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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the adult adjustment of an Iowa random sample of 1,012 individuals labeled learning disabled whose graduating class had been out of school for 1 year. Of this group (82% of the original sample), 911 individuals had been graduated from special education programs and 101 individuals had dropped out. Results are reported in terms of: (1) general characteristics of the sample; (2) characteristics of the employed individuals, in terms of rate and location of employment, occupational status, number of hours worked, mean wage, and benefits; and (3) comparisons of employed and unemployed individuals in terms of vocational training and experiences, postsecondary training, and perceptions of the usefulness of school. Data are also reported by graduate/dropout group, program model in which the individual was enrolled while still in school, and by gender where relevant. The study found that only 54% of the graduates and 38% of the dropouts met the criteria of being employed or "otherwise meaningfully engaged," living independently or with a parent or relative, paying at least a portion of their living expenses, and being involved in more than one leisure activity. (13 references) (Author/JDD)

Iowa Statewide Follow-up Study

Individuals with Learning Disabilities Out of School One Year

1989

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Iowa Statewide Follow-up Study:

Adult Adjustment of Individuals with Learning Disabilities

One Year after Leaving School

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Preface

This monograph is one product of the Iowa Statewide Follow-up Study. Monographs have been developed, or are currently being completed, on the other major disability groups. An Action Group of the Iowa Statewide Follow-up Study Task Force has also been formed to draft specific programming recommendations based upon the data collected.

The follow-up study is a five-year project funded by the Iowa Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education, using EHA Part B discretionary funds. The purpose of this project is to determine the adult adjustment of special education graduates and dropouts (of all disabilities and program models) throughout the state of Iowa. The Iowa Statewide Follow-up Study is a joint effort of the Bureau of Special Education, Iowa Department of Education; the 15 Area Education Agencies in Iowa; Des Moines Public Schools; Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School; and the Division of Special Education, University of Iowa.

We gratefully acknowledge Merry Maitre, who originated the Iowa Statewide Follow-up Study; Dr. Timothy Z. Keith, who helped refine the data gathering procedures; Valerie Cool and Rori Carson, who served as research associates for the project; and the Special Education Directors, Task Force members, and interviewers, who made the project a success. We also thank the individuals with disabilities who generously shared their stories and experiences with us.

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Abstract

This study investigated the adult adjustment of a statewide random sample of 1,012 individuals labelled learning disabled whose graduating class had been out of school for one year. Of this group (82% of the original sample), 911 individuals had been graduated from special education programs and 101 individuals had dropped out. Results are reported in terms of: a) general characteristics of the sample; b) characteristics of the employed individuals, in terms of rate and location of employment, occupational status, number of hours worked, mean wage, and benefits; and c) comparisons of employed and unemployed individuals in terms of vocational training and experiences, postsecondary training, and perceptions of the usefulness of school. Data are also reported by graduate/dropout group, program model in which the individual was enrolled while still in school, and by gender where relevant.

Iowa Statewide Follow-up Study:
Adult Adjustment of Individuals with Learning Disabilities
One Year after Leaving School

The adult adjustment of former special education students has been the focus of a number of studies in the past few years (e.g., Hasazi, Gordon, & Roe, 1985; Mithaug, Horiuchi, & Fanning, 1985). One of the primary purposes of these investigations has been to examine factors related to the employment status of persons after exiting high school. Hasazi et al. reported that over half of their sample that exited Vermont high schools between 1979-83 were employed primarily in service occupations when interviewed, and that most found jobs through the "self-family-friend network." Employment outcomes were related to secondary vocational and training experiences, and to part-time or summer work during high school. Mithaug et al. found that 69% of their sample of 1978 graduates of Colorado special education programs were employed in jobs at minimal wages at the time of the interview; most were living with their parents, and appeared to be financially dependent upon their families. Contrary to the Hasazi et al. study, Mithaug et al. reported that persons in their investigation said special education teachers were more helpful in finding jobs for them than were their parents.

Some studies have focused exclusively on the adult adjustment of individuals labelled learning disabled (LD) while in school. Humes and Brammer (1985) conducted a follow-up study of 29 individuals with learning disabilities in Virginia. Approximately 90% were either employed or in training programs. Of those employed, most were in unskilled or semiskilled

jobs on an entry level. The authors attributed the high employment rate to an effective guidance and counseling program and an opportunity to participate in vocational-technical training. Schalock, Wolzen, Ross, Elliott, Webel, and Peterson (1986) studied the post-secondary community placement of 65 youths with learning disabilities who had been graduated from high school between 1979-83. These researchers found 72% were employed (typically less than full-time), and an additional 8% were attending technical schools or colleges. Only one-fourth of the respondents were living independently, but the majority (71%) said the primary source of their income was personal. White, Schumaker, Warner, Alley, and Deshler (1980) examined the status of 47 individuals labelled learning disabled who had been out of school from one to seven years. These persons held jobs at approximately the same rate as their peers, but their jobs had less social status and the individuals with learning disabilities were less satisfied with their employment than their peers. Similarly, in a study of adults with learning disabilities who had received educational services in a university laboratory school, Fafard and Haubrich (1981) found that most individuals were not employed full time, and indicated that they would get a "good job" in the future.

Zigmond and Thornton (1985) examined the employment status of a group of youths with learning disabilities and a control group of non-learning disabled same-age peers from a northeastern urban area. They reported significantly higher drop-out rates and significantly lower basic skills competency levels among youth with learning disabilities. In addition, both learning disabled and non-disabled high school dropouts were employed at the time of follow-up at a significantly lower rate than their graduating peers.

In the most recent study, deBettencourt, Zigmond, and Thornton (1989) interviewed three school-year cohorts who were enrolled as ninth graders in

rural LD programs and had been out of school a minimum of 18 months. They also included a randomly-selected control sample of non-handicapped students from these classes. Individuals were considered employed if they were working at least 10 hours per week. Eighty percent of the individuals with learning disabilities were employed, compared to 74% of the non-handicapped sample.

Recently, Okolo and Sitlington (1986) summarized the findings of follow-up studies that have focused on adults with learning disabilities or included them in their sample. They pointed out that, despite methodological concerns about these studies, there were some consistent results. The individuals studied appeared to be employed at approximately the same rate as non-disabled peers. However, their employment was often part time and at entry level or minimum-wage. Moreover, these individuals frequently received little vocational counseling in high school.

Halpern (unpublished manuscript) has expressed concern about the narrow manner in which the dimensions of community adjustment have been structured in follow-up studies concerning former special education students. He recommended a balanced representation of the various dimensions of community adjustment, including employment, community integration, post-school education, and personal/social adjustment. The purpose of the present investigation was to examine the adult adjustment of students labelled learning disabled while in high school using a more comprehensive set of variables as recommended by Halpern. This investigation was a component of the Iowa Statewide Follow-up Study, which is a five-year project designed to study a random sample of special education graduates and dropouts (of all disabilities and program models) throughout the state of Iowa.

More specifically, the present study looked at the following dimensions of adult adjustment: a) general adult status (e.g., marital status, leisure

activities); b) employment variables (e.g., percent employed, location of jobs, classification of jobs, wages); c) types of vocational training while in high school; d) types of postsecondary education and training; and e) perceptions of former students with learning disabilities concerning selected aspects of their high school experiences.

Method

Subjects

The sample for this investigation was a merged data set from two separate classes (Classes of 1985 and 1986), each surveyed one year after their class was scheduled to be graduated. Each of the fifteen Area Education Agencies (AEAs) in the state of Iowa prepared a list of special education students (all exceptionalities) who were graduated from, or "aged out" of, high school at the end of the target school year; a similar list was prepared of all special education dropouts who would have completed high school at the end of the target year. For each AEA, 50% of the students on each list (graduates and dropouts) were randomly selected for inclusion in the sample each target year.

School records of individuals in the sample were examined to obtain relevant information, including each student's primary disability label and program model at the time of exit from school. Of the total sample of 2,476 former special education students, 1,243 had been identified as learning disabled while in school and 1,015 of these students were actually interviewed (82%) during the course of the present study. Three of these individuals were excluded from this analysis because they received only supplemental assistance. Thus, the total number of individuals included in the analyses reported here was N = 1,012.

Relevant data for individuals who were graduated from special education programs (n = 911) are presented in Table 1. Table 2 contains relevant information concerning individuals who dropped out of special education programs prior to graduation (n = 101). Program model in both tables refers to the type of special education instructional model attended by individuals while in high school. In programs designated resource teacher programs (RTP), students are placed for a minimal average of thirty minutes per day; these students attend regular classes for the remainder of each school day. In the special classes with integration model (SCIN), students attend special classes for the majority of the school day, while participating in the general education curriculum in one or more academic subjects. Students in special classes with little integration (SCIN-L) are integrated into regular classes for limited participation. There were no individuals with learning disabilities enrolled in self-contained special classes (SCC). For the purposes of this study, students in more restrictive instructional models were considered to be more disabled (e.g., SCIN students were viewed as more disabled than RTP students, etc.) This assumption was supported by t- tests which revealed that differences between the mean math grade equivalent scores for graduates and dropouts of each program model were significant at the .05 level of probability. This was also true for mean reading grade equivalent scores.

Instrumentation

The survey instrument used in this study was developed by project staff in conjunction with a task force of representatives of the 15 Area Education Agencies (AEAs) in the state of Iowa, the largest public school district in the state, and the state schools and correctional facilities. This task force identified the content areas to be covered in the interview form, based on

Table 1

Selected characteristics of sample prior to graduation (Graduates)

Variable	Total Group	Program Model		
		RTP	SCIN	SCIN-L
Gender	(n = 909)	(n = 737)	(n = 152)	(n = 20)
% Male	74.3	72.3	82.2	85.0
% Female	25.7	27.7	17.8	15.0
Full Scale IQ	(n = 876)	(n = 705)	(n = 151)	(n = 20)
M	94.43	95.15	92.31	84.80
SD	9.00	8.78	9.12	8.37
Academic Achievement				
Math G.E.	(n = 882)	(n = 713)	(n = 149)	(n = 20)
M	7.50	7.72	6.77	5.22
SD	2.46	2.46	2.20	1.76
Reading G.E.	(n = 895)	(n = 725)	(n = 151)	(n = 19)
M	6.68	6.94	5.72	4.41
SD	2.38	2.38	2.00	1.70

Table 2

Selected characteristics of sample prior to graduation (Dropouts)

Variable	Total Group	Program Model*	
		RTP	SCIN
Gender	(n = 101)	(n = 73)	(n = 28)
% Male	68.3	58.9	92.9
% Female	31.7	41.1	7.1
Full Scale IQ	(n = 95)	(n = 68)	(n = 27)
M	93.79	94.35	92.37
SD	8.97	9.18	8.41
Academic Achievement			
Math G.E.	(n = 96)	(n = 69)	(n = 27)
M	6.90	7.12	6.35
SD	2.13	2.17	1.96
Reading G.E.	(n = 100)	(n = 72)	(n = 28)
M	6.48	7.04	5.06
SD	2.52	2.39	2.29

* No dropouts from SCIN-L programs participated in the study.

previous follow-up studies conducted in other states and on other categories of information task force members felt would be useful in making programming decisions in their AEAs.

The survey form was piloted on a random sample of 878 subjects from throughout the state. The initial form contained a number of open-ended items; the most common responses to these items were incorporated into response choices for the revised instrument used in the current study. In addition, interviewer and coder comments were used to further refine questions which seemed to cause problems in interpretation.

The survey instrument was designed to provide the following types of information: background information about students (e.g., test scores from high school, disability label, instructional program model); information pertaining to their high school programs (e.g., number of regular and special vocational education courses taken, extracurricular activities); evaluations of their school experiences (e.g., did your school experiences help you to keep a job?); information about current life circumstances (e.g., marital status, living arrangements, leisure activities); and information on past and current employment (e.g., job experiences during high school, location of job, salary, hours worked).

Procedure

Interviews were conducted by professionals such as work experience coordinators, consultants, school psychologists, and teachers from the students' school district or AEA. These paid interviewers were trained and supervised by the task force member from their respective AEA. In addition, an in-depth interviewer handbook and sample interview forms were developed by project staff, and interviewers also participated in one of several one-hour training sessions using these documents to insure consistency across

interviewers. The project director was also on call to answer any general or specific questions arising from actual interviews. Interviewers were instructed to conduct a face-to-face interview with the former student, if possible. If the student could not be contacted either in person or by telephone, an individual such as a parent, spouse or sibling was interviewed. Of the 1,012 interviews analyzed in this study, 48% were face-to-face with the former student, 29% were by telephone with the former student, 10% were face-to-face with a parent or guardian, and 13% were through a telephone interview with a parent or guardian.

All survey forms were first returned to the task force member for an initial content and completion check. Next, the forms were submitted to the Iowa Department of Education for a second content and completion check and for removal of any identifying information other than the students' ID number. All surveys were then forwarded to The University of Iowa for a final content check, coding, computer entry and analysis.

Data were collected in two separate summers, each one year after the respective class was graduated. Data were analyzed separately for the two classes, and then compared on key variables. Since no significant differences were found on these variables, the two data sets were merged.

Data analyses were completed using routines described in the SPSS-X User's Guide (1986). Results are reported in two parts, one concerning graduates and the other concerning dropouts. Dropouts were analyzed separately because Zigmond and Thornton (1985) reported differences between dropouts and graduates in their study. Each part is subdivided into four sections; the first addresses general characteristics of the former students while in school. In the second section, employed individuals are further described (seasonal workers were excluded from the analyses reported in this

section). The third section contains a comparison of employed and unemployed individuals on selected variables. The fourth section provides a description of those persons who were judged to have made a "successful" adjustment to post-high school life.

Results

Graduates

General Status

General status variables concerning graduates involved in this investigation are presented in Table 3. Most graduates reported their marital status as single at the time of the interview. The most frequently reported living arrangement was with parents or relatives (64%); this finding was even more evident among individuals from SCIN and SCIN-L programs (72%, 80%). Independent living was the next most common living arrangement for graduates from all three program models (13% to 20%).

At least 90% of all graduates were involved in some type of leisure activities, with most reporting they participated in from one-to-three leisure activities. Socializing with family or friends was the leisure activity mentioned most frequently by graduates of all three program models. SCIN-L persons also named listening to music most often as a leisure activity. All three groups named going to bars least often as a leisure activity. Persons from SCIN-L programs also least often identified games, driving around, and dancing as leisure activities.

During the interview, graduates were asked about their current occupation. The proportion of individuals indicating they were currently employed (at least part-time) ranged from 74% (SCIN) to 80% (SCIN-L), and averaged 77% for the total group. The types and locations of jobs are

Table 3

General post-high school characteristics (Graduates)

Variable	Total Group	Program Model*		
		RTP	SCIN	SCIN-L
Marital Status	(n = 909)	(n = 737)	(n = 152)	(n = 20)
Single	93.1	92.3	95.4	100.0
Married	6.4	7.2	3.3	0.0
Divorced	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0
Other	0.4	0.3	1.3	0.0
Living Situation	(n = 908)	(n = 737)	(n = 151)	(n = 20)
Residential facility	0.3	0.1	0.7	5.0
Parents or relative	64.1	62.0	72.2	80.0
Group home/ suprvsd apt.	0.7	0.6	6.6	0.0
Live with friend	5.8	6.1	5.3	0.0
Live indepndtly	18.9	20.4	12.6	15.0
Buying own home	2.0	2.2	1.3	0.0
Other	8.0	8.7	6.0	0.0
Leisure Activities	(n = 911)	(n = 739)	(n = 152)	(n = 20)
None	8.5	8.4	8.6	10.0
1 to 3	64.5	66.2	58.6	50.0
4 to 6	18.8	17.3	23.7	35.0
7 to 9	5.7	5.4	7.2	5.0
More than 9	2.5	2.7	2.0	0.0
Doing Now	(n = 880)	(n = 714)	(n = 146)	(n = 20)
Homemaker	2.3	2.4	0.7	10.0
Student/Job training	6.5	7.0	4.8	0.0
Disabled	0.2	0.3	0.0	0.0
Unable to find work	6.3	5.9	7.5	10.0
Fired/ laid off	2.4	2.0	4.8	0.0
Quit last job	2.0	2.1	2.1	0.0
Full/part-time work	77.0	77.4	74.0	80.0
Other	3.4	2.9	6.2	0.0

* Values are expressed as percentages by column within each variable. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding error.

discussed below. An additional 9% of the total group was "otherwise meaningfully engaged" (homemaker, student, or in job training), ranging from 6% (SCIN) to 10% (SCIN-L).

Characteristics of Employed

The employment status of individuals in this study is contained in Table 4. The employment rate among males was 81%, whereas considerably fewer females were employed (66%). This problem was particularly evident for persons from SCIN and SCIN-L programs.

Each respondent's current occupation was categorized by the interviewer as competitive employment; community-based, but employed by sheltered workshop; or sheltered employment. For the total group of employed persons, 99% were in competitive employment, whereas 1% were in sheltered employment or in community-based employment sponsored by sheltered workshops (see Table 5). Similar proportions were found for both males and females. The only instances where substantially more than 1% were not competitively employed involved SCIN females (14%) and SCIN-L males and females (13% and 100%, respectively). The SCIN-L finding concerning females must be viewed with caution since only one individual was involved.

Occupations were classified according to Duncan's classification system (Reiss, Duncan, Hatt, & North, 1961). Approximately two-thirds of all employed individuals in this investigation had low status jobs as laborers or service workers (see Table 6). An additional 21% held jobs as operatives or craftsmen. This pattern of low status jobs held true for all program models; however, males tended to be employed as laborers whereas females were more often working in service occupations. Further, no females were employed as craftsmen, and only a few RTP females were employed as operatives. It should be noted that only 3% of the total group were employed in "higher status"

Table 4

Employment status (Graduates)

Program Model	n	Employment Status*	
		Employed	Unemployed
RTP			
Males	533	81.6	18.4
Females	204	68.1	31.9
Total subgroup	737	77.9	22.1
SCIN			
Males	125	78.4	21.6
Females	27	55.6	44.4
Total subgroup	152	74.3	25.7
SCIN-L			
Males	17	88.2	11.8
Females	3	33.3	66.7
Total subgroup	20	80.0	20.0
Total group			
Males	675	81.2	18.8
Females	234	66.2	33.8
Total	909	77.3	22.7

* Values are expressed as percentages by row.

Table 5

Location of employment (Graduates)

Program Model	n	Location of employment[a]		
		Community Competitive	Community[b] Workshop	Sheltered Workshop
RTP				
Males	415	99.5	0.5	0.0
Females	133	99.2	0.8	0.0
Total subgroup	550	99.5	0.5	0.0
SCIN				
Males	89	100.0	0.0	0.0
Females	14	85.7	7.1	7.1
Total subgroup	103	98.1	1.0	1.0
SCIN-L				
Males	15	86.7	13.3	0.0
Females	1	0.0	0.0	100.0
Total subgroup	16	81.3	12.5	6.3
Total group				
Males	519	99.2	0.8	0.0
Females	148	97.3	1.4	1.4
Total	669	98.8	0.9	0.3

[a] Values are expressed as percentages by row. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding error.

[b] Individuals are working over half of the time in the community, but as part of a mobile work crew or small group supervised by sheltered workshop or work activity center personnel.

Table 6

Type of employment (Graduates)

Program Model	n	Type of employment[a]					
		Laborer	Service Worker	Operative[b]	Craftsman	"Higher" Status[c]	Other
RTP							
Males	411	45.5	19.0	15.6	10.2	2.9	6.7
Females	134	7.5	71.6	4.5	0.0	3.6	12.5
Total subgroup	546	36.1	32.1	12.8	7.7	3.1	8.1
SCIN							
Males	85	44.7	17.6	16.5	14.1	1.2	5.9
Females	14	21.4	64.3	0.0	0.0	7.1	7.1
Total subgroup	99	41.4	24.2	14.1	12.1	2.0	6.0
SCIN-L							
Males	15	46.7	26.7	13.3	6.7	6.7	0.0
Females	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total subgroup	15	46.7	26.7	13.3	6.7	6.7	0.0
Total group							
Males	511	45.4	19.0	15.7	10.8	2.8	6.5
Females	148	8.8	70.9	4.1	0.0	4.1	12.2
Total	660	37.1	30.8	13.0	8.3	3.0	7.9

[a] Values are expressed as percentages by row. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding error.

[b] E.g., meat cutter, assembler, machine operator, truck driver, shipping clerk.

[c] Technical, professional 1, school teacher.

jobs, with females doing slightly better than males.

Seventy percent of the employed were working full-time (over 37 hours per week), with an additional 23% employed between 21-37 hours per week (see Table 7). A substantially greater proportion of males than females were employed full-time. The job benefit most commonly reported by graduates was health insurance (36%), followed by vacations (34%) (see Table 8); the least mentioned job benefit was profit sharing (4%). This pattern held true for individuals from RTP and SCIN programs. However, while about one-third of the SCIN-L persons said they received vacations, only 13% indicated their employer provided health insurance.

A mean wage was calculated for all employed individuals (as well as for males and females separately) by program model (see Table 9). The mean wage for the total group was $4.39 per hour (approximately $1.00 above minimum wage), with the average wage for males being over $1.00 per hour greater than for females. Wages were also placed into three intervals around the minimum wage of $3.35 per hour. The only subgroups where more than half the individuals were receiving greater than $3.95 per hour involved males from RTP and SCIN programs. Further, the clear trend in all program models is for males to receive higher wages than females.

Individuals interviewed were also asked to indicate the main person that helped them get their current job. The majority of individuals from each program model relied on either themselves, family, or friends in finding employment (see Table 10). The most significant departure from this trend occurred for SCIN females, where 21% said they sought help from a community agency for assistance in finding their job.

Table 7

Number of hours employed per week (Graduates)

Program Model	n	Hours per week*		
		<21	21 - 37	>37
RTP				
Males	420	6.2	17.6	76.2
Females	135	11.1	36.3	52.6
Total subgroup	557	7.4	22.1	70.6
SCIN				
Males	90	10.0	24.4	65.6
Females	14	7.1	42.9	50.0
Total subgroup	104	9.6	26.9	63.5
SCIN-L				
Males	15	6.7	13.3	80.0
Females	1	0.0	100.0	0.0
Total subgroup	16	6.3	18.8	75.0
Total group				
Males	525	6.9	18.7	74.5
Females	150	10.7	37.3	52.0
Total	677	7.7	22.7	69.6

* Values are expressed as percentages by row. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding error.

Table 8

Job benefits received by employed individuals (Graduates)*

Job benefit received:	Program Model							
	Total Group		RTP		SCIN		SCIN-L	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
promotion	658	21.1	537	21.4	106	20.8	15	13.3
sick leave	705	24.1	576	25.0	113	20.4	16	18.8
vacation	705	33.9	576	34.5	113	31.0	16	31.3
life insurance	705	18.0	576	18.8	113	15.9	16	6.3
dental insurance	705	12.8	576	13.0	113	13.3	16	0.0
health insurance	705	36.0	576	37.7	113	31.0	16	12.5
profit sharing	705	4.4	576	4.2	113	5.3	16	6.3
free meals	705	17.6	576	18.2	113	15.0	16	12.5

* Percentages indicate the proportion of individuals who received the benefit as a part of their current employment.

Table 9

Wages per hour (Graduates)

Program Model	n	M	Wages per hour*		
			<$3.35	$3.35-$3.95	>$3.95
RTP					
Males	364	$4.67	4.9	29.1	65.9
Females	123	$3.57	22.0	55.3	22.8
Total subgroup	489	$4.39	9.2	35.8	55.0
SCIN					
Males	75	$4.75	5.3	29.3	65.3
Females	13	$3.32	23.1	61.5	15.4
Total subgroup	88	$4.54	8.0	34.1	58.0
SCIN-L					
Males	15	$3.72	6.7	66.7	26.7
Females	1	$1.60	100.0	0.0	0.0
Total subgroup	16	$3.59	12.5	62.5	25.0
Total group					
Males	454	$4.65	5.1	30.4	64.5
Females	137	$3.53	22.6	55.5	21.9
Total	593	$4.39	9.1	36.3	54.6

* Values are expressed as percentages by row. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding error.

Table 10

Source of help in finding employment (Graduates)

Program Model	n	Source of Help*				
		Self	School	Family/ Friends	Community Agency	Other
RTP						
Males	418	41.6	5.0	42.3	4.5	6.5
Females	135	51.1	6.7	34.1	3.7	4.4
Total subgroup	555	44.0	5.4	40.4	4.3	5.9
SCIN						
Males	90	38.9	10.0	43.3	6.7	1.1
Females	14	42.9	14.3	21.4	21.4	0.0
Total subgroup	104	39.4	10.6	40.4	8.7	1.0
SCIN-L						
Males	15	46.7	13.3	20.0	6.7	13.3
Females	1	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
Total subgroup	16	43.8	12.5	18.8	12.5	12.5
Total group						
Males	523	41.3	6.1	41.9	5.0	5.7
Females	150	50.0	7.3	32.7	6.0	4.0
Total	675	43.3	6.4	39.9	5.2	5.3

* Values are expressed as percentages by row. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding error.

Comparison of Employed/Unemployed

Chi-square tests were conducted to analyze selected portions of the data related to employment/unemployment because of the importance placed on work in post-school adjustment. A .05 level of probability was used as the criterion level for significance. Where applicable, chi-square statistics are reported before the Yates correction.

A 3-way chi-square test was conducted to examine the proportions of employed and unemployed graduates by gender across program models. A significant statistic, χ^2 (1, n = 737) = 15.55, p = 0.0001, was obtained for graduates of RTP programs. As indicated in Table 4, a higher percentage of RTP females (32%) were unemployed than males (18%). A significant statistic, χ^2 (1, n = 152) = 6.07, p = 0.0137, was also obtained for graduates of SCIN programs. Again, a higher percentage of SCIN females versus males were unemployed (44% versus 22%). Because of the small number of SCIN-L individuals involved (only 3 females), any conclusions drawn concerning individuals from this program model must be considered very tentative.

Three-way chi-square tests were conducted to examine the proportions of employed and unemployed graduates by type of vocational education received in high school across program model. Regular vocational education programs (e.g., industrial arts, home economics, distributive education, trades and industry) and specially-designed vocational programs (e.g., school-based simulated work, experiential exploration, work experience, etc.) were considered separately. In the first set of analyses, which focused on regular vocational education programs, most individuals who were in each program model in high school had participated in some type of regular vocational education (see Table 11).

Table 11

Types of regular vocational training by current employment status (Graduates)

Program Model	Types of Regular Vocational Training/Experiences[a]					
	No Training		General Training Only		Preparatory Training[b]	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
RTP						
Employed	23	74.2	193	77.8	351	78.7
Unemployed	8	25.8	55	22.2	95	21.3
SCIN						
Employed	1	33.3	42	77.8	67	73.6
Unemployed	2	66.7	12	22.2	24	26.4
SCIN-L						
Employed	1	50.0	10	83.3	4	80.0
Unemployed	1	50.0	2	16.7	1	20.0
Total Group						
Employed	25	69.4	245	78.0	422	77.9
Unemployed	11	30.6	69	22.0	120	22.1

[a] Values are expressed as percentages by column within each level.

[b] Individuals with specific training may have also had general training.

The first analysis focused on the association between employment status, type of regular vocational education, and controlling for program model. For this analysis regular vocational education was divided into general vocational education (i.e., industrial arts and home economics) and preparatory vocational education (i.e., office education, health occupations education, distributive education, agricultural education, and trades and industry). Individuals were assigned to one of three categories: a) those who had no regular vocational education, b) those who had at least one type of general vocational education, but no preparatory vocational education experiences, and c) those who had at least one preparatory vocational education experience (and may have had some general vocational education experiences as well). No significant statistics were obtained. A substantial majority of the RTP and SCIN individuals had participated in both general and preparatory vocational programs whereas SCIN-L graduates more often had general, but not preparatory, vocational training (see Table 11). These results should be viewed with caution, however, since the number of individuals with no regular vocational education was very small.

The second area of analysis focused on specially-designed vocational programs. Less than half (40%) of the RTP individuals had received specially-designed vocational training of some type (see Table 12). Conversely, about two-thirds of graduates of SCIN or SCIN-L programs had been involved in some type of specially-designed vocational training. No significant chi-square statistics were obtained for any of the program models, indicating that the proportions of employed and unemployed graduates within each program model who had participated in specially-designed vocational programs were not substantially different than the proportions of those who had not participated in these programs.

Table 12

Types of specially-designed vocational training by current employment status (Graduates)

Program Model	Types of Vocational Programs[a]							
	Specially-designed Program		No special Program		Work Experience[b]		No Work Experience	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
RTP								
Employed	231	78.0	345	77.9	122	74.4	454	79.0
Unemployed	65	22.0	98	22.1	42	25.6	121	21.0
SCIN								
Employed	76	71.7	37	80.4	50	75.8	63	73.3
Unemployed	30	28.3	9	19.6	16	24.2	23	26.7
SCIN-L								
Employed	11	91.7	5	62.5	6	100.0	10	71.4
Unemployed	1	8.3	3	37.5	0	0.0	4	28.6
Total Group								
Employed	318	76.8	387	77.9	178	75.4	527	78.1
Unemployed	96	23.2	110	22.1	58	24.6	148	21.9

Note. Individuals may have had regular vocational training/experiences.

[a] Values are expressed as percentages by column within each level.

[b] Work experience is a subcategory of specially-designed vocational programs.

Because of the widespread belief in the value of work experience programs for students with disabilities, a 3-way chi-square was conducted concerning this specific subcategory of specially-designed vocational program by employment status, controlling for program model. The only group of students where work experience programs appeared to make a difference were those from SCIN-L programs, where 100% of those from work experience programs were employed, versus 71% who were not enrolled in these programs. No significant statistics were obtained, however, for any of the program models.

A 3-way chi-square test was also conducted to determine if there was an association between paid employment during high school and post-school employment, controlling for program model. Paid employment was defined as at least one paying job; persons with subsidized jobs were grouped with individuals who had no jobs during high school. A significant statistic, χ^2 (1, n = 675) = 13.49, p = 0.0002, was obtained for graduates of RTP programs. In this case, of those who had been involved in paid employment in high school, 81% were employed. Of those who had no paid employment in high school, 67% were employed. A significant statistic, χ^2 (1, n = 139) = 5.26, p = 0.0218, also was obtained for SCIN graduates. The employment percentages of SCIN persons who had paid jobs in high school versus those without paid jobs were quite similar to the proportions found among RTP persons. No significant statistic was obtained for SCIN-L persons. For this program model, about 91% of those with paid jobs in high school were employed, compared to 67% who had no such job.

Graduates were also asked about their postsecondary education and training experiences (see Table 13). Slightly over 50% indicated they had participated in such programs. Among those who had participated in these experiences, the most commonly named was a community college program (20%),

Table 13

Postsecondary education and training (Graduates)[a]

Type of postsecondary education/training:[b]	Employment Status by Program Model															
	Total Group				RTP				SCIN				SCIN-L			
	Employed		Unemployed		Employed		Unemployed		Employed		Unemployed		Employed		Unemployed	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
none	705	56.2	206	50.5	576	55.6	163	47.2	113	54.0	39	64.1	16	93.8	4	50.0
junior college	705	5.1	206	4.9	576	6.3	163	6.1	113	0.0	39	0.0	16	0.0	4	0.0
community college	705	19.9	206	23.8	576	19.3	163	25.2	113	24.8	39	20.5	16	6.3	4	0.0
Adult Based Education	705	0.3	206	1.5	576	0.3	163	1.2	113	0.0	39	0.0	16	0.0	4	25.0
adult education	705	1.1	206	1.5	576	1.0	163	1.8	113	1.8	39	0.0	16	0.0	4	0.0
four-year college	705	3.4	206	2.4	576	3.6	163	3.1	113	2.7	39	0.0	16	0.0	4	0.0
military service	705	8.8	206	5.3	576	8.9	163	6.1	113	9.7	39	2.6	16	0.0	4	0.0
private training	705	5.5	206	8.3	576	5.9	163	8.0	113	4.4	39	10.3	16	0.0	4	0.0
apprenticeship	705	1.4	206	1.0	576	1.0	163	1.2	113	3.5	39	0.0	16	0.0	4	0.0

[a] Percentages indicate the proportion of individuals who had been involved in the education or training listed at some time since high school.

[b] Individuals may have identified more than one type of education or training.

followed by military service (9%). For unemployed persons involved in postsecondary programs, the most frequently named program was in a community college setting, and the second most commonly mentioned experience was some type of private training.

Interviewers also inquired about the perceptions of graduates concerning the quality of their school experiences in several specific areas (see Table 14). Generally speaking, employed and unemployed persons held positive perceptions of selected aspects of their school experiences, with two-thirds or more indicating these experiences were helpful or very helpful. Employed SCIN individuals gave some aspects of their school program higher ratings than did SCIN-L persons; this pattern was not found for unemployed persons.

"Successful" Graduates

Halpern (1985) has indicated that "successful" community adjustment involves not only employment, but includes a residential and social/interpersonal component. In keeping with this model the authors defined overall adjustment of individuals was also of interest in this study. "Successful" graduates were defined as: a) employed (full- or part-time), b) buying a home, living independently, or living with a friend, c) paying more than half their living expenses, and d) involved in more than three leisure activities. Thirty-one (31) RTP, one (1) SCIN, and one (1) SCIN-L individuals met these criteria. Thus, 33 of the 911 graduates (4%) were judged to have been successful in making the transition to adult life.

The criteria for "successful" graduates are perhaps too high since the former special education students had been graduated from high school only one year previously. Therefore, a second set of criteria were selected for these persons, lessening the standards for success in every category. Under these criteria, graduates were judged to be "successful" if they were: a) employed;

Table 14

Satisfaction with school (Graduates)*

School was helpful/ very helpful in preparing you to:	Employment Status by Program Model													
	Total Group				RTP				SCIN				SCIN-L			
	Employed		Unemployed		Employed		Unemployed		Employed		Unemployed		Employed		Unemployed	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
-find a job	698	78.9	203	75.4	570	77.2	160	75.6	112	88.4	39	74.3	16	75.1	4	75.0
-keep a job	695	80.6	201	72.6	567	79.7	158	74.0	112	87.5	39	66.7	16	62.5	4	75.0
-get along, deal with personal problems	699	86.5	205	84.9	572	86.2	162	87.6	111	90.1	39	71.8	16	68.8	4	100.0
-read things like newspaper, want ad, job info	700	94.1	205	91.7	573	94.0	162	91.4	111	94.6	39	92.3	16	93.8	4	100.0
-cook, clean, take care of children	699	68.0	205	79.1	572	67.7	162	80.3	111	69.3	39	76.9	16	68.8	4	50.0
-budget money, save money, understand taxes, insurance	700	80.0	204	80.4	573	80.8	162	78.4	111	78.4	38	86.9	16	62.5	4	100.0

* Each value is the percentage of individuals who rated their school experience relative to the statement as being helpful or very helpful.

or homemakers, students, or involved in job training; b) buying a home, living independently, living with a friend, or living with a parent or relative; c) paying at least a portion of their living expenses; and d) involved in more than one leisure activity. An additional 386 RTP, 68 SCIN, and 6 SCIN-L persons met this second set of criteria. Thus, an additional 460 of the graduates (50%) were judged to be successful. When both groups were combined, 493 persons were rated as "successful," representing about 54% of the graduates interviewed.

Dropouts

As mentioned previously, there was a total of 101 dropouts among those interviewed. Of these, 73 were in RTP programs and 28 in SCIN programs. It should be remembered that dropouts were surveyed with their original class, one year after that class was graduated. Thus, dropouts may have been out of school anywhere from one to four years at the time of the interview.

General Status

General status variables concerning dropouts involved in this investigation are presented in Table 15. Approximately 85% of these individuals reported their marital status as single, and the majority of the remaining persons indicated they were married. The most common living arrangement was with parents (64%), followed by living independently (15%). Close to 90% of the dropouts said they were involved in one or more leisure activities.

Dropouts were asked during the interview about their current occupational status (see Table 15). About 57% of the individuals said they were employed at least part-time; this held true for RTP and SCIN dropouts. The types and locations of jobs are discussed below. An additional 12% reported they were

Table 15

General post-high school characteristics (Dropouts)

Variable	Total Group	Program Model* RTP	SCIN
Marital Status	(n = 101)	(n = 73)	(n = 28)
Single	85.1	82.2	92.9
Married	13.9	16.4	7.1
Divorced	1.0	1.4	0.0
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0
Living Situation	(n = 100)	(n = 72)	(n = 28)
Residential facility	2.0	1.4	3.6
Parents or relative	64.0	61.1	71.4
Group home/ suprvsd apt.	0.0	0.0	0.0
Live with friend	6.0	6.9	3.6
Live indepndtly	15.0	16.7	10.7
Buying own home	4.0	5.6	0.0
Other	9.0	8.3	10.7
Leisure Activities	(n = 101)	(n = 73)	(n = 28)
None	12.9	13.7	10.7
1 to 3	67.3	64.4	75.0
4 to 6	15.8	19.2	7.1
7 to 9	1.0	1.4	0.0
More than 9	3.0	1.4	7.1
Doing Now	(n = 97)	(n = 70)	(n = 27)
Homemaker	6.2	8.6	0.0
Student/Job trainingng	6.2	8.6	0.0
Disabled	0.0	0.0	0.0
Unable to find work	16.5	14.3	22.2
Fired/ laid off	3.1	2.9	3.7
Quit last job	5.2	4.3	7.4
Full/part-time work	56.7	57.2	55.5
Other	6.2	4.3	11.1

* Values are expressed as percentages by column within each variable. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding error.

"otherwise meaningfully engaged" as homemakers, students, or in job training programs. These persons were all from RTP programs; no SCIN dropouts were "otherwise meaningfully engaged."

Characteristics of Employed

The employment status of individuals in this study are presented in Table 16. The employment rate among males was 61%, whereas considerably fewer females were employed (47%). This problem was particularly evident for RTP persons. Nearly all (98%) of the employed dropouts held jobs in competitive employment (see Table 17). The most common job classifications for both males and females were laborer and service worker, while smaller numbers worked as operatives or craftsmen. A few RTP females held higher status jobs (see Table 18). Half of the females were employed full-time (i.e., over 37 hours per week), whereas over 75% of the males were employed full-time (see Table 19). The average wage per hour for males was $4.71; females earned an average of $1.21 per hour less than males (see Table 20). RTP males and females earned more per hour than SCIN males and females, respectively.

Most males and females (over 80%) reported they found their present job themselves or through family or friends; although males more often relied on themselves whereas females obtained help from family and friends (see Table 21). No females and few males indicated they received help from school personnel in finding their current job. Further, few individuals received assistance from community agencies in getting their job.

When asked about the job benefits they received from their current employers, dropouts most frequently reported they were given health insurance (42%), followed by vacation time (39%) (see Table 22). These findings were consistent for both RTP and SCIN individuals.

Table 16

Employment status (Dropouts)

Program Model	n	Employment Status*	
		Employed	Unemployed
RTP			
Males	43	62.8	37.2
Females	30	46.7	53.3
Total subgroup	73	56.2	43.8
SCIN			
Males	26	57.7	42.3
Females	2	50.0	50.0
Total subgroup	28	57.1	42.9
Total group			
Males	69	60.9	39.1
Females	32	46.9	53.1
Total	101	56.4	43.6

* Values are expressed as percentages by row.

Table 17

Location of employment (Dropouts)

Program Model	n	Location of employment[a]		
		Community Competitive	Community[b] Workshop	Sheltered Workshop
RTP				
Males	27	100.00	0.0	0.0
Females	14	92.9	0.0	7.1
Total subgroup	41	97.6	0.0	2.4
SCIN				
Males	15	100.0	0.0	0.0
Females	1	100.0	0.0	0.0
Total subgroup	16	100.0	0.0	0.0
Total group				
Males	42	100.0	0.0	0.0
Females	15	93.3	0.0	6.7
Total	57	98.2	0.0	1.8

[a] Values are expressed as percentages by row. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding error.

[b] Individuals are working over half of the time in the community, but as part of a mobile work crew or small group supervised by sheltered workshop or work activity center personnel.

Table 18

Type of employment (Dropouts)

Program Model	N	Type of employment[a]					
		Laborer	Service Worker	Operative[b]	Craftsman	"Higher" Status[c]	Other
RTP							
Males	26	34.6	15.4	19.2	19.2	0.0	11.5
Females	14	7.1	85.7	0.0	0.0	7.1	0.0
Total subgroup	40	25.0	40.0	12.5	12.5	2.5	7.5
SCIN							
Males	15	40.0	33.3	0.0	20.0	0.0	6.7
Females	1	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total subgroup	16	37.5	37.5	0.0	18.8	0.0	6.3
Total group							
Males	41	36.6	22.0	12.2	19.5	0.0	9.7
Females	15	6.7	86.7	0.0	0.0	6.7	0.0
Total	56	28.6	39.3	8.9	14.3	1.8	7.2

[a] Values are expressed as percentages by row. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding error.

[b] E.g., meat cutter, assembler, machine operator, truck driver, shipping clerk.

[c] Technical, professional 1, school teacher.

Table 19

Number of hours employed per week (Dropouts)

Program Model	n	Hours per week*		
		<21	21 - 37	>37
RTP				
Males	27	3.7	14.8	81.5
Females	14	21.4	28.6	50.0
Total subgroup	41	9.8	19.5	70.7
SCIN				
Males	15	6.7	26.7	66.7
Females	1	0.0	0.0	100.0
Total subgroup	16	6.3	25.0	68.8
Total group				
Males	42	4.8	19.0	76.2
Females	15	20.0	26.7	53.3
Total	57	8.8	21.1	70.2

* Values are expressed as percentages by row. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding error.

Table 20

Wages per hour (Dropouts)

Program Model	n	M	Wages per hour*		
			<$3.35	$3.35-$3.95	>$3.95
RTP					
Males	24	$4.83	8.3	29.2	62.5
Females	13	$3.51	15.4	61.5	23.1
Total subgroup	37	$4.38	10.8	40.5	48.6
SCIN					
Males	15	$4.52	6.7	33.3	60.0
Females	1	$3.35	0.0	100.0	0.0
Total subgroup	16	$4.45	6.3	37.5	56.3
Total group					
Males	39	$4.71	7.7	30.8	61.5
Females	14	$3.50	14.3	64.3	21.4
Total	53	$4.39	9.4	39.6	50.9

* Values are expressed as percentages by row. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding error.

Table 21

Source of help in finding employment (Dropouts)

Program Model	n	Source of Help*				
		Self	School	Family/ Friends	Community Agency	Other
RTP						
Males	27	55.6	0.0	37.0	7.4	0.0
Females	14	28.6	0.0	64.3	0.0	7.1
Total subgroup	41	46.3	0.0	46.3	4.9	2.4
SCIN						
Males	15	40.0	6.7	26.7	20.0	6.7
Females	1	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
Total subgroup	16	37.5	6.3	25.0	25.0	6.3
Total group						
Males	42	50.0	2.4	33.3	11.9	2.4
Females	15	26.7	0.0	60.0	6.7	6.7
Total	57	43.9	1.8	40.4	10.5	3.5

* Values are expressed as percentages by row. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding error.

Table 22

Job benefits received by employed individuals (Dropouts)*

Job benefit received:	Program Model					
	Total Group		RTP		SCIN	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
promotion	55	21.8	39	25.6	16	12.5
sick leave	57	28.1	41	34.1	16	12.5
vacation	57	38.6	41	43.9	16	25.0
life insurance	57	19.3	41	22.0	16	12.5
dental insurance	57	14.0	41	17.1	16	6.3
health insurance	57	42.1	41	41.5	16	43.8
profit sharing	57	7.0	41	7.3	16	6.3
free meals	57	22.8	41	26.8	16	12.5

* Percentages indicate the proportion of individuals who received the benefit as a part of their current employment.

Comparison of Employed/Unemployed

As was the case for graduates, chi-square tests were conducted to analyze the data for dropouts related to employment/unemployment. A .05 level of probability was used as the criterion level for significance. Where applicable, the chi-square statistics reported are those obtained before the Yates correction.

A 3-way chi-square test was conducted to examine the proportions of employed and unemployed dropouts by gender across program model (see Table 16). The proportions of males and females who were employed and unemployed were not significantly different. For RTP individuals, about two-thirds of the males were employed, compared to 47% of the females. Among SCIN individuals, 58% of the males were employed, compared to 50% of the females. Results for SCIN persons should be interpreted with caution, since there were only 2 female dropouts from SCIN programs.

Three-way chi-square tests were conducted to examine the proportions of employed and unemployed individuals by type of vocational education, controlling for program model. The first analysis, which focused on regular vocational programs, revealed that in excess of 90% of the RTP dropouts had participated in some type of regular vocational program (see Table 23). For RTP dropouts, there were no significant differences in the percentage of employed by vocational education versus no vocational education program. Among SCIN individuals, 64% of those who had received regular vocational training were employed, compared to 0% of those who had not been in such programs. This finding concerning SCIN persons was statistically significant, χ^2 (1, n = 28) = 4.48, p = 0.0343.

An additional chi-square test was conducted to further examine the association between employment status and type of regular vocational education

Table 23

Types of regular vocational training by current employment status (Dropouts)

Program Model	Types of Regular Vocational Training/Experiences[a]					
	No Training		General Training Only		Preparatory Training[b]	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
RTP						
Employed	3	50.0	15	60.0	22	53.7
Unemployed	3	50.0	10	40.0	19	46.3
SCIN						
Employed	0	0.0	11	64.7	5	62.5
Unemployed	3	100.0	6	35.3	3	37.5
Total Group						
Employed	3	33.3	26	61.9	27	55.1
Unemployed	6	66.7	16	38.1	22	44.9

[a] Values are expressed as percentages by column within each level.

[b] Individuals with specific training may have also had general training.

for each program model. For this analysis regular vocational education was divided into general vocational education and preparatory vocational education. As with the same analysis involving graduates, individuals were assigned to one of three categories: a) those who had no regular vocational education, b) those who had at least one type of general vocational education experience, but no preparatory vocational education experiences, and c) those who had at least one preparatory vocational education experience (and may have had some general vocational education experiences as well). The chi-square statistics were not significant. Most employed and unemployed RTP individuals had some amount of regular vocational training, much of which was preparatory in nature. Most employed and unemployed SCIN individuals also had regular vocational training, but much of it was general (see Table 23). The results for regular vocational education programs should be interpreted with caution, since the number of individuals with no vocational education was extremely small ($n = 9$).

The second area of analysis focused on specially-designed vocational programs. For RTP dropouts, 48% of those participating in specially-designed programs were employed, compared to 60% who had no such program (see Table 24). For SCIN dropouts, however, the findings were reversed, with 69% of those from specially-designed programs employed, compared to 47% of those who had no such program. The chi-square statistics obtained for specially-designed programs were not significant.

A 3-way chi-square test was also conducted to determine if there was an association between paid employment during high school and post-school employment. Paid employment was defined as at least one paying job; persons with subsidized jobs were grouped with individuals who had no jobs during high school. A significant statistic was not obtained. For RTP dropouts, of those

Table 24

Types of specially-designed vocational training by current employment status (Dropouts)[a]

Program Model	Types of Vocational Programs							
	Specially-designed Program		No special Program		Work Experience[b]		No Work Experience	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
RTP								
Employed	12	48.0	29	60.4	8	50.0	33	57.9
Unemployed	13	52.0	19	39.6	8	50.0	24	42.1
SCIN								
Employed	9	69.2	7	46.7	5	62.5	11	55.0
Unemployed	4	30.8	8	53.3	3	37.5	9	45.0
Total Group								
Employed	21	55.3	36	57.1	13	54.2	44	57.1
Unemployed	17	44.7	27	42.9	11	45.8	33	42.9

Note. Individuals may have had regular vocational training/experiences.

[a] Values are expressed as percentages by column within each level.

[b] Work experience is a subcategory of specially-designed vocational programs.

who had been involved in paid employment in high school, 53% were employed, compared to 60% employed among those with no paid employment in high school. For SCIN, 71% of those with paid employment in high school were employed, compared to 50% of those with no such history of employment.

Postsecondary education and training experiences were also discussed with interviewees (see Table 25). Among the total group of dropouts, 63% of the employed individuals had no postsecondary education or training. Of the remaining employed dropouts with such training, community college was the most frequently named (14%), while none of these persons said they had attended a four-year college. When postsecondary experiences among employed dropouts were examined by program model, it was found that RTP persons had a pattern similar to the total group. However, a smaller proportion of employed SCIN individuals (50%) had no postsecondary training. For those employed SCIN persons with postsecondary experiences, community college was named by 25%, and adult education and apprenticeship programs by 13%. When compared to employed dropouts, a greater proportion of unemployed dropouts had no postsecondary training (71%). Among those who did have some type of training after high school, all were from RTP programs; none of the SCIN persons had participated. For the RTP group, the most common experience was adult education (16%).

The perceptions of dropouts concerning their high school education were explored during the interview. Between half and three-fourths of the employed dropouts expressed the opinion that school was helpful to them in the areas listed in Table 26. When perceptions were examined by program model, it can be seen that RTP persons tended to be more positive than SCIN persons about academic training (reading), whereas SCIN individuals were more positive than RTP people about job-related training. Unemployed dropouts were generally less

Table 25

Postsecondary education and training (Dropouts)[a]

Type of postsecondary education/training:[b]	Employment Status by Program Model											
	Total Group				RTP				SCIN			
	Employed		Unemployed		Employed		Unemployed		Employed		Unemployed	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
none	57	63.2	44	70.5	41	68.3	32	59.4	16	50.0	12	100.0
junior college	57	1.8	44	0.0	41	2.4	32	0.0	16	0.0	12	0.0
community college	57	14.0	44	2.3	41	9.8	32	3.1	16	25.0	12	0.0
Adult Based Education	57	3.5	44	0.0	41	4.9	32	0.0	16	0.0	12	0.0
adult education	57	7.0	44	11.4	41	4.9	32	15.6	16	12.5	12	0.0
four-year college	57	0.0	44	2.3	41	0.0	32	3.1	16	0.0	12	0.0
military service	57	1.8	44	0.0	41	2.4	32	0.0	16	0.0	12	0.0
private training	57	1.8	44	9.1	41	2.4	32	12.5	16	0.0	12	0.0
apprenticeship	57	5.3	44	2.3	41	2.4	32	3.1	16	12.5	12	0.0

[a] Percentages indicate the proportion of individuals who had been involved in the education or training listed at some time since high school.

[b] Individuals may have identified more than one type of education or training.

Table 26

Satisfaction with school (Dropouts)*

	Employment Status by Program Model											
	Total Group				RTP				SCIN			
School was helpful/ very helpful in preparing you to:	Employed		Unemployed		Employed		Unemployed		Employed		Unemployed	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
-find a job	56	57.1	44	38.6	40	52.5	32	34.4	16	68.8	12	50.0
-keep a job	56	46.4	44	40.9	40	37.5	32	40.7	16	68.8	12	41.7
-get along, deal with personal problems	57	77.2	44	50.0	41	78.1	32	46.9	16	75.0	12	58.3
-read things like newspaper, want ad, job info	57	75.5	44	65.9	41	82.9	32	71.9	16	56.3	12	50.0
-cook, clean, take care of children	57	52.6	44	63.6	41	53.6	32	68.7	16	50.1	12	50.0
-budget money, save money, understand taxes, insurance	57	61.4	44	50.0	41	61.0	32	50.1	16	62.6	12	50.0

* Each value is the percentage of individuals who rated their school experience relative to the statement as being helpful or very helpful.

enthusiastic in their perceptions about school programs, where ratings of helpfulness ranged from 39% to 66%. The lowest ratings occurred for statements related to finding and keeping a job. The pattern of perceptions of unemployed individuals by program model was similar to the employed dropouts, where SCIN persons were more positive about job related training (specifically, finding a job) than RTP persons, but less positive about reading instruction.

"Successful" Dropouts

The overall adult adjustment of dropouts was also of interest in this study. "Successful" was defined in this analysis in the same way as for graduates. Dropouts were considered to have made a successful adjustment to adult life if they were: a) employed (full- or part-time); b) buying a home, living independently, or living with a friend; c) paying more than half their living expenses; and d) involved in more than three leisure activities. Two (2) dropouts (2% of 101) met these criteria (1 from an RTP program and 1 from a SCIN program). When the expanded criteria used with graduates were applied to dropouts, 36 additional individuals (36% of 101) (29 from RTP programs and 7 from SCIN programs) were identified. The combined total number of dropouts judged to be "successful" was 38, representing 38% of the dropouts in the study.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that individuals labelled learning disabled whose graduating class had been out of school one year have far to go to reach our goal of adult adjustment, with only 54% of the graduates and 38% of the dropouts interviewed meeting the following criteria: a) employed or "otherwise meaningfully engaged"; b) living independently or with a parent or

relative; c) paying at least a portion of their living expenses; and d) involved in more than one leisure activity. Results in specific areas of adult adjustment will be discussed below, in terms of graduation status (graduates versus dropouts), gender, and program model. Dropouts were interviewed as part of their original graduating class; thus, these individuals may have been out of school from one to three years longer than graduates. A number of dropouts displayed a history of moving in and out of the school system.

Almost all individuals (regardless of graduation status or program model) were single and living at home; although slightly more dropouts than graduates were married (14% versus 6%), 64% of both groups were living with parents or relatives. It is encouraging to note that 93% of the graduates and 87% of the dropouts were involved in at least one leisure activity. Involvement in these activities was consistent across all program models.

In terms of overall employment the present study found that a higher percentage of graduates than dropouts were in full- or part-time work (77% versus 56%); an additional 9% of the graduates and 12% of the dropouts were "otherwise meaningfully engaged." Employment levels were fairly consistent across program models. The disparity in the rate of employment between males and females is of considerable concern. Approximately 15% more male than female graduates and dropouts were employed; for some program models the differences were even greater. It is encouraging to note that almost all of the employed individuals were in competitive jobs.

Although the percent of employment among graduates could be viewed with some optimism, 68% of those employed were holding jobs at the laborer or service worker level, with females holding primarily service worker jobs and males holding laborer jobs. When the results are further analyzed by gender,

79% of the females were holding jobs at these lower levels, compared to 64% of the males. These results were fairly consistent across program model, although slightly more SCIN-L males and SCIN females held lower status occupations. The fact that 70% of the employed graduates were working full time (37 or more hours) is encouraging, but concerns arise when only 52% of the females are so employed, compared to 75% of the males. This differential was true across all program models. There was again little difference in program models in number of hours worked for the graduates.

The problem of employment in low status occupations also holds true for dropouts, with 67% of this group in laborer or service worker occupations. Again, the problem is much worse for females than males (93% versus 59%). Full-time employment is also encouraging with this group as a whole (70%), but the fact that only 53% of the females are employed full-time versus 76% of the males is discouraging.

The average wage for both graduates and dropouts was $4.39 per hour, with the differential between males and females again surfacing on this variable; the average wage for graduate males was over $1.00 per hour greater than females, with female dropouts earning $1.21 per hour less than their male counterparts. There was little difference in average wage for dropouts across RTP and SCIN programs. For graduates, however, individuals from SCIN programs earned the highest average wage, followed by persons from RTP and SCIN-L programs.

The present study found no significant association between current employment status and enrollment in either regular or specially-designed vocational programs while in high school for individuals who had been graduated; this was true for all program models. A complicating factor in the interpretation of these data may be the high percentage of students who were

enrolled in regular vocational education programs; thus, we have no adequate comparison between individuals who have and have not had such experience. A significant relation was found, however, for graduates of RTP and SCIN programs between post-school employment and a paid job while in high school.

For dropouts a significant relation was found between regular vocational training and employment for SCIN individuals. There was no significant relation, however, between paid jobs in high school and post-school employment. Again, the information regarding regular vocational education must be interpreted with caution, since there was an extremely small number of individuals who had not been enrolled in some type of vocational education.

Slightly over half of the graduates indicated they had been involved in some type of postsecondary education or training since high school, with 20% reporting they had attended a program at a merged area school (community college). These figures were lower for dropouts, with only 37% indicating they had received any postsecondary training and 14% saying they had attended a merged area school.

The perceptions of both graduates and dropouts concerning the usefulness of their high school preparation were enlightening. RTP dropouts tended to be more positive regarding their academic preparation, whereas dropouts from SCIN programs were more positive than those from RTP about job-related training. Unemployed dropouts were generally less enthusiastic in their perceptions about school than their employed counterparts. Both employed and unemployed graduates held generally positive perceptions of those aspects of their school experiences addressed in this investigation.

Finally, we have analyzed the results of this study according to program model. The existing differences (or lack of differences) in adult adjustment across program models may have been caused by differences in curriculum and

other program experiences, or differences in functioning level of the individuals in these programs, or by an interaction between these two factors. The functioning level of individuals does appear to decrease from RTP through SCIN-L programs, as evidenced by decreases in mean IQ, math, and reading scores.

The findings of this investigation are, for the most part, similar to other studies examining the post-school adjustment of individuals with learning disabilities. Although employment rates for graduates are respectable and almost all graduates and dropouts who are employed are in competitive employment, a high percentage of these individuals are in part-time employment in low status occupations. A high percentage of both graduates and dropouts are also still living at home.

Are the individuals with learning disabilities who were interviewed in this study "successfully" crossing the bridge into adulthood? We feel that the answer is "not as well as they could be." Although employment for graduates is respectable and almost all individuals who are employed are in competitive jobs, a high percentage of these individuals are in part-time employment in low status occupations. A high percentage are also still living at home. The results for females are much less encouraging. The employment rate for dropouts is much less acceptable and the male/female differential also exists with this group.

The individuals in this study were high functioning as evidenced by intelligence, math and reading test scores and by the fact that a high percentage were served in resource teaching programs. Special education as a field needs to examine its goals for all individuals, but especially for individuals labelled learning disabled. The transition process involves three separate components: a) the foundation, which is laid in the school years; b)

the end goal of community adjustment, which includes residential, employment, and social/interpersonal network components; and c) the bridge between the school and community adjustment. The majority of individuals with learning disabilities who were surveyed in this study appear to have crossed this bridge alone. Although 50% of the graduates had received some type of post-secondary training, only 21% had attended even a segment of a community college program. The fact that only six percent of the group were still students or in job training one year out of school indicates that many did not attend a full two-year program. Only 36% of the dropouts had received some type of post-secondary training. In addition, a very small percent of those employed indicated that the school or a community agency had helped them find their current job.

The foundation that we are laying for these students also appears to be a shaky one. The effects of regular vocational education and specially-designed experiences appear to be mixed; the only component that appears to have any positive effect on post-school employment is paid employment during high school, and this is not consistent across programming models.

As Okolo and Sitlington (1988) have indicated, special education can play a critical role in the transition of individuals with learning disabilities from school to adult life. This role can include preparation in academic skills needed for specific occupations, instruction in social skills needed for survival in the community and on the job, and support of the individual in regular general education and vocational education courses that will provide specific skill training and paid employment experiences. Special educators also need to be involved in transition planning for this population so that the foundation laid can be stronger and more closely related to the individual's goals in adult life and so that the individual's journey across the bridge does not have to be made alone.

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