sample they studied ranged from 50 to 95, grade level reading scores from 1.3 to 9.9 (mean 4.9), and math from 1.4 to 11.0 (mean 4.4). Forty-eight percent of the sample were placed in clerical and sales jobs, with 25% in service jobs. Specific jobs included stock clerk, mailroom clerk, retail sales assistant, auto mechanic helper, stone mason apprentice, optical goods blocking tender, and graphic arts technician. That these jobs tended to be appropriate is suggested by the finding that at the end of a one-year period, 64% of the sample had remained continuously employed.

Other studies also suggest that service and clerical jobs are appropriate for individuals with severe learning disabilities. Chetkovich et al. (1989) found that the largest proportion (35%) of learning disabled clients of vocational rehabilitation services became employed in service occupations, most frequently in food service and janitorial jobs. The next largest group (15%) were employed in clerical/sales jobs.

While many young adults with learning disabilities are able to obtain competitive jobs, most of these jobs are unskilled and semi-skilled. Succimarra & Speece (1990) followed up a sample of "mildly handicapped" individuals who had been twelfth graders two years previously. Most of the sample were learning disabled. Of the 79% of the sample who were employed, 80% were in full time, competitive jobs. Sixty-one percent of the employed group had unskilled jobs, 31% had semi-skilled and 8% had skilled jobs. There was an approximately even spread among clerical/sales, service and unspecifed "structural" jobs.

Individuals who show a clearer discrepancy between intellectual and academic functioning are able to receive vocational training in skilled areas. Cawley, Kahn & Tedesco (1989) described secondary vocational education for learning disabled students with I.Q.s ranging from 85 to 98 and reading and math scores from fifth to seventh grade levels who were classified learning disabled on the basis of a discrepancy of at least 1.5 standard deviations between expected and actual reading and math grade levels. Students in this group received vocational training in higher level skills areas, 44% in automotive skills, 35% in carpentry and 21% in electrical skills.

Retaining a job, whatever the skill level, may be more difficult than obtaining a job for the young adult with a severe learning disability. Zetlin and Hosseini (1989) presented the case of a learning disabled young woman with an I.Q. of 84, fifth grade reading skills, and fourth grade math skills. After experiencing considerable difficulty with art and geography courses in a two-year college, she obtained a stock job in a department store. She found her assigned task of returning clothes from the dressing room to the selling floor tedious, and complained of dizziness and nausea before quitting after one month. In another case study, Zetlin and Hosseini described a learning disabled young woman with an I.Q. of 75, seventh grade reading skills and fifth grade math skills. She was employed in several fast food outlets, bussing tables and washing dishes, but quit because she found the work degrading and depressing. She then obtained a job on an assembly line but was laid off for "not being fast enough."

Neubert et al. (1989) followed up 66 severely learning disabled and mildly mentally retarded young adults one month after they completed a school-to-work transition program. Seventy-four percent of the subjects reported problems on the job. Of this group, 92% reported inability to perform assigned tasks, inadequate rate of production or difficulty following instructions. Seventy-one percent reported difficulties adjusting to work routines, including attendance, punctuality, hygiene and grooming problems, social and interpersonal problems. Twelve percent reported health problems including seizures and insufficient physical stamina to accomplish work tasks.

Successful outcome as defined by state vocational rehabilitation agencies is employment for at least 60 days; it is at this point that cases are closed. Chetkovich et al. (1989) found successful outcomes in 67% of clients with learning disabilities, compared with 64% for all clients. The outcome rate for severely and non-severely learning disabled clients was identical (67%). Ninety-four percent of the learning disabled clients with successful outcomes were competitively employed, compared to 82% for all clients. Severely learning disabled clients obtained competitive jobs at almost the same rate (93%) as non-severely learning disabled clients (95%). The authors suggested, on the basis of reports from survey informants, that the lack of effect of severity on outcome was an artifact of problems in defining severity. When counselors were asked which service aspects

were the most difficult to apply or to operate consistently with state policy guidelines, the most frequently mentioned problem involved the determination of severity.

Investigating the rate of full-versus part-time employment, Chetkovich et al. found that 71% of successful closures of learning disabled cases involved full time employment. I.Q. scores were not related to this factor: 70% of severely learning disabled clients worked full time, compared to 82% for non-severely learning disabled clients.

Faas and Alonzo (1990), in examining the relationship between I.Q. and job outcome in learning disabled individuals, defined successful outcome as sustained or intermittent employment for at least three months. Employment failure was defined as chronic unemployment or lack of any job experience. I.Q. scores were related to employment outcomes. (It was mentioned earlier in this section that Faas & Alonzo's subjects were heterogeneous compared to other studies reviewed; 35% of the sample were university students.) The authors divided the sample into high, medium, and low groups with respect to I.Q. scores. The high group contained 39% of the subjects, who had full scale I.Q. of 111 and above. Forty-two percent of the subjects had I.Q.s of 91-110 and were assigned to the medium group. The low group contained the 19% of the subjects who had I.Q.s of 90 and below. I.Q. was found to be an accurate predictor of employment outcome: 94% of subjects in the high group were successfully employed, as defined above, as defined above, compared to 42% in the medium group and 11% in the low group.

Scuccimarra & Speece (1990), in a follow-up study described above, found that 70% of a sample of special education school leavers, most of whom were learning disabled, were employed. Eighty percent of them were working in competitive, full-time jobs. Sixty percent had been employed between one and three years, 31% between six months and one year. Defining successful employment outcomes as competitive or non-competitive full- or part-time work at the minimum wage or more for six months or longer, the authors found that 92% of their sample were successful.

Neubert et al. (1989) reported employment outcomes for 45 learning disabled and mildly mentally retarded individuals following completion of a transition program. At the end of two months, 64% of this group had been continuously

employed, 76% after six months and 64% after one year. Thirty-five percent of the sample quit their jobs and did not become reemployed, for reasons including seizures, decision to stay home to look after a child, entry to another program, or decision not to work.

Given the substantial cognitive and social problems experienced by young adults with learning disabilities, the positive employment outcomes just described seem surprisingly favorable. It is probable that the level of success reported was partly due to lenient criteria, e.g., short period of employment required. If stricter criteria were adopted, the success rate would probably plummet. Short-term, part-time, unskilled employment at the minimum wage is hardly a desireable outcome, and is not sufficient to support independent living.

Summary of Literature Review

Approximately 4% of American students aged six to 21 are receiving special education services, having been diagnosed as having a learning disability. Learning disabilities do not disappear by the end of the school years, and learning disabled adults and children show similar deficits and problems. As a theoretical concept, learning disability has been difficult to define although most definitions specify a discrepancy between intellectual potential and academic achievement. In operationalizing the term, neither the schools nor the state vocational rehabilitation agencies specify such a discrepancy. Some individuals have been diagnosed learning disabled although their poor academic achievement seems commensurate with their low level of measured intelligence. Many learning disabled clients of vocational rehabilitation services fall into this group and are referred to as severely learning disabled. This term describes the participants of the demonstration program to be described.

Although practitioners have often stated that learning disabled students have poor self concept, research studies have not always found a difference in this factor between learning disabled and non-learning disabled individuals. The lack of difference has been attributed to learning disabled individuals' lack of understanding of their handicap. When a more specific measure of self-concept,--"academic self-concept"--is examined, learning disabled students show a decrement. Poor academic self-concept may cause frustration, leading in turn to abandoning tasks affecting the transition to work such as filling in application forms.

Learning disabled individuals show many social skills deficits that cause difficulties in interviewing for jobs and in communicating with others at work. It has been suggested that some of the social skills deficits result from a sense of dependency fostered in the special education setting.

Successful transition from school to work is also hindered by inappropriate aspirations that may be harbored by learning disabled individuals. The efforts of school special education staff, who may make instructional accommodations on behalf of rather than with the participation of learning disabled students, may unwittingly aid in students' denial of their problems, and lead them to overestimate the kinds of career goals they can achieve. It may be only after a series of painful failures that denial is replaced by a more accurate self-assessment of abilities.

Learning disabled along with individuals with other disabilities have a difficult time finding employment. School-to-work transition services are intended to ameliorate this problem. However, the drop-out rate is high for learning disabled students and transition services may begin too late to help the students who need them most. Difficulties in making the transition to work are probably more intense in urban than suburban or rural learning disabled individuals, because the effects of the disability are often compounded by the multiple effects of low socioeconomic status.

Learning disabled individuals are most frequently employed in service and clerical/sales occupations. They often have difficulty in keeping their jobs, for many reasons, including negative emotional reactions to the drudgery of low level employment, difficulty with work routines, and social and interpersonal problems on the job.

Taking the ability to maintain a job for 60 days as a measure of success, outcomes of vocational rehabilitation are slightly more positive for learning disabled clients than for individuals with other disabilities. Further, it has been reported that severely learning disabled clients are competitively employed at about the same rate as non-severely disabled individuals, although the lack of difference between the two groups may be a result of difficulties defining severity. There is an effect of severity on full- compared to part-time employment: the rate of full-time employment is lower in severely compared to non-severely learning disabled vocational rehabilitation clients. That transition programs have a positive impact

on the employment of learning disabled individuals is suggested by a study that found that after one year, 64% of a group who had completed such a program had been continuously employed.

NEED FOR POSTSECONDARY VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Approximately 45% of learning disabled students are not able to obtain a high school diploma. Ten percent leave with special education certificates, 26% drop out and 1% leave when they have reached the maximum age.

As mentioned in the previous section, government figures show that after leaving high school special education programs, 59% of learning disabled individuals find full or part time employment. Nineteen percent become involved in some form of postsecondary education; 10% attending programs in vocational or trade schools, 7% attending two-year colleges, and 2% attending four-year colleges (all information taken from Eleventh Annual Report to Congress, 1989).

It can be seen from these figures that while 55% of learning disabled students leave high school with a regular diploma, only 9% go on to college. Adding to the college group the 10% who attend vocational or trade schools and the 59% who are able to obtain full- or part-time employment leaves approximately 22% of learning disabled special education students unengaged in education or work when they leave high school. Furthermore, as noted in the previous section, many learning disabled individuals may have difficulty retaining their jobs. Adding to this bleak picture is the tendency of learning disabled individuals to be employed in unskilled jobs; their average hourly wage is $4.63, with 12% earning under $3.00 per hour and only 21% earning over $5.00 per hour (Eleventh Annual Report to Congress, 1989).

Clearly, many of the individuals concerned have not overcome their learning difficulties by the end of high school, nor were special education services able to prepare them for competitive, skilled employment. Because of their low level of functioning, these individuals are often thought to be appropriate candidates for vocational training in rehabilitation agencies. However, the forms of training and services provided in such settings are often perceived to be inadequate for meeting the needs of this population.

A Gap in Services

A high level of expectation is generated by the high school experiences of students in the normalized environments that resulted from Public Law 94-142. Many students have had positive experiences in least restrictive settings while in high school, and are not interested in participating in the segregated settings that characterize the training programs of rehabilitation agencies. Many handicapped students and their families perceive participation in this form of training as a step backward. Learning disabled students find community college programs attractive, as do their non-handicapped peers. However, this option is not open to individuals who have been unable to obtain a high school diploma. Even in cases where students do receive diplomas, poor reading skills and low levels of intellectual functioning preclude successful participation in regular community college programs. While learning disabled individuals might be interested in receiving training in a proprietary vocational school, few such schools modify entrance requirements, curricular offerings, or grading systems for handicapped students, and few offer special support services.

Since rehabilitation agencies may not be considered an attractive option, proprietary schools generally do not provide the necessary supports and accommodations, and learning disabled students are often not eligible or appropriate for community college programs, there has been a gap in services for this population.

Filling the Gap

In answer to the gap in services, a model program was developed in New York City to provide vocational training services to young adults with severe learning disabilities who had left special education programs. Research was conducted on the model to determine its feasibility in helping this population make the transition from high school to work.

While many learning disabled out-of-school young adults are not eligible for matriculation in regular community college programs, continuing education programs may be appropriate because a high school diploma is not required for participation. The continuing education department offers the severely learning disabled student the possibility of a mainstream postsecondary educational

experience without the requirement of a high school diploma. In the demonstration model, the services of a continuing education division of a community college were combined with those of a not-for-profit vocational school. A learning disabilities specialist provided support in the vocational school. Later, a second agency joined the collaboration.

The program was based on an earlier model, also developed in New York City and funded by the U.S. Department of Education, which is described in the following chapter in order to provide background.

CHAPTER 2

BACKGROUND TO DEVELOPMENT OF THE TRANSITION MODEL: THE FIRST PROGRAM

In the first model,[1] developed between 1984 and 1987, learning disabled young adults aged seventeen and above received career preparation in the continuing education division of a community college. Reading grade levels ranged from 3.4 to 12.9, and math scores from 3.4 to 7.8. Many participants were of low S.E.S. and had considerable social services needs. Participants had either left high school or were still attending in the morning, "bridging" to the program in the afternoon. Most participants had not been able to obtain a high school diploma or, if still enrolled in high school, were not diploma-bound. Participants either paid a nominal tuition fee, were sponsored by the state vocational rehabilitation agency, or attended at no charge.

The program was housed in LaGuardia Community College of the City University of New York. Each student attended the program for four college quarters over a period of one year. For three quarters, students spent five half-days per week on campus; the final quarter was spent off campus in a job internship. During the period spent on campus, students attended classes in vocational skills in the clerical area, basic literacy skills, and interpersonal skills. They also received career counseling and basic skills tutoring. Each day students received one hour of vocational skills training and one hour of basic skills training, taught by college adjunct instructors who were supervised by project staff regarding participants' special needs. A further two hours of interpersonal skills training per week were given in classes taught by the project counselor. In addition, students were assigned to work-study placements on the college campus for reinforcement of clerical skills learning.

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[1] "Redirecting Vocational Training to the Community College: A Purchasable Option for Mildly Handicapped Consumers." Grant # G008435124 awarded by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services of the Office of Special Programs, U.S. Department of Education, 1984-1987.

Over the three-year period 101 students participated, with approximately equal numbers of out-of-school and "bridge" students. Fifty-five percent of the students completed all four quarters of the program, with 62% of the out-of-school and 50% of the bridge students completing. A segment of participants, designated "long staying students," left the program for constructive reasons after at least two college quarters, for example to take a job, or to enter a work study or training program.

Out-of-school students were asked to pay tuition as a means of testing whether parents were willing to enroll students in a non-degree career preparation program in a community college setting. No student was turned away because of inability to pay; 23% received full scholarship. Fifty-seven percent of the 47 out-of-school students paid a full tuition ($500) or partial tuition, leading to the conclusion that there was a market in an urban area for services at at least this level of payment.

Motivation was high whether or not tuition was paid. Ninety-two percent of participants who paid full or part tuition and 91% students on full scholarship completed or were long staying students. Of seven out-of-school students who were sponsored by the state agency, two completed and five were long-staying students.

Initially, a standard community college clerical skills curriculum was used, with modifications and accommodations for learning disabilities, such as a slower pace of instruction, student verbalization of steps and procedures, and frequent review. The curriculum had to be substantially simplified in the second and third years of program operation because of student's underdeveloped literacy and intellectual abilities. Very poor reading, writing, and math skills were evidenced even in students whose school records showed, for example, a seventh grade reading grade level.

A curriculum to teach basic literacy skills was developed by project staff. The curriculum consisted of reading, writing, math, oral communication and travel skills, all contextualized in work-related content. A curriculum developed by Flugman, Goldman, Katz and Lynch (1985) was used by the project counselor to teach interpersonal skills. These curricula were also used in the second project and will be discussed in later sections.

Both locally-developed and standardized measures of learning were used. Competency rating forms were developed by project staff for each of the three skills areas (vocational, basic and interpersonal). Instructors made periodic ratings, based on classroom observations, on a 12-point scale from non-acceptable to highly acceptable. The scales were constructed in terms of the levels needed for entry level clerical jobs. (Further information about the scales is provided in the section below on student progress.) While significant gains were posted in all skills areas, most students remained in the "nearly acceptable" range, in other words below the level required for an entry level position.

Pre-post comparisons of scores on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTB/McGraw-Hill, 1981), the Test of Adult Basic Education (CTB/McGraw-Hill, 1976) and the Wide Range Achievement Test - Revised (Jastak & Wilkinson 1984) found slight increases although they were not statistically significant. It appeared that the locally-developed competency assessments, which were connected directly to curriculum, were more likely to detect change than standardized tests that did not reflect the instructional program.

An adapted version of the Piers-Harris self-concept scale, "The Way I Feel About Myself" (Piers, 1984), was administered and pre-post comparisons found significant increases. In addition to these data, increases in self-concept were indicated in many observations and comments made by project staff, parents and work-study supervisors to the effect that there had been a large improvement in the students' social skills during their time in the program.

However, it became obvious that many students were not capable of obtaining entry level clerical jobs, evidently because of considerable literacy and cognitive deficiencies. At the same time, students showed growth while in the program, and, upon program completion, became engaged in activities that were productive from the standpoint of vocational development. For this reason, a multiple-outcomes approach was felt to be most appropriate for this population.

Outcomes such as the following were obtained: further vocational training, a return to high school in the case of drop-outs, enrollment in a high school equivalency program, and full- or part-time employment. Post-program follow-up of program completers in the first two years of the program who could be contacted revealed that the majority had engaged and were engaging in a variety of constructive activities as just listed.

It was concluded that a non-degree career preparation program grounded in the philosophy of a continuing education department of a community college can produce growth in occupational skills, basic literacy skills, and interpersonal skills that can enhance the overall vocational development of severely learning disabled young adults. Without the restriction of basic academic prerequisites such as a high school diploma, such a department has the flexibility needed to accommodate programs serving special needs students. Further, the college environment, being a normal, adult-level setting, has a positive effect in motivating severely learning disabled young adults to continue to develop their abilities.

While follow-up revealed constructive outcomes for a majority of participants, it was felt that areas other than clerical skills would be more suitable for severely learning disabled students. Also, it was realized that the intensive vocational training needed to prepare this population for competitive, entry level jobs would require a full- rather than part-time training program, and would thus be better given by a vocational school or rehabilitation agency. This recognition led to the development of the second model, which built directly on experiences with the initial program. Further information regarding the first program may be found in Flugman and Perin 1986, 1987).

CHAPTER 3
THE TRANSITION PROGRAM MODEL

A not-for-profit vocational school and the continuing education division of a community college collaborated to provide a full-time, comprehensive vocational training in a variety of vocational areas to severely learning disabled young adults. In the third year of the three-year project, the collaboration was expanded to include a rehabilitation agency. The collaborating institutions were Federation Employment and Guidance Services, or FEGS (the vocational school), Federation of the Handicapped, or FOH, (the rehabilitation agency), and LaGuardia Community College of the City University of New York. The program was named "The Integrated Skills Vocational Training Program," reflecting the close connection among the skills area taught, to be described later in this section. FOH joined the program in the third year.

COLLABORATING ORGA IZATIONS

Federation Employment Guidance Services

FEGS is a large not-for-profit agency that provides vocational assessment, vocational training, and treatment programs for a wide range of individuals with and without handicapping conditions. Trainees include unemployed, unskilled persons, refugees, troubled high school youth, individuals with a criminal justice background who are on probation, substance abuse clients, deaf and hearing impaired individuals, psychiatrically disabled clients, and institutionalized mentally retarded individuals.

The vocational training was given by a trade school that was a unit of FEGS. Vocational classrooms were mainstream environments, attended by individuals with and without handicapping conditions, who, while they had a wide variety of backgrounds, had a common need for skills leading to entry level employment.

Federation of the Handicapped

FOH is a large not-for-profit rehabilitation agency providing vocational evaluation, skills training programs, and support services to individuals with a variety of handicapping conditions. Trainees include individuals with orthopedic disabilities, sensory impairments, mental retardation, learning disabilities, and

emotional disorders. Individuals with various disabilities work alongside each other in vocational training classrooms, receiving accommodations and supports as needed. Most trainees are clients of the state vocational rehabilitation agency.

LaGuardia Community College

LaGuardia Community College is a comprehensive cooperative education college where all students participate in both on-campus study and relevant, credit-bearing off-campus work-experience. While the program described in this report was not credit-bearing, this characteristic is important because, as will be described below, on-campus work experience was one of the vocational training components.

The College's Continuing Education Division offers a wide variety of non-credit programs to over 11,000 students per year. Programs include high school equivalency, English as a second language, worker education programs, enrichment programs for children, vocational training programs for deaf and hearing impaired adults and homeless individuals, computing courses, and a range of business courses.

The Division is primarily concerned with the educational needs of adult students, many of whom are working concurrently, who need further education to compete for employment or better jobs. With its emphasis on the non-traditional adult student, the continuing education department provides an attractive mainstream setting into which the severely learning disabled individual can assimilate comfortably.

TRAINING COMPONENTS

The vocational training program was divided into two segments, agency-based training and college-based training. Each student spent three full days per week at the trade school or rehabilitation agency for vocational skills classes, and two full days at the community college for basic skills and interpersonal skills classes, work-study, tutoring and career counseling. The major objective of training was placement in a skilled job at the entry level. The trade school (FEGS) and rehabilitation agency (FOH) were responsible for job placement when participants completed the program.

Sponsorship of Training

The program was approved by the state vocational rehabilitation agency (in New York State formerly known as the Office for Vocational Rehabilitation, or OVR, and currently known as Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities, or VESID), a division of the State Education Department. Project staff worked closely with VESID staff, both at the state and local level, in the development of program procedures. VESID reimbursed the vocational training agencies for the vocational skills component of training. The college-based training was sponsored by the federal grant.

Of course, VESID routinely referred handicapped individuals to vocational training programs such as FEGS and FOH, but the concept of incorporating the college-based services into the rehabilitation plans of severely learning disabled students was new. Once the program was approved by VESID, counselors needed to be informed of the program, and, as with any new program, encouraged to try it as a referral option.

VESID counselors varied in their interest in the program. While many counselors were optimistic about the value of the program, some expressed doubt concerning whether severely learning disabled students could benefit from it. For example, some asked whether clients who had poor reading, writing and math skills could benefit from basic skills training. Others were dubious that students who had just left high school special education programs were mature enough to function well in the trade school or college environments. Such issues are not easily resolved, since learning patterns and behavioral styles vary widely in this population.

Program Length

Students entered the program on a rolling admissions basis, mirroring the pattern of intake and referral by VESID. The length of the program ranged from approximately six to eleven months. Program length varied across project students because it was determined by the length of the specific vocational training course taken at FEGS or FOH. In other words, program length was driven by the vocational skills component; students attended the college for the period during which they were attending vocational skills classes. In this sense, the college could be seen as a "hub" for special needs students participating in agency-based vocational training.

Individual Calendars

An individual calendar was drawn up by project staff[1] for each student. This was a rather complicated process because factors such as length of vocational skills training, holidays, and college intersessions had to be taken into account. A sample calendar is provided in Appendix A.

While the number of vocational training days was fixed, the number of college days was variable depending on entry date. This was because the program adhered to the calendar of the continuing education department, and college training was not given during intersessions, between two and five weeks' duration depending on the time of the year (summer intersessions were longer). During these periods, students attended FEGS or FOH five days per week, in effect speeding up their period of training overall.

Agency-Based Training

Each student received training in one of eight areas, five given by FEGS and three by FOH. The areas were selected as being appropriate for severely learning disabled students because of their relatively minimal reading, writing and math requirements. The objective of vocational skills training was to develop skills for competitive, skilled jobs at the entry level.

The choice of specific vocational training area was made by the VESID counselor based on client interests and abilities determined through a diagnostic vocational evaluation that was part of the VESID intake procedure. The eight areas, target entry level jobs, and length of training are listed below. Length of training is described in hours because the two agencies differed in the amount of training given in a day, six hours per day for FEGS and five hours per day for FOH.

Given by FEGS:

Building maintenance: To prepare students for jobs as building maintenance workers. 780 hours of training.

[1] Many of the functions described in the report as being developed and carried out by project staff were the responsibility of the research and development team. Of course, when a demonstration program is replicated or institutionalized, functions initially developed and undertaken by research and development staff become the responsibility of staff of the ongoing program. Staff of the collaborating organizations would need to decide among themselves how specific responsibilities would be allocated.

Mailroom/reprographics: To prepare students for jobs as mail clerks, messengers, couriers, duplicating machine operators, offset duplicating operators, photocopying operators, addressing machine operators, embossing machine operators and collator operators. 975 hours of training.

Jewelry manufacturing: To prepare student for jobs as jewelers. 780 hours of training.

Upholstery: To prepare students for jobs as upholstery helpers. 600 hours of training.

Furniture finishing: To prepare students for jobs as furniture finishers, finish removers, furniture assemblers, finisher repairers, finish patchers, and finish cleaners. 600 hours of training.

Given by FOH:

Custodial services: To prepare students for jobs as custodial porters. 500 hours of training.

Food services: To prepare students for jobs as hot and cold food preparers and servers, food cart attendants, and general utility workers. 650 hours of training.

Data entry: to prepare students for jobs as data entry clerks. 650 hours of training.

As indicated above, each vocational training course had a requisite number of training hours determined by the agency concerned. Project participants received the same number of hours' training as the non-project trainees alongside whom they worked; the difference was that because project students attended the vocational classes three rather than five days per week, they attended for a greater number of months. Special scheduling procedures were developed by project staff in conjunction with VESID district office managers and agency staff. The special scheduling had implications for vocational instructors, who saw project students three days a week, compared to five days for their "regular" students. Once the instructors accepted this arrangement, it was easy for them to accommodate to the scheduling, since all agency students were accepted to vocational classrooms on a rolling admissions basis; it was standard practice for students to reach different points of the curriculum at different times.

The vocational training curricula were those regularly used by the agencies concerned. Specific skills taught are described in the chapter below on assessment of progress.

The vocational training of the project participants assigned to FEGS was supported by a learning disabilities specialist whose salary was provided by the federal grant. The functions and responsibilities of this individual are described in the section below on staffing pattern. On the basis of observations of students' performance throughout the program, project staff concluded that the support of a learning disability specialist is indispensible if severely learning disabled individuals are to receive training in regular, mainstream vocational classrooms.

College-Based Training

Each of the two days per week on campus, students attended self-contained classes in basic skills and interpersonal skills classes for two hours each. Maximum class size was twenty students. Students were assigned to on-campus work-study placements one or two hours per day. Basic skills tutoring was given to each student one or two hours per week. In addition, students received regular career counseling. All of these activities had been developed in the previous project described above.

While federal funding allowed this segment of the demonstration program to be tuition-free to participants, in replication of the program, the college-based training would probably have to be supported by tuition fees, grant funding, college funds, or other sources of funding typically obtained to support continuing education programs.

Basic skills classes were taught by a college adjunct remedial instructor using a vocationally-oriented literacy curriculum developed in the previous project described above. Areas taught included reading, writing, math, and oral communication skills. Specific work-related skills taught included resume preparation, completion of application forms, and comprehension of classified advertisements. The skills taught are described below in the section on evaluation of progress.

There was an emphasis on collaborative learning methods in the basic skills classroom. Students often worked in pairs, discussing and correcting each other's work. The pairing of students of approximately equal ability was found to be highly productive. On the other hand, peer tutoring where a more able student worked with a student of lesser ability was used only infrequently. There was a tendency for the lower skilled individual to play a passive role in this type of situation, and resentment or embarrassment sometimes resulted.

Instructional materials included published materials that were adult- and career-oriented, and locally-generated worksheets. A basic skills curriculum guide including samples of instructional material and a bibliography of published sources is available separately (Perin & Castaldi, in preparation). The basic skills lesson plan form used in the program may be found in Appendix B.

Interpersonal skills classes were taught by the project counselor. As in the earlier project, a curriculum by Flugman, Goldman, Katz and, Lynch (1985) for high school special needs students was used. Because the curriculum consists of modules which are complete lessons in themselves, it is appropriate for use with students who enter on a rolling admissions basis. Content and procedures in the curriculum were adapted by the counselor taking into account the students' ages, life experiences, and interests. The curriculum was supplemented by exercises from a social skills training series produced by the New York City Public Schools (1985). The interpersonal skills lesson plan form used may be found in Appendix B.

Role play exercises were used frequently. Situations were simulated, including job interviews and job-related events causing conflict. Students learned both to participate in role play and to critique their own and other students' performance in these activities.

Role-play activities were frequently videotaped. After the role play activity was complete, the counselor utilized the videotape record in an interactive fashion, asking students to view a small segment and then to answer questions about what had happened, what was successful, and what could be improved. After such critiques, the exercise would be repeated, with students taking suggestions into consideration. The repeat activity would also be videotaped, and students would review the second attempt, again commenting and critiquing. This type of activity motivated students and gave them a concrete basis for understanding and discussing interpersonal skills.

To reinforce punctuality, students signed in upon entering both the basic and interpersonal skills classes, using the "Student Attendance Sign-In Form" found in Appendix C.

Each student was assigned to a work-study placement one or two hours per day. A wide variety of departments on campus provided placements. Students were assigned routine work tasks such as answering telephones and taking messages,

delivering supplies, media equipment, and inter-office mail, preparing material for mailings, xeroxing, and addressing envelopes. This work was supervised by a worker in the department concerned. As mentioned above, LaGuardia Community College is oriented toward career development and all matriculated students incorporate work experience into their program of study. Work-study was a familiar concept to supervisors (a number of whom were or had been LaGuardia students themselves), who proved on the whole to be accepting, supportive supervisors of project participants.

Students were assigned to placements by the project counselor on the basis of their interests. Placements included the Media Department, the Gym, Shipping and Receiving, the Mailroom, the office where students received identification cards, the English Language Center, the Program for Deaf Adults, and a vocational program for homeless individuals. Work-study gave students the opportunity to gain job experience if they had never worked. The supervisors emphasized positive work habits and reinforced interpersonal skills.

Students were assisted in accomplishing work-study tasks by a project job-coach (either the basic skills tutor or learning disabilities specialist, depending on availability of time of each). The job-coach interviewed each student's work-study supervisor, using the "Interview of Work-Study Supervisor" form, to be found in Appendix D. The interview provided information about tasks the students were expected to perform, and underlying skills needed. After the interview had been conducted, the job-coach rotated among work-study placements, assisting students if they had problems, or standing by if they were doing well. Information learned through the job coach's activities was relayed to other staff members so that weaknesses detected could be addressed in basic or interpersonal skills classes, tutoring, or counseling.

Basic skills tutoring was given to individuals and small groups to reinforce skills being taught in the basic skills class. Each student received one or two hours' tutoring per week. The tutor developed a program for each student based on his or her needs, as reported by the student or the basic skills instructor, or as determined through working with the student. In the case of small groups, students were grouped according to reading level. In both individual and group tutoring sessions, there was an emphasis on verbalization and discussion. The tutor kept a log of activities; the form used may be found in Appendix B.

Career counseling was provided by the project counselor. Counseling related primarily to career issues but of course personal issues were also addressed. Upon entry to the program, each student was given a "Career Maturity Interview", which may be found in Appendix E. This provided information that suggested areas of counseling for individual students.

To reinforce the value of individual sessions, the counselor developed a strategy of bringing specific issues anonymously into the classroom. She found that students were highly similar so that if one student was facing a problem, other students had the same problem in the past or would encounter it in the future. Discussing problems in a group context allowed students to think of solutions to each other's problems.

The counselor scheduled appointments with students during non-class hours, providing a "course" of career counseling for almost all students (a few were not interested in receiving counseling). The number of sessions given was determined by student need. Most students attended counseling sessions once a week for six weeks.

Unscheduled, individualized counseling was also given as needed. Sometimes students wished to discuss predicaments that had suddenly arisen and the counselor made herself available "impromptu" for this propose. As will be described in a later section, many students experienced hardships connected with urban poverty, over and above problems related specifically to learning disabilities. The counselor was at the front line in dealing with the sometimes very serious social issues presented by students. She sometimes needed to act as a liaison between the student and other service providers such as psychiatrists, welfare administrators and homeless shelter staff.

In addition to the training components just described, career-education workshops were given for parents, guardians, and relatives on topics related to vocational training and preparation for work. Students also attended some of the workshops. The project director, counselor, and learning disability specialist led the workshops, which were held at times convenient to parents, usually in early evening hours. Typically, workshops consisted of a presentation followed by a question-answer and discussion period. In some cases presentations were made by program graduates who were working. After the presentation, participants met in small groups led by staff members in order to discuss specific concerns. Examples of

announcements and agendas of several parent workshops may be found in Appendix F.

STAFFING PATTERN

Agency-Based Instructors

Vocational instruction at FEGS and FOH was provided by instructors who were ongoing members of staff of the agencies. It is helpful for instructors at a trade school such as that run by FEGS to receive orientation regarding the special needs of learning disabled students and the reasons for classroom interventions of a learning disabled specialist. Instructors at rehabilitation agencies such as FOH may already be serving learning disabled students and would not require extra orientation.

Agency-Based Learning Disabilities Specialist

As mentioned above, mainstream vocational schools such as that operated by FEGS do not usually provide support or modifications to accommodate the special needs of individuals with learning disabilities. One feature of the present demonstration model was the provision of the services of a learning disabilities specialist to support the vocational training given at FEGS. The learning disabilities specialist served as case manager for program students, and held regular case meetings with VESID counselors.

The specialist was responsible for providing remediation and support to participants on an individual basis both in and out of the vocational classrooms. She rotated among the five FEGS vocational classrooms, acting both as coach and intermediary between the student and the instructor.

Students lacked self-esteem and were often fearful of asking the instructor questions, feeling embarrassed about not being able to understand or remember. The specialist taught them how to seek clarification from the instructor. Frequent reinforcement was necessary before they began to feel comfortable about asking questions.

The specialist frequently engaged students in discussion of what they were learning, eliciting information about specific tasks. Verbalization of procedures

provided reinforcement of newly acquired skills. Students often had difficulties remembering the names of tools and other job-specific vocabulary. The specialist addressed this problem by frequently reviewing these terms. One objective of such remediation was to help students speak fluently about their skills area, which would be important in job interviews at a later time.

Many of the participants evidenced passivity, not seeking more work when a task was complete, or not attempting to solve problems when they arose as tasks were being performed. They tended merely to wait for something to happen rather than to take action under their own initiative. In such situations, the specialist approached the student and elicited suggestions about next steps, providing assistance when needed. The specialist regularly monitored and checked the work that students were doing while she was present in the classroom. When there were problems, she would often call the instructor over and ask him to re-teach the skill.

Sometimes students' pace of working was inappropriate to the task. Some students were impulsive, completing tasks rapidly without necessary attention to detail. Others worked far too slowly to engage in a skill successfully in competitive employment. Since many students found it difficult to reflect on their own performance, the first step in helping a student in this situation was to draw his or her attention to the pace of working. As students struggled with difficult tasks, they sometimes became disheartened. The specialist provided many pep talks to encourage students to continue to try.

Some of the instructors had a rather brusque, unsympathetic style, sometimes possibly to simulate work situations. At times, some became angry with project students when they made mistakes. Of course, this style may be found among the students' future supervisors and bosses, and could thus be seen as constituting a necessary form of training. However, this approach could be devastating to some of the more emotionally delicate students. The specialist advocated for students, attempting to explain to instructors the nature of the students' problems and enlisting their support.

The specialist, with the instructors' consent, "pulled out" students from classrooms at times to work on specific tasks. When program completion was imminent, she strengthened their skills n filling out practice job applications and constructing resumes, skills that were also being taught in the college basic skills class. Sometimes a student would need to complete an application form to take to a

job interview and would ask the specialist to help. Her strategy was to encourage the student to perform the task independently, and later help him or her with corrections. Spelling skills were extremely deficient in this group, making her assistance indispensable. The specialist also helped students prepare for interviews for which they were being sent. These activities reinforced skills learned through interview simulation role play exercises in the college interpersonal skills class.

The specialist addressed problems of attendance and punctuality often found in special education students. At intervals she reviewed with students the agency's rules and regulations. When necessary and appropriate, she drew up behavioral contracts with students in an attempt to reduce lateness or absence. (Sometimes the mention of a behavioral contract was counterproductive; some students associated this intervention with special education and refused to participate.) The specialist provided a record of her activities and observations on a weekly basis. The "Vocational Training Observation" form used for this purpose is in Appendix G. In addition, she prepared regular case reports.

As mentioned above, the trade school had the responsibility of placing program completers in jobs. Job placement officers expected individuals who were nearing completion to approach them, initiating contact in the search for work. Since many project students were not able to take the initiative, there was a risk of their not being sent for interviews. The specialist became aware of this problem, and facilitated the initiation of contact.

Job placement personnel may unintentionally lavish their attention on higher functioning students while paying less attention to others: this is an issue that programs serving severely learning disabled students need to grapple with. On one hand, one wants to advocate as much as possible for this group. On the other hand, an agency that sends for job interviews possibly incompetent applicants who need special understanding and accommodation may jeopardize its credibility in seeking employment for its non-disabled or higher functioning students. Clearly, a substantial amount of advocacy and education with both vocational training agencies and potential employers is necessary (Michaels, 1989).

Program graduates frequently contacted the specialist, sometimes just to "report in," or to enlist her help with problems on the job even as much as two years after they had completed the progam. Sometimes completers lost their jobs and

contacted the specialist for moral support and help in finding another placement. FEGS was responsible for placing students in further jobs, should a job be lost. The specialist acted as liaison, setting up appointments for students with job placement officers.

The learning disabilities specialist played a major role in the raising of awareness of agency staff regarding the special needs of learning disabled students. As staff became aware that students were often capable of learning but needed special help, they became more able and willing to accommodate students' needs.

An individual serving as a learning disabilities specialist in this type of program should be highly familiar with both the specific vocational skills being taught and a wide variety of instructional techniques effective in compensating for the cognitive, memory and perceptual deficits of severely learning disabled students. This combination of expertise is rare, and considerable amount of on-the-job training and supervision may be required.

The ability of the specialist to provide "on-line" support in the vocational classrooms to project participants was contingent upon the vocational instructors' acceptance of this function. In some cases, the presence of the specialist in the classroom may not be welcomed by an instructor. Instructors may think that students should be able to fend for themselves, without extra support. In order for the services of a learning disabilities specialist to be effective in a vocational school unused to such an intervention, it is of great importance that agency supervisors orient and tactfully "educate" the instructors regarding this role.

As shown in the section on job-placement outcomes below, many program completers were able to obtain and retain skilled, competitive jobs in the areas in which they were trained. Their success appears attributable in no small measure to the interventions and support provided by the learning disabilities specialist.

College-Based Program Coordinator

The project director served as program coordinator. Responsibilities in setting up and monitoring services provided at the college included: working with the college administration, VESID, high schools, and the vocational training agencies to start the program; producing promotional material; recruiting students; scheduling and holding intake interviews; working with VESID and agencies to select students;

interacting regularly with agencies on program operation decisions such as scheduling; hiring and supervising of counselor, basic skills instructor and tutor; arranging for payment of program staff; managing program budget; handling routine correspondence including inquiries about program; setting up the schedule for interpersonal skills and basic skills instruction, tutoring and work-study; reserving classrooms; producing a calendar for each student; developing and enforcing attendance policy; planning and holding staff meetings; overseeing and conducting pre and post testing; overseeing periodic teacher competency ratings (to be described in a later section); keeping student records, purchasing instructional supplies as needed; planning and conducting parent workshops each quarter; arranging for coverage if staff were absent; producing regular student magazine.

College-Based Counselor

The counselor, who was full-time, played a key role in the program. She fulfilled many functions from classroom instruction to individualized counseling to case management. She taught interpersonal skills classes of up to twenty students so that each student received four hours' instruction per week. Conducting classes of this type presented the challenge of students who lacked both the self-confidence and the verbal skills needed to engage in conversation. The counselor proved to be a vivacious, sensitive individual who was able to accommodate the instruction to the students' needs so that by the end of their training they were participating fully in discussion of a range of interpersonal skills issues. The counselor demonstrated much creativity in adapting the curriculum and developing additional exercises to accommodate the groups' specific needs. The nature of interpersonal skills instruction is described below in the chapter on students' experiences in the program.

The counselor met with each participant upon entry and administered the Career Maturity Interview. This provided information on the student's work history and on his or her awareness of employment-related information which would be used subsequently in counseling. The counselor also pre- and post-tested each student on their Piers Harris Self-Concept Scale.

Each participant was offered counseling either on an individual basis or in small groups. Most accepted the opportunity of individual sessions and the counselor

scheduled these over a period of approximately six weeks per student. For many students, the counseling sessions provided the first experience they had ever had of reflecting on and/or revealing sensitive issues and emotions. The ability of individuals with severe learning disabilities to benefit from counseling is limited by their difficulties with verbal expression and also by their highly concrete style of thought. However, in almost all cases, students learned to express their feelings in counseling sessions on a range of issues including their embarrassment and anger concerning their learning problems. Many students needed to address the emotional issues experienced by severely learning disabled individuals in interacting with family members. For example, one student was treated as "stupid" and incompetent by an older sibling; in another case, a students' mother fostered much dependency.

In some cases, it was necessary to address inappropriate career aspirations (e.g., one student wanted to become a highly skilled construction worker; another wanted to become a repairer of computers). Other individuals had considerable social service needs (e.g., one student was homeless for a period of time), and others were showing symptoms of substance or alcohol abuse, or psychiatric illness. In such cases, the counselor not only provided counseling but, in order to obtain necessary services, began to serve as an unofficial social worker. Examples of counseling are provided in the chapter on students' experiences below. The counselor wrote regular reports on the counseling sessions.

It will be recalled that the state rehabilitation agency sponsored training in the trade school and rehabilitation agency, while the federal grant provided funding for the college-based training. Because VESID counselors needed to interface with program staff concerned on a day-to-day basis with the vocational component of training, the FEGS-based learning disability specialist and the FOH counselors served as primary case managers. However, the college-based counselor played an important role in the case management not only in providing information to the FEGS and FOH staff and VESID counselors regarding students' progress at the college, but in contributing to recommendations regarding additional service provision. The counselor worked closely with the project learning disability specialist in the management of cases, and kept detailed case notes.

The counselor played a leading role in case conferences held by project staff. She provided background information and made suggestions for accommodations that

could be made in the classroom instruction and tutoring. She met with or talked by phone to parents of some of the participants regarding issues that arose.

She followed up with students regarding non-attendance or lateness. Since it was important that the counselor not be perceived as an "authority figure," if discipline regarding attendance or punctuality was needed, the counselor referred cases to the program coordinator (project director). It was the policy of the program that if students were not able to attend the college, they needed to phone the counselor by a specified time in the morning.

The counselor assigned participants to work-study sites. This task was a major responsibility; not only were other special programs on campus competing for scarce work-study sites, but the fact that the project participants were somewhat low-functioning made them difficult to place at times. However, the counselor was an extremely friendly, outgoing individual who participated in many activities in the college; she networked with many other members of the college staff and was able to obtain work-study placements for all participants. Further information on the work-study component of training may be found in the chapter on students' experiences in the program.

Other responsibilities of the counselor included describing the program to school and VESID staff and other service providers who called for information, scheduling extra-curricular activities for individual students at the college, and referring program completers for other services such as G.E.D. classes.

The counselor's contribution was invaluable to the program. It is possible that the ability of students to benefit from the other components of training depended on the availability of the support provided through counseling.

Whether the counselor and coordinator work full or part time depends upon the number of students. If the number is twenty or below, part time participation for each is sufficient. In this case it is possible that the counselor and coordinator functions could be combined, adding up to a full time position. However, since the counselor may not have expertise in the basic skills area, it would then be necessary to add a part-time instructional consultant to program staff. Responsibilities would include: supervising basic skills instructor and tutor on instructional materials and methods, observing and evaluating teaching and tutoring at intervals, pre and post testing of academic skills; and meeting regularly with instructor, tutor and

counselor to case conference each student. A consultant would probably be required a half-day every two weeks.

College-Based Basic Skills Instructor. A community college remedial skills instructor taught basic skills classes of up to twenty students four hours per week per student. A part-time, hourly-paid staff member, this individual was responsible for developing lesson plans which she submitted regularly to the coordinator; conducting instruction; evaluating progress using competency checklists; assisting in planning tutoring sessions; and attending case conferences and staff meeetings. In general, college remedial instructors are not familiar with the learning disabilities area and require on-the-job training and supervision by the program coordinator so that special needs are adequately met.

College-Based Basic Skills Tutor. Typically, basic skills tutors who participated in the project were undergraduate students of psychology or English. While a college degree was not required for this position, excellent reading, writing, math, and spoken English were necessary. Supervision by the coordinator on learning disabilities issues was provided as necessary. However, the project was fortunate in recruiting tutors who had background in the learning disabilities area. Some also had experience tutoring English as a Second Language students, which was also relevant. A part-time hourly-paid member of staff, the tutor's responsibilities included: developing tutoring plans; providing one-hour tutoring sessions to individuals and small groups so that each student received at least one hour of tutoring per week; keeping a log of activities; attending case conferences and staff meetings; and providing input to the basic skills teacher regarding the progress of specific students.

TRAINING OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of the training was employment in a competitive entry-level job in the area in which vocational training had been received. A certificate of completion, a copy of which may be found in Appendix H, was awarded to each program completer. Other objectives included the continuation of educational pursuits such as enrolling in G.E.D. or basic literacy classes on program completion.

CHAPTER 4
RECRUITMENT OF STUDENTS

RECRUITMENT METHODS

A variety of recruitment methods were used, including meetings with referring organizations, mailings, presentations and phone calls. Fliers used in mailings and as handouts for presentations and meetings may be found in Appendix I. Presentations were conducted by project and/or agency staff. When project staff made presentations it was helpful to have vocational agency staff on hand to answer specific questions about vocational skills taught and job placement objectives. Recruitment activities included the following:

1. Meetings with the VESID Downstate Coordinator and the four district Office Managers, in New York City, consulting with them on developing program components, and encouraging them to publicize the program among the counselors at each district office.
2. Presentations to the counselors at each VESID district office, followed by informal discussions.
3. Follow up phone calls to VESID counselors who had made referrals to discuss possibility of further referrals.
4. Meetings with the Administrator of the New York City Board of Education Office of Transition Services to plan and conduct recruitment through high schools.
5. Mailings to students who had left high school special education programs in the past five years. Fliers in unaddressed, stamped envelopes were given by the project to the Board of Education Office of Transition Services, whose staff addressed and mailed the envelopes. This preserved confidentiality.
6. Presentations to four borough-wide meetings of high school Assistant Principals for Special Education in the New York City schools.
7. Follow-up mailings and phone calls to high school special education staff including assistant principals, guidance counselors, grade advisors, and teachers.
8. Invited presentations to high school special education classes.
9. Invited presentations at high school special education career days.

10. Mailings and follow up phone calls to coordinators for disabled students services on the CUNY community college campuses to recruit learning disabled students who were not felt to be capable of succeeding in regular academic programs.
11. Discussions with and mailings to advocacy organizations such as the Association for Neurologically Impaired and Brain Injured Children (ANIBIC), the New York Branch of the Orton Dyslexia Society, the LD Helpline (maintained by the Learning Disabilities Association, formerly the Association for Children with Learning Disabilities), the Literacy Assistance Center, (a city clearinghouse for literacy services). and various library literacy progams.
12. Discussions with and mailings to developmental disabilities advisory groups in each Borough President's office.
13. A presentation to New York State Education Department Regional Councils.
14. Presentations at open houses given by FEGS.
15. Program descriptions in newsletters of national organizations including the HEATH National Clearinghouse on Postsecondary Education for Individuals with Disabilities, and the Learning Disabilities Special Interest Group of the Association on Handicapped Student Service Programs in Postsecondary Education (AHSSPPE).
16. Contacts that resulted from dissemination activities. The project was presented at various professional meetings and conferences, for example, a meeting of a local chapter of the Council for Exceptional Children, and an annual meeting of the New York Orton Dyslexia Society. Contact with hospital social workers, special education teachers, case workers at residential homes and other individuals resulted from such presentations.
17. A public service announcement that was placed on a local radio station by FEGS.

RECRUITMENT OUTCOMES

As a result of the recruitment activities listed above, a total of 319 calls were received to inquire about the program Calls were received from VESID counselors,

high school staff, parents, relatives, members of advocacy groups, hospital social workers, city employment bureau staff, individuals interested in attending the program, and staff of special residential schools, substance abuse facilities, homeless youth programs, and religious organizations providing social services. Out of the 319 calls received, 43 (13%) callers requested general information and 276 calls (87%) concerned specific applicants. Of these, 47 (17%) actually entered the program. Procedures in the selection of students are described in the next chapter.

Specific referral sources are shown below. The number of calls for each referral source is reported as a percentage of the total number ("N") in each category.

1. Referral sources for students entering program (N = 47)
   a. VESID counselors: 30%
   b. School staff (guidance counselors, grade advisors, work-study coordinators, etc.): 9%
   c. Parent or guardian: 6%
   d. Applicant him/herself: 4%
   e. FEGS: 40%
   f. Other (sibling, friend, other program): 11%
2. Referral sources for non-entrants (N=229)
   a. VESID counselors: 10%
   b. School staff (guidance counselors, grade advisors, work-study coordinators, etc.): 20%
   c. Parent or guardian: 14%
   d. Applicant him/herself: 7%
   e. FEGS: 10%
   f. Other (sibling, friend, other program): 39%

All the referrals from VESID and 79% of FEGS referrals were "open cases," i.e., VESID clients who were in the process of being placed in vocational training programs. Such cases constituted 70% of the program entrants and 16% of the non-entrants. An additional 19% of entrants and 17% of non-entrants, referred by other sources, were open cases with VESID at the time of the referral. (In these cases, the project informed the VESID counselor that the individual was interested in entering the program. The VESID counselor then determined whether entry was

appropriate.) Thus, 89% of program entrants and 33% of non-entrants were VESID open cases at the time of referral.

In some cases, applicants with open cases had not persevered in their contact with VESID because they were kept waiting for long periods of time between appointments. In other cases, applicants experienced routine rather than personalized attention on the part of a VESID counselor, in contrast to the close attention received from special education staff in the high school. In these cases, project staff encouraged the applicant to resume contact with the VESID counselor especially since the agency was the only possible source of funding for the vocational training. At times the project counselor advocated for the applicant by contacting the VESID counselor to attempt to speed up the referral process.

Collapsing across entry/non-entry status, 42% of the total number of applicants (N = 276) had open cases with VESID, leaving 58% who were not clients at the time of referral. All applicants who were not VESID clients were referred to VESID. It was explained to these applicants, who in almost all cases lacked the ability or desire to finance their own training, that program entry depended on VESID sponsorship. It was also explained that the final decision regarding whether this or another vocational training program was the most appropriate rested with the VESID counselor. In some cases, project staff felt that other types of vocational training, such as sheltered workshops in the case of relatively low functioning applicants, would be more appropriate. This information was relayed to VESID.

Project staff worked with VESID office managers to facilitate intake and referral. This often accelerated the VESID process, often very lengthy, during which time applicants might feel inclined to drift away. In a number of cases, applicants, parents and high school staff were reluctant to initiate contact with VESID on the basis of hearsay or past experience. Again, project staff found itself in an advocacy role, this time on behalf of VESID, attempting to overcome applicants' trepidation in the interest of obtaining vocational training.

ISSUES IN RECRUITMENT

In the New York City high schools, students who are classified as learning disabled are either placed in self-contained "MIS-I" classroom (one teacher to 12 students) or are assigned to mainstream classes and attend resource rooms regularly.

Approximately 20,000 New York City high school students receive MIS-1 or resource room services per year, of whom approximately 70% (approximately 14,000) are classified as learning disabled. Significant numbers of learning disabled high school students are graduating, leaving, aging out, and dropping out each year, lacking the ability to succeed in postsecondary education, or to obtain and retain skilled, competitive jobs. Frequently during the development and operation of the project, project staff consulted with the VESID Downstate Coordinator and Office Managers, and the Administrator of the Office of Transitional Services, and Borough Head Supervisors of Special Education of the New York City Board of Education. All indicated that they thought the program provided valuable training to learning disabled young adults. Indeed, if they had not been positive about program activities, there would have been little reason to develop the project. Further, all these individuals made practical suggestions that were incorporated into program operations.

Given the evident need for career preparation in this population, it is perplexing to see that, despite a comprehensive and energetic recruitment strategy, only 47 individuals entered the program. The small number of students served may be attributed to several factors, probably operating in combination, as follows:

1. Offering a new program. Despite the positive opinions of the VESID Coordinator and Managers, individual counselors may be reluctant to refer clients to an unfamiliar program. The program was unusual in that traditional vocational training was combined with college based training. In some cases, counselors may not have thought that this type of training was necessary or appropriate for learning disabled clients. For example, some counselors told project staff that they did not see the relevance of interpersonal and basic skills instruction in vocational training. As with viewing any new program, VESID counselors would understandably wish to see demonstrations of success before they would refer clients. However, an impasse can arise when a new program depends on one referral source, but that referral source awaits evidence of success before referring.

   Also, for the VESID counselor, the unusual combination of services meant new paperwork procedures. As mentioned in the previous section, the length of the training period at FEGS and FOH was longer for project than non-

project students. Since VESID Managers generously agreed that VESID would pay for students' transportation to the college in addition to the vocational training sites, more complex authorization procedures were required.

2. Lack of preparation in high school. Special education students are often not interested in vocational training programs when they leave high school. Often they and their parents have unrealistic expectations, possibly generated and fueled by high school staff, regarding their ability to achieve goals. Many appear to expect to matriculate into regular college programs, or to obtain skilled jobs when they leave high school and will not consider other alternatives. Students may sit for required minimum competency tests over and over, hoping to obtain a regular diploma. At the same time, they are apprehensive about the future and have only a vague understanding of the nature of the demands of college or skilled jobs.

There are some dedicated, valiant special education teachers serving as transition linkage coordinators who are working intensively with students in their last year of high school, trying to familiarize them with appropriate postsecondary options. Several such teachers referred students to the program and some even accompanied them to the initial interview at the college (see next chapter on selection procedures). Despite the great effort of the teacher to try to stimulate students' interest in the program, the impression sometimes received by project staff at the interview was that students did not understand the meaning of vocational training and were frightened of it. Perhaps if the coordinators had begun working with students several years earlier, comprehension of and attitudes towards employment preparation would be better. The need for an earlier start in transition services is also indicated by the fact, noted in the literature review above, that many learning disabled students drop out during the ninth grade. Of course, it must be borne in mind that middle-school students and their parents may view a focus on occupation and employment as premature.

When project staff made presentations to high school special education classes, students tended to be either unruly or passive, and if they were listening to the presentation, did not seem to understand the nature of the vocational training program being described. Following two such

presentations, project staff invited groups of appropriate learning disabled students and their teachers to visit the program. It was planned that existing project students would act as "buddies" to visiting students and take them through a typical day. On both occasions, visits were cancelled by the schools at the last minute, in one case because of a conflict in scheduling and in the other because the students who were to visit had not brought in the necessary parental consents. In the great majority of contacts with high schools, teachers and other staff were highly enthusiastic about the value of the program but somehow the necessary linkages were not made.

3. Lack of coordination between VESID and the high schools. In many cases VESID and the high schools are not successful in effecting the transition of special education students to postsecondary settings. (This is partly a function of funding cuts and hiring freezes.) In some cases, the high schools reported informally to project staff that VESID counselors were not easily available, and in other cases VESID counselors felt that high school staff were not providing necessary support in referring students for services. In particular, VESID intake is facilitated when documentation of psychoeducational evaluations conducted by the schools is given to the VESID counselor. In informal contacts, VESID counselors indicated that this documentation was sometimes not provided.

While it was not possible to determine the proportion of responsibility of the high schools and VESID respectively, somehow many learning disabled students who needed transition services were slipping through the cracks. That 58% of program applicants were not VESID clients suggests that more effective school-VESID linkages are needed. Also, more resources need to be made available to both the high schools and VESID.

4. Lack of participation by students and/or parents. In some cases, students and parents were not cooperative as VESID and the high schools attempted to refer students to the program. Also, students and parents did not always understand the importance of keeping appointments and following through in other ways. Intensive parental advocacy would probably be effective in improving the quality of transition efforts of the high school and VESID. However, the parents of many severely learning disabled urban young adults

may be absent, inattentive, uninterested, low functioning, or otherwise unable to participate in the transition process.

5. Geographical location of the college and vocational training agencies. The college was located in a non-residential area that was undergoing conversion from a factory and warehouse to an office district. The vocational training agencies were located in a downtown business and residential district that is also an area known for drug dealing. Further, subway travel was required to attend both the college and vocational agencies. Some parents and others may have regarded the training sites as potentially dangerous, and inappropriate for learning disabled students, many of whom gave the appearance of vulnerability and could be crime victims.

There may be significant positive effects on school and agency transition activities in the offing as a result of funding of transition demonstration projects by the Office of Special Education Programs of the U.S. Department of Education over the past eight years or so. However, at the time of operation of the current project, comprehensive transition activities in the New York City high schools needed to be enhanced. For example, teachers might be assigned to transition-related tasks but were not released from other responsibilities to do this. School transition staff need full administrative support and commitment of resources if they are to make a meaningful contribution.

As suggested above, the schools need to start much earlier in preparing students for work, both in terms of attitudes and pre-employment skills. The beginning of junior high school is probably not too soon to start. Students, parents, relatives, and guardians need to be frequently provided with concrete experiences (e.g., field trips, especially where they can sample a day or two of education or training) of all kinds of postsecondary options so that they can meaningfully evaluate suggestions that are made to them at the time the students are ready to leave school. In fact, various types of transition services are available in both junior high and high schools, but they may need to be made more comprehensive for special education students in academic high schools.

CHAPTER 5
SELECTION PROCEDURES

Because of the collaborative nature of the program and the fact that students were sponsored by the state vocational rehabilitation agency (VESID), selection procedures were complicated. In essence, an applicant had to satisfy three sets of eligibility criteria: those of the project, VESID and the vocational training agency respectively.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Stage One

First, screening was conducted by project staff in telephone interviews of callers, who were either calling to refer applicants, or were the applicants themselves. A form used for this purpose, the "Preliminary Screening Interview" may be found in Appendix J. Applicants were screened in by project staff if they conformed to the following characteristics.

- were 17 years of age or above
- had exited or were about to exit high school special education programs, and had been formally evaluated as having a learning disability
- did not have a high school diploma, or if they had one, were not interested in or appropriate for matriculation into an existing community college program
- had reading levels of third grade or higher

A third grade reading level was determined to be the miminum at which a student could benefit from instruction in a literacy classroom. Students functioning below the third grade level were considered to need reading instruction on an individual basis; the program did not have the resources to provide this intensive service.

Applicants who were judged not to be appropriate on the basis of the initial telephone screening were encouraged to contact VESID for possible referral to another program.

Stage Two

For those judged to be appropriate, the second step in the selection process was to set up an interview at the college. The way this was done depended on whether or not the applicant was already a VESID client, and if s/he was, whether or not the VESID counselor had made the referral. These possibilities were handled as follows:

1. If the applicant was a VESID client and the VESID counselor made the referral, an interview was scheduled.
2. If the applicant was a VESID client but the VESID counselor had not made the referral, project staff contacted the VESID counselor to discuss the feasibility of entry to the program. If the counselor agreed, an interview was scheduled. Otherwise, the applicant was asked to meet with the VESID counselor before an interview could be scheduled.
3. If the applicant was not a client of VESID, an interview was scheduled. After the interview, project staff initiated intake with VESID. When VESID intake was complete, the VESID counselor assigned to the case made a decision regarding whether or not to refer the applicant to the program.

The interview at the college helped to establish an applicant's appropriateness for the program. Ability to arrive at the interview, along with appropriate verbal skills and behavior, were indicators of motivation and ability to benefit from the program. Some applicants lacked travel skills and were unable to find the college. In this case, another interview was offered. Others presented signs of retardation or emotional disturbance which required further investigation before they could be considered. During the interview, the applicant was asked to complete a simple application form. Ability to understand and attempt the task was required for acceptance.

Some interview behaviors were diagnostic of needs that could later be addressed in training. Problematic behaviors included an applicant's arriving for the interview hours or days early or late, or an inability to attempt the application form task independently. Often, applicants revealed feelings of trepidation or anxiety to the interviewer; such information was noted so that the counselor could be sensitive to emotional needs when applicants entered the program. Forms used in the interview and subsequent follow-up, "Initial Interview," "Application," and "Case Notes," may be found in Appendix K.

If, on the basis of the interview at the college, project staff determined that the applicant was not appropriate, or the applicant indicated a lack of interest in the training, VESID counselors were informed so that another program could be offered.

Stage Three

The third step in the selection was taken if and when VESID determined that the applicant was both eligible for state vocational rehabilitation services and appropriate for the program. This step involved a Diagnostic Vocational Evaluation (DVE) at the vocational training agency. The evaluation required full time attendance by the applicant in the vocational classroom, to try out a variety of tasks that would be taught. If the applicant did not appear capable of learning skills in one area, s/he was given the opportunity to try another area, with VESID's approval. The evaluation period was usually five weeks, but FEGS initiated a one-week evaluation for program applicants which was used if the VESID counselor agreed. If the applicant "passed" the evaluation, s/he was accepted for entry to the program.

As reported in the previous chapter, 47 of 276 applicants (17%) entered the program. The other 229 applicants (83%) were screened out at various phases of the selection process, by project staff, VESID, the vocational training agencies, or by the applicants themselves. Reasons for non-entry, with percentages of non-entrants concerned, are presented below:

1. Screened out during initial contact with project staff, either in telephone screening interviews at the college: N = 135, 59% of the 229 non-entrants.
   a. Did not conform to desired student characteristics (e.g., were not in special education programs in high school and were not formally diagnosed as learning disabled, or were academically or cognitively too low functioning) (22% of 135).
   b. Conformed to desired student characteristics but were inappropriate for or not interested in receiving the college-based training (9% of 135).
   c. Conformed to desired student characteristics but were inappropriate for or not interested in receiving the college-based training (9% of 135).
   d. Did not attend scheduled interview; follow-up unsuccessful (64% of 135).

2. Screened out by VESID: N = 44, 19% of the 229 non-entrants
   a. Did not conform to desired student characteristics (48% of 44).
   b. Did not meet financial eligibility requirements for full sponsorship and were not able or willing to pay supplement (9% of 44).
   c. VESID intake or referral process took a long time; applicants lost interest and became engaged elsewhere (43% of 44).
3. Screened out by FEGS: N = 9, 4% of 229 non-entrants
   a. Completed but did not pass DVE (78% of 9).
   b. Passed evaluation but did not wish to attend program (11% of 9).
   c. Did not complete evaluation (11% of 9).
4. Screened out by self: still attending high school at time of referral, subsequently lost interest or became engaged elsewhere at time of leaving school: N = 41, 18% of 229.

ISSUES IN SELECTION

From the standpoint of the applicant, the major selection issue was the need to conform to three sets of entry criteria: those of the project, VESID and the vocational training agency. At the first "gate," the applicant had to be learning disabled, aged 17 or above, have a reading level of third grade or above, be able to arrive and communicate in some way at a preliminary interview, and be able at least to attempt a simple application form task.

At the next gate, VESID, a more rigorous set of criteria was applied in order to determine eligibility for services. To proceed through VESID's procedures requires much persistence, patience, and in some cases initiative on the part of an applicant. It is necessary to complete an application form that is written at the 7th grade level (Chetkovich et al., 1989), to attend appointments for intake and evaluation, to have a medical examination, and to be able to tolerate in some cases very long intervals between contacts. Possibly because counselors felt pressure of large caseloads, applicants often had to wait several months before receiving a letter confirming receipt of an application form for VESID services. Applicants who called the VESID offices regarding the status of their applications were often not successful in receiving information. As mentioned in the previous section, as a result of contacts set up by the VESID Managers, project staff advocated for some

of the applicants to try to speed up the process. In many cases, VESID counselors were extremely responsive but in some cases there was a lack of interest so that some of the applicants "faded away."

At the third gate, applicants had to complete and pass a Diagnostic Vocational Evaluation (DVE). This presented a totally different set of requirements, related to job skills. However, persistence and interpersonal skills were also needed. Some applicants had not participated regularly in any school or work related activity for several years and had difficulty adjusting to a regular schedule.

In summary, because of the need for VESID sponsorship and because of the collaborative nature of the training services, the selection process was more complex and rigorous than it might be in other postsecondary programs. It is possible that applicants' level of persistence in the selection process was diagnostic of their ability to succeed in the program.

CHAPTER 6
CHARACTERISTICS OF PROGRAM ENTRANTS

Forty-seven students entered the vocational training program. At the time of this writing, 23 (49%) had completed the program, 14 (30%) had left prior to completion, and 10 (21%) were still receiving training.

Ethnic status of program entrants was as follows: 45% African-American; 28% Hispanic; 21% White; 6% Asian-American. With the exception of several students who lived in rented single rooms or, as mentioned below, in a homeless shelter, students lived with their parents, guardians, or other relatives. None were married. One female student lived with her three children and her own mother. The family of one student gave him an apartment in the basement of their house to help him develop independent living skills.

Information concerning age, sex, number of years between school exit and program entry, school exit status, academic scores, self-concept scores, and I.Q. scores for the 47 program entrants is provided below. For purpose of comparison, entrants were divided into groups: Group 1 contains students who completed the program (N=23). Group 2 contains those who left the program prior to completion (N=14), and Group 3 contains students still in training at the time of report preparation (N=10).

AGE

Range: 17-32

	All entrants	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Mean	21.4	21.0	21.4	22.4
S.D.	3.8	2.8	4.4	4.9

SEX

	All entrants	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Male (%)	83	83	93	70
Female (%)	17	17	7	30

NUMBER OF YEARS BETWEEN SCHOOL EXIT AND PROGRAM ENTRY

Range: 0-16 years

	All entrants	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Mean	3.4	3.3	3.7	3 4
S.D.	4.2	3.7	4.6	4.1

SCHOOL EXIT STATUS

	All entrants	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
No diploma or certificate (%)	57	43	86	50
Special education certificate (%)	13	13	14	10
Regular high school diploma (%)	30	43	0	40

ACADEMIC AND SELF-CONCEPT SCORES*

	All entrants	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Reading: Mean (S.D) Range: 2.9-9.6	4.9 (1.8)	5.1 (2.0)	4.2 (1.8)	4.9 (1.4)
Spelling: Mean (S.D.) Range: 2.9-10.1	4.7 (2.5)	4.9 (2.7)	4.0 (1.6)	5.1 (2.8)
Arithmetic: Mean (S.D.) Range: 2.9-9.1	5.8 (1.7)	5.8 (1.9)	6.1 (1.0)	5.7 (2.1)
Self-concept: Mean (S.D.) Range: 42-76	58.3 (10.4)	57.9 (11.7)	59.4 (11.6)	57.9 (4.3)

*Measures used

Reading test: Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE; CTB/McGraw-Hill, 1976), reading comprehension subtest. Scores shown as grade equivalents.

Spelling and arithmetic tests: Wide Range Achievement Tests - Revised (Jastak & Wilkinson, 1984). Scores shown as grade quivalents.

Self-concept measure: Adapted Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (based on Piers, 1984). Wording of several items slightly changed to be more appropriate for young adults. Raw scores shown (highest score possible = 80).

WAIS-R I.Q. SCORES*

	All entrants	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Verbal I.Q. Mean (S.D.) Range: 61-95	75.4 (6.4)	75.2 (6.5)	74.9 (4.5)	76.6 (8.5)
Perf. I.Q.: Mean (S.D.) Range: 66-112	81.1 (10.7)	79.2 (10.2)	84.6 (9.7)	81.7 (13.2)
Full Scale I.Q.: Mean (S.D.) Range: 67-105	76.7 (8.5)	75.8 (5.5)	77.6 (5.5)	78.0 (10.5)

*Weschler, 1981

The students were similar in age to those described by Minskoff et. al. (1989) and Chetkovich et al. (1989), as mentioned in the first section of this report. While I.Q. scores were somewhat lower, academic scores were fairly similar to those reported by Chetkovich et al.

There were few differences between program completers, leavers and current participants. However, while 43% of program completers had left high school without a diploma or certificate 86% of program leavers did so. Following Zigmond & Thornton (1985), this difference, together with a lack of major differences in skills abilities, suggests that persistence is a major factor in program completion.

Program participants had limitations in addition to the low scores shown above. While the families of several students were financially relatively comfortable, most students were of low socioeconomic status. The home environments of some were extremely unstable as a result of poverty, substance abuse, or emotional disturbance.

One student lived alternately with his father, who was emotionally unstable and on welfare, in a room in a house populated with crack addicts, and in a city homeless shelter. The parents of some of the students were dependent on their help; for example, the mother of one student spoke no English and on a number of occasions had him miss school so that he could accompany her on various errands. Another student was often required by his family to leave school early to "watch" his father who had a severe alcoholism problem.

Some students' families were unable to afford the cost of transportation to the program. This presented problems in the first few months of training because VESID's payment for travel was on a reimbursement basis. Sometimes FECS loaned students transportation money until the reimbursement was made. Several students appeared to be malnourished, again because of their financial position. They were extremely thin, and frequently purchased junk food from vending machines.

Several students had criminal justice histories and it was sometimes necessary for them to miss school in order to attend court appointments. Several had substance abuse backgrounds and two lived in drug rehabilitation facilities. While in the program, several students at times demonstrated erratic behavior and moods typical of crack ingestion. Several other students appeared to be alcoholics. Two students left the program because they had resumed drinking heavily on a regular basis.

In addition, some students had physical disabilities or emotional disturbance. Two students had earlier been academically successful high school students who later sustained brain injuries that resulted in learning disabilities. Several other students had mild cerebral palsy. One student had a severe speech impediment. Two students had seizure disorders which were controlled by medication. Others suffered from severe depression, panic disorder, and possible psychosis. Some of these disorders were controlled by medication. In several instances, students manifested severe behavioral reactions in class because they had forgotten or decided not to take medication, or because dosages were being adjusted by medical doctors.

Students' socioeconomic, emotional, and physical problems compounded the effects of the learning disabilities. It was necessary to consider these problems in all aspects of the training. Not only was it necessary to incorporate personal issues into career counseling, but teaching staff needed to adapt classroom instruction depending on needs that were unpredictably demonstrated.

On-the-job-training was needed for project staff, including the basic skills teacher and tutor, who had little experience of teaching students with multiple serious needs. In staff meetings, case conferences, and frequent informal discussions, staff reviewed individual cases and as a group decided how to deal with them. These interactions were necessary so that staff responses to student behaviors would be consistent.

Assignment of Entrants to Vocational Training Areas

Program participants were assigned to vocational training areas based on the results of diagnostic vocational evaluations conducted by VESID. Percentages of students (N=47) assigned to each area were as follows:

Building Maintenance: 47%
Mailroom/Reprographics: 27%
Jewelry Manufacturing: 11%
Furniture Finishing: 9%
Upholstery: 4%
Custodial Services: 2%
Data Entry: 2%

CHAPTER 7

EXAMPLES OF STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES IN THE PROGRAM

As discussed in the previous chapter, students entered the program with a wide variety of needs. The combination of learning emotional, and physical difficulties, compounded by poverty, was a challenge to all members of staff. The key to assisting students make the transition to work rested in individualizing services as much as possible. Despite difficulties that naturally arise in working with a population of this kind, all staff members found the work highly rewarding in a personal sense. In many cases, students had not previously experienced the level of attention that staff paid to their learning needs and their feelings. The students' responsiveness to expressions of caring, along with noticeable signs of growth while in the program, were gratifying to all who worked with them.

Regular reports on students' performance in vocational training, interpersonal skills training, work-study, and career counseling were prepared by the project learning disabilities specialist, Cynthia Coren, and counselor, Phyllis Illges. This chapter draws on these reports and presents examples of learning activities, and situations and dilemmas that arose during the training. In all cases, students' names have been changed. Some identifying characteristics have also been changed.

EXPERIENCES IN VOCATIONAL TRAINING

1. Example of emotional problem affecting employability, and of delayed successful outcome

Fred was a sensitive man aged 20 who was enrolled in upholstery training. He was manually adept and meticulous in his construction. He was, however, reluctant to ask for clarification from vocational instructors when he did not understand verbal or written instructions. One of the L.D. specialist's main interventions with Fred was to ask him questions about procedures and encourage him to ask the vocational instructors for assistance when needed.

Fred had a chronic problem with lateness probably connected to depression. He slept poorly at night and had difficulty getting up at the appropriate time. The specialist discussed this problem with him on numerous occasions, stressing that if he was to become job ready he had to be punctual and that good technical skills alone were not enough.

The specialist met frequently on an informal basis with Fred's vocational instructors. They supported her opinion that he had to improve his punctuality significantly in order to be successful on a job. After an instructor once scolded him harshly about his lateness, Fred shouted back, "I've got problems!" The specialist then met with the instructors in order to bring to their attention Fred's particular obstacles and problems. They readily agreed to be lenient with him in terms of punctuality, recognizing that lateness was not a result of poor attitude, but of emotional problems.

Fred appeared to welcome the opportunity to discuss his work and talk to someone who cared about him. He tended to be guarded with the instructors, but was quite comfortable with the specialist and project counselor. He appeared to need much positive reinforcement. The specialist focused on how far his skills had developed rather than dwelling on deficits.

The specialist met with Fred, his VESID counselor, the project counselor, and the furniture placement counselor to discuss his progress and plan for his future. He had made significant progress and his upholstery skills were proficient at the entry level. The only factor which might hold him back in terms of employability was his chronic problem with lateness. The placement counselor stressed that most upholstery jobs begin at 8:00 a.m.

As job placement activities began, he continued to have difficulty with attendance and follow through. He sometimes called at the last minute to cancel appointments with the specialist and placement counselor that had been set up to discuss job interview strategies and fill out practice applications. On one occasion he was extremely anxious about an interview at a job site that was a considerable distance from his home. The specialist called the company for travel instructions and then relayed them to Fred's mother. His mother was critical of the instructions and angry that her son was expected to travel so great a distance from home. A water main broke while he was en route to the interview and he was not able to get there. He stated that he was going to give up but in subsequent conversations, the specialist encouraged him to persevere with his job search.

Fred expressed anger that the placement counselor had not found him a job closer to home. Fred's mother, who appeared to be a volatile individual, seemed to exacerbate Fred's anxiety by blaming VESID and the placement counselor for Fred's problems. This seemed to agitate her son.

He obtained work as a clerk in a grocery store while continuing to pursue placement in the furniture area with the help of a FEGS placement counselor. While Fred's skills were well above average for the entry level, it was felt by FEGS that he needed an apprentice position. His attendance and punctuality problems combined with his unwillingness and inability to travel extensively make placement somewhat difficult. Six months after completing the program, he found an entry level position in the upholstery area on his own. He held this job for six months until a dispute over pay arose. Fred then obtained various other (unskilled) positions, and at the time of this writing, was receiving on-the-job training as an electrician, and had just gotten married.

2. Example of remediation and support in training

Student Ken, aged 24, was enrolled in building maintenance training, and was working on an independent project, a grandfather clock. The project involved reading technical diagrams and extensive measuring.

The student consulted a diagram, saying, "There must be a piece that goes inside." The specialist examined the diagram and said, "You're looking for the lower front panel. How do you know which is the right piece of wood?" The student replied, "I have to measure it." The specialist asked, "What are the dimensions?" Together they measured a board of the dimensions 16 5/8" by 1 1/8". The vocational instructor came over and gave the student instructions for squaring off the inside of the clock.

The specialist realized that Ken would feel more comfortable with measuring tasks if they spent time working on them together. She requested the vocational instructor's guidance in specific procedures so that she could help him. Ken expressed concern that the project was taking an undue amount of time to complete. The specialist discussed with him how long he had been working on the clock and how much progress he had made.

Throughout his training this student set unusually high levels of expectation for himself. He was frequently disappointed in efforts he should have been proud of, and never felt he had accomplished enough. The specialist helped him to set more realistic goals for himself. Ken tended to forget that he was not an experienced woodworker. He expected projects to run smoothly and not to make errors. He felt

he worked more slowly than his classmates. The specialist counseled him not to compare his work to that of other students, and to recognize his own progress.

The specialist frequently met with the building maintenance instructor to discuss Ken's fears and frustrations. She suggested interventions which the instructor could make to help Ken realize the quality of his work.

3. Example of L.D. specialist's intervention in training

Ray, aged 21, was enrolled in mailroom/reprographics training. He consistently took care of the outside mail delivery for the trade school. Whenever the specialist visited the mailroom, he was either on outside mail work or just returning from a delivery. Ray was becoming a proficient messenger, but the specialist noted that he avoided doing other types of work, and thought that he would benefit from being exposed to additional areas of reprographics training. She met with the vocational instructors to discuss this problem. It was agreed that Ray would continue to do the morning mail delivery, but would be more actively engaged in learning zip coding, postage meter scale and other reprographics skills.

4. Example of behavioral problems

Sara was an 18-year-old student enrolled in the jewelery area. When "regular" (non-project) students entered this area of training, they were given a tool box, tools and diagrams consisting of labeled pictures of the tools used in the shop. Students checked the contents of the tool box against the diagrams to make sure they had all the necessary tools. When a project student entered jewelry training, a modification was made. The specialist examined the contents of the box with the student and reviewed the terminology. Together they matched the pictures and labels to the appropriate tools. The specialist assisted and encouraged the student in what might otherwise be a frustrating task if attempted independently.

When the specialist went over the tool box and terms with Sara, she observed that the student was able to cope with the reading demands, and was able to make small visual discriminations. She was aware, for example that different pliers looked similar except that they had different noses. The specialist then met with the instructor and student to review the tools and terms. Together they praised the student for quickly familiarizing herself with numerous tools and terms.

Specific problems arose later. It was clear from her evaluation that Sara had excellent manual dexterity and a good deal of potential for jewelry training. What was also clear was that she had very low self-esteem and a defiant attitude toward authority. Sara frequently sought approval and attention from the specialist. In this case, the specialist acted as a liaison between the vocational instructor and the student.

At first Sara appeared more concerned with socializing than applying herself to her work. She constantly left her seat and talked with other students. She became angry with the vocational instructor when he encouraged her to work more consistently. The specialist explained to Sara that the instructor cared about her and was not nagging her, but wanted to see her succeed. The specialist met informally on a regular basis with the instructor to discuss Sara's behavior and work attitude. It was decided that she would work with another instructor and one other student in a specialized area, wax mold casting.

Sara took an instant liking to working with wax molds. She stayed in that area and became skillful and productive. Her instructor stated that she had learned quickly and had excellent hands for casting. During one of the specialist's visits, Sara demonstrated her technique and gave a running commentary on the steps she was taking.

5. Example of remediation, support, and advocacy

Mailroom/reprographics student Wilma, aged 21, was highly motivated and eager to learn. She had initially aspired to clerical training but her low reading and math levels precluded her participation in an office practices program. She failed a diagnostic-vocational evaluation for mailroom training at FEGS, because she seemed to be intellectually too low functioning for the vocational training. After the specialist intervened, she was accepted on a provisional basis and in fact completed training successfully, and obtained employment at the entry level in the area of vocational training.

Throughout training, Wilma required a great deal of emotional support from the specialist, as well as reinforcement of her acquired skills. On several occasions she became upset with instructors' criticism of her behavior and work, and sought the specialist's help. She stated that she was leaving the program but after

talking with the specialist, she was able to go back to class and resume learning. At times, the instructor made caustic remarks, and the specialist intervened to facilitate communication.

Her vocational instructors found that she had great difficulty learning new procedures, and processing new material. She took copious notes, a process encouraged by the specialist, and frequently referred to them.

Although she was meticulous in completing specific tasks, she experienced difficulty in performing work which required a sequence of steps. She was competent in performing bulk mailing tasks such as manual folding and affixing labels onto envelopes. Her difficulty with retaining information became more apparent when she performed high level tasks, such as using machinery which required her to remember several operations.

In the course of remediation, the specialist asked her to make xerox copies, a frequently assigned task for all students in this area of training. She made many errors when performing this task. Back-to-back copies necessitate removing the original from the bins and placing it face down in the tray so that it will print on the second side. Wilma had tremendous difficulty each time she made copies. She would forget to check her first copy and run multiple copies with words or headings cut off. The specialist reminded her to "check her copy" in order to avoid the frustration Wilma verbalized when she had to throw out numerous flawed copies. She learned that checking one copy saves a tremendous amount of wasted effort.

She needed the specialist to advocate for her at FEGS in her effort to obtain job placement. The student had difficulty in interviews, for one reason because of a speech impediment, and was fearful she would not get a job. She personalized the issue and claimed her vocational instructors were holding her back and not trying hard enough to place her. She was very vocal about the type of working environment and salary she desired. She repeatedly expressed these desires to the specialist when classmates took jobs she considered too low level. She accepted an entry-level clerk position in the Parking Violations Bureau, a job obtained through her vocational instructor, who prepared her for the job by drilling her on an adding machine, one of her future duties. Wilma was thrilled to be employed, continued to hold the job a year and four months later, at the time of report preparation.

6. Example of emotional problems affecting training

Steve, aged 19, was enrolled in jewelry training. He was highly enthusiastic and motivated upon entering the program. He easily learned basic jewelry techniques such as filing and soldering. He was, however, hypersensitive to any comment or evaluation of his work which was the least bit critical. He became upset and antagonistic whenever the specialist made a suggestion or the instructor corrected his work. The specialist was concerned because she felt this difficulty would hinder Steve's ability to benefit fully from instruction, and discussed the problem with the instructor. One day Steve came to the specialist in an agitated state, saying that his instructor was a stupid old man and didn't know anything about jewelry. When Steve calmed down he revealed that the instructor had questioned the way a piece of work was done. The specialist explained to him that because he was a beginner, he should try to learn from the jewelry instructor, who was experienced.

Steve frequently expressed the feeling that he was a highly creative individual and often balked at doing pieces assigned to develop specific skills. The specialist intervened to explain the purpose behind the assigned tasks and urged him to follow the curriculum. He was permitted to create his own designs occasionally as a supplement to the curriculum.

His motivation waned and his attendance began to decline, and the specialist and vocational instructor arranged a part time job doing polishing work for a jewelry company several afternoons a week. This seemed to boost his self-esteem until he was told by the employer to try to work faster and produce a greater volume of work. Steve then told the specialist he no longer liked the job.

Periodically, Steve would disappear from training and his job for weeks at a time with no explanation. Since he had no phone at home he could not be reached. The specialist tried to help him realize that it was not sufficient to come back for a day or two now and again, but that he had to attend consistently in order to demonstrate job-ready behavior. He continued to entertain grandiose ideas that he was tremendously talented and creative in jewelry. He expressed the opinion that he was doing the right thing by completing training, but that the polishing job was far below his talents.

Throughout Steve's training, the specialist had frequent contact with his VESID counselor. At the time of program completion, the project counselor recommended that he undergo psychological evaluation, which was implemented by the vocational rehabilitation counselor. Following the evaluation, the student quit his part-time job and and could not be reached subsequently by project staff despite numerous attempts.

7. Example of student in drug rehabilitation

Student Mike, aged 26, was in the final phases of rehabilitation in a residential drug treatment program when he entered the program. He was enrolled in the building maintenance program. He was highly motivated but also felt under pressure to complete skills training and then obtain employment in order to exit the drug facility. He spoke to the specialist many times about this pressure.

Mike had a history of epileptic seizures and chronic respiratory problems. A serious bout of conjunctivitis caused attendance problems in the early part of his training. He had an epileptic seizure at his residence while in training. The student frequently sought the specialist out to discuss his health. She consulted his doctor to better understand his medical condition. There was a concern on the part of the vocational rehabilitation counselor that if the seizures began to occur frequently Mike would not be able to remain in the program.

Mike requested that numerous letters verifying his participation and progress in the program be sent to the drug residence. He also needed proof of participation in the program in order to receive a public assistance stipend and benefits. Mike presented these requests with a quiet insistence which the specialist felt stemmed from his anger and feelings of being shortchanged in life. He confronted the specialist with disparities between the amount of money he and other students had. He wanted to improve his position in life and enlisted the specialist's help to obtain a part-time porter's job to supplement his income. He later quit the job, claiming that he was "drained" and wanted to conserve his energy for a full-time job when training ended.

Mike learned electrical wiring, plastering, painting, using electric saws and a host of other skills, many of which involved planning and measuring. He often needed extra help. He was encouraged to work cooperatively with other students

and to demonstrate initiative. He frequently appeared phlegmatic and when the specialist raised this issue, he complained of fatigue because of mandatory late-night counseling sessions that were held at his residence.

On one occasion he was sent to the specialist by the vocational instructor because he appeared not to be listening or doing the work assigned. The specialist spoke with him alone and then conducted a meeting with him and the instructor. Mike stated that he had gotten very upset because of a previous incident where the instructor had shouted at him and he shouted back. The specialist explained to him that the instructor was the boss just as he would be on a job. He not only needed to carry out the instructor's orders, but should also do so without talking back. Occasionally Mike had other problems with authority figures.

Several times towards the end of his training the specialist and Mike met with the FEGS job placement counselor. Upon program completion he accepted a porter position. The salary was modest but he was satisfied because he could leave the drug facility and return to his parents' home. He later obtained a building maintenance position at a hospital with the specialist's help. At this job he received an increased salary and significant benefits. He continued to hold the job one year and five months later, at the time of this writing.

EXPERIENCES IN INTERPERSONAL SKILLS TRAINING

Interpersonal skills training activities were drawn from an already existing curriculum. Some exercises were modified or adapted to accommodate specific needs. For example, the counselor observed that students would allow what the "average" person would consider to be minor obstacles to deter them from attending classes or appointments. This attitude tended to carry over to job interviews. Student Rick did not go to a scheduled job interview because of a toothache. Student Wilma became confused when she could not find the correct address of the company to which she had been sent and went directly home instead of phoning for directions.

The counselor created stories describing incidents that would frustrate students and wrote them on index cards. Examples: (a) "You are on your way to a job interview. You are in a crowded subway car and someone spills coffee on your clothing. What do you do? How do you feel? How do you think this will affect your

attitude on the interview?" and (b) "You are on your way to a job interview when you realize you left your resume on the train. What do you do? How do you feel? How do you think this will affect your attitude on the interview?" Role playing the various incidents brought them more to life for the students than a discussion of the same situations.

Examples of activities used for various areas of the interpersonal skills training are as follows:

1. Nonverbal Behavior

When they entered training, students were usually not able to explain what was meant by nonverbal behavior or body language. Severely learning disabled individuals may not be aware that lack of eye contact, poor posture, and other nonverbal behaviors may have an adverse effect on communication with employers and co-workers. In one activity, the counselor asked individual students to "freeze" while the other students described their body language. A list of characteristics of body language emerged, which was written on the board. Students were asked to express through body language how they could convey specific information about themselves to other people. The main question students had to ask themselves was: "Do other people see me as I see myself?"

Nonverbal behavior was reinforced through the use of magazine pictures. Students were first asked to list all the possible emotions that could be expressed through body language. The class was then divided into dyads. Each dyad selected a category, such as anger, and then tried to find as many magazine pictures as they could depicting anger. The class discussion that followed revealed how misunderstandings can develop through the incorrect interpretation of body language.

Another exercise required students to make a list of occupations. Then, in a type of guessing game, one student acted out an occupation without the use of language. The student guessing correctly then acted out the next occupation. This exercise was successful, as was a similar exercise using a list of famous people.

The counselor introduced the concept of role play by asking students to pretend they were arriving for a job interview and meeting the boss for the first time. The counselor assumed the role of the boss, and each student was asked individually to leave the room, enter, and introduce her or himself. The other students would note the nonverbal behavior of the "boss" and "employee."

In order to solidify the concepts of nonverbal behavior and to continue to practice through role play, the counselor arranged to have a speaker talk to the students about job interviews. Students were asked to note the nonverbal behavior of the speaker. The speaker was aware that the students were observing her body language and was particularly vivacious. The speaker had students participate in interview role plays with her. Students were later asked to rate the performance of the speaker, other students and themselves.

2. Listening Skills

The counselor initiated the listening skills module by asking students if they could describe the difference between listening and hearing. When she gave the example of hearing a garbage truck versus listening to music, students began to be able to understand and describe the difference. Students offered a list of examples of hearing and listening which was written on the board. Students were asked to think about ways in which they would express nonverbally that they were listening, and to describe nonverbal messages from others that indicated they were or were not listening. Incorporating another skill, students were asked to distinguish facts from opinions by using their listening skills. Various magazine and newspaper articles were selected. Students were asked to separate fact from opinion and to give the "gist" of the articles. Most students had a great deal of difficulty with this task, and it had to be repeated with some variation until students were successful. Gist was a very difficult concept for the students to grasp, but after several sessions, students were able to identify simple main ideas.

Due to the difficulty students were having with these concepts, the counselor adopted a self-disclosing story approach. She related a story to the class in which poor listening skills had created confusion and an unsuccessful outcome. Through this, the students were able to discuss similar occurrences in their own lives. After the counselor's "self-disclosure," students felt more comfortable discussing their own situations. The class was able to work together as a group to determine how the outcomes could have been avoided with better listening skills and the concept of "checking it out."

Students were asked to present a situation in which they had experienced listening skills deficiencies during vocational training. For example, a student might receive instructions and pretend to understand when he actually had no idea how to

complete the task. Students made a false assumption that asking questions or writing down information implied stupidity.

Student Harry gave an example of receiving instructions from the building maintenance instructor, proceeding before "checking it out," and completing the task incorrectly. When the counselor role played displeasure with Harry, the class gave him many suggestions as to how he could have "checked out" the instructions and avoided the negative outcome. This task illustrated to students that it was not only acceptable to verify information, but that it was necessary in order to avoid mistakes. This exercise also allowed students see that they were all having similar difficulties and that they could assist one another with the solutions.

In a discussion of things that could interfere with good listening, Student Steve mentioned his own frustrations with taking orders and accepting criticism. This opened a discussion about how people can shut out what they do not want to hear, and reinforced the concept of hearing but not listening. Students discussed fear of not comprehending and allowing that fear to distract them from listening.

3. Expressing Ideas

In this segment, students focused on appropriate ways of expressing their ideas. Severely learning disabled individuals may have "good ideas" but may have problems asserting themselves appropriately. The counselor developed an exercise that incorporated all the interpersonal skills addressed in the curriculum and allowed the students to express ideas. The concept was adapted from an article entitled, "Use of Fantasy to Overcome Resistance to Learning" (Zaretsky, 1986).

Students were asked to create a business of their own. They decided to run a hotel in Jamaica which they named after one of the student's children. Officers of the company were chosen by the students, and students applied for positions which they themselves designated within the hotel. The basic skills teacher cooperated in this exercise by assisting the students in writing resumes and preparing cover letters.

The counselor asked students to list all the job possibilities within the hotel structure and then to choose a job or jobs for which they would like to apply. Students role played interviews until everyone had a position in the company.

Students created advertisements for the hotel and wrote a script for a commercial which they were able to enact themselves on videotape. They practiced

group decision making in decorating the hotel (using magazine photos) and planning company policy.

The counselor planned various activities to allow for expression of feelings, expression of ideas and working as a group. Students were asked to answer a letter of complaint from a displeased customer. The manager had made a mistake with a reservation, and students had to satisfy the customer and reprimand the manager.

The students became so involved in this exercise that the counselor decided to add an element of fun to the exercise. A murder occurred in the hotel, and the students were asked to solve the murder. The hotel detective, student Rick, had to question all suspects. When the guilty party was finally identified, the students asked if they could enact a courtroom trial on videotape. This videotape was later utilized to illustrate body language to the class, to discuss better ways of asking questions and expressing ideas and feelings. The exercise was a highly effective means of practicing all interpersonal skills taught and the counselor repeated it with a different group of students at a later point in the program.

4. Expressing Feelings

A great deal of time was spent in this area. It is common for individuals with severe learning disabilities to manifest little affect, or to express anger, happiness or frustration inappropriately. The counselor asked the questions: "Do I always want to say exactly what I'm feeling," and "In what situation is that more appropriate than others?"

Student Wilma had been having a geat deal of difficulty communicating with her vocational instructors. She became easily frustrated and upset, and often left the classroom in tears. On one occasion, which she related to the interpersonal skills class, she had actually decided to leave training altogether after an outburst of tears and was heading home on the subway. She realized how important training was to her, got off the train at the next stop and went back to the classroom.

The counselor was able to elicit similar incidents from other students, who were inspired by Wilma's honesty about her own experiences. The counselor made up a series of role plays based on the students' contributions. For example, "You say a cheerful good morning to your boss. He responds 'What's so good about it?' What do you do or say? How do you feel inside? What do you do with those feelings? How do you think this will affect your work for the rest of the day?" After the students

were given the opportunity to practice and discuss the role plays, several were videotaped so that students could observe their body language.

This type of exercise was extremely successful with these students. They recognized the incidents from their personal experiences. They formulated ideas for different responses that could result in more positive outcomes, and had the opportunity to practice those responses in a safe environment.

5. Conversations

Although most of the students easily expressed themselves to one another in street language, they often became very shy with new people and new situations in which the use of such language would be inappropriate. The counselor found that student Rick had improved substantially in self-expression. During the first few months, he had been unable to utter a complete sentence when asked his opinion. Although he had improved in class, when Rick began to interview for jobs, he was unable to transfer this skill to a new environment, so that he could not talk about himself with his prospective employer.

The counselor asked for volunteers for different types of conversations. Students could select from the school, home or work environment. The counselor then role-played different types of conversations with individual students. One conversation with student Sara was particularly successful in illustrating several interpersonal skills. Students observed body language, conversation, asking questions, resolving conflicts, and listening skills. This situation involved a married couple discussing their day. When the "husband" suddenly asked what the "wife" had cooked for dinner, the "wife" stopped listening and began to hide behind the newspaper. This conflict was resolved through compromise.

After the counselor had enacted several role plays with volunteers, the students broke up into dyads and role played conversations in all three environments. Several role plays were performed for the class. The next class session focused only on answering one question: "Tell me a little bit about yourself." When the students seemed comfortable with this exchange, the counselor asked one student from each dyad to become an employer asking an applicant to tell a little bit about himself/herself.

Student Rick reported back to the counselor that his next interview had been more successful and that he had been able to let the employer see more of his

personality and enthusiasm for work. However, there was subsequent feedback from interviewers that Rick was unsuccessful in expressing himself, indicating that he had not learned to transfer this behavior beyond the classroom situation where he was comfortable.

This last situation reflects difficulty students had in changing well-established behavior patterns. The counselor found that it was necessary to spend considerable time in each individual skill area. She provided as much repetition as possible under the guise of varying activities to avoid boredom or loss of interest. For example, if a student had difficulty making eye contact, body langage was mentioned in every other activity until it became habit for him/her to concentrate on eye contact.

6. Learning to Role-Play

Most of the students were initially resistant to role play, but the counselor found it to be the strongest method of getting the point across. An effective approach was to ask for a volunteer and model the role play for the class several times. Once was usually not enough. After the class had sufficient time to practice the role plays in dyads, one or two of the dyads role played for the group. This was followed by class discussion.

7. Eliciting Information.

It was also found effective to elicit answers from the class rather than to give answers. Naturally, in certain situations it was necessary to give answers, but continuing to ask the right questions could elicit the correct response. This made students more successful and encouraged them to concentrate for longer periods of time. Most of the students' attention spans were very short, and they needed to be actively involved in each session in order to benefit.

WORK-STUDY EXPERIENCE

Students devoted at least two hours per week to work-study on the college campus. The counselor matched each student to an area of his or her interest. Work-study gave students an opportunity to gain job experience if they had never worked. Even if they had held a job, the additional exposure gave them confidence. Work-study supervisors emphasized good work habits and reinforced interpersonal skills. The work-study experience gave the student insight into the work environment, into what the boss can expect from the employee, and what the employee can expect from the boss.

Examples of work-study are as follows:

1. Community Services Department of the Continuing Education Division

Students were given a variety of clerical duties based upon their levels of functioning. Some of these tasks were filing, stuffing envelopes, messenger work, light typing and answering the telephones. Student Ray showed an increase in confidence and maturity as a result of the success he experienced here. This student also learned to become flexible as he was working for several different "bosses."

The supervisor provided feedback indicating that his "main weakness is his inability to express himself to his superior/supervisor." For example, one day the counselor discovered Ray pounding his fist on the wall in frustration. He explained that he had been asked to make a delivery in another borough of the city and was afraid he would not be back in time for his basic skills class. The counselor explored his feelings with him until he discovered that he was really terrified of becoming lost and did not yet feel ready to make the trip.

This incident provided an opportunity for Ray to see how his behavior could be misinterpreted. He realized that the supervisor had no idea how he felt and could not understand his reluctance. The counselor asked Ray to pretend she was the supervisor and to express himself to her. After he had successfully practiced with the counselor, he was able to talk to the supervisor and get the additional support he needed. He did not make that particular delivery, but he was subsequently able to carry out similar errands in his mailroom training.

2. Media Department

Students initially delivered audio-visual equipment to different areas of the college. If demonstrated that they were capable, they also learned how to operate some of the equipment. Students reported that they enjoyed working in the studio and operating the various types of equipment.

Student Ben had initially been assigned to Shipping and Receiving where he did poorly. The supervisor reported that he was a distraction to the other students, causing them to "goof off" on the job. Simultaneously, Ben approached the counselor with a request for a change of work study. The counselor decided to see if his behavior would improve in another work study site, and placed him in the Media Department. She warned him that any student working in Media had to be very serious and responsible. The new supervisor reported that Ben "asked a lot of

questions when he first began" but although he was watched very carefully, no further difficulties occurred.

Students were placed very carefully in work-study sites. The student just mentioned would have seemed very unsuccessful in the workplace judging only on the basis of the first work-study assignment. In both situations he was making deliveries, but the importance he felt in delivering the video equipment in the second placement may have led him to take his job more seriously. On the other hand, Student Rob showed an immediate sense of pride and responsibility working in Shipping and Receiving. Therefore, the same work study setting can be experienced differently by different students.

3. Shipping and Receiving Department

Students picked up and delivered packages to and from this department to all departments of the college. Learning disabled students often have difficulty with directions. Work-study in this department gave students the opportunity to practice skills related to asking for directions and clarifying instructions that they had been taught in interpersonal skills clases.

Student Henry was unhappy during his first two weeks of work study in this department. That did not happen frequently, as the supervisor was very popular with the students. When the counselor spoke to the supervisor to see how Henry was progressing, the supervisor reported that he sensed reluctance on the student's part to tackle the tasks requested of him. The counselor approached Henry and asked him how he felt about his work study. He admitted that he really wanted to be in the I.D. office and did not enjoy making deliveries. The counselor requested a change, and Henry immediately demonstrated completely different work habits. The supervisor showed Henry only once how to take the photos, laminate the cards, type the name and social security number on each card. He learned the procedure immediately and was careful to check his work. Initially, the supervisor commented that Henry could show more initiative, but the student began to improve, and was no longer hesitant to do the work to which he was assigned.

4. English Language Center

The work done in this department was mainly clerical. Student Steve did filing, xeroxing, collating and some pick-up and delivery work to another college building two blocks away.

The counselor was somewhat hesitant to send Steve to this work site. He had had some difficulty on a part-time job (connected with the FEGS training) accepting criticism from his employer and was in danger of being fired. As it turned out, the work study was the only assignment to which Steve consistently arrived on time. On several occasions when he was absent for basic skills class, it was discovered later that he had taken it upon himself to remain at his work study because "they needed him." The feeling of importance he had from this job made him more responsible. However, Steve "perseverated" in the work study tasks and was unwilling to leave in order to attend the next class. Steve had many periods of absenteeism from both the college and his vocational training. He did not call his work study supervisor to alert him that he would not be in that day. This was an issue that required considerable attention. The counselor met with him on a number of occasions, and the program coordinator was eventually called in. In fact, there was little change. His classroom behaviors suggested emotional dysfunction and while he did complete training, he was not subsequently employed, to the knowledge of project staff.

5. Project Enable (a project housed in the Continuing Education Department that served homeless individuals)

The tasks carried out by student Wilma in this placement were as follows: xeroxing, filing student folders, addressing envelopes, answering the phone, pick-ups and deliveries from the print shop and bookstore (located within the college). The supervisor also taught Wilma how to use the computer for her own personal use.

The main criticism the supervisor had was that Wilma was unable to work on her own initiative. She seemed not to know how to ask for more work. Each task had to be assigned to her, even after she had been working there for some time. This criticism was also received for other students ,and the counselor worked with them in interpersonal skills classes to develop the ability to show initiative and ask questions.

Comments on Work-Study

When the students seemed to grasp a concept in the classroom, it was easy to believe that the information had been processed and the students were ready to move on to the next concept. However, there was no test to see how much of that information could be transferred to real life situations. The work study was one way

to examine this before the student attempted a real job. It was still not the perfect test because the college staff tended to be empathic toward the students, creating a very accepting and nurturing atmosphere unlike the outside world.

The counselor worked closely with the college staff who served as work study supervisors to encourage them to simulate a more realistic environment for students. For example, Student Sid was told by his supervisor to call if he could not attend work study. After several incidents where he did not call or show up, he was "fired" from his work study, and the placement was given to another student. This more accurately reflected what would occur in the real world. If an employee frequently misses work without calling, he/she is fired and replaced. Such an experience in a work-study setting made this clear to the student. He saw exactly why he had been replaced, what he could have done to avoid it, and what the correct action should be in the future.

Although, in principle, work study students provided extra help in the departments to which they were assigned, in fact the college employee who agreed to supervise a student often had extra work because of the student's low skill levels. For example, since many of the students were unable to work effectively without direct supervision, the supervisor often was not able to leave a student to work independently while she did her own work. Some of the students became upset if they were not supervised continuously, or if there were lag times when there was no work for them. Sometimes they complained or stopped attending. As a result of the great effort needed, a few supervisors tactfully declined to continue providing work study settings for project students. Since the student tended to benefit more than the supervisor, it was necessary for the counselor carefully to develop and maintain good relationships with staff throughout the college. She became highly visible in the college, for example, participating in regular meetings in the department in which the project was housed. Her friendliness with the supervisors led to another dilemma: the supervisors were hesitant at times to report to her that a student was not doing well and in fact was becoming more of a hindrance than a help.

It was also possible that a college employee would volunteer to be a supervisor although not understanding the students' limitations. In one case, a highly sympathetic work study supervisor who was greatly liked by the students left the college employ, and was replaced by another invidivual who was less understanding

and had some difficulties communicating with the students. This problem was compounded by the students' resentment that the original supervisor had left and their difficulty making a transition to a new type of "boss." The counselor worked intensively with both the supervisor and the students to try to ameliorate the situation. When problems continued and in fact worsened she tried to help the students think of strategies to deal with a possible future employer who behaved similarly. This attempt was not totally successful and some of the students flatly refused to return to the work study site.

Naturally, there were fluctuations in supervisors' levels of commitment and enthusiasm. Some of the supervisors became attached to the students, providing a positive experience for them. In a few cases where students were less socially appealing, the supervisor's experience was frustrating. Monitoring the work study experiences provided important information that was applied in classroom instruction and also career counseling.

INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING EXPERIENCES

The project counselor provided a series of individual counseling sessions to interested students, to address both personal issues and social service needs. The following excerpts from the counselor's notes capture the range of needs of the students, and indicate ways in which they were addressed. Names and identifying details have been changed. In one case below (Ernest), the counselor also conducted peer tutoring sessions and a parent conference as part of the counseling. Of the cases described, Ted, Ernest and Ron completed the program and obtained employment. Conrad and Cathy were still in training at the time of report preparation.

Student Ted

Session 1. I explained the counseling process to Ted, as this was his first session. Ted began by telling me about his relationship with his mother and the pressure he was under living at home. We talked at great length about the complex relationships within his family. He told me about his childhood and his relationship with his father, who is no longer living. Ted shared his feelings about his mother's boyfriend and the latter's children and the influence this relationship has had on his mother. We talked about his younger brother and how he relates to his mother.

Ted was able to express a lot of anger which I believe is covering so much sadness that he is afraid to be anything but angry. He is afraid of breaking down. He desperately wants to feel loved and worthy. He has been told he is worthless because of his disability, and that he will never amount to anything. He is trying desperately to overcome this image of himself, and he needs constant reinforcement. Ted is trying to move out of his mother's house at this time. We discussed the pros and cons of doing that right now. We will continue along these lines in our next meeting.

I had planned to meet with Ted every other week. I feel that he needs to see me more regularly, and I will attempt to begin seeing him on a weekly basis within the next week or two.

Session 2. Ted is exhibiting extremes in mood swings. He is very up one moment and very down the next. His thinking appears to be very scattered. He has been sharing a lot of information about his childhood and the frustrations he had growing up as the "slow" or "retarded" child. He refers to himself as the "black sheep of the family," and his definition of "black sheep" is someone who is slow and whom nobody cares about or wants.

His relationship with siblings is ambivalent. He appears to be close to them at one moment and in serious rivalry with them the next. He does appear to get emotional support from an older sister who no longer lives at home, but he seems to have a lot of problems with his younger sister. The younger sister just came home after living away from the mother for some time. Ted sees the two of them taking sides against him. Ted is feeling that he must get out of his mother's house, and we are helping him to see if we can't get him into some kind of supported housing. I have serious doubts that he could live on his own and also complete this program.

Session 3. Ted revealed more about his relationship with his mother and his younger sister. He also considered the effect his father's death had on his life. Right now Ted is very concerned about being able to stay in his mother's house long enough to complete his training. This was the promise that his mother made to him, but Ted doesn't seem to think she will keep that promise. She has made several comments that indicate she is ready to throw Ted out of the house. This presents a real problem, as the only relatives that Ted has who would take him in are in Texas. There really is no one here who is willing to help him. He is terrified of

the shelters, and related some of his experiences there the last time his mother threw him out. We are working to try to help him find some place to stay. This is not an easy situation.

Session 4. Ted missed his appointment on Wednesday because of his current situation. He became homeless the week before, and he has been living on the street. We have found him a shelter where he can stay for approximately one month. He has not been eating or sleeping properly which makes it difficult to try to work with him. Naturally, he is having difficulty processing any information. Ted expressed feelings of hopelessness. He is completely overwhelmed by his situation, which is not at all surprising. Because I sent Ted to Welfare to try to obtain emergency funds, our session only lasted for about a half hour. He really needs to stabilize his situation in order to be able to continue in the program.

Session 5. In the first part of this session, I helped Ted to fill out a job application. Student Pat had helped him to get an interview for an after-school job at the restaurant where he works. This job would be very good for Ted until he finishes the program. He will be able to get his meals there as well.

Ted has been moving around between the shelter, his mother's house and a friends' apartment. His clothes are in two places, and he has been having a terrible time. I told him that I was very impressed with his strength, the fact that he has been attending school through all of this and that he has managed to look for work. I told him how much I admire his perseverance.

Ted spoke more about his confused feelings for his mother and his confusion over this father's death. I am still not sure how much of what he is telling me is fact and how much is fantasy. I don't think he is consciously fabricating anything, but he may actually be fantasizing some of the information he is giving me. When his circumstances are more stable, I would like to recommend a new psychiatric evaluation from VESID.

Session 6. Ted has been drinking but rejected the suggestion of attending AA. At first, he refused to admit there was a problem, giving the classic responses: "I can quit any time I want," "I already quit on my own," and "I'm not drinking anymore." Moments later he said, "I know I have a problem with drinking." I left the AA option open.

I am doubtful now of this client's ability to sustain any type of employment without supportive counseling services. He really needs supervised housing which he flatly rejects. He wants to be on his own, and yet he is completely incapable of such a responsibility.

Session 7. Ted has been out for two weeks, since he was stabbed on the arm on the street. He came into my office very concerned and upset about receiving an F in his FEGS class. He realizes that he has been absent a great deal and that this is the reason for his failure. He wants to turn this around for the next grading period.

He has been staying with a friend, and the living conditions sound less than ideal. He is in a constant state of stress. Probably the only safe place he knows is this program. He is in the midst of a turmoil of financial problems, including an old IRS bill from a previous job as a messenger. He owes the government around $1500, and the interest is steadily growing. He hasn't been receiving his transportation checks from VESID, and he is suspicious that his mother is stealing checks from him.

Ted confided that he is drinking on a daily basis, and I suspect that some of his absences are related to a drinking problem. I once again suggested therapy, but he feels the pressures are too great now.

Ted is also having difficulty maintaining his after-school job and coming to school. He is constantly exhausted, and he is considering quitting the job and living on welfare until he finishes the program. This may help him to focus more. He will contact welfare on Monday and report back to me.

Student Ernest

Session 1. I discussed the purpose of the counseling process with Ernest, and we agreed to meet every Tuesday from 3:00 p.m., to 3:45 p.m. Ernest was upset due to a disagreement in his FEGS class with Student Larry. Ernest feels a constant need to apologize for his actions. Several times he stated that it seemed to him that I wanted him to apologize to Larry. I asked him exactly what it was that made him believe this. We also discussed whether or not in conflicts between people someone was always clearly right and someone was always clearly wrong.

Ernest commented several times that the is "too nice," "too helpful." I asked him how he would like to be different, but he was not able to respond. We talked about rejection and how it feels to be rejected when you are offering help to others.

Ernest related an incident with a young woman he had been wanting to speak with for some time. He was quite expressive as to how painful it was for him to approach this woman and the physical reactions he experienced due to his fears and shyness. His method of approach was apologetic.

Ernest is terribly ashamed of his learning disability. He desperately wants to make friends, especially to have a normal relationship with a woman, but his fear that he will be rejected on the basis of either his physical appearance or his disability seriously inhibits his abillty to communicate. He is very jealous of Student Francisco, who is much more socially mature, and he became furious with him when Francisco su cessfully approached a young woman for a date.

I will work with Ernest on accepting himself and others, and will also schedule a session with Larry, and hope to arrange a joint session for the resolution of their conflict.

Session 2. I asked Ernest how the situation was going with Larry and he described how it had improved. We discussed problem solving, including whom you go to when you have a disagreement with someone. We discussed why it is ultimately necessary to resolve the conflict directly with that individual and not through someone else. We discussed his previous job and problems he had with his employers. Ernest said he would forget instructions. I asked Ernest if he would try to write the instructions down. He said that his boss tried to get him to write things down, but he refused, because he felt stupid.

We talked about writing things down, whether it really looks stupid and why people do it. I asked him if he would be willing to start trying to write instructions in the mailroom. He said he would try but had no idea where to begin, or what to write.

At first his affect was cheerful and alert. As we discussed his feelings, he began to yawn uncontrollably, muttering that he was tired and hungry. When I remarked to him that only moments ago he seemed wide awake, he said it was the room. I asked him if his difficulties with communication made him tired. He said yes, that it was very hard for him to express his feelings.

Note: The counselor decided to hold peer tutoring sessions with Ernest and two other students in his FEGS class, Larry and Francisco, who were able to write down instructions. Through the process of peer tutoring, Larry and

Francisco would explain and demonstrate writing instructions. This would not only help Ernest, but would reinforce Larry and Francisco's skills. Three sessions were held as follows.

Peer Tutoring Session 1. I asked the students to go over all the steps involved in delivering the mail. They were to state them orally, and Ernest was to write them down in list form. All three students were to check the list for clarity and accuracy when completed. The task was very successful. Ernest feels that this is very helpful to him. We will continue this once a week until Ernest feels confident in completing this task on his own.

Peer Tutoring Session 2. Students worked on listing all the components of bulk mailings. This appears to be one of the most difficult tasks in the mailroom, and the students will continue to work on this until all the steps have been completed.

This process of teaching how to list steps is good for the peer tutors as well, because their own skills are being reinforced. Ernest's ability to make a list seems to be improving, but the element of nervousness under pressure is not a factor in this atmosphere. Therefore, it remains to be seen whether Ernest will be able to perform this task under pressure.

Peer Tutoring Session 3. The student started to continue with bulk mailing. Ernest mentioned that he could never remember what he had done in class when his mother asked him later. I explained how he could write down the main idea of the class in order to remember enough to explain to her. The students then continued with the bulk mailing exercise for the remainder of the time. There was disagreement as to whether calculations were made based on six or nine sacks. Ernest made a note to confirm this information with the mailroom instructor.

Parent Conference. Present: counselor, L.D. specialist, Ernest, his mother and his father.

The conference began with a brief overview of Ernest's progress in the program. Ernest is no longer dependent on the L.D. specialist to act as a go-between for him and the mailroom instructors. Ernest has learned to take the criticism less personally and integrate the interpersonal skills into his working experience.

The parents were interested in the counseling Ernest has been receiving. The counselor explained that these are not therapy sessions, but that she is working with

Ernest to analyze what happened on his last job that didn't work and how he could have changed the circumstances. What would he do now under similar circumstances? The father was extremely pleased to learn of the nature of these sessions. He felt that it is exactly the kind of work Ernest needs.

The mother expressed concern over the basic skills class. She did not feel that it was practical enough for Ernest's needs. He has difficulty getting the right change when he goes to purchase an item. The father felt that it was not as much a math problem as a confidence problem. The counselor asked Ernest what he thought. He admitted that he was afraid to confront a salesperson or store clerk with their error. The counselor suggested that this could be worked on in interpersonal skills since it is a part of the curriculum and most of the students have the same problem. The LD specialist also made suggestions for classroom work that could help to alleviate some of the math problems.

The parents were not concerned with the job placement situation at this time. They feel that Ernest has plenty of time, and they are more concerned with his progress in the skills areas and his overall development. The LD specialist reported on his progress in the classroom, and the parents both expressed concern over the loss of time and training due to the disruption caused by the moving of the mailroom to new premises. The LD specialist stated that she would look into making up the time.

The parents stated that they are very pleased with the program. The mother mentioned that Ernest complains about not having enough to do on his work study, and the counselor agreed to look into this.

Session 3. Ernest entered the office stating he wanted to leave the program. He was extremely angry and sat in the chair opposite me, refusing to communicate for almost fifteen minutes. It turned out that a misunderstanding with his instructor left him filled with anger and frustration. Ernest was encouraged to express his anger. We then discussed what was within his power to change and what he was powerless to change. We discussed what Ernest thought he learned from this experience and how he could change his own philosophy that the instructor should let him leave because it is his right to do so (not in those words). He expressed his general frustrations with life, how difficult it is for him to get the energy to continue to do the things that he must in order to become independent.

We jointly agreed to continue to meet for several more sessions, rather than terminating at this time. Ernest is anxious to learn different coping mechanisms for his anger.

Session 4. Ernest said that his mailroom instuctor had been "yelling at him all day." He expressed feeling "humiliated." I asked him to be specific. He stated that the instructor asked him to carry out some boxes and then yelled at him for not breaking them up and stacking them neatly. I asked him to repeat the teacher's instructions to him. He said the teacher "asked me to take out the boxes and break them up and stack them neatly." I asked Ernest if he hadn't forgotten part of the instructions. He agreed that he had. We again discussed writing things down.

Ernest made the statement: "My life is vague." I asked him what he meant by that. He said he couldn't understand himself, why he was so afraid, why he refused to try new things. He couldn't understand why he never went to the college's Student Activities Office. I asked him if he would like to go with Larry and Francisco. He said that he would be willing to do that. He expressed reluctance to go to evening events, and we discussed his fears.

Session 5. Discussed gradual termination. He agreed readily to sessions every other week, and said that at another time he would have been upset but that he was trying to adjust to change. He is working very hard on not being as resistant to change, and although he admits that he enjoys the attention and the time we are spending together, he understands that he now has to work on the things we have been discussing. He also understands that other students need my attention as well. This indicates a great deal of progress for Ernest.

He tried to write down some instructions given to him by the mailroom instructor. Francisco suggested to him that he write down the instructions when the teacher is no longer watching. I expressed to Ernest that this would not give him the benefit of being able to verify or "check out" what he has written with the instructor. We discussed various approaches he could use to get the teacher to work with him on this problem.

Session 6. I met briefly with Ernest to discuss his termination from individual counseling. As we have discussed this before, it was unnecessary to take an entire session for this. I asked Ernest how he was feeling, and I expressed to him my own feelings on his personal growth and development, citing specific instances where he

has handled situations in a mature and confident manner with positive results. Ernest's response was different from what it was a month ago. He is obviously confident that he is doing well in the program. He is much less needy of constant attention, and although he admits himself that he continues to enjoy the attention, he understands that he no longer needs this kind of attention in order to be succe sful. I explained to Ernest that he may come to me at any time with any problems that he has and we will set aside time to discuss them.

Student Ron

Session 1. Ron is especially concerned with his ability to handle success. He feels uncomfortable with the thought of being a "successful" person and often gets in his own way to avoid it. We agreed to spend some time on this in our future sessions together as well as in the interpersonal skills class.

Session 2. Ron is very concerned about his ability to get a job with his criminal justice record. I allowed him to express these concerns, and it came out that he is equally afraid of getting the job, being able to function on a daily basis, going to the same place, dressing appropriately, and punching a clock day after day. Ron is terrified that he will fail. He described the people he sees going off to work every day. He's not sure he can be like them.

Ron said that perhaps street life is easier. Perhaps he should return to dealing drugs because it would mean he could be his own boss, work when he felt like it and dress whatever way pleases him. I asked him how he felt about getting arrested again or using drugs again. I suggested that he make a list for each job, building maintenance and drug dealing. He is to list all the pros and cons of each and we will discuss them together. He agreed to this.

I explained to Ron how easy it is to want to stay with what we know instead of making changes. I did not show anxiety over his comments, but I expressed an appreciation for his honesty. I told him that it's quite natural for him to be feeling these things now because he is so close to having to actually perform. I emphasized his recent success with drug rehab and with this program. He hadn't thought it was possible for him to succeed in either, and now he's almost finished. He acknowledged that was true. He also admitted how afraid he'd been when he started the program, and we discussed the changes in his behavior to indicate his growth since that time.

Session 3. Ron talked a great deal about his concerns for finding employment. He is also concerned that he may have a difficult time adjusting to a nine-to-five life style. He has been expressing many fears of this nature as he comes closer and closer to completing the program.

He spent a great deal of time complaining about his living situation at the drug rehab program. At this point, I feel I can best serve this client by simply being someone he can trust to listen to whatever is on his mind. He has nowhere to go with his fears at this point, and it's extremely important for him to be able to talk about them.

Session 4. Ron is resisting help at this point. He wants to stop seeing me now, which I told him was his choice. He wants to stop talking at the drug residence, too. I told him I have no authority there, but certainly, if it is his wish to stop coming to me, he can make that decision himself. He then proceeded to describe many of his feelings about using drugs, the feelings and the fantasies he experiences. I believe that Ron is testing me to see if I will let him down like everyone else in his life has, according to him. At this point, I am giving him all the room he wants. He needs one place where he can go and talk about his feelings without fear of repercussions. I don't really know whether he will come back next week or not. I won't be surprised if he doesn't. He was trusted me a great deal, and that may have been too frightening for him.

Session 5. Ron has expressed that he would like to attend FEGS full time until he finishes the program. I do not feel this would be in his best interests. Ron has a great deal of difficulty being able to finish things and being able to say good-bye without feeling he has been deserted. He has no trust in people, and it is this very lack of trust which led him into drug abuse. If Ron can see this pattern for himself, if he can see that he has been in a trusting relationship with me and acknowledge that, it might be very helpful to him in learning to trust again. If he doesn't learn to trust again, in all likelihood he will end up back on the streets. Even if he is successful in getting a job. It just won't last. He would have no reason to stay there. It is my feeling that he is trying to run away from any sense of commitment by leaving the LaGuardia portion of the program early.

Ron again expressed concern about applying for jobs with his criminal justice record. I have talked to the counselor at FEGS, and we will try to work with the

placement counselor so that he will speak to any prospective employers first before Ron interviews. This seemed to alleviate some of his fear, but I'm still not convinced that Ron really wants a job.

Session 6. From the moment Ron sat down, I sensed there was something very different about him, but I couldn't quite put my finger on it. I knew it was related to his body language which seemed unusually non-defensive and vulnerable. He sat facing me, which he hadn't done for the past two or three sessions.

Ron related his fears to me again about job interviews and having to talk about his criminal justice background. I suggested that we speak to the FEGS job placement officer about informing prospective employers ahead of time so that Ron wouldn't have to go in to the interview with this as a major concern. He seemed very relieved at the idea. I asked him what had happened to change his attitude, and he said that he had spoken to some people at the drug facility. After speaking to me, he had gotten up the courage and felt relieved at having his feelings out in the open. We discussed trust again.

Session 7. Ron's mood was lighter than it has been in some time. He was facing me, and he had more eye contact than he has for the past three sessions. He started by saying that he was surprised that people at the house were no longer asking him about his feelings, but everyone was continuously asking him if he has a job yet. I pointed out that this was exactly what he had told people he wanted. He was sick of talking about his feelings, and all he wanted was to get a job. He acknowledged that indeed, he has been getting exactly what he wants. We began to discuss his feelings about leaving the house and leaving the program. Actually, we have been discussing termination for two weeks.

Ron was able for the first time to describe his feelings about leaving. I explained to Ron that we would still be available for him if he needed our help; that he could continue the relationship in a different way, but that it doesn't have to end. He seemed relieved to hear that and said he would be visiting us.

I complimented Ron on his ability to finish the program, and encouraged him to recognize his achievements. I also complimented him on his approach to getting job interviews through the FEGS job placement officer. He has practically camped outside of his office. I told him that his determination would probably pay off. He is learning what it takes to get things done.

Ron again expressed his desire to change things in his life. Although he knows how difficult this will be for him. I reminded him that he won't always feel this positive; that there will be times when he will want to go back to his street life. I also reminded him that things are different now because he does have people he can depend on to help him at those times. He has us and he has the people at his house. I felt it was important to point this out to him.

We agreed to have our last session next week. I feel that even if this student does not succeed in the working world, we have done a great deal to improve his situation.

Student Conrad

Session 1. I asked Conrad what he thought our meetings were about, and he said that he thought I would help him to get a job. I explained to him that some of the things we discussed and worked on together might make it easier for him to get and to hold a job, but that was not the only focus of our sessions. I explained to him that he could discuss anything that was on his mind, any of the problems that came up either at home or at school, and we could work on them together. Conrad said he understood; that he had been to a psychiatrist. I explained to him that I was not a psychiatrist and some of the differences. I asked him if he thought he had gained from his experience with the psychiatrist, and he said, "yes."

Conrad agreed to attend weekly sessions, and I explained the confidentiality and the general ground rules.

At first Conrad was very silly, and it was obvious that he had a hard time communicating his feelings. He knows he has a problem expressing himself, and the silly act is a cover for how nervous he is. He would prefer to be taken as a joke than have people take him seriously and then "screw up."

Conrad communicated several incidents which all led to the same theme. He is very nervous and self-conscious and has very little self-esteem or self-confidence. This may be why he is demonstrating in class in what appears to be nasty behavior. He told me the story of a class he had attended in high school. He had a great deal of difficulty trying to grasp the skills, and the teacher had humiliated him in front of the class. Everyone had laughed, and Conrad had not returned to class. He felt that the teacher should have taken him aside because he was really trying. He

described feeling frustrated in school. Sometimes it just doesn't matter how hard he tries. He just can't seem to get it. I asked him if anyone had discussed his learning disability with him and how it influences his ability to learn. He said "yes," but I sense a great deal of denial here.

This student has very poor social skills and coping mechanisms. On a one-to-one basis he is likeable, innocent and charming. In the classroom, where he feels threatened and inferior, he tries to compensate by "putting down" the other students. He is extremely immature, even for someone of his level of abilities and social limitations. We agreed to work together on the issue of his nervousness in attempting new tasks and how he can work on this in the mailroom class.

Session 2. Conrad seems much more relaxed than he did right before the Christmas holidays, when he was considering leaving the program. He feels his FEGS instructors have eased up on him a bit, even though he still thinks they are angry with him for considering quitting.

Conrad is one of the most immature students we have had in the program. He jumps from one topic to another, and he avoids discussing his feelings. He seems very out of touch with his feelings, attributing his insomnia to irregularity of sleep schedule (which is in fact part of the problem) without considering the emotional component at all. This is completely beyond his present ability. This student presents a difficult challenge. I feel that he needs more structure and focus within these sessions to enable him to discover his feelings in a non-threatening manner.

Session 3. Since Conrad decided to come back to the program, his commitment and adjustment seem to be very strong. I think he needed to see that people cared about him and believed in him. His attitude in the mailroom class has improved. In the past, if he made a mistake, he would be devastated. Now he laughs at himself and tries to improve. He is still intimidated by the instructors, but it's not powerful enough to make him want to leave. He is learning survival and coping strategies for himself. This is excellent, since he no longer has to run away. However, I have my doubts, as always, as to whether or not he will be able to generalize this to the world of work.

Conrad shared some of his poetry with me. One poem was exceptional in its expression of feelings of worthlessness and yet persevering for successful outcome. It will be printed in the student magazine. He has also been writing short love

poems to his new girl friend. She is in another training program and may be learning disabled as well.

Conrad seems to be developing better social skills. He had problems communicating with the other students initially, due to the fact that his level of maturity is lower than most of our students at this time. He has made marked improvement, although he still needs a great deal of work in this area.

Session 4. Conrad reports that he is doing very well in the mailroom program now. We discussed why he thinks that the instructors are treating him differently now and what created all the positive change. Could all of this have happened without him feeling it was necessary to quit? How could he handle the same situation differently in the future?

Conrad is very happy about his new girlfriend. Her parents have opened their home to him, accepted him, allowed him to spend the night so that he doesn't have to ride the train home late at night. It is doubtful that the relationship could survive without this support, as he is terrified of riding the trains. The experience has been good for his confidence. He is more able to ride trains now and is very grateful to the basic skills teacher for showing him how to get to the town where his girlfriend lives.

Session 5. Conrad came in laughing and giggling, and we spent most of this session discussing how he jokes to cover up his real feelings. He told me that when he's upset, he transforms into a fantasy character, becoming another person. He said I wouldn't recognize him and wouldn't want to know him. Conrad told me how his sister had not attended his birthday celebration last year, and how his feelings were very hurt. We did a role play. Conrad was unable to express himself, so he had me play him. He enjoyed this immensely.

Session 6. Conrad arrived looking pale and holding his stomach. Although I knew he had complained to the learning disabilities specialist of stomach pains, I did not address it with him. He had mentioned to her that he might not want to stay for his session, but he came in, sat down, and immediately began to talk about all the plans for his 21st birthday party. After he had expressed his disappointment that his younger sister would not be attending, even though Conrad had told her she could bring her boyfriend, he began to complain about his stomach. I asked him if he thought he might be anxious about the weekend. He said that he could very well be nervous and upset about all the plans and arrangements around his birthday.

I mentioned that it was a pretty significant birthday, and we discussed what turning 21 meant to him. He wants to be independent but realizes that he is far from ready at this point. He mentioned that his girlfriend is talking abou. marriage, but he would not even consider it for several years. He says that he is very happy with her, but he realizes that he has to have a stable job and be able to put aside some money.

Conrad said how much he likes the program and how happy he is that he decided to stay. He admits now that he really didn't think he could make it, and he has surprised himself with how well he has been doing. However, he does recognize that he has an attendance problem for which he is currently on probation. His lack of punctuality is also a problem. He is extremely immature, and even though he will sit there and be very serious about his intentions to correct all of this, he does not seem able to sustain it over time. I am not convinced he will be able to hold a job over time either, although he has made great strides since he started the program. When the session concluded, Conrad indicated that his stomach felt much better.

Student Cathy

Session 1. This was my first real session with Cathy, since she arrived too late last week to do more than orient her to the process and set up the rules--contract with her. Today Cathy arrived exactly on time which she acknowledged as soon as she entered my office. I congratulated her on her punctuality.

At first Cathy had a great deal of difficulty saying anything. She wanted me to tell her what to talk about and how to begin. When we explored at some length how it felt for her to be "listened to" with full attention, she decided that although it was strange to her, she really liked the feeling that I was paying full attention to what she was saying.

Despite some periods of silence, Cathy was able to communicate about her family. Recently, since her birthday this month, her mother has been permitting her to go out with friends. She is elated over this new independence which she feels is long overdue. Cathy also discussed her relationship with her sister which is characterized by many ambivalent feelings. Cathy resents that her sister assumes an authoritative role, which Cathy believes is most likely related to her disability.

Because Cathy's sister made the initial arrangements for Cathy to enter this program, Cathy was very resistant. She wanted to attend college in an art program which her sister told her she would never be able to do. Cathy resented receiving this information from her sister, and she became even more resentful when her sister insisted she attend a vocational training program for learning disabled students. However, Cathy ajusted rapidly to the program. She is happy that she came, but she is still angry at how she came.

Session 2. Cathy is extremely difficult to work with in counseling. She may want to terminate counseling because she is so frustrated. She wants me to talk about myself, and is having the most difficulty of any student so far in accepting our separate roles. She spends a lot of time sitting in silence, waiting for me to tell her what to say. She spoke so softly that I couldn't understand her at all. When I expressed to her that this was interfering with our communication, she became very serious and silent. I allowed her to sit like this, until she finally came out with something quite revealing. She told me that she was a stutterer for a number of years. She speaks softly to keep this under control, or to hide it should it get out of control. She told me that her brother also stutters, and it has continued to be a problem for him.

EXPERIENCES OF NON-COMPLETERS

As indicated earlier, 30% of entrants left the program prior to completion. The major reasons for non-completion were persistent and severe problems of attendance, punctuality, and/or behavioral. Project staff were reluctant to ask students to leave the program because in many cases, attendance and behavioral problems were seen as being related to the learning disability and/or environmental factors rather than being under voluntary control.

Various interventions were made by project staff to try to prevent non-completion. Interventions included counseling; addressing specific issues in the interpersonal skills classroom without reference to any specific individual (i.e., addressing the issue on a group level); conferences attended by parents, relatives, guardians, VESID counselors, and the student; behavioral contracts; and phone calls and letters to the home in cases of persistent absenteeism. Most non-completers simply stopped attending despite phone calls and letters from program staff. A few

students were asked to leave because, despite multiple interventions, their presence was seen as disruptive and potentially harmful to the other students.

Specific examples of situations and predicaments, taken from case notes, that resulted in non-completion, are as follows (all names have been changed):

1. Student Frieda showed very poor attendance soon after entering the program and was rarely reachable by phone at home. Whenever staff members were able to reach her, they set up appointments that she did not attend. She demonstrated excellent performance in the vocational classroom although she was very sensitive to criticism. She would flare up when her poor attendance was mentioned, feeling criticized. In the college classes she was very shy and withdrawn although she interacted well with the other students out of class. She appeared to be embarrassed about her low level of academic skills. She had a history of substance abuse. It appeared from comments she made to a staff member that she had been beaten by her boyfriend, with whom she was living. She moved out and went to stay with a friend, and had no money. She was eventually dropped from the program for non-attendance.

2. Student Simon spoke a language other than English at home. Although he was fluent in English, he had a thick accent. During his initial interview with project staff, he expressed interest only in the college component of training. However, because of his low level of academic and intellectual functioning, he was not appropriate for entry to a regular community college program, nor was he employable. He entered the program and persisted with all components of training until his VESID counselor realized that a mistake had been made in establishing his eligibility for financial support. He had originally been told that he was eligible for full support but because of the level of parental income, he was found to be eligible for only partial support; his parents were asked to pay a supplement. It appeared that they were unable to pay this, although they did not say this outright, possibly because of embarrassment. Simon left the program and was accepted into a non-credit English as a Second Language program in another community college.

3. Student Billy had a criminal justice record connected with drug sales. He was a highly sensitive individual who claimed that others were prejudiced against him on racial grounds. He did extremely well in the vocational skills classes. He had a charming personality and got along well with the instructor, who appeared to

be tolerant of severe attendance and punctuality problems that surfaced early in the training. In the college classes, motivation and participation were minimal. Project staff described him as arrogant. He refused to follow instructions in class and his attendance became very poor. Despite many attempts to enlist his participation, he was dropped from the program. Since he was perceived by the vocational instructor to be successful in his classroom, he was transferred to the vocational program on a full time basis. However, attendance and punctuality problems persisted and he refused to cooperate with the agency counselor assigned to his case. He was eventually asked to leave the vocational program and had to be escorted out by a security guard.

4. Student Miguel had a criminal justice record. Also, his arm had been disfigured in an accident but this did not hinder his vocational training. He did extremely well in vocational training despite his statements that he was not at all interested in the area of training to which he had been assigned. He expressed interest in becoming a computer repairer. However, his academic skills were minimal. He was frequently absent from the program to attend court hearings in connection with the injury. Also, he would frequently leave the classroom without telling anyone why, and then stopped attending the program altogether. When contacted by staff, he said illness was preventing him from attending.

5. Student Bruce showed poor attendance and lateness from the beginning. He was described as lazy and slow in vocational classes, and did not follow instructions. He often went home "sick" without informing staff. It appeared that he was not motivated to be in the program and was eventually dropped despite many attempts to raise his level of motivation.

6. Student Roberto had a criminal justice record and attendance in the program was a condition of parole. He had great difficulty in vocational skills training and was able to learn only a few simple tasks. He had a lower I.Q. than the other students and had minimal academic skills. Attendance and punctuality were extremely poor. He did not appear to understand why he was being asked to attend regularly, nor did he understand the meaning of a behavioral contract. Eventually, he was dropped from the program and then referred by VESID to a sheltered workshop near his home. He subsequently contacted the learning disabilities specialist saying that he was doing well and that he missed her.

7. Student Alex did very well in the vocational classroom but did not like the college component. He had very poor attendance in both the college and vocational agency, and would frequently leave early. He made many excuses for his poor attendance including his own and family illness. The counselor frequently called his mother, who indicated that she did not know where he was. At one point Alex told project staff that he was going to Jamaica for a period of time but expected to come back and resume participation in the program. However, it was agreed with his VESID counselor that he be dropped from the program.

8. Student Hugo, who had excellent vocational skills, had a part-time evening job in a hospital. Because he worked late hours he had difficulty waking up in the morning, and was consequently frequently late to the program or absent. He informed project staff that he was leaving his family's home to live with his girlfriend, and then stopped attending the program. Messages were left with his family, which he did not answer. He was then dropped from the program.

9. Student Scott was a 19-year old who appeared to have emotional problems. He talked to himself in bizarre ways, and frequently behaved in a hostile and rebellious manner. Attendance and punctuality were poor. Progress was poor in the vocational component of training, and he often fell asleep in this class. The vocational teacher gave him more help than usual but eventually decided that he did not have the potential to complete the program. A meeting was arranged for the student, parent, VESID counselor, and learning disabilities specialist. The parent did not show up. Attendance, punctuality and behavioral problems persisted, and when Scott was eventually asked to leave the program, he returned to high school.

10. Student Arnold showed excellent learning ability in his vocational skills class. He had a manly appearance and was looked up to by the other students. He demonstrated a mature, adult work attitude in the vocational skills classes. However, his attitude was very different at the college. Academic skills were minimal, which may have caused him to feel embarrassed. He refused to participate in class, which disrupted the collaborative learning activities that were frequently used in both interpersonal and basic skills classes. He acted in an arrogant, disdainful manner to college staff. Despite his unpleasant behavior, he insisted that he wanted to continue to attend. Attendance and punctuality were very poor both at the vocational training agency and the college. Eventually, college staff were

concerned that his arrogance was having a negative effect on the other students, who as mentioned above, respected him. He was offered and accepted the opportunity to transfer to the vocational component of the program on a full time basis. He completed his program successfully and was placed in employment.

BEHAVIORAL DIFFICULTIES IN TWO COMPLETERS

Two students completed training despite persistent and severe behavioral problems throughout. Members of staff and vocational instructors worked intensively with both of them. As will be seen below, the employment outcomes were different for each.

1. Student Sara, also described earlier in this chapter, was an angry, provocative, and rebellious young woman who perceived any correction as criticism. She once engaged in a physical fight with another student in the vocational classroom. She acted in an immature manner, and staff considered her behavior attention-seeking. Her brother and cousin were deeply concerned about her development and called project staff frequently. Sara's VESID counselor made psychotherapy a prerequisite of program participation. Project staff were asked by the VESID counselor to facilitate this, which became very time consuming especially because Medicaid arrangements were necessary. Sara frequently missed appointments with the project counselor and learning disabilities specialist. Since she showed good skills in the vocational training class, she was placed in a part-time job in her vocational area, an intervention to try to help her change her behavior. However, behavioral problems appeared on the job and she was asked to leave.

Her attendance was generally good although she was often extremely late in arriving both at the start of the day and after breaks. When asked to change her hairstyle, which was considered dangerous for her type of work, she refused. She often complained of headaches and said that pressure made her nervous. She mentioned many other small physical problems. She was allowed to complete the program despite the persistence of her behavioral problems. Upon completion, she was placed in a job but soon quit. She was then fired from a second job. After some months, she reappeared at the vocational school, and another job placement was found. She was continuing to hold this job over a year later, at the time of this writing. This unpredictably successful outcome suggests that in this population, progress may be slow but eventually problematic cases may "turn around."

2. Student Steve, also described earlier in this chapter, appeared to have severe emotional problems. He demonstrated grandiosity and a great sense of unreality concerning his skill levels. He became very angry in response to mild criticism or when a different method of learning was suggested to him. His performance in the vocational skills class was adequate but his academic skills were poor. Despite a very low level of reading ability, he carried a difficult-to-read newspaper around with him. He perseverated at tasks he liked, both in the vocational training and in the college work study site. On various occasions he did not appear in the basic skills class that was scheduled immediately after his work study assignment. When a staff member located him in work study and encouraged him to leave in order to attend class, he would refuse, saying he had to finish his work. An hour later he would still be there. He demonstrated poor motivation in the college classes and refused entirely to work in the basic skills class. It is possible that he felt the level of work was too low.

Behavioral and emotional problems persisted in the vocational classes and he was placed in a part-time job (as had Sara, above). Punctuality was poor and there were many unexplained absences from the program. At one point he returned after a period of time, saying that he had had surgery. A social worker who had handled his case in high school had much contact with project staff. Although Steve had many problems, the social worker was impressed that he had managed to continue in the program and thought that it had provided him a positive experience. Upon completion, Steve was offered a full-time job where he was working part-time. However, he was referred by VESID for a psychiatric evaluation at this time and immediately afterwords, he quit the part-time job. Staff were not able to reach him after this.

SUMMARY AND COMMENTS

As in any program, some participants proceeded through training so smoothly that they almost escaped notice at times. In other cases, problems and issues arose that required intervention. Cases of the latter type were selected for this chapter because they illustrate a wide range of needs that must be addressed in programs of this type. The range of disabilities evidenced in this population must necessarily give rise to modest expectations, and many learning and behavioral difficulties must be expected.

The learning disabilities specialist was able to intervene in the small but important steps of learning in the vocational classroom. In individual counseling sessions and in the interpersonal skills classroom, the counselor addressed many behavioral and social issues that affected employability. The vignettes presented in this chapter show, besides the range of need, positive changes that occurred at various points in the transition process.

CHPATER 8
ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT PROGRESS IN THE PROGRAM

DESCRIPTION OF INSTRUMENTS

Various measures, both standardized and locally developed, were used to assess students' progress in the vocational training program. Pre-post assessments of academic skills and self-concept were made using standardized tests, an adapted standarized test, and a locally developed measure. During the course of the program, locally-developed measures were used periodically to assess progress in the learning of vocational, basic and interpersonal skills.

Pre-Post Testing of Academic Skills and Self-Concept

Reading, spelling, writing, arithmetic, and self-concept were assessed on entry to and exit from the program. Standardized measures of reading, spelling, and arithmetic were used in addition to an adapted standardized measure of self-concept, and a locally developed informal measure of writing skills. The measures were as follows:

Reading. Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE, CTB/McGraw-Hill, 1976), Reading Comprehension subtest. The appropriate level of the test was selected for each student according to the procedure outlined in the manual.

Spelling and Arithmetic. The Spelling and Arithmetic subtests of the Wide Range Achievement Test -Revised, Level 2 (Jastak & Wilkinson, 1984).

Writing Skills. An informal writing test was developed by project staff. Students were asked to write one or more paragraphs entitled, "How to Be Successful in a Job." The title was written on the board and the students were asked to copy it and then given fifteen minutes to write. They were told to spell as well as they could but not to be concerned if they made spelling errors. No help was given while they wrote.

Self-Concept. An adapted version of the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (Piers, 1984) was administered. The adaptation consisted of changes in the wording of some of the items to make them more age-appropriate or easier to understand. For example, the word "often" in the original question 4 ("I am often sad.") was considered difficult for the student to understand. The re-worded items were as follows:

4. I am sad a lot.

8. I don't like the way I look.

11. People do not like me.

29. I have nice eyes.

34. I get into trouble a lot.

38. My parents want too much from me.

41. My hair is cut nicely.

42. I volunteer in school a lot.

48. I am mean to other people a lot.

52. I am in a good mood a lot.

55. I have lots of energy.

57. The opposite sex likes me.

60. I have a nice face.

64. I bump into things or break things a lot.

69. The same sex likes me.

73. When I look in the mirror I like what I see.

74. I am afraid a lot.

Apart from these adaptations, the standardized form and procedures were used. As recommended in the manual for lower reading levels the items were read aloud to the students.

Periodic Assessment of Vocational, Academic, and Interpersonal Skills

Locally-developed competency rating scales were filled in by instructors of vocational, academic, and interpersonal skills every six weeks. The scales listed the major competencies taught in each skill area. (See "Checklist of Basic Skills Attainment," "Checklist of Interpersonal Skills Attainment" and "Checklist of Vocational Skills Attainment" in Appendix L.) Instructors placed checks on a notched line representing a 12-point scale, to describe students' performance in terms of acceptability for an entry level job. Ratings 1 to 3 indicated that the student's performance was not acceptable; 4 to 6 indicated potential for entry level or that performance was nearly acceptable; 7 to 9 indicated that performance was acceptable; and 10 to 12 indicated that performance was industrially acceptable or better than that required for an entry level job.

The basic skills instructor, counselor, and learning disa...ities specialist were trained to make the ratings in the relevant areas by the project director. The learning disabilities specialist then trained the vocational instructors at FEGS to make the ratings. FOH joined the project in its final year and was not asked for ratings.

The FEGS instructors were already providing monthly assessments of a global nature according to standard procedures that had been in place in the organization for a number of years. However, the project needed additional information to capture smaller degrees of change in student's performance in respect to the specific competencies being taugh . It is important in running a collaborative project such as this that vocational instructors receive adequate orientation from their own agency supervisors so that they became aware of the importance of such ratings. Instructors who have worked for such an organization for a period of time may have negative feelings about learning a new method of assessment, which may amount to extra work.

College work-study supervisors completed rating forms (see "Checklist of On-The-Job Vocational Skills Attainment" in the Appendix) at the end of each college quarter in order to describe students' performance on the assigned tasks. These ratings were noted in planning the basic and interpersonal skills instruction, and career counseling.

FINDINGS

Pre-Post Assessment

Pre-test scores on the standardized academic tests and the self-concept scale for all program entrants were reported in an earlier section (Characteristics of Program Entrants). Post-tests were administered upon program completion. Of the 23 completers, data were available for 21. The remaining two completers were placed in jobs too suddenly to allow testing; one completer was never able to spare the time to return for testing while the other was no longer reachable.

Pre and post test means and standard deviations are shown in the table below. Reading, spelling and arithmetic scores are shown as Grade Equivalents (G.E.). In the case of spelling and arithmetic, the test manual provides for conversion of raw scores to grade level equivalents expressed as "beginning" or "end" of the grade

concerned. For reporting purposes, "beginning" level scores are represented as ".1" and "end" level scores as ".9." Accordingly, a score of "beginning of 6th grade" is represented as G.E of 6.1. Self-concept scores are reported as raw scores (highest possible score is 80.)

PRE AND POST SCORES FOR PROGRAM COMPLETERS
(N=21)

	Pre		Post	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Reading Comp. G.E.	5.1	2.0	5.5	1.8
Spelling G.E.	4.9	2.7	5.7	2.4
Arithmetic G.E.	5.8	1.9	7.0	1.3
Self Concept Score	57.9	11.7	60.8	10.4

T-tests were used to compare pre and post scores. The comparisons were made on the basis of reading comprehension scale scores, and spelling, arithmetic and self-concept standard scores, as provided in the test manuals.

A significant difference was found for math scores ($t = 3.64$, $df = 20$, p .01). None of the other comparisons was significant.

As would be expected in this population, there was considerable variability among students' abilities, which is masked by group means. While statistical significance was not found for most the pre-post comparisons, scale and standard scores for the majority of completers showed positive change from pre to post, as indicated in the following table.

DIRECTION OF CHANGE FROM PRE TO POST

Test	Increase (% completers)	No Change (% completers)	Decrease (% completers)
Reading Comprehension	60	15	25
Spelling	65	15	20
Math	75	10	15
Self-Concept	80	0	20

The writing samples were examined in terms of word length and spelling error rate. Holistic judgments were also made to assess change in the quality of the writing.

Pre-program writing samples ranged from 27 to 206 words, while the post-program samples ranged from 18 to 127 words. The mean number of words for pre and post writing samples was similar, 76 and 72 words respectively.

Spelling error rates were computed by expressing the number of errors as a percentage of total words produced. Error rate on the pre tests ranged from 1% to 41%, while post error rates ranged from 2% to 22%. Mean error rates on the pre and post tests were 12% and 8% respectively However a t-test showed that the difference was not significant ($t = 1.47$, $df = 20$), because there was substantial within-group variability. While spelling improvement was minimal or non-existent in many cases, there were large decreases in spelling error rates in four of the completers: 11%, 13%, 26%, and 35% respectively.

Criteria for assessing the writing samples holistically were drawn from the Division of Curriculum and Instruction, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Milwaukee, WI Public Schools. Judgments were made on a 4-point scale, summarized as follows: 1: highly flawed; 2: unacceptable/not competent; 3: minimally competent/acceptable; 4: competent/clear mastery. A score of 0 was given to a sample that was illegible or off the point.

On both pre and post tests, most of the samples were given scores of 1 or 2. Pre-test scores and amount of change for the 21 completers for whom data were available are shown in the following table:

PRE-POST WRITING ASSESSMENTS FOR PROGRAM COMPLETERS

Pre-test Score	% Completers
0	10
1	43
2	43
3	5
4	0
Pre-Post Change	**% Completers**
Up 1 point	38
Stayed same	52
Down 1 point	10

To summarize the pre-post comparisons of reading spelling, arithmetic and self-concept scores, all group means showed increase from pre to post although only in the case of arithmetic was the difference significant. There was much within-group variability and the majority of completers showed positive change from pre to post. In the case of writing skills, the outcomes were less favorable: writing samples were mostly highly flawed or unacceptable both pre and post, and only 38% of the completers were able to increase their scores while 52% did not change, and 10% decreased. Spelling error rates declined by a mean of 4%, indicating change in a positive direction. For four completers in particular there were large decreases in spelling errors.

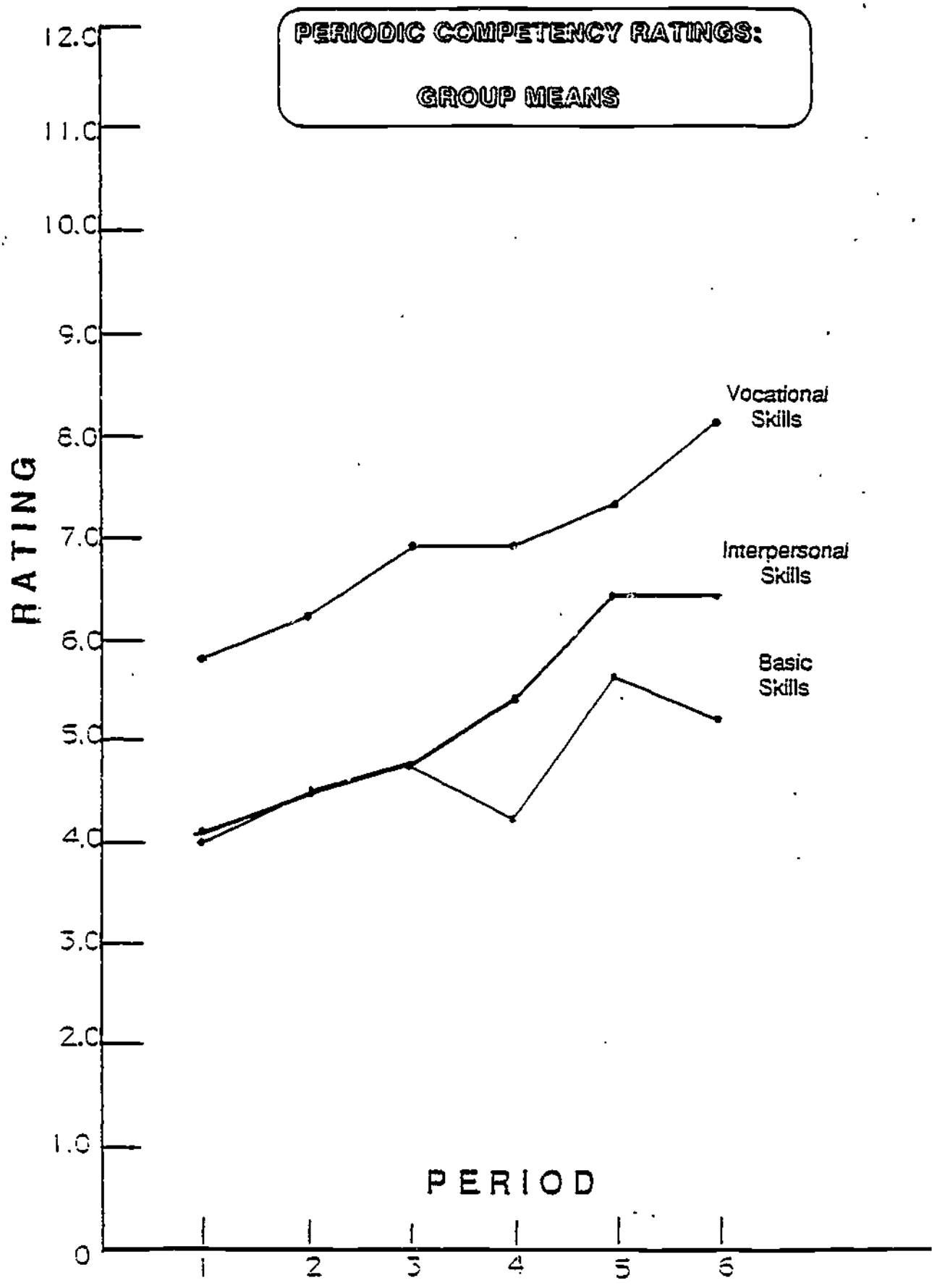
Periodic Ratings

Checks placed on the rating forms were converted to numbers from 1 to 12 (1 = lowest, 12 = highest point on scale). A mean score was then computed for each rating period for each student, in each of the three skills areas (vocational, basic, interpersonal). Only the students (N=23) who completed the program were included. Group means are presented in the following table and graph.

PERIODIC COMPETENCY RATINGS: GROUP MEANS

Rating Period

	1		2		3		4		5		6	
	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD
Vocational	5.75	2.03	6.02	2.81	6.87	2.15	6.91	1.89	7.26	1.21	8 12	1.88
Basic	3.95	0.89	4.46	1.10	4.66	1.32	4.23	1.20	5.58	1.43	5.20	1.77
Interpersonal	4.13	2.13	4.48	1.81	4.69	1.81	5.44	1.73	6.38	2.10	6.38	1.44


PERIODIC COMPETENCY RATINGS:
GROUP MEANS
12.0
11.0
10.0
9.0
8.0
7.0
6.0
5.0
4.0
3.0
2.0
1.0
0
RATING
Vocational Skills
Interpersonal Skills
Basic Skills
PERIOD
1
2
3
4
5
6

As can be seen from the table and graph, students' ability levels were higher in vocational than the other two skills areas. In vocational skills, the group mean was 5.75 for the first rating period and 8.12 for the last rating period, representing an increase of approximately 2 points on the scale. Further, the group mean at the beginning was at the high end of the range of "potential for entry level" (nearly acceptable) while the group mean for the final rating period was in the middle of the range of "acceptable for entry level."

The results for basic and interpersonal skills were highly similar. For the first rating period, the group mean for both was at the low end of the range of potential for entry level. By the final rating period, group means in both areas were still in this range, although the interpersonal skills rating was at a higher level.

Vocational skills and interpersonal skills group means increased two points on the scale between the first and final rating periods, while the basic skills mean increased by one point. Thus, the pattern of change is similar among the three skills areas but vocational skills performance is at a higher level.

It is possible to explain the difference in levels of performance between vocational and the other two skills areas in terms of the purpose of vocational rehabilitation services. VESID counselors are naturally willing to place clients in programs of this type only if they think that they are capable of learning the vocational skills necessary for competitive entry level employment. The current findings corroborate VESID's judgements about the appropriateness of most of the clients they referred to the program. In contrast, VESID does not screen clients into programs of this type on the basis of basic or interpersonal skills. Therefore, since individuals with severe learning disabilities tend to have serious deficits in these areas, it is not surprising that their basic and interpersonal skills would be at lower levels than their vocational skills.

To summarize the findings regarding the periodic competency ratings, vocational skills ratings moved from the nearly acceptable to the acceptable range during the course of training. While the amount of progress was similar in the basic and interpersonal skills areas, the ratings were lower than the vocational ratings, and the ratings did not move out of the nearly acceptable range.

CHAPTER 9
EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES

In this section, information is presented on job outcomes at the time of program completion, and six months later. The six-month data were obtained by project staff through follow up telephone interviews. Additional information was learned through unplanned contacts: many completers had established excellent rapport with project staff and called or visited at various times on their own initiative.

Of the 23 program completers * 17 (74%) were placed in competitive, entry-level employment at the end of training. Another completer, Fred, described in a earlier section, was not able to attend job interviews but some months later found himself an entry level job in his area of training through a newspaper classified ad. Therefore, including this individual 18 (78%) students found jobs on completion.

Of these 18 completers, 17 (94%) worked in full time and one (6%) in part time jobs. Hourly pay for the first placement ranged from $4.00 to $10.00. Seventy-two percent earned $5.50 or less per hour, and 29% earned $6.00 or more per hour.

All but one completer worked in his or her area of vocational training in the first placement. The other completer, Ron, described earlier, had been trained in building maintenance but despite attending numerous interviews, was not hired, possibly due to poor interviewing skills and personal presentation. Ron was extremely persistent and eventually FEGS found him a cleaning job in a long-term care facility, a significant improvement in the life of this person with a substance abuse history who had not previously earned an income from legal activities.

Of the 18 who found jobs upon completion 83% were still working six months later. Nine (50%) were still employed in the same job, six (33%) were in different jos, two (11%) were in another training program, and one (6%) was not employed on follow up. Examples of job difficulties are given below (unless otherwise specified, all jobs referred to are full time).

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*All individuals described in this section were FEGS students. The two FOH students were still in training at the time of report preparation.

1. Bruce lost his part-time job as a jewelry polisher because he was suspected of stealing. He strongly denied the charge and enlisted the help of the learning disabilities specialist. When she contacted the employer, he re-investigated the situation, withdrew his accusation, and offered Bruce his job back. However, Bruce was not longer interested in working there and found a full time job assisting a picture framer at $6.00 an hour. He held the job for nine months. During this time he fell off a ladder and obtained worker's compensation. He was later laid off, accused of not working hard enough (which he denied). He then found a part-time job at $8.00 per hour in a shipping and receiving department, loading and unloading trucks. Following this, he enrolled in full time, private barber training. He made his own arrangements for the payment of tuition. Working as a barber was a goal he had originally expressed at VESID intake but it was considered inappropriate.

2. Ray completed the mailroom/reprographics program and was initially placed as a mial clerk at $6.25 per hour. After three months, he was laid off because business was slow. He was placed in a second mail clerk job at $5.60 per hour. He was fired after one month because he could not retain instructions, which caused his supervisor frustration. He may have had additional difficulties of poor social skills; he frequentiy laughed loudly and attempted to socialize too often during work.

Prior to program completion, FEGS staff had considered Ray to be most appropriate for a messenger job, especially because he was physically restless. Ray was very interested in this option but his parents felt that such a job was undesirable. When Ray was fired from the second job, project staff continued to talk to his parents and in fact persuaded them to allow their son to take a messenger job. He was placed in such a position at a law firm for $5.00 per hour.

At the time of report preparation, he had worked for the law firm for 11 months, and was extremely successful. He had been promoted to a mail clerk position, and given an attendance award of a certificate and $100. He greatly enjoyed the job.

3. Paul, a building maintenance completer, was originally placed in a $6.30 per hour maintenance/messenger job. He was laid off after the first week because of budgetary cutbacks. He then found a part-time casual job for several weeks on his own initiative. FEGS then placed him in a $6.00 per hour job as a maintenance worker, which he was still holding over six months later. When followed up he was

particularly proud of the fact that a number of co-workers had just been fired but that he was well liked by his supervisor and had retained his job.

4. Hernando, whose vocational area was building maintenance, completed the program despite poor motivation and behavioral immaturity. FEGS did not immediately have a placement for him and while they found one, he was referred for a day work by VESID. After three months he was placed in an entry level position at $4.75 per hour. He was let go after one day because he made many mistakes.

He was then placed in a semi-supported job as a utility porter in a hotel kitchen at $5.25 per hour. He greatly disliked the job and was transferred to another site. He applied for another job through FEGS but was not selected. He quit the porter job and on follow up was unemployed. FEGS planned to continue helping him but he was not seen as being adequately motivated. His mother called project staff to ask if her son was really trying and whether he had turned down any job offers. At the time of report preparation FEGS was attempting to assist him in finding another placement.

5. Phil's academic skills were among the highest in the program but he was often poorly motivated in all areas of training. His vocational area was building maintenance. As with Hernando above, there was a delay in finding him a placement. During this period his father contacted project staff and expressed concern that his behavior and motivation were regressing while he was unoccupied. His first placement was an entry-level building maintenance/porter job at $5.00 per hour. He lost the job after two weeks because of lack of initiative. He was then placed in a partially supported job at the same rate of pay as a utility worker in a kitchen (a similar job to Hernando's). At the time of report preparation, he had held the job for three months.

6. Rick, a building maintenance completer whose case is presented in the next section, was placed in a $5.25 per hour porter/maintenance job in a hospital but was fired two weeks later. One of his tasks was to mop the floor in a busy area of the hospital. He did not realize he was expected to ask people to move that he could mop. Rather, he waited until areas were empty, but since these times were rare, he was unable to do his work. It is possible that this situation could have been facilitated by a job coach. He interviewed for several other jobs through FEGS but was not successful. He then found a part-time porter job at the minimum wage

through the newspaper. He quit the job after a week because he did not like his supervisor's attitude. He spent some months unoccupied. Then, project staff were able to persuade him to see his VESID counselor, who referred him to a pre-employment program for developmentally disabled individuals that would culminate in a supported job with a job coach.

Five (22 %) of the completers were not employed. The circumstances varied, as follows.

1. Ben completed the building maintenance program with good skills. He was sent to a hotel to interview for a $11.00 per hour entry level light maintenance position. He told the interviewer that he was not interested in the job because he considered it below his level of ability. He expressed his desire to obtain a construction job at at least $18.00 per hour. His aspirations were highly unrealistic. Despite several subsequent conversations with the learning disabilities specialist, his aspirations did not change. He later told his VESID counselor he was seeking work as a security guard. When followed up six months later, he had not yet found a job, and was unoccupied.

2. Henry, who completed building maintenance training, was not hired after his first interview, and after his second it was found that he had lied about his job history; what he said in the interview was highly discrepant with his resume and his letter of reference. While Henry had completed the program, his skills and level of intellectual functioning were low. In addition, he had a psychiatric disorder which affected his behavior. FEGS offered him a supported work placement but he declined and was neither employed nor going to school when followed up.

3. Larry was a mailroom/reprographics student who completed the program but failed to receive job offers after several interviews. In high school he had been a high-achieving student with no special learning needs, and was planning for a career as a computer programmer. He then sustained a head injury which left him with a substantially lower I.Q. and severe learning disabilities. He remembered his earlier levels of achievement and hoped to recover his abilities. A fellow program completer who had also sustained a head injury was able to obtain a job immediately on completion. Larry became despondent and began to express interest in enrolling in a proprietary school in the computer area. Despite receiving counseling and strong advice from project staff to the contrary, Larry enrolled in the school. He

received a state loan to pay for his tuition. The school only placed him in remedial skills classes and upon follow up he had not been able to enter computer training classes. He realized that his chances of doing so were slim. At the time of report preparation, project staff were trying to obtain interviews for him for a mailroom position.

4. Ramon was an individual with a history of serious physical illness. He continued to be frail and illness frequently caused absence while in the program. He was extremely poor and may have been malnourished. In addition, his mother spoke no English and required him to take further time off to help her with her affairs. Ramon was considered to have good skills in his area of training, upholstery, and was considered ready for employment. However, he became sick again at the time when interviews were being set up. When he returned a month later, his instructor noted that his skills had regressed. Immediately after he completed the program, Ramon informed project staff that he was going to visit some relatives in the West Indies for an unknown period of time. At the time of report preparation, six months later, he had just reappeared and had found himself a $4.50 per hour assembly job in a factory. FEGS staff were attempting to find him a job placement in the upholstery area.

5. Steve was offered a full time job in the jewelry business in which he was currently being employed part-time as part of his training. However, he appeared to have an emotional disturbance and was referred for a psychiatric evaluation at the same time. He quit his part-time job and project staff were not able to reach him subsequently, despite repeated attempts.

Summary of Employment Outcomes

To summarize regarding employment outcomes, 78% of program completers obtained competitive, entry level jobs. Most jobs were full time with hourly pay of $5.50 or below. All but one completer was originally employed in the area of vocational training. Of the employed completers, 50% were still in their original jobs on six month follow up. At this time, another 33% were in other jobs, 11% in another training program, and 6% were neither employed nor in school. The 22% of completers who were not employed on program completion were in another training program or unoccupied at six month follow up.

The fact that more than three quarters of the completers found competitive employment, and that 83% of these individuals were still employed after six months, indicates that the program was successful in achieving its major goal. It seems doubtful that many of the participants could have found skilled jobs without the training and support services provided in the program. For many, the training experience was a turning point, opening up possibilities that had not existed previously.

CHAPTER 10
SELECTED CASE STUDIES

Throughout this report, examples concerning specific students have been provided to illustrate various issues that arose in the operation of the program. This chapter provides fuller information on three participants to deepen an understanding of the transition process for special education school leavers. The cases, already referred to on the first page of this report, were selected because they exemplified three types of student: those who successfully completed the program and made the transition to competitive employment, those who completed the program but were not ready to work competitively, and those who did not complete the program. Of course, each student in each of these three groups has his or her own pattern of strengths and weaknesses, and the cases presented are typical in some ways and unique in others.

To allow comparison, all three cases are from the building maintenance area, to which the majority of program entrants were assigned. All three cases raise issues that need to be addressed in working with urban young adults with severe learning disabilities. All three cases are male, reflecting the fact that the large majority of participants were male. All names have been changed. The case studies were prepared with the help of Phyllis Illges, project counselor.

EXAMPLE OF A SUCCESSFUL COMPLETER: TOM

Background

Tom was an 18-year-old African-American male who completed twelfth grade and received a special education certificate. Although he had no work experience, Tom participated in his high school's co-op program in plumbing and carpentry. It was after this that he first expressed interest in learning either indoor or outdoor construction skills. He was referred to VESID by his school to evaluate him for possible vocational training. VESID in turn referred him to FEGS. Since Tom expressed anxiety over his reading and arithmetic skills and about his ability to succeed in vocational training, the Diagnostic Vocational Evaluation (DVE) counselor at FEGS recommended him to the program.

Tom was from an intact family, and he continued to live at home with his father, mother, one younger brother (age 16), and three sisters aged 19, 20, and 21. It appeared to be a very enmeshed and religious family with old-fashioned values. This seemed to have instilled in Tom a positive attitude toward authority figures. Other than the usual sibling conflicts, Tom seemed to have a good relationship with all members of his family. When his mother attended a parent education workshop meeting at the college, she was extremely interested in finding out about the skills he was learning.

Tom adjusted very well to all aspects of the program except for his work study, which was in the shipping/receiving area. The supervisor had problems relating to most project students. Normally, Tom was easy-going, cooperative, anxious to learn, and sensitive to the other students. When he spoke up in interpersonal skills classes, which happened on an irregular basis, he often appeared insightful but seemed to be repeating statements he had heard from his parents.

Test data provided by VESID

WAIS-R: Verbal 73; Performance: 72; FS: 72.

WRAT Reading: 3.9 GE

Arithmetic: 4.5 GE

Pre-program test scores

TABE Reading Comprehension: 5.0

WRAT-R Math: End of 6th grade GE

Spelling: below 3 GE

Adapted Piers-Harris Self Concept: 57

Post-test scores

TABE Reading Comprehension: 5.0

WRAT-R Math: End of 7th grade GE

Spelling: Beginning of 4th grade GE

Adapted Piers-Harris Self-Concept 65

Competency Rating Data

Average competency ratings on a twelve-point scale, as described in Chapter 8, are shown below. There were more ratings for vocational than the other areas because of the occurrence of college intersessions, during which time full-time vocational training was received.

Skills Area	Rating Period						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Vocational	4	8	4	5	6	7	8
Basic	3	4	4	4	6		
Interpersonal	5	5	4	3	6		

It can be seen that there was a steady increase in performance in all three skills areas, the greatest increase being in vocational skills. Here, Tom moved from the lowest point within "potential for entry level" to the middle of "acceptable for entry level."

Psychosocial and Behavioral

Tom always had a mild attendance and lateness problem hardly unique to this population. The slightest headache or toothache was a reason to stay home, as was bad weather on certain occasions. At various times Tom was called at home by project staff to determine why he was absent. Often he would answer the telephone himself and when asked why he had not come in, he responded "I was tired," or "We went out of town for the weekend." On other occasions, he responded that he had a headache or his tooth was bothering him. Other than this, Tom was able to sustain himself in the program fairly well.

He presented very few problems to the counselor or staff, kept quietly to himself with only an occasional question or difficulty. His socialization skills were good, and he made many friends among students and staff. When other students complained about conditions of training or learning, Tom always had a solution which he had already implemented himself and was willing to share. His two interpersonal conflicts (described below) were with individuals who were known to have frequent incidents of this nature, and in general Tom got along well with everyone. However, there was an aspect of "laziness" that manifested itself when Tom became completely relaxed and comfortable in a situation. It was almost as if he was saying "Okay, I've had enought of being the perfect worker or student, and now I'm going to take a break and do as I please." If he was confronted, he would cooperate and get back on track again. He responded well to criticism from authority figures.

Vocational Training

Tom was an enthusiastic student in the building maintenance program. He was also a good role model for some of the other students, who tended to sit around and complain that there was "nothing to do." Tom constantly found more advanced students to teach him a variety of skills when the instructor was busy. He also attached himself to one of the most skilled students in the FEGS program who showed him a great deal about cabinet building. Tom assisted students in sandpapering in exchange for watching them construct cabinets and perform more complicated tasks.

Tom attached himself to one particular student, Arnold, who left the program to attend FEGS on a full-time basis. Arnold helped him to use a table saw, and together they built a bookcase and a small typewriter table. When Tom was making a small, wooden cabinet, Arnold helped him to nail and glue the pieces into place. Tom learned how to use clamps to fortify the piece. Later he stained and shellacked a video cabinet that Arnold had constructed for someone else. This kind of teamwork was inspiring to the other students, although the LD specialist had to monitor the activities, making sure that Tom was really doing tasks himself and not merely passing the tools and observing.

On one occasion, Tom assisted a FEGS counselor with new students, teaching them basic electrical wiring and sheet rocking. Tom had good ability to work with others as assistant, as student and as teacher. However, his strength might later prove to be a weakness in his tendency to lean on others and to show a lack of independence.

Tom was constantly concerned with his future job placement. He showed more than average interest in his future, and accepted the responsibility for asking for the help he needed in obtaining interviews and completing his resume. He was assertive in dealing with the LD specialist, and she reported being able to work with him very effectively in completing these tasks.

Interpersonal Skills Training

The level of Tom's participation in this class varied tremendously. He was extremely sensitive to the comments of the other students, who did not always follow the rules about poking fun at each other. During Tom's time in the program,

some racial bantering occurred between a few students. These issues were discussed at length in the classroom. Eventually, this subsided completely, but during the period of working it through, Tom had a lot of difficulty expressing himself in the class. The counselor addressed the issues in a general sense and observed Tom's reactions closely. It was obvious to her that someone had said something to him outside of the classroom. After this was discussed at some length, and the class became "safe" again, Tom opened up and began to participate fully again.

Tom worked well with the other students, encouraging others and asking questions when he was unclear about instructions. He volunteered his opinions, and he was not afraid to disagree with his classmates.

In a class where the topic of emotional conflicts was discussed, Tom "broke the ice" in the class by introducing an example from his home. It was extremely relevant, as well as amusing enough to make everyone feel comfortable. After Tom described the situation, different students agreed to role play with him. The students introduced various suggestions for him through the role play. When the counselor checked with him in a later class as to any progress he might have made, he said that the situation at home had improved. His ability to be open and honest in the class encouraged other students to introduce their own personal situations.

Basic Skills Training

Tom enjoyed reading and frequently volunteered. Unlike many students, he was able to read fluently from line to line without losing his place and stumbling over words. However, he did have trouble recognizing punctuation, and he tended to read on in one continuing monotone until he would run out of breath, creating his own, often inappropriate pauses. Tom was able to find the details in the reading, but he was unable to pick out the main idea. However, he was capable of making inferences and generalizing concepts.

Tom could do simple addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, but needed help when the multiplication and division required more than one step. He would lose concentration and become frustrated when left alone, but he could complete the problem with some direction from the instructor.

Tom had good oral communication skills. He asked many more questions than the average student, and hw was unafraid to admit he did not understand. Often he

volunteered to answer questions and go to the blackboard to illustrate math problems. He seemed to have a natural empathy for the other students and would encourage and support them.

Tom's written sentences always made sense, but he was never able to write more than five or six on one topic. However, he was able to punctuate, spell and use grammar sufficiently to be understood. In general, Tom was punctual, cooperative, followed directions, and worked well with others.

Basic Skills Tutoring

Tom had a tremendous amount of difficulty with phonics. Whenever the tutor asked him if he understood, he always nodded his head. However, when she would ask him about the same concept in a different way, he became confused and was not able to demonstrate any understanding.

When Tom was asked to answer grammar questions, he was able to choose between two answers successfully. However, his reading was slow and labored, and he had continuous difficulty with phonics and spelling. In the area of math, the tutor worked with Tom on basic addition and subtraction, which he became able to perform adequately. The tutor found Tom to be polite, cooperative, and always very eager to learn.

Work-Study

Tom's work study was in the shipping/receiving department of the college. Initially, Tom enjoyed this tremendously. He delivered packages to various departments within the college. Sometimes he would go alone, and at other times he would be accompanied by another student. The supervisor at the time worked well with the students, who were all very fond of him and, if permitted, would have spent the entire day there. After Tom had been on this assignment for several months, the supervisor, F, left his job. He was replaced by supervisor J, who was immediately disliked by all the students. The counselor felt that anyone taking F's place would have had a rough time because of the fondness that all the students felt for him. She worked with the small group of students on the issues of loss, grief, and their general feelings of desertion and anger. She also contacted the new supervisor, explaining the situation to him and discussing different methods of working with the students.

Problems seemed to subside for a time. However, several weeks later, supervisor J called to inform the counselor that Tom, along with several other students, had not been attending his work study. The counselor set up an early morning meeting to discuss the situation. At this meeting, Tom flatly refused to attend work study. He said that supervisor J was rude and nasty to the students. Although the counselor recognized the need for students to be able to cope with supervisors who might behave in a similar fashion, she also felt that the students must also feel empowered not to stay with supervisors who might be abusive with them. She felt it was important to respect Tom's decision. Since there were no other work-study positions open at that time, and Tom was close to completion, he did not have another work study experience.

Individual Counseling

Although the opportunity for individual counseling was offered to Tom on several occasions during his training, he never accepted, and in fact, shied away from it. He would speak to the counselor when he needed help with special situations which will be described, but he was not interested in ongoing counseling. Three different circumstances arose which did bring Tom to the counselor's office. The first situation involved his work study as just described.

On another occasion, he arrived at the counselor's office in the middle of a basic skills class looking very upset. He expressed his frustration with the behavior of another student whose "moodiness" and angry outbreaks could be very disturbing. The counselor allowed Tom to express his feelings, encouraged him to think of different approaches to the problem, and then walked him back to the classroom when he felt able to continue. The counselor approached him a few days later to ask him how things were going in relation to the other student. He reported that he was "ignoring" him and his behavior, and that he felt more comfortable and able to concentrate in the classroom.

On several occasions Tom "dropped in" to the counselor's office to discuss interviewing skills and future employment. When the interpersonal skills class practiced interviews, he would drop by after the class to ask questions about how much or how little he should say in an interview or how to answer specific questions. The counselor encouraged him to raise his questions in the classroom for the benefit

of the other students. When appropriate, she would suggest raising the question in the classroom herself, explaining to Tom that other students probably had the same question and it would be helpful to them.

Even though Tom was a "model" student in many ways, it seemed that he could have benefited from individual counseling.

Employment Outcome

Immediately upon program completion, Tom was placed in a porter maintenance job. He had excellent social skills and had developed a relationship with a FEGS job placement officer, who found him a job in what was considered to be a good environment. He earned $5.50 an hour and worked full time. When followed up six months later, he still had the job and was doing well. When asked to describe some good things about the job, he responded, "I thought I could never get up early and go to work but I look at this as training me for a bigger and better job." He liked his supervisor and got along well with his co-workers. He stated that there were no problems.

When asked about good things in his life other than work, he answered, "I feel independent now. I can make my own money without somebody giving it to me." He stated that he planned to go to college and get more education so that he could earn more.

Conclusion

Tom's success may be attributed to his combination of positive motivation to work, good social skills, ability to learn in the classroom, and ability to follow through. In addition, the support he received from his family should not be underestimated.

EXAMPLE OF AN UNSUCCESSFUL COMPLETER: RICK

Background

Rick was a 20-year-old African-American male whose vocational training area was building maintenance. He had attended regular classes until ninth grade when he was assigned to special education classes. Upon VESID intake, he stated that he expected to receive a special education certificate but was unable to do so. Basic

academic skills were extremely poor; his reading was labored and he could barely write one sentence. During an interview that was part of the program application process, he had difficulty reading and completing a simple application form (contained in the Appendix). He was very thin and staff suspected nutritional problems, as he had poor eating habits and frequently stated that he was hungry.

Work history consisted of part time employment through two summer youth programs, when he worked as a hospital maintenance helper and a packager in a factory. In addition, as part of his school curriculum, he had a job cleaning meters for a gas and electric company.

Rick's parents were deceased, and he lived with his aunt, uncle, and five cousins. The family was supported by the uncle. Rick always seemed to feel loved and well cared for by these people. However, there were conflicts with one of his cousins, around the same age, that were addressed in counseling.

Rick was one of the lower functioning students in the program. Both verbal and social skills were extremely limited. He was initially introverted and shy. He frequently fell asleep in class and even in tutoring where he worked on a one-to-one basis. When he smiled, his affect changed dramatically. His happiness was infectious and in general, Rick was extremely good natured and well liked.

Test data provided by VESID

WAIS-R: Verbal 64; Performance: 67; FS: 65.

WRAT Reading: 2.6 GE

Arithmetic: 3.7 GE

Pre-program test scores

TABE Reading Comprehension: 4.0 GE

WRAT-R Math: End of 4th grade GE

Spelling: End of 3rd grade GE

Adapted Piers-Harris Self-Concept: 49

Post-program test scores

TABE Reading Comprehension: 4.1 GE

WRAT-R Math: Beginning of 5th grade GE

Spelling: Below 3rd grade GE

Adapted Piers-Harris Self-Concept: 57

Competency Rating Data

Average competency ratings on a twelve-point scale, as described in Chapter 8, are shown below. There were more ratings for the vocational than the other areas because of the occurrence of college intersessions, during which time full-time vocational training was received.

Skills Area	Rating Period					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Vocational	3	2	3	5	5	5
Basic	4	4	4	5		
Interpersonal	2	4	3	5		

At the beginning of training, performance was in the non-acceptable range in both vocational and interpersonal skills, and at the lowest level of "nearly-acceptable" in basic skills. By the end of the program, Rick had moved up the scale slightly, but was still performing only in the middle of the range of potential for entry level in all three areas. Thus, at the end of training, he was not considered to be functioning at an acceptable level for entry level employment.

Psychosocial and Behavioral

Rick had considerable difficulty throughout his training. His appearance of flat affect, and poor social skills, coupled with the fact that he was intellectually lower functioning than the others, created an impression that he was unmotivated, "lazy," and disinterested.

On one occasion, the vocational training instructor discovered him sound asleep in the classroom. He yelled at him, startling him and awakening him very suddenly. Rick later revealed to the counselor that he had been humiliated and embarrassed. He yelled back at the instructor and several students expressed that they had been concerned that he would hit the instructor. This was incongruent with his normal behavior. The counselor judged that he did not have the social skills to handle his feelings of embarrassment.

Initially, Rick was so shy that he isolated himself from the other students. He had no idea how to initiate communication, or how to respond when others initiated

conversation. The "ice breaker" for him was a group role play in an interpersonal skills class described below which allowed him tc step outside of himself and take on another role. He began to smile and even laugh, which the counselor viewed as a major breakthrough for him.

A group project in building maintenance further helped him to communicate, and it became obvious that Rick benefited from group support and encouragement. When the interpersonal skills class focused on a group project, Rick began to form relationships with other students and staff. His progress, his willingness to learn and participate, and especially his change from nonverbal to outgoing and friendly gave the impression that he had a chance of obtaining competitive employment in the future.

Vocational Training

Several themes were consistent throughout Rick's vocational training. He seemed to lack motivation and enthusiasm for the work, although when asked if he liked what he was doing, he always said that he enjoyed it. His lack of energy or ability to sustain a task without repeated support and supervision made him appear "lazy" and unwilling to work hard. The LD specialist continuously worked with him, but this behavior never improved. Rick was also resistant to any corrections in his work methods or even choice of tools. He stated that he did not like anyone telling him what to do, and he really preferred to work in small groups with other students. Although he would work better in this situation, he would frequently "supervise" himself or stand around watching the other students do the work.

When he did work, his work was consistently too slow, often affecting the quality of the finished product. For several days, the LD specialist observed Rick applying wa :r to moisten the cement floor of a bathroom prior to laying down the tiles. He was using a paint brush to apply the water to the surface area. He was moving the brush too slowly, thus splashing water on newly installed tiles. This occurred on two separate occasions, and the LD specialist intervened by asking the instructor to demonstrate the correct procedure for Rick. On another occasion, the LD specialist found Rick using a small "Exacto" knife to cut a piece of sheetrock. Noting that he was working very slowly and making little progress, she asked him if he was using the correct tool. The instructor came over and demonstrated how he

should be cutting with a much sharper tool. Rick became frustrated and impatient when he was corrected by the instructor, which the LD specialist found to be his normal reaction to criticism. He frequently forgot the various steps involved in procedures. It was thought that his possible nutritional problems affected his concentration and energy level.

The LD specialist spent a great deal of time encouraging him to ask questions when he was confused. She tried to help him to focus on his tasks. Although he was able to learn basic building maintenance skills, neither his pace, enthusiasm, nor ability to accept criticism improved over time.

[illegible] Skills Training

Initially Rick refused to participate in basic skills classes, but gradually he began to cooperate. He often appeared to be "moody" and "in his own world." His work was inconsistent, and he "played around" and "goofed off" frequently. He could do basic addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division, and compute with decimals. He was able to solve word problems with help from the instructor.

His writing skills were very poor. He did not have a concept of punctuation, and he ran all of his sentences together with "and." His spelling and phonics were also very poor. His reading was slow and labored. In a short segment of reading material, he could locate the facts and sometimes the main idea. However, he was unable to make inferences from these readings. He was able to find information from a table of contents.

He never refused to answer questions, but he did not volunteer any questions of his own. This may have been due to his shyness, but he also may not have been capable of formulating questions. Overall, although he did not make great strides, he did exhibit some improvement in reading. Since he was essentially nonverbal when he entered the program, the fact that he began to respond was a marked improvement. Although his expressive communication skills did not improve very much, he was able to give concrete answers. He had a very short attention span, and was generally very low functioning.

Interpersonal Skills

Initially Rick did not speak in class. When he was asked his opinion, he would just smile or giggle. On one occasion, the class did a group role play exercise where the students were passengers on a bus which had broken down in the middle of nowhere. They had to interact and figure out what action, if any, should be taken. For the first time, Rick became involved in the process. When he kept insisting he had hoarded food and refused to share, the other students teased him until he passed out make-believe chicken wings and mashed potatoes to everyone in the group. This exercise seemed to help him open up, and he began to participate.

He was able to memorize enough facts to do a videotaped interview, but any unexpected questions could throw him off guard. Unless there was a concrete answer for a question, and he was somehow prepared to give that answer, he was unable to provide answers.

Rick appeared unaware of some of his behaviors and their impact on others. When he would arrive late for class, he would strut into the classroom and slam the door. The counselor used role play to have all the students "arrive late" and demonstrate how they each thought it should be done. Rick still did not see how his behavior was different. The counselor then role-played Rick, and accentuated the negative behavior in order for him to see her point. He was able to laugh along with the others, and this "grand entrance" behavior ceased.

Rick had a short temper, especially if aroused during sleep or criticized for his work or behavior. The situation where his vocational instructor woke him during sleep, mentioned above, was also role played in the classroom, with his permission. The other students gave him suggestions and acted out different responses which they felt might produce better results. In general, his behavior in the interpersonal skills classroom was cooperative, and he became more cheerful and involved during the latter half of his training.

Basic Skills Tutoring

Rick had a great deal of difficulty reading due to the fact that he did not remember the phonics principles necessary to sound out words. He would guess, instead, at pronunciations, mumbling the endings to cover his mistakes. The tutor worked with Rick on "ed" and "s" word endings specifically, which he frequently

dropped. Rick remembered the spellings of words, and he was able to unscramble words quite well. The bulk of tutoring time was spent learning phonics, where he had the most difficulty.

Work Study

Rick's work study was in the Shipping/Receiving Department of the college. He delivered messages and packages between the main college building and another part of the college just two blocks away. Rick had to read the package labels and the cards for the packages. He also had to write out cards with the name of the person receiving the package and the location. The only math required of him was simple addition in counting pieces of mail.

Social interaction was necessary with his supervisor and the other messengers. He also communicated with the people whom he delivered the mail after the job coach told him exactly what to say. She suggested that he say, "This package is for Mr. _____." Until she made the suggestion, he had been nonverbal. In general, he was able to do all the tasks well, and the supervisor found him to be very cooperative.

On one occasion, the job coach observed Rick trying to squeeze a loaded hand truck under a railing that was too low to allow it to pass. She noted that he seemed to have a depth/distance perception problem. On several occasions in the beginning stages of the work study, the counselor found him lost and frustrated. She helped him to figure out the directions. After about a month, he seemed to be able to find his way around the college without any difficulty.

Individual Counseling

Rick did not have regular sessions with the counselor. However, he did meet with her on several occasions to discuss the various issues, such as sleeping in class, and his diet. He admitted that he did not always eat breakfast, and he sometimes went the whole day without eating anything but candy bars and "junk food" from the machines. He started to bring his lunch with him, but this did not occur on a regular basis.

When Rick yelled at his vocational training instructor for waking him up in the classroom (described above), the counselor discussed it privately with him, and then

with his permission the situation was recreated through role play in interpersonal skills class. The counselor also saw him for several sessions during a period of conflict with his cousin. During this time, Rick opened up slightly, but remained generally uncommunicative about his personal life.

Employment Outcome

Rick proved unable to generalize his skills from the classroom to job interviews. Even though he was able to do a job interview in the classroom, and had even reached the point where he could interview on videotape, he was essentially nonverbal with strangers. He was so painfully shy that he was unable to even ask for the appropriate person when arriving for the interview, and had difficulty stating his purpose and his name.

FEGS was able to place Rick in a porter job, but he was fired after only two weeks. He told the counselor, "I was fired because they didn't like the way I cleaned the place." In fact, he had not realized that he was expected to ask people to move when he was mopping a floor. Rather than ask them, he would merely wait for them to move, meaning that the floor went unmopped and he seemed not to be working. Subsequently he found himself another porter position from the want ads in the newspaper. Even though this was a part-time job, it lasted for only one week. Rick explained to the counselor, "I quit because I didn't like the lady. She had a snotty attitude."

Rick was still unemployed upon follow up six months after completion of the program. He was seeking employment through the newspaper and "on foot." He was spending his time "watching TV and videos and hanging out with my cousin."

However, Rick learned through the program how to ask for help, and he felt attached enough to be able to go back to FEGS and the LD specialist. Later, VESID placed Rick in a pre-employment program for developmentally disabled young adults. This program concentrated initially on social skills training, and later participants were placed in a supported work environment with a job coach. This appeared to be an appropriate program for Rick. Upon follow up, Rick had completed the program and was working in a supported job as a porter.

Conclusion

Rick made considerable progress in all areas while in the program. He changed from a person who rarely spoke to one who frequently participated. However, probably because of his low level of intellectual capacity, he was unable to transfer skills from the classroom to a competitive job interview. Therefore, a supported work program was more appropriate for him.

EXAMPLE OF A NON-COMPLETER: SAM

Background

Sam was a 26-year-old white male who attended regular education classes until the seventh grade, when he was assigned to a special education program. He left school at age 21 without a diploma or certificate and enlisted in the army reserve. He served six months of active duty as a light wheel mechanic. He returned to New York to work in a friends' gararge as an auto mechanic for approximately six months. Over the next year and a half, he found employment as a trucker's assistant for a food distributor, and then as a laborer assembling subway train cars for the New York City Transit Authority. After this he obtained a job in the building maintenance department of a computer company, where he worked for three months. He then worked for his uncle as a landscaping assistant for several months. During all this time, he lived with his mother and sister and was self-supporting.

Test data provided by VESID

WAIS-R: Verbal 79; Performance: 87; FS: 80.

WRAT Reading: 4.5 GE

Arithmetic: 4.9 GE

Pre-program test scores

TABE Reading Comprehension: 8.9 GE

WRAT-R Math: Beginning of 7th grade GE

Spelling: Beginning of 7th grade GE

Sam left the prorgram prior to completion and therefore was not post-tested.

Competency Rating Data

Average competency ratings on a twelve-point scale, as described in Chapter 8, are shown for the period of time that Sam was in the program.

Skills Area	Rating Period		
	1	2	3
Vocational	8	10	11
Basic	2	4	6
Interpersonal	4	6	6

It can be seen that in the vocational area, Sam's skills were acceptable for an entry level job upon entry to the program. By the third period, his skills were industrially acceptable, in other words, better than acceptable for entry level. His basic skills level on entry was non-acceptable but moved to the highest point in the range of potential for entry level. His interpersonal skills were at the lowest level of potential for entry level and moved up two points in this range of the third rating period.

Psychosocial and Behavioral

Sam was highly motivated to succeed in all areas of training when he entered the program. He expressed interest in continuing in a GED program when he completed training. However, after several weeks, his enthusiasm declined, and his attendance and classroom participation at both the college and FEGS became erratic. He frequently complained about the building maintenance classroom, saying it was too crowded and the tasks were too easy. He stated that he did not really need the training because his family was going to assist him in finding employment. He said that as soon as a job became available he planned to leave the program, even though he would not be able to receive a certificate. His vocational instructor placed him on a work site as part of his training, along with other members of the class who had good skills. This increased his detachment from the program, and after this his attendance at the college declined further. Also, it was not clear that Sam was attending the FEGS work site regularly. The LD specialist recommended that he be reassigned to the vocational classroom, which he was, against his wishes.

Sam told project staff that he had occasionally been working at odd jobs on a construction job with a relative. A mayoral election had just taken place in the city and he stated that as soon as the new mayor was sworn in, he would be able to get a job with the city. He was cautioned that because he had not completed his training he might lose such a job, not being as highly skilled as might be required. Sam replied that his skill levels did not matter since it was impossible to be fired from a city job. Sam expressed interest in finding a similar training program nearer home where he could increase his reading skills and prepare for a GED.

A meeting was arranged between Sam and his VESID counselor to discuss his participation in the program. The counselor told him that he would have to exhibit more commitment and be more accountable for his time. Although he agreed to these conditions, attendance did not improve.

In the opinion of project staff, Sam did not appear to have the reasoning ability to look ahead as to what might possibly happen in the future. He was not able to see beyond a first job from which he believed he could not be fired. Although he was capable of giving "correct" answers and displaying the "right" behaviors in class, it appeared that his beliefs were different from his statements. For example, in an interpersonal skills class, he provided appropriate responses such as, "if you don't show up for work or call, you'll get fired." When asked why it is necessary to do this now at school, he responded, "Because what you do in here, you'll do out there." He "knew" the information but may not have believed it.

He was always courteous to project staff but his attitude implied that he felt above the program, commenting, for example, that he was much more able than the other students. There may have been some validity to this view, as a comparison of his I.Q. and reading comprehension scores with those of the other students suggests. His performance I.Q. approached the normal range of intellectual functioning, and his reading comprehension score was just under the ninth grade level. He seemed to feel that he already knew all of what was being taught, and that there was not'ng to be learned.

Vocational Training

Sam did well in general maintenance tasks and showed improvement in carpentry, painting, and plumbing skills. The instructor stated that Sam exhibited

leadership qualities. However, when Sam began to work off site, he refused to report regularly to his instructor. He seemed to consider himself above reporting to anyone, which could lead to obvious employment problems.

Interpersonal Skills Training

Sam was able to respond appropriately and openly in this class. When he did attend, which was irregularly, he was an asset to the other students. He displayed the same leadership qualities that were noted by his vocational instructor. However, he lacked the ability to incorporate his knowledge into his own life experience. He comprehended fairly complex concepts and could explain them to the other students.

An example of this was seen in an exercise on values which required that the student come to a group decision based on their values as to what is important in life. The exercise presented a question of who should live and who should die based upon their lot in life. The students assumed various character roles, such as a teenage genius, a mentally retarded child or a father with three children. Most of the students had difficulty separating themselves from the characters they role played. Sam was able to make the distinction, and explain it to the group. However, his ability to reason logically about his responsibilities in training were limited.

Basic Skills Training

Sam had relatively good reading skills. He rarely stumbled over words, unless they were unusually difficult. He read rapidly in comparison to the other students, and he would correct another student's mispronunciation. He was able to answer questions about material he had just read aloud, showing that he could read and comprehend simultaneously. Once in a while he was able to determine the main idea, which was very difficult for most of the other students. He could almost always answer questions as to specific points. He was one of the best writers in the class, and was able to organize a coherent paragraph with relatively few spelling errors. The instructor was able to recognize and understand all of the words and the meaning, even with errors. Sam was also better at math than most of the other students in that he could do some basic multiplication and division correctly. He was also able to calculate word problems with one operation. When there was more

than one operation involved, he required some assistance. Once it was broken down into steps, he was able to solve the probelm accurately. Sam expressed himself clearly, volunteering his opinions and communicating well with others.

Basic Skills Tutoring

When Sam did attend his tutoring, he was the most motivated student in the group. He did weekly homework assignments and brought in a draft of relatively good quality work. Sam had difficulty with spelling and vowel distinction but was able to follow English usage rules. The tutor reported that his reading skills improved when he began to work with another student who had skills of a similar level. This served as a motivating factor. His reading comprehension skills were superior for the group.

Work-Study

Sam was given one of the most coveted work study assignments, in the Recreation Department, where students worked behind the desk in the gym area. They checked ID cards when students entered the gym area. The project students enjoyed the interaction with the general college population, and often used the weight equipment or played basketball. Sam worked very well when he showed up for work. The supervisor threatened to "fire" him if he did not call when absent, and he eventually began to phone when absent. Once again, his ability to sustain a job was in question; it was his ability to show a sense of responsibility.

Individual Counseling

The counselor did not work with Sam on a regular basis because his attendance was too infrequent. She discussed his commitment to the program with him. His attitude was that "everybody worries too much," "it's no big deal," and "why is everyone so upset?" He was not at the college frequently enough for much of a relationship to develop between them.

Outcome. Attendance continued to be sporadic. The learning disabilities specialist, counselor, and project director met with him on numerous occasions to discuss what the program could offer him, and to try to increase his awareness of job realities.

He continued to complain about the vocational classroom and all components of college training. The one exception was tutoring, which he greatly enjoyed and felt was beneficial to him.

He asked the VESID counselor if he could drop the FEGS portion of the training and only attend the college component. Neither the VESID counselor nor project staff thought this was appropriate. It was pointed out that although his vocational skills were good, he was not job ready because his attendance and motivation had been so poor in the vocational classroom.

He was informed that if his attendance did not improve significantly in all aspects of training, he would be asked to leave the program. Attendance did not improve, and he was about to be dropped. At that point, Sam requested a transfer out of the program and into the full-time FEGS program. He realized that in doing so, he would no longer be a client of the project's learning disabilities specialist and would be allowed to return to off-site vocational training, where his attendance was not monitored as closely. The VESID counselor agreed to the transfer, and Sam left the program five months into training, at about the halfway point.

He completed the "regular" FEGS training and, following completion, obtained a job in his uncle's company doing home construction.

Conclusion. Sam accurately perceived his strengths in the vocational and basic skills areas in comparison to the other students. From this perception he drew the conclusion that he had nothing to learn. He did not easily accept that dependability was important and may not have realized that when he compared his abilities to those of other people in a less than subtle manner, this might be offensive. His major deficits seemed to be in the interpersonal skills area. He did not appear to be able to understand the realities of employers' expectations, and that the training was preparation for a real situation. He was able to manipulate the situation to what he thought was his advantage.

Since his family seemed able and willing to obtain jobs for him, he did not see the need to attend the program regularly. The family's "support" may in fact have been detrimental to Sam's ability to accept the expectations of employers who were not relatives. It might have been helpful if family members had attended parent education workshops conducted by the project or if they had met with the career counselor. Examination of this case suggests that family members need to be

closely involved in planning the steps in transition to work, especially in the initial sessions with state vocational rehabilitation counselors. However, such involvement may not always be feasible in the case of an "older" individual such as Sam, who was 26 years old on program entry.

CONCLUSION

There is a tremendous need to assist individuals with disabilities in general, and learning disabilities in particular to make the transition from school to work. Large numbers of high school students are hindered in their career development by learning disabilities, and need postsecondary training in specific job-related skills so that they can enter the labor force. The project described in this report demonstrated one model for accomplishing this goal.

The project found that, with support, young adults with severe learning disabilities are able to complete postsecondary vocational training and enter competitive skilled employment. Further, it was shown that this objective could be accomplished despite serious problems connected with urban background and low socioeconomic status, problems that compounded the already serious effects of severe learning disabilities.

At the time of report preparation, 49% of entrants had completed the program, 21% were still receiving training, and 30% had left the program. Seventy-eight percent of the completers obtained competitive, skilled jobs, and of these, 83% were working at sixth-month follow-up.

While the amount of improvement shown in the attainment of competencies was relatively small in the three areas taught, vocational, basic and interpersonal skills, change was in a positive direction. Most compelling were observational data and anecdotal evidence describing positive qualitative change, such as a student's ability gradually to open up and participate more fully in discussions, to learn to ask for help in performing a job task, or to call the counselor, as required, when he was out sick.

Through close observation of project participants as they proceeded through the stages of the program from intake to completion, much was learned about both typical and unique needs demonstrated in this population. Programs of this type will need to individualize services as much as possible in order to help severely learning disabled students benefit from the experience being offered to them. The outcomes of this project indicate that the considerable effort required is not wasted, in terms of achieving the goal of preparing participants for skilled work.

In conducting the project, certain issues arose that need to be addressed in future projects of this type, as follows:

Recruitment

Despite the large numbers of young adults exiting New York City high school special education programs who were neither eligible for entry to regular college programs nor ready to enter the competitive workforce, only a small number of individuals entered the program. While state coordinators and office managers, and high school special education administrators endorsed the need for the project, and contributed to planning it, VESID counselors were not referring clients in large numbers.

Reasons may have included the fact that this was a new program that needed to demonstrate its value. However, other reasons including complex, time-consuming procedures required for intake to state rehabilitation services, and income eligibility requirements, may have contributed. Further, there may have been a lack of successful linkage between high school special education and VESID staff. In addition, the special education departments may not have been comprehensively orienting students to the meaning of postsecondary vocational training options. Service delivery efforts by both school and VESID personnel have been hindered by lack of resources due to budget cuts and hiring freezes.

Urban young adults with severe learning disabilities are difficult to work with; they have problems understanding and remembering procedures they need to follow, and may lack family supports that could help them interact more successfully with agencies responsible for helping them. On the basis of experience gained from conducting this project, it appears that much improvement is needed in the services provided by both the state vocational rehabilitation agency and high school systems to assist young adults with severe learning disabilities make the transition to work.

The high schools need to start much earlier in preparing special needs students for work. Teachers may be reluctant to discriminate between those students who could aim toward college and others who should plan for vocational training. However, students seem to be receiving a message that if they can pass the minimum competency tests and thus receive a regular diploma, they will then be able to "go to college." Much effort is then placed on having the students take the

tests over until they pass them. An equal amount of attention needs to be spent in familiarizing students with non-college postsecondary options. Students and family members should be given frequent opportunities to visit vocational schools and other postsecondary training sites so that when the student is found not to be appropriate for college entry, the idea of vocational training is not new and frightening. Such preparation should begin at the junior high school level, prior to the ninth grade, when the highest level of dropout occurs.

At the same time, state rehabilitation personnel need to recognize the fact that an urban young adult with severe learning disabilities will need a greater degree of follow up and attention than higher functioning clients. Intake policies need to be changed so that the first experience with the system is not an intimidating form received in the mail. Many potential clients decide to have nothing further to do with those rehabilitation services when neither they nor family members are able to fill out the form. Closer contact with the schools could ensure that intake is complete prior to the student's exit from school. Efforts of this nature currently under way need to be intensified.

Further, poor ability to follow through, especially when months intervene betwen appointments, is characteristic of this population. Ideally with adequate resources state agency counselors could take the initiative and contact clients prior to appointments to remind them to attend. Counselors could also consider attending interviews at potential postsecondary training sites along with their clients. Sixty-four percent of applicants to the project were screened out during the initial contact with the program only because they did not attend scheduled interviews, despite attempts of project staff to follow up. It is predicted that some of these no-shows could be avoided if enough rehabilitation personnel could engage in activities described above. On the other hand, veteran rehabilitation staff may see no-shows as predictive of failure in vocational training.

Selection

Clearly, some of the project students who left the program prior to completion were not appropriate for the type of training given. Some were behaviorally immature and others did not remain motivated to participate. In some cases, behavior during the initial project interview indicated that problems would follow.

It is easy, in retrospect, to suggest that they should not have been accepted in the first place. However, a number of individuals successfully completed the program and obtained competitive jobs despite numerous problems during the training period. In some cases, the degree of success shown was not at all predictable based on difficulties manifested during training. Form this experience, it is concluded that selection procedures were appropriate. Since it is difficult to predict which applicants "turn around" and which will merely confirm expectations of failure, it is necessary to err on the side of the leniency in accepting students to the program.

In some cases, participants were not able to understand the nature of training or to transfer skills to new settings because their level of intellectual functioning was low. While I.Q. is a highly imperfect measure of intelligence, some of the outcomes indicated that applicants whose I.Q.'s were below 70 were not appropriate for the program. Such individuals were more appropriate for supported work training and should not be accepted into programs where the objective is completely independent competitive work.

Further, attendance and punctuality problems may be linked to lack of personal motivation, such as in students for whom participation is a condition of parole. Closer contact may be necessary with parole officers to prevent these problems. Unless parole officers find a way to enforce promptness and consistent attendance, applicants on parole may not be appropriate participants, and selection decisions should be made with care.

Classroom based training

At the college, the interpersonal skills and basic skills training were reinforced by individual counseling and basic skills tutoring respectively. Perhaps the greatest challenge in training lay in the basic skills area. Participants varied so widely in reading, writing, and math skills that it was difficult to accommodate all their needs in a single classroom.

Future projects should consider substituting several basic skills tutors for one basic skills classroom instructor. Participants should be grouped according to their ability in the specific skills being taught, and groups should frequently re-form, to avoid any stigma based on perceived group levels. Conducting tutoring groups requires appropriate space. Since individuals with severe learning disabilities are

often distractible and may often speak inappropriately loudly or softly, it is not advisable to conduct more than one tutoring group in a room.

Because of lack of space, tutoring groups could not be substituted for classroom instruction at the college that collaborated in this project. However, it was felt that most of the basic skills gains that were made were attributable to weekly tutoring rather than more frequent classroom instruction, and thus it is concluded that such a substitution is appropriate.

Transfer of training

It was found that some of the more severely learning disabled students had difficulty transferring skills from the classroom to job settings. Future projects* should incorporate practice interviews and even job practice in real job environments. In some cases, students may be able to make a transition from school to work only if they receive explicit, concrete training in small steps. While role play and videotape exercises, and classroom discussion were found to be effective in the majority of cases, some of the participants needed a more concrete form of training.

Final Comment

Despite the issues just raised, the project enjoyed considerable success in preparing urban young adults with severe learning disabilities for work. For many participants, previous work history was nonexistent or inconsistent, and many were unoccupied prior to entering the program. For many students, the program was of major importance in their development, and in some cases a turning point in their lives. Individuals previously barred from full social participation because of their disability could start to feel a sense of pride and self-worth that comes from joining the workforce.

*In order to communicate information to others who might be interested in replicating all or part of the program, the project was disseminated through conference presentations, local workshops, and newsletter announcements (see Appendix K).

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APPENDICES

Appendix A
Sample Calendar

THE INTEGRATED SKILLS VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM

CALENDAR

F = FEGS L=LaGuardia X = No training

1990

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat./Sun.
January	1 X	2 F	3 F	4 L	5 L	6 7
	8 F	9 F	10 F	11 L	12 L	13 14
	15 X	16 F	17 F	18 L	19 L	20 21
	22 F	23 F	24 F	25 L	26 L	27 28
	29 F	30 F	31 F	1 L	2 L	3 4
February	5 F	6 F	7 F	8 L	9 L	10 11
	12 F	13 F	14 F	15 L	16 L	17 18
	19 F	20 F	21 F	22 X	23 L	24 25
	26 F	27 F	28 F	1 L	2 L	3 4
March	5 F	6 F	7 F	8 L	9 L	10 11
	12 F	13 F	14 F	15 L	16 L	17 18
	19 F	20 F	21 F	22 F	23 F	24 25
	26 F	27 F	28 F	29 F	30 F	31 1
April	2 F	3 F	4 F	5 L	6 L	7 8
	9 F	10 X	11 F	12 L	13 L	14 15
	16 F	17 F	18 X	19 L	20 L	21 22
	23 F	24 F	25 F	26 L	27 L	28 29
	30 F	1 F	2 F	3 L	4 L	5 6
May	7 F	8 F	9 F	10 L	11 L	12 13
	14 F	15 F	16 F	17 L	18 L	19 20
	21 F	22 F	23 F	24 L	25 L	26 27
	28 X	29 F	30 F	31 L	1 L	2 3
June	4 F	5 F	6 F	7 L	8 L	9 10
	11 F	12 F	13 F	14 F	15 F	16 17
	18 F	19 F	20 F	21 F	22 F	23 24
	25 L	26 L	27 F	28 F	29 F	30 1
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat./Sun.

Appendix B
Lesson Plan Forms and Tutor Log

The Integrated Skills Vocational Training Program

BASIC SKILLS

Lesson Plan

Date _____

Aim:

Materials used:

Procedures (including key questions):

Comments and follow-up activities:

Please hand lesson plans to Project Director each Friday.
Copies of all new handouts used should be placed in the instructional manual.

The Integrated Skills Vocational Training Program

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

Lesson Plan

Date _____

Aim:

Materials used:

Procedures (including key questions):

Comments and follow-up activities:

Please hand each week's lesson plans to Project Director each Friday.
Copies of all handouts used should be attached.

THE INTEGRATED SKILLS VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM

TUTORING LOG

Date: _____

Name(s) of student(s): _____

Objective:

Materials used:

Reactions of student(s):

Observations: What specific skills covered in this session need further work? What follow-up is needed?

Appendix C
Student Attendance Sign-In Form

THE INTEGRATED SKILLS VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM

Student Attendance Sign in Form

Class _____ Instructor _____

Time _____ Date _____

STUDENT'S NAME	INSTRUCTOR'S COMMENTS

Appendix D
Interview of Work-Study Supervisor Form

LaGuardia/FEGS
Integrated Skills Vocational Training Program

Interview of Work-Study Supervisor

Work-site (Dept.) _____ Date _____

Supervisor interviewed _____ Student _____

1. What tasks is the student expected to do? Please be as specific as possible. Provide a list and give examples where possible.

2. Please indicate the following skills needed to do the tasks mentioned above:

   Reading:

   Writing/Spelling:

   Math:

   Oral communication:

   Social skills:

3. Is the student being held back in doing any assigned task, or a task at a higher level, because of problems with reading, writing/spelling, math, oral communication or social skills? Please be very specific.

4. What can we do in class to help this student do the tasks better?

Use reverse side if necessary.

Interviewer: _____

Appendix E
Career Maturity Interview

YOUR CAREER CHOICES	REASONS FOR YOUR CHOICES	WHAT DO THEY DO?	HOW DO YOU GET READY?
Name 3 occupations you are considering as a career:	Why did you make these choices? Is there anything (else) about yourself or the job that led you to make this choice? (Is there anything else? Can you tell me more about that? Are there any other reasons?	What does a person do in each of these jobs? (Can you tell me more about that? Would you explain that a little bit more? Is there anything else?)	How I'd like you to tell me what you know about how a person goes about becoming a _____ (Is there anything else? Can you tell me more?)
Your first choice: _____ _____	Reason 1: _____ Reason 2: _____ Reason 3: _____		
Your second choice: _____ _____	Reason 1: _____ Reason 2: _____ Reason 3: _____		
Your third choice: _____ _____	Reason 1: _____ Reason 2: _____ Reason 3: _____		

Appendix F
Sample Announcement and Agenda of Parent Workshops

The Graduate School and University Center
of The City University of New York

Center for Advanced Study in Education
Institute for Research and Development in Occupational Education
33 West 42 Street, New York, N Y 10036
212 642-2942 FAX 212 719-2488

The Integrated Skills Vocational Training Program

STUDENTS, PARENTS, RELATIVES AND GUARDIANS:

MEETING ON APRIL 24th--HOLD THE DATE!

LaGuardia Community College
29-10 Thomson Avenue
7th floor - Room C-740
Long Island City, Queens
New York, N.Y. 11101

Monday, April 24, 1989
6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

We are pleased to invite our students, and their parents, relatives and guardians to a meeting at LaGuardia Community College on Monday, April 24, 1989 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. At this meeting, we will discuss job training and job placement.

We will have two speakers from FEGS. Ted Gershon, Assistant Vice President for Training and Assessment, will talk about the skills employers are looking for when they hire employees. Andrew Pitts, Admissions Officer, will provide information about how FEGS places the students in jobs when they are finished with training.

We will also hear from two recent program graduates, who are now working.

Dr. Dolores Perin, Project Director, Phyllis Illges, Career Counselor, and Cindy Coren, Learning Disabilities Specialist, will also be at the meeting.

We are all looking forward to seeing you and answering questions you have about the training.

Please call Phyllis Illges at 718-482-5326 if you have any questions about the meeting.

You can get to the College by taking either the #7 Flushing subway line to 33rd and Rawson Street, or the E, F, G or R subway line to Queens Plaza. If you go to Queens Plaza, walk over the bridge and turn right for the College. For further travel information, please call the New York City Transit Authority at 718-330-1234.

The Graduate School and University Center
of the City University of New York

Center for Advanced Study in Education
Institute for Research and Development in Occupational Education
33 West 42 Street, New York, N.Y. 10036
(212) 221-3895, -3896

LaGuardia/FEGS
Integrated Skills Vocational Training Program

MEETING FOR PARENTS, RELATIVES AND GUARDIANS: INFORMATION ON JOB PLACEMENT

Monday, December 5, 1988
at
LaGuardia Community College

AGENDA

1. Welcome and introductions
   Staff Members
   Dolores Perin - Project Director
   Phyllis Illges - Career Counselor
   Cindy Coren - Learning Disabilities Specialist
   Allan Burns - FEGS Job Placement Officer

   Program Graduate
   Myra Robinson

   Parents, Relatives and Guardians of Students in the Program

2. Brief description of the program

3. Job Placement

   Mr. Burns will talk about how FEGS places students who complete the LaGuardia/FEGS Integrated Skills Vocational Training Program. This will be an opportunity for parents and others to get information about the job outlook for students in the program.

4. One student's experience in the program

   Myra Robinson, a recent graduate of the program, will talk about her experience in the program.

5. Questions and Discussion

Appendix G
Vocational Training Observation

La Guardia/FEGS
Integrated Skills Vocational Training Program

VOCATIONAL T'NING OBSERVATION

Name of Student _____ Week ending _____

Shop _____ _____ Observer _____

Tasks learned this week (list):

Example of task successfully learned (based on observation or on teacher report)

Example of task found difficult by student to learn (based on observation or on teacher report)

Describe your intervention(s) to help student improve learning of task:

Further comments on student's performance including follow-up needed:

Appendix H
Certificate of Completion

The Graduate School and University Center
of The City University of New York

Center for Advanced Study in Education
Institute for Research and Development in Occupational Education
33 West 42 Street, New York, N Y 10036
212 642 2942 FAX 212 719 2488

LaGUARDIA/FEGS
INTEGRATED SKILLS VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM

Certificate of Completion

This is to certify that _____ has completed the LaGuardia/FEGS Integrated Skills Vocational Training Program. Dates of attendance were _____ to _____.

The program provided instruction in the vocational area of _____. The program also included instruction in reading, writing, math, and employability skills training. The above-named student also participated in part-time work experience at the college.

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Bert Flugman, Ph.D.
Project Director
CASE, CUNY
Graduate School

Theodore J. Gershon, M.A.
Asst. Vice President
Skills Training, FEGS

Dolores Perin, Ph.D
Program Director
CASE, CUNY
Graduate School

Appendix I
Recruitment Fliers

The Graduate School and University Center
of The City University of New York

Center for Advanced Study in Education
Institute for Research and Development in Occupational Education
33 West 42 Street, New York, N Y 10036
212 642-2942 FAX 212 719-2488

THE INTEGRATED SKILLS VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM
for Learning Disabled Students
at FEGS, FOH and LaGuardia Community College

An Announcement Prepared for the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

We are pleased to announce, based on our success with Federation Employment and Guidance Service (FEGS), that we are now going to collaborate with additional agencies in providing vocational training to learning disabled young adults. We are happy to inform you that we have now begun to work with Federation of the Handicapped (FOH), in addition to FEGS. This will allow us to offer a wider range of vocational training options. The Integrated Skills Vocational Training Program is a collaboration between the CASE Institute for Research and Development in Occupational Education, FEGS, FOH, and LaGuardia Community College. It is supported by the Office of Special Education Programs of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSE).

Students are young adults who have been classified as learning disabled within the public school system or by an agency. Students generally have the following characteristics:

- are 17 years of age and above
- have exited or are about to exit high school special education programs
- do not have regular high school diplomas, or if they do have them, are not interested in or appropriate for matriculation into an existing community college program
- have reading levels of 3rd grade or higher
- may be in the borderline range of intellectual functioning.

The program lasts approximately six months to one year, depending on vocational training area. Enrollment is on a continuous basis. The program provides three days training per week at the trade school/rehabilitation agency (FEGS or FOH), and two days training per week at LaGuardia Community College. Components of the program are described below.

Vocational training for entry level jobs is provided in one of the areas described below.

A. At FEGS:

Following a one-week evaluation or three- or five-week D.V.E. when required, the following training is provided:

Upholstery: to prepare students for entry level jobs as upholstery helpers and upholsterers. 600 hours of training at the FEGS site in the New York City Furniture Institute, several blocks from LaGuardia Community College in Long Island City.

Furniture Finishing: to prepare students for entry level jobs as furniture finishers, finish removers, furniture assemblers, finish repairers, finish patchers and finish cleaners. 600 hours of training at the New York City Furniture Institute, as above.

Mailroom/Reprographics: to prepare students for entry level jobs as mailcenter clerks, messengers, couriers, duplicating machine operators, offset duplicating operators, photocopying operators, addressing machine operators, embossing machine operators and collator operators. 975 hours of training at 114 Fifth Avenue, between 16th and 17th Streets in Manhattan.

Jewelry Manufacturing: to prepare students for entry level jobs as jewelers. 780 hours of training at 62 West 14th Street, near Sixth Avenue, in Manhattan.

Building Maintenance: to prepare students for entry level jobs as building maintenance workers. 780 hours of training at 62 West 14th Street as above.

OVR counselors apply economic need or cost effective training guidelines for these programs as per OVR policy.

B. At FOH:

Following a D.V.E., ranging from two to five weeks, the following training is provided:

Custodial Services: to prepare students for entry level jobs as custodial porters. 500 hours of training at 211 West 14th Street, near Seventh Avenue, in Manhattan.

Food Services: to prepare students for entry level jobs as hot and cold food preparers and servers, food cart attendants and general utility workers. 650 hours of training at 211 West 14th Street as above.

Data Entry: to prepare students for entry level jobs as data entry clerks. 650 hours of training at 211 West 14th Street as above.

College-based training. The following training and services are provided at LaGuardia Community College concurrently with agency-based training:

Basic Skills: job-related reading, writing, math and communication skills. Four hours per week. Taught by a community college adjunct instructor.

Interpersonal Skills: job-related social skills needed by learning disabled students to enhance their employability. Four hours per week. Taught by the program counselor based at the college.

Basic Skills Tutoring: on an individual and small group basis.

Career Counseling: sessions for individuals and small groups to enhance career maturity.

Work-Study with Job Coaching: work experience at the college approximately two hours per week to enhance job-related interpersonal skills. Job-coaching provided to facilitate job performance.

Tuition for the FEGS or FOH portion of the training is provided by OVR through already established reimbursement procedures. Pell grants may be available for some of the FEGS vocational training areas.

Placement: FEGS and FOH are responsible for placing students who complete the program in competitive entry level employment.

For more information, please contact:

Dr. Dolores Perin
CASE/IRDOE, CUNY Graduate School
33 West 42nd Street, Room 620NC
New York, N.Y. 10036

(212) 642-2937

The Graduate School and University Center
of The City University of New York

Center for Advanced Study in Education
Institute for Research and Development in Occupational Education
33 West 42 Street, New York, N.Y. 10036
212 642-2942 FAX 212 719-2488

THE INTEGRATED SKILLS VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM
for Learning Disabled Students
at FEGS, FOH and LaGuardia Community College

The Integrated Skills Vocational Training Program is a collaboration between the CASE Institute for Research and Development in Occupational Education, Federation Employment and Guidance Service (FEGS), Federation of the Handicapped (FOH), and LaGuardia Community College. It is supported by the Office of Special Education Programs of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (DOE).

Students are young adults who have been classified as learning disabled within the public school system or by an agency. Students generally have the following characteristics:

- are 17 years of age and above
- have exited or are about to exit high school special education programs
- do not have regular high school diplomas, or if they do have them, are not interested in or appropriate for matriculation into an existing community college program
- have reading levels of 3rd grade or higher
- may be in the borderline range of intellectual functioning.

The program lasts approximately six months to one year, depending on vocational training area. Enrollment is on a continuous basis. The program provides three days training per week at the trade school/rehabilitation agency (FEGS or FOH), and two days training per week at LaGuardia Community College. Components of the program are described below.

Vocational training for entry level jobs is provided in one of the areas described below.

A. At FEGS:

Following an evaluation ranging from one to five weeks, the following training is provided:

Upholstery: to prepare students for entry level jobs as upholstery helpers and upholsterers. 600 hours of training at the FEGS site in the New York City Furniture Institute, several blocks from LaGuardia Community College in Long Island City.

Furniture Finishing: to prepare students for entry level jobs as furniture finishers, finish removers, furniture assemblers, finish repairers, finish patchers and finish cleaners. 600 hours of training at the New York City Furniture Institute, as above.

Mailroom/Reprographics: to prepare students for entry level jobs as mailcenter clerks, messengers, couriers, duplicating machine operators, offset duplicating operators, photocopying operators, addressing machine operators, embossing machine operators and collator operators. 975 hours of training at 114 Fifth Avenue, between 16th and 17th Streets in Manhattan.

Jewelry Manufacturing: to prepare students for entry level jobs as jewelers. 780 hours of training at 62 West 14th Street, near Sixth Avenue, in Manhattan.

Building Maintenance: to prepare students for entry level jobs as building maintenance workers. 780 hours of training at 62 West 14th Street as above.

B. At FOH:

Following an evaluation ranging from two to five weeks, the following training is provided:

Custodial Services: to prepare students for entry level jobs as custodial porters. 500 hours of training at 211 West 14th Street, near Seventh Avenue, in Manhattan.

Food Services: to prepare students for entry level jobs as hot and cold food preparers and servers, food cart attendants and general utility workers. 650 hours of training at 211 West 14th Street as above.

Data Entry: to prepare students for entry level jobs as data entry clerks. 650 hours of training at 211 West 14th Street as above.

College-based training. The following training and services are provided at LaGuardia Community College concurrently with agency-based training:

Basic Skills: job-related reading, writing, math and communication skills. Four hours per week. Taught by a community college adjunct instructor.

Interpersonal Skills: job-related social skills needed by learning disabled students to enhance their employability Four hours per week. Taught by the program counselor based at the college.

Basic Skills Tutoring: on an individual and small group basis.

Career Counseling: sessions for individuals and small groups to enhance career maturity.

Work-Study with Job Coaching: work experience at the college approximately two hours per week to enhance job-related interpersonal skills. Job-coaching provided to facilitate job performance.

Tuition for the FEGS or FOH portion of the training is provided by OVR through already established reimbursement procedures. Pell grants may be available for some of the FEGS vocational training areas.

Placement: FEGS and FOH are responsible for placing students who complete the program in competitive entry level employment.

For more information, please contact:

Dr. Dolores Perin
CASE/IRDOE, CUNY Graduate School
33 West 42nd Street, Room 620NC
New York, N.Y. 10036

(212) 642-2937

The Graduate School and University Center
of The City University of New York

Center for Advanced Study in Education
Institute for Research and Development in Occupational Education
33 West 42 Street, New York, N Y 10036
212 642-2942 FAX 212 719-2488

THE INTEGRATED SKILLS VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM
for Learning Disabled Students
at FEGS, FOH and LaGuardia Community College

An Announcement for High School Students Who are Interested in Job Training

The Integrated Skills Vocational Training Program* offers:

- training for entry level jobs in:
  - BUILDING MAINTENANCE
  - MAILROOM/REPROGRAPHICS
  - JEWELRY MANUFACTURING
  - UPHOLSTERY
  - FURNITURE FINISHING
  - CUSTODIAL SERVICES
  - FOOD SERVICES
  - DATA ENTRY

- help with reading, writing, math and social skills

- training in both a trade school and community college

- placement in a job when you complete the program

- a certificate when you complete the program

The program is for young adults have a learning disability and have left special education high school programs. You do not need a high school diploma to enter the program.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CALL DR. DOLORES PERIN AT (212) 642-2937

---

* A collaboration between the CASE Institute for Research and Development in Occupational Education, Federation Employment and Guidance Services (FEGS), Federation of the Handicapped (FOH), and LaGuardia Community College, supported by the Office of Special Education Programs of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, U.S. Department of Education.

Appendix J
Preliminary Screening Interview Form

The Integrated Skills Vocational Training Program

Preliminary Interview

for Initial Telephone Contacts

1. Describe program briefly

2. Ask for information as indicated below.

3. Set up interview if applicant seems appropriate; refer to OVR or other agencies if not appropriate.

Name of Caller: _____ Date: _____

Relationship to applicant: _____

Name of Applicant: _____

Address: _____ Apt. _____

_____ _____ _____

Phone Number: _____ Age: _____

S.S. Number: _____ D.O.B. _____

High School attended or last attended: _____

Borough of High School: _____ Special Ed.: ___Yes ___No

Name of contact person at High School: _____

Current status: ___left school without diploma or certificate. ___ graduated with certificate.

___ graduated with regular diploma. Date left or graduated: _____

___ still attending high school

Is student learning disabled? ___yes ___no

Established by: ___school ___ agency (specify): _____

Describe contact with OVR: _____

Borough: _____ Counselor's name: _____

Previous contact with FEGS or FOH_____

Borough: _____ Contact person: _____

Estimation of applicant's reading grade level:_____

How caller heard about program:_____

Caller's questions:

Action:

Comments:

Appendix K
Forms used for Interviews and Follow-up

THE INTEGRATED SKILLS VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM

INITIAL INTERVIEW

Name of Applicant _____ Date _____

Name(s) of other person(s) attending interview and relationship to applicant _____

_____

Topics of discussion (see application form):

Work study experience; occupational goals; favorite subject in school; spare time activities; other training programs attended; other relevant topics.

Student's questions:

Questions of others attending interview:

Observations of applicant:

Behavior _____

Language _____

Ability to complete application form _____

Other observations and comments _____

Action: Recommend acceptance to program ___ yes ___ no (specify reasons)

Further action: See attached Case Notes

THE INTEGRATED SKILLS VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM

CASE NOTES

Name: Date:

THE INTEGRATED SKILLS VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM

APPLICATION

Name _____ Date _____

Street Address _____ Apt. _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Date of Birth _____ High School last attended _____

Work study experience _____

List types of jobs you have had or have now _____

_____

_____

What kind of job would you like? _____

Favorite subject in school _____

What do you like to do in your spare time? _____

List any other training programs you have been enrolled in _____

_____

Appendix L
Competency Rating Scales

CHECKLIST OF VOCATIONAL SKILLS ATTAINMENT

Vocational Area: Furniture Finishing

We need your help in obtaining a profile of the vocational skills achieved by the student whose name appears below. Please complete all parts of the following form.

Student's Name _____ Pre: _____ Post: _____ Date

I. Vocational Skills

Please make one rating that reflects the student's overall performance, at the BEGINNING of this rating period, on the competencies listed below that were taught during this period. Circle the appropriate rating.

Non-acceptable | Potential for Entry Level | Acceptable for Entry Level | Industrially Acceptable

Now please make one rating that reflects the student's CURRENT overall performance on the competencies listed below that were taught during this period. Circle the appropriate rating.

Non-acceptable | Potential for Entry Level | Acceptable for Entry Level | Industrially Acceptable

Now please rate the student's CURRENT performance on each competency listed below.

	LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT				
	Non-Acceptable	Potential for Entry Level	Acceptable for Entry Level	Industrially Acceptable	Not Applicable
A. Wood preparation					
B. Sanding					
C. Filling					
D. Coating					
E. Rubbing					
F. Polishing					
G. Basic repairs					
H. Antique restoration					
I. Special finishes					

(OVER)

II. Work Habits

Please make one rating that reflects the student's overall per: on the items listed below, at the BEGINNING of this rating period. Circle one of the follow...

Rarely Sometimes Most of the time

Now please make one rating that reflects the student's CURRENT overall performance. Circle one of the following.

Rarely Sometimes Most of the time

Now please rate the student's CURRENT performance on each item listed below. Check all items.

	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the time	No opportunity to observe
A. Attends class				
B. Comes to class on time				
C. Works well independently				
D. Cooperates with teachers				
E. Cooperates on assigned tasks				
F. Concentrates on assigned tasks				
G. Reacts to constructive criticism				
H. Completes assignments				
I. Is able to learn new material				
J. Demonstrates personal cleanliness				
K. Is appropriately groomed and dressed				
L. Attends to detail (work quality)				
M. Organizes work tasks				
N. Works at appropriate pace				
O. Follows rules and regulations				
P. Works well with peers				

CHECKLIST OF VOCATIONAL SKILLS ATTAINMENT

Vocational Area: Building Maintenance

We need your help in obtaining a profile of the vocational skills achieved by the student whose name appears below. Please complete all parts of the following form.

_____ Pre: Post:
Student's Name Date

I. Vocational Skills

Please make one rating that reflects the student's overall performance, at the BEGINNING of this rating period, on the competencies listed below that were taught during this period. Circle the appropriate rating.

Non-acceptable	Potential for Entry Level	Acceptable for Entry Level	Industrially Acceptable

Now please make one rating that reflects the student's CURRENT overall performance on the competencies listed below that were taught during this period. Circle the appropriate rating.

Non-acceptable	Potential for Entry Level	Acceptable for Entry Level	Industrially Acceptable

CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

(OVER)

Now please rate the student's CURRENT performance on each competency listed below.

	LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT				
	Non-Acceptable	Potential for Entry Level	Acceptable for Entry Level	Industrially Acceptable	Not Applicable
A. Introduction to building maintenance					
B. Measuring and planning					
C. Painting and decoration					
D. Floor covering					
E. Carpentry/masonry					
F. Glazing and caulking					
G. Indoor insect and rodent control					
H. Plumbing and heating maintenance					
I. Electrical maintenance					
J. Plant care maintenance					
K. Seeking employment in building maintenance					

CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

II. Work Habits

Please make one rating that reflects the student's overall performance on the items listed below, at the BEGINNING of this rating period. Circle one of the following:

Rarely Sometimes Most of the time

Now please make one rating that reflects the student's CURRENT overall performance. Circle one of the following.

Rarely Sometimes Most of the time

Now please rate the student's CURRENT performance on each item listed below. Check all items.

	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the time	No opportunity to observe
A. Attends class				
B. Comes to class on time				
C. Works well independently				
D. Cooperates with teachers				
E. Cooperates on assigned tasks				
F. Concentrates on assigned tasks				
G. Reacts to constructive criticism				
H. Completes assignments				
I. Is able to learn new material				
J. Demonstrates personal cleanliness				
K. Is appropriately groomed and dressed				
L. Attends to detail (work quality)				
M. Organizes work tasks				
N. Works at appropriate pace				
O. Follows rules and regulations				
P. Works well with peers				

CHECKLIST OF VOCATIONAL SKILLS ATTAINMENT

Vocational Area: Mailroom/Reprographics

We need your help in obtaining a profile of the vocational skills achieved by the student whose name appears below. Please complete all parts of the following form.

_____ Pre: Post: _____

Student's Name Date

I. Vocational Skills

Please make one rating that reflects the student's overall performance, at the BEGINNING of this rating period, on the competencies listed below that were taught during this period. Circle the appropriate rating.

A. Safety rules

Non-acceptable | Potential for Entry Level | Acceptable for Entry Level | Industrially Acceptable

B. Postal mailing

Non-acceptable | Potential for Entry Level | Acceptable for Entry Level | Industrially Acceptable

C. Mail handling and messenger

Non-acceptable | Potential for Entry Level | Acceptable for Entry Level | Industrially Acceptable

D. Flat sheet binding

Non-acceptable | Potential for Entry Level | Acceptable for Entry Level | Industrially Acceptable

E. Reprographics equipment

Non-acceptable | Potential for Entry Level | Acceptable for Entry Level | Industrially Acceptable

F. Handling stock & supplies

Non-acceptable | Potential for Entry Level | Acceptable for Entry Level | Industrially Acceptable

G. Work skills

Non-acceptable | Potential for Entry Level | Acceptable for Entry Level | Industrially Acceptable

CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

(OVER)

Now please make one rating that reflects the student's CURRENT overall performance on the competencies listed below that were taught during this period. Circle the appropriate rating.

A. Safety rules

Non-acceptable	Potential for Entry Level	Acceptable for Entry Level	Industrially Acceptable

B. Postal mailing

Non-acceptable	Potential for Entry Level	Acceptable for Entry Level	Industrially Acceptable

C. Mail handling and messenger

Non-acceptable	Potential for Entry Level	Acceptable for Entry Level	Industrially Acceptable

D. Flat sheet binding

Non-acceptable	Potential for Entry Level	Acceptable for Entry Level	Industrially Acceptable

E. Reprographics equipment

Non-acceptable	Potential for Entry Level	Acceptable for Entry Level	Industrially Acceptable

F. Handling stock & supplies

Non-acceptable	Potential for Entry Level	Acceptable for Entry Level	Industrially Acceptable

G. Work skills

Non-acceptable	Potential for Entry Level	Acceptable for Entry Level	Industrially Acceptable

CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

Now please rate the student's CURRENT performance on each competency listed below.

	LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT				
	Non-Acceptable	Potential for Entry Level	Acceptable for Entry Level	Industrially Acceptable	Not Applicable
A. Safety rules					
B. Postal mailing					
1. Postal zones					
2. Zip coding					
3. Classifying information using tables or directories					
4. Identifying numbers in a series					
C. Mail handling and messenger					
1. Internal mail sorting					
a. Department sort					
b. Staff sort					
2. Internal deliveries					
D. Flat sheet binding					
E. Reprographics equipment					
1. Paper roll copier					
2. Plain paper copier					
3. Electronic scanner					
4. Stencil duplicator					
5. Machine skills					
a. Multi-step machine operation					
b. Finger dexterity					
c. Coordination					

CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE (OVER)

	LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT				
	Non-Acceptable	Potential for Entry Level	Acceptable for Entry Level	Industrially Acceptable	Not Applicable
F. Handling stock and supplies					
G. Work skills					
1. Following verbal instructions					
2. Following written work orders					
3. Maintaining established production					
4. Maintaining orderly work area					

CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

II. Work Habits

Please make one rating that reflects the student's overall performance on the items listed below at the BEGINNING of this rating period. Circle one of the following:

Rarely Sometimes Most of the time

Now please make one rating that reflects the student's CURRENT overall performance. Circle one of the following.

Rarely Sometimes Most of the time

Now please rate the student's CURRENT performance on each item listed below. Check all items.

	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the time	No opportunity to observe
A. Attends class				
B. Comes to class on time				
C. Works well independently				
D. Cooperates with teachers				
E. Cooperates on assigned tasks				
F. Concentrates on assigned tasks				
G. Reacts to constructive criticism				
H. Completes assignments				
I. Is able to learn new material				
J. Demonstrates personal cleanliness				
K. Is appropriately groomed and dressed				
L. Attends to detail (work quality)				
M. Organizes work tasks				
N. Works at appropriate pace				
O. Follows rules and regulations				
P. Works well with peers				

CHECKLIST OF VOCATIONAL SKILLS ATTAINMENT

Vocational Area: Upholstery

We need your help in obtaining a profile of the vocational skills achieved by the student whose name appears below. Please complete all parts of the following form.

_____ Pre: Post:

Student's Name Date

I. Vocational Skills

Please make one rating that reflects the student's overall performance, at the BEGINNING of this rating period, on the competencies listed below that were taught during this period. Circle the appropriate rating.

Non-acceptable | Potential for Entry Level | Acceptable for Entry Level | Industrially Acceptable

Now please make one rating that reflects the student's CURRENT overall performance on the competencies listed below that were taught during this period. Circle the appropriate rating.

Non-acceptable | Potential for Entry Level | Acceptable for Entry Level | Industrially Acceptable

Now please rate the student's CURRENT performance on each competency listed below.

	LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT				
	Non-Acceptable	Potential for Entry Level	Acceptable for Entry Level	Industrially Acceptable	Not Applicable
A. Webbing					
B. Springing					
C. Padding					
D. Measuring and cutting fabrics					
E. Sewing machine operation					
F. Trimming					
G. Basic woodworking					
H. Applying fabrics					

(OVER)

II. Work Habits

Please make one rating that reflects the student's overall performance on the items listed below, at the BEGINNING of this rating period. Circle one of the following:

Rarely Sometimes Most of the time

Now please make one rating that reflects the student's CURRENT overall performance. Circle one of the following.

Rarely Sometimes Most of the time

Now please rate the student's CURRENT performance on each item listed below. Check all items.

		Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the time	No opportunity to observe
A.	Attends class				
B.	Comes to class on time				
C.	Works well independently				
D.	Cooperates with teachers				
E.	Cooperates on assigned tasks				
F.	Concentrates on assigned tasks				
G.	Reacts to constructive criticism				
H.	Completes assignments				
I.	Is able to learn new material				
J.	Demonstrates personal cleanliness				
K.	Is appropriately groomed and dressed				
L.	Attends to detail (work quality)				
M.	Organizes work tasks				
N.	Works at appropriate pace				
O.	Follows rules and regulations				
P.	Works well with peers				

CHECKLIST OF VOCATIONAL SKILLS ATTAINMENT

Vocational Area: Jewelry

We need your help in obtaining a profile of the vocational skills achieved by the student whose name appears below. Please complete all parts of the following form.

_____ Pre: _____ Post: _____

Student's Name Date

I. Vocational Skills

Please make one rating that reflects the student's overall performance, at the BEGINNING of this rating period, on the competencies listed below that were taught during this period. Circle the appropriate rating.

A. Basic Core

Non-acceptable	Potential for Entry Level	Acceptable for Entry Level	Industrially Acceptable

B. Specializations

Non-acceptable	Potential for Entry Level	Acceptable for Entry Level	Industrially Acceptable

Now please make one rating that reflects the student's CURRENT overall performance on the competencies listed below that were taught during this period. Circle the appropriate rating.

A. Basic Core

Non-acceptable	Potential for Entry Level	Acceptable for Entry Level	Industrially Acceptable

B. Specializations

Non-acceptable	Potential for Entry Level	Acceptable for Entry Level	Industrially Acceptable

CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

(OVER)

Now please rate the student's CURRENT performance on each competency listed below.

	LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT				
	Non-Acceptable	Potential for Entry Level	Acceptable for Entry Level	Industrially Acceptable	Not Applicable
A. Basic Core					
1. Introduction to jewelry manufacturing					
2. Identification and use of tools					
3. Production filing					
4. Production soldering					
5. Production casting and waxing					
6. Production piercing					
7. Production stamping and dapping					
8. Surface decoration in jewelry					
9. Production polishing					
10. Jewelry findings					
11. Production jewelry work					
12. The jewelry industry					

CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

	LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT				
	Non-Acceptable	Potential for Entry Level	Acceptable for Entry Level	industrially Acceptable	Not Applicable
B. Specializations					
1. Ring construction					
2. Bracelet construction					
3. Chain construction					
4. Pendants and brooches					
5. Srones and setting					
6. Earring construction					
7. Engraving					
8. Repair techniques					
9. Original pieces: Design and construction					
10. Wax model making					
11. Jewelry design and design processes					

(OVER)

II. Work Habits

Please make one rating that reflects the student's overall performance on the items listed below at the BEGINNING of this rating period. Circle one of the following:

Rarely Sometimes Most of the time

Now please make one rating that reflects the student's CURRENT overall performance. Circle one of the following.

Rarely Sometimes Most of the time

Now please rate the student's CURRENT performance on each item listed below. Check all items.

	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the time	No opportunity to observe
A. Attends class				
B. Comes to class on time				
C. Works well independently				
D. Cooperates with teachers				
E. Cooperates on assigned tasks				
F. Concentrates on assigned tasks				
G. Reacts to constructive criticism				
H. Completes assignments				
I. Is able to learn new material				
J. Demonstrates personal cleanliness				
K. Is appropriately groomed and dressed				
L. Attends to detail (work quality)				
M. Organizes work tasks				
N. Works at appropriate pace				
O. Follows rules and regulations				
P. Works well with peers				

CHECKLIST OF BASIC SKILLS ATTAINMENT

We need your help in obtaining a profile of the basic skills achieved by the student whose name appears below. Please complete all parts of the following form.

_____ Pre: _____ Post: _____

Student's Name Date

I. Basic Skills

Please make one rating that reflects the student's overall performance, at the BEGINNING of this period, on the competencies listed below that were taught during this period. Circle the appropriate rating.

A. Reading

Non-acceptable Nearly Acceptable Acceptable Better than Acceptable

B. Writing Skills

Non-acceptable Nearly Acceptable Acceptable Better than Acceptable

C. Mathematics

Non-acceptable Nearly Acceptable Acceptable Better than Acceptable

D. Oral Communication Skills

Non-acceptable Nearly Acceptable Acceptable Better than Acceptable

E. Resume Preparation

Non-acceptable Nearly Acceptable Acceptable Better than Acceptable

F. Travel Training

Non-acceptable Nearly Acceptable Acceptable Better than Acceptable

G. Word Processing

Non-acceptable Nearly Acceptable Acceptable Better than Acceptable

CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

(OVER)

Now please make one rating that reflects the student's CURRENT overall performance. Circle one of the following.

A. Reading

Non-acceptable Nearly Acceptable Acceptable Better than Acceptable

B. Writing Skills

Non-acceptable Nearly Acceptable Acceptable Better than Acceptable

C. Mathematics

Non-acceptable Nearly Acceptable Acceptable Better than Acceptable

D. Oral Communication Skills

Non-acceptable Nearly Acceptable Acceptable Better than Acceptable

E. Resume Preparation

Non-acceptable Nearly Acceptable Acceptable Better than Acceptable

F. Travel Training

Non-acceptable Nearly Acceptable Acceptable Better than Acceptable

G. Word Processing

Non-acceptable Nearly Acceptable Acceptable Better than Acceptable

CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

Now please rate the student's CURRENT performance on each competency listed below.

	LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT				
	Non-Acceptable	Nearly Acceptable	Acceptable	Better than Acceptable	Not Applicable
A. Reading					
1. Word attack skills					
2. Comprehension					
a. Locating details in text					
b. Getting main ideas					
c. Drawing conclusions					
d. Making inferences					
e. Question answering techniques for comprehension exercises					
3. Vocabulary development for reading					
B. Writing Skills					
1. Punctuation skills					
2. Producing discrete sentences with correct punctuation					
a. Writing three sentences with help					
b. Writing three sentences without help					

(OVER)

	LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT				
	Non-Acceptable	Nearly Acceptable	Acceptable	Better than Acceptable	Not Applicable
3. Producing paragraphs					
a. Writing one paragraph with help					
b. Writing one paragraph without help					
c. Writing two or more paragraphs without help					
4. Spelling Skills					
a. Dictionary skills					
i. Alphabetical order					
ii. Using guide words					
b. Syllabication strategies					
c. Spelling letter sequences and words from dictation					
d. Proofreading skills					
5. Vocabulary development for writing					
6. Filling in job application forms					
a. Understanding application vocabulary					
b. Accurate completion of form					

(CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE)

	LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT				
	Non-Acceptable	Nearly Acceptable	Acceptable	Better than Acceptable	Not Applicable
c. Writing information legibly					
C. Mathematics					
1. Money problems: basic computation					
2. Making change					
3. Price comparison					
4. Calculating percentages for tax, tip and interest					
5. Proofreading written math					
6. Banking skills					
a. Banking vocabulary					
b. Completing deposit and withdrawal slips					
c. Balancing bankbook ledger					
d. Computing interest					
7. Time management					
8. Interpreting charts and graphs					
D. Oral Communication Skills					
a. Appropriate tone and volume of voice					
b. Appropriate content as function of situation					
c. Speaking in complete sentences					
d. Formulating questions					

(OVER)

	LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT				
	Non-Acceptable	Nearly Acceptable	Acceptable	Better than Acceptable	Not Applicable
e. Vocabulary development for speaking					
f. Listening skills					
E. Resume Preparation					
a. Identifying personal data					
b. Resume vocabulary					
c. Resume format					
d. Resume content					
F. Travel Training					
a. Travel vocabulary					
b. Identifying destination					
c. Choosing travel route					
d. Timetable reading					
e. Estimating travel time					
f. Estimating travel cost					
g. Using directions north, south, east, west					
G. Word Processing					
a. Booting the system					
b. Using basic commands					
c. Composing own work					
d. Editing and revising work					

(CONTINUE ON NEXT PAGE)

II. Work Habits

Please make one rating that reflects the student's overall performance on the items listed below, at the BEGINNING of this rating period. Circle one of the following:

Rarely Sometimes Most of the time

Now please make one rating that reflects the student's CURRENT overall performance. Circle one of the following.

Rarely Sometimes Most of the time

Now please rate the student's CURRENT performance on each item listed below. Check all items.

	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the time	No opportunity to observe
A. Attends class				
B. Comes to class on time				
C. Works well independently				
D. Cooperates with teachers				
E. Cooperates on assigned tasks				
F. Concentrates on assigned tasks				
G. Reacts to constructive criticism				
H. Completes assignments				
I. Is able to learn new material				
J. Demonstrates personal cleanliness				
K. Is appropriately groomed and dressed				
L. Attends to detail (work quality)				
M. Organizes work tasks				
N. Works at appropriate pace				
O. Follows rules and regulations				
P. Works well with peers				

Interpersonal Skills Checklist

We need your help in obtaining a profile of the interpersonal skills achieved by the student whose name appears below. Please complete all parts of the following form.

Pre: Post:

Student's Name _____ Date _____

Please make <u>one rating</u> that reflects the student's <u>overall performance</u>, at the BEGINNING of this rating period, on the competencies listed below that were taught during this period. Circle the appropriate rating.

Non-acceptable Nearly aceptable Acceptable Better than acceptable

Now please make <u>one rating</u> that reflects the student's CURRENT overall performance on the competencies listed below that were taught during this period. Circle the appropriate rating.

Non-acceptable Nearly aceptable Acceptable Better than acceptable

Now please rate the student's <u>CURRENT</u> performance on each competency listed below.

	LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT				
	Non-Acceptable	Nearly Acceptable	Acceptable	Better than Acceptable	Not Applicable
Nonverbal behavior Can read others' non-verbal behavior					
Can exhibit appropriate non-verbal behavior					
Listening Can exhibit appropriate listening behavior					
Expressing ideas Can appropriately express ideas					
Expressing feeling Can appropriately express feelings					
Asking questions Can appropriately ask questions					
Can appropriately answer questions					

(OVER)

	LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT				
	Non-Acceptable	Nearly Acceptable	Acceptable	Better than Acceptable	Not Applicable
Conversations Can appropriately begin and maintain conversation					
Feedback Can receive feedback appropriately					
Can give feedback appropriately					
Participating in groups Can exhibit appropriate behavior in groups					
Resolving conflicts Can appropriately resolve conflicts					
Acting assertively Can exhibit appropriate assertive behavior					

Checklist of On-The-Job Vocational Skill Attainment

We need your help in obtaining a profile of the vocational skills achieved at the work-site/work tation by the individual whose name appears below. Please complete Parts I, II and III of the following orm.

ndividual's Name _____ Name/position of on-site rater _____ Work station/work-site _____

otal number hours at work station_____ Please return by_____

art I: Under the heading Job Tasks (at the far left of this form) list the most important job tasks you asked the individual to carry out in your setting. List no more than 10 tasks in rank-order with the first on the list being the least difficult. After you have listed these tasks, check off the extent to which the student has accomplished them.

Job Tasks	Level of Accomplishment			
	Non-Acceptable	Nearly Acceptable	Acceptable	Better Than Acceptable
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				

Part II: Work Habits (check all items)	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the Time	No Opportunity to Observe
A. Attends job				
B. Comes to job on time				
C. Works well independently				
D. Cooperates with supervisors				
E. Cooperates on assigned tasks				
F. Concentrates on assigned tasks				
G. Reacts constructively to criticism				
H. Completes assignments				
I. Is able to learn new material				
J. Demonstrates personal cleanliness				
L. Attends to detail (work quality)				
M. Organizes work tasks				
N. Works at appropriate pace				
O. Follows rules and regulations				
P. Cooperates with co-workers				

art III:

A. In your opinion, how ready is this individual to work in the regular job market on a job similar to the one rated above?

B. What are the individual's main strengths?

C. What are the individual's main weaknesses?

D. What modifications (if any) have you made in training this individual?

E. What modifications (if any) have you made in the work-site tasks for this individual?

Date checklist completed_____

Appendix M
Dissemination of the Project

Dissemination of the Project

Presentations describing project operations and outcomes were made by project staff at the following large-scale conferences:

Annual Conference of the Council for Exceptional Children, Washington, DC, April 1988.

National Conference on Adults with Special Learning Needs, Gallaudet University, Washington, DC, August 1988.

Annual Statewide Conference of Local Administrators of Occupational Education, Albany, NY, February 1989.

Annual Convention of the American Vocational Association, Special Needs Division, Orlando, FL, December 1989.

Annual Conference of the New York Branch of the Orton Dyslexia Society, New York, March 1990.

Local presentations were made as follows:

A workshop for Transition Linkage Coordinators in Special Education, Lehman High School, Bronx, NY, November 1988.

Presentation to Chapter 742 of the Council for Exceptional Children, Baruch College, CUNY, New York, December 1988.

A workshop for parents of special education high school students as part of the Collaborative Employment Project of the City University of New York, May 1989.

Handouts describing the program were distributed at all large-scale conferences and local presentations described above.

The project was described in newsletters as follows:

"Latest Developments," of the Association on Handicapped Student Service Programs in Postsecondary Education (AHSSPPE), Winter 1988

"The DLD Times," of the Division for Learning Disabilities of the Council for Exceptional Children, Summer 1989.

"Postsecondary LD Network News," of the Northeast Technical Assistance Center, The University of Connecticut, Spring 1989.

The program was described in the following Guide:

"Young Adults with Learning Disabilities and Other Special Needs: Guide for Selecting Postsecondary Transition Programs," HEATH Resource Center, Washington, DC, 1988.

This Final Report will be made available in the form of a Monograph to interested individuals. Announcements of the availability of this document will be placed in various newsletters, such as those mentioned above.

Throughout the project, staff received numerous phone calls and letters requesting information about the program. Seventy individuals from across the country who requested information during the final project year were placed on a list to receive a copy of the Executive Summary of the Monograph.