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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on an ongoing 3-year project which has worked with three school sites to identify program and staff needs and then develop a tailored intervention to improve program services for adolescent students with severe emotional disturbances (SED). Necessary characteristics of effective transition programs for this population are discussed, including school-based location, interagency involvement, specialized staff training, attention to multiple problems simultaneously, fundamental academic instruction, social skills training and support, and emphasis on functional life skills and vocational preparation. The three sites, which served a total of up to 20 students at each site, each fall, each developed tailored vocational programs with project support. Program development involved needs assessment, inservice training, individual site training and support, and ongoing consultation. Evaluation data gathered on the programs, staff, and students (N=67) indicated that the development of community work experience components was the most significant programmatic change. During the last year, the project will provide technical assistance in the establishment of a computerized data system, support for SED students mainstreamed in rural schools, and expansion of a consultative model. (Contains 37 references.) (DB)

Development of Transition Programs for Adolescents with Serious Emotional Disturbances

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ADOLESCENTS WITH SERIOUS EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCES (SED) ARGUABLY ARE THE MOST under-served and most needy segment of all disability groups under the umbrella of special education. Current national studies (Cook, Solomon, & Mock, 1988; Neel, Meadow, Levine, & Edgar, 1987, 1988; Wagner & Shaver, 1989) paint a bleak picture of the vocational and community adjustment of the SED population after leaving high school. School dropout rates among these persons range from 50% to 60%; unemployment runs between 30% to 40%; if employed, the work that is secured is low paying and menial in nature; few enter any type of postsecondary educational training; and many are arrested at least once in the two years following their exit from high school. Recent data from the SRI National Longitudinal Transition Study (Wagner, 1992) documented that the SED group experienced the highest unemployment (52%), poorest work history, and highest number of social adjustment problems four years post-high school of any of the 12 special education disability categories recognized by the federal government. Compounding this situation is the almost complete lack of support services for these persons after leaving school and entering the community. Kortering and Edgar (1988) found that few SED adolescents and young adults (only 5% of their sample) had any contact with the vocational rehabilitation agency, a figure that is corroborated in at least one national study (Wagner & Shaver, 1989).

A study of school-leavers in this state (Halpern & Benz, 1984) indicated that persons labeled as SED exhibited higher rates of school drop-out (about 45%), unemployment (about 50%), under-employment (worked less than 30 hours a week for pay around minimum wage), and social problems than persons in other disability categories and in relation to a control group of nonhandicapped peers. The SED group also experienced exceptionally high rates of

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problems—as compared to other disability groups and the control sample—related to drug use, criminal experiences, social unhappiness, and victimization (Doren, Bullis, & Benz, 1994a, 1994b).

In recent years there has been general recognition that secondary transition programs for students with disabilities are poor and need great improvement to affect positive community adjustment (Edgar, 1987, 1988). As a result, there have been millions of dollars and hundreds of projects implemented at the federal, state, and local levels to improve transition services for all students with disabilities (Clark & Knowlton, 1987; Halpern, 1990; Rusch et al., 1988). However, this thrust usually has not included adolescents with SED (Bullis & Gaylord-Ross, 1991; Knitzer et al., 1990; Rusch et al., 1988). Perhaps because of their high dropout rate, poor attendance, or negative social behaviors, these students simply are not being involved in the new wave of transition programming at the same rate or manner as peers with other disabilities (Bullis & Gaylord-Ross, 1991; Wagner & Shaver, 1989). In short, a population that is woefully in need of focused, pragmatic transition services is not being provided such interventions.

In a related vein, secondary staff are in need of re-training in order to provide transition and vocational interventions (Halpern & Benz, 1984), particularly as related to the unique characteristics of and demands posed by adolescents with SED (Bullis & Gaylord-Ross, 1991). Given how few vocational and transition programs there are for this population, it is not too far of a conceptual leap to conclude that few staff have the requisite skills necessary to deliver effective transition services to this population (Bullis & Gaylord-Ross, 1991; Fredericks & Nishioka-Evans, 1987).

In an attempt to address these issues, Teaching Research began a federally funded grant project to work with three school sites to identify both program and staff needs and then to develop a "tailored" intervention to change and improve program services for adolescents with SED (Bullis, 1992). Because changing an educational program is difficult, slow and complicated, we first explored the various parts of each school system and the effects that a change in one aspect of the system would have on the system as a whole, (Schalock, Fredericks, Dalke, & Alberto, 1994). We then worked with program staff at each of the sites to develop skills and programs that reflected a functional secondary curriculum, a system of vocational placements in community settings, and a network of related service agencies to foster and support the student's transition from school to the community. We also worked with each school system as a whole by providing regular educators and administrators training and support on mainstreaming techniques for students with SED. Because of the unique characteristics, structure and needs of each school system and their SED program, this process of staff training and program development was varied and ongoing throughout the three year period. This paper presents a summary of these activities and a preliminary summary of the project's results in both narrative and qualitative forms. To provide a context for this discussion, we first discuss necessary characteristics of effective transition programs for adolescents with SED.

Characteristics of Quality Programs

Adolescents with SED foster a myriad of intervention and service delivery issues. Accordingly, interventions offered in the secondary grades must be as powerful and pragmatic as possible, as they are likely to be the last concentrated social services many of these students will receive. Further, some contend that adolescence may be the most fertile time to intervene with some segment of this popu-

lation, as they are approaching adult age and may be receptive to participation in structured programs (Bullis, 1992; Hobbs & Robinson, 1982). Unfortunately, little research attention has been paid to adolescents with SED (Bullis et al., 1992; Bullis & Gaylord-Ross, 1991; Jorissen, 1992; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1985) and few examples of clearly effective interventions and programs have been published (e.g., Feldman, Caplinger, & Wodarski, 1983). This situation is most probably due to the durable nature of SED and the very real difficulties of offering interventions in community settings to adolescents with SED. The following characteristics represent the major components of transition programs for this population (For a complete discussion of these points see Walker & Bullis, in press). These guideposts provided the context for the program change efforts in this project.

First, as a rule, transition programs for adolescents should be based in the schools. For many students, the school is the most stable unit in their lives, and it is a constant for many until the age of 16, and beyond. But, the educational and transition data on these students is far from positive; so it is possible to conclude that "traditional" educational offerings are not effective, and must be re-designed to have maximum impact.

Second, it is unrealistic to believe that only the resources of the school need to be, or should be, utilized in an effective treatment program. The varied and numerous needs of adolescents exhibiting antisocial behaviors will require that multiple, specialized agencies from outside the schools become involved in order for the program to address the needs of these students adequately. Examples of just a few such programs include mental health, substance abuse treatment programs, welfare, criminal justice, and so on. Of course, the introduction of multiple programs within the schools and the coordination of multiple program services creates a different set of problems. Accordingly, a key component of service provision is case management. Case mangers become service brokers, advocates, friends, and provide vocational placement and support.

Third, as service programs deal with issues and problems that are outside the usual realm of special education, such as addressing antisocial behaviors, it becomes imperative that they include training to prepare staff to succeed within these new contexts. Obviously, training needs will vary across programs and staff, but it is clear that some type of ongoing development activities must be included in effective programs.

Fourth, the inter-relationship of behaviors associated with SED (i.e., delinquency/criminality, substance abuse, pregnancy and "at-risk" sex, and school failure/dropout) cannot be ignored. Interventions cannot afford to be focused toward only one of these behaviors. While not all adolescents with SED will exhibit all four of these behavioral clusters, many will exhibit more than one deviant behavior. Thus, a program focused on only one of these clusters may not address other important, associated problems.

Fifth, by the time the adolescent reaches the teenage years, he or she is likely to be far behind their peer group in terms of academic achievement (Epstein, Cullinan, & Sabornie, 1992). This lag is doubly concerning as it coincides with the growing pains associated with adolescence (e.g., the desire to be included in a peer group) and the openness of the high school setting. On the other hand, many of these adolescents have the potential to learn, and some portion of their academic deficiencies probably can be attributed to lack of effort. Consequently, it is imperative that heavy emphasis be placed on academic instruction to provide fundamental reading, computation, and expressive skills.

Sixth, persons with SED generally exhibit deficient social behaviors relative to their peers

without antisocial behaviors. Accordingly, social skills training and social supports should be a central feature of educational programs at this point in the educational system. However, these specific interventions cannot in and of themselves be completely effective and should be structured to be as powerful as possible for maximum effect by focusing on skills needed in the vocational and community settings in which the individual is placed (Walker & Bullis, in press) and utilizing multiple training procedures, focusing on generalization to the *in situ* settings (Clement-Heist, Siegel, & Gaylord-Ross, 1992).

Finally, most of these students do not go on to postsecondary education; rather the majority leave school and enter society in the vague hope of finding a job and of living independently. As the secondary years may be the last chance for these persons to receive access to any type of intervention or education, they must be as powerful as possible. In line with this reality, we strongly believe that academic offerings at the secondary grades should emphasize *functional skills* that relate to the demands the individual is likely to encounter upon leaving the academic setting (e.g., balancing a checkbook, completing a job application) (Fredericks & Nishioka-Evans, 1987), coupled with a community-based vocational training program. Vocational preparation has been shown to be a deterrent to dropping out of school before completion (Thornton & Zigmond, 1988; Weber, 1987). Securing vocational placements and providing support in these settings is extremely important and should be provided to all students with SED (Bullis, et al., 1994).

Method

At the start of each project year, we worked with each of the three participating sites to identify their staff and program development needs through an empirical decision-making process. Based on these decisions, project staff provided training to the school staff, direct experience in model vocational and transition projects we operate (e.g., Bullis, Fredericks, Lehman, Paris, Corbitt, & Johnson, 1994). Following this, ongoing staff support and consultation were provided to assure that the skills and procedures were implemented fully and appropriately within the program's particular setting. A plan for program change was developed at each site, and a small amount of project monies were allocated in line with these plans. Thus, each site developed a "tailored" secondary program for adolescents with SED that was supported by project staff and resources. This general process was repeated in each project year. The effect of these interventions on the program, staff, and students at each site was examined through the gathering of extensive data.

Sample

The following is a description of each site at the onset of their first year of grant involvement. None of the three sites had previously offered any vocational curriculum or work experience to students with SED. Administrators at each site agreed to hire or reassign vocational assistants and the necessary classroom staff in order to implement a vocational model.

Site 1

Site 1 was a self contained program for secondary students with SED. It was located in a former office building in a rural town near the county Educational Service District headquarters that served as the administrative body for the program. Students were referred for services from the seven high schools located within the county. Bus transportation was provided from these rural county high schools to the program site.

Student enrollment ranged in number from 8 to 12 each year. The majority of the students attended the program for one half of the school day and their home high school for the remainder of the day. A small number of stu-

dents attended the program for a full day. All of the students enrolled in the program were diagnosed with a primary handicapping condition of SED as a prerequisite to their placement in the ESD program. The majority of the students also demonstrated significant impairment in their academic skills consistent with those of learning disabled or low intelligence level students.

Program staff originally consisted of one teacher, two teaching assistants, and one newly assigned part-time vocational assistant. Each half-day loosely consisted of three 60 minute periods with a 15 minute break between periods. Vocational placements were usually one hour in length occurring from two to five days per week.

The primary educational thrust of the program was that of a tutorial model in which students could receive assistance on their high school coursework. Additionally, the classroom teacher selected materials for individual student instruction and/or obtained coursework from the students' high schools. The teacher and classroom assistants shared in the one-to-one tutoring of students and in the transportation to and from vocational placements.

Site 2

Site 2 was the Court School division of a county Family Court Education Program. It was administered by, and located on the grounds of, the County Juvenile Department. The Court School provided educational and vocational programs for adjudicated delinquent youth between the ages of 12 and 18 years. The program operated year-round, and students were required to provide their own transportation and to attend each day the school was in session.

Student enrollment averaged 35, with the majority of the students in the program aged 14 to 16. As is typical of this population, boys outnumbered girls at a four to one ratio. Although all of the students exhibited delinquent behavior and social and/or academic difficulties as a prerequisite of placement, only approximately 25% of the students were on Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Unfortunately, a large percentage of adjudicated youths are considered conduct disordered and are therefore excluded from special education services; a practice that is controversial but prevalent in the public schools (Bullis & Walker, in press; Forness & Knitzer, 1992; Peacock Hill Working Group, 1991).

The Court School administrator closed the program for approximately six months at the onset of grant involvement in order to hire quality staff and to allow them time to initiate a vocational program with our involvement. The new staff of the Court School consisted of one certified special education teacher, one secondary teacher, three instructional assistants, and a vocational assistant. Staff and administration made a strong commitment to the teaching of functional, social, and vocational courses, and to the students' need to experience community work placements. All of the teachers and classroom assistants shared in the planning and teaching of these functional courses.

The school schedule resembled a typical eight period high school day. Community work placements were scheduled for three days a week, (usually Monday, Wednesday, and Friday), for a maximum of four hours each day. Student schedules were arranged to ensure that they attended a minimum of a high school completion class and a social skills class on the days that they worked in the community.

Site 3

Site 3 was added to the project during the second year of the grant. This site was a high school special education vocational program located in a small rural school and funded by a county Educational Service District (ESD). The program served students grades 9 to 12 from three small school districts. The pro-

gram initially was designed and implemented approximately seven years ago, but had been discontinued for the past three years due to a lack of qualified personnel and budgetary constraints. No vocational programming was offered for students with SED during this interim. The ESD sought our support in re-establishing the program in order to resume providing vocational training and community placements to handicapped students.

A unique feature of this high school was the opportunity for students to earn an alternative vocational diploma. The coursework designed for this diploma focused on functional living, work, and social skills. Students generally chose this vocational "path" by their junior year in order to complete the necessary coursework and fulfill the requirements of extensive career exploration and work experience. This alternative diploma format offered handicapped and/or at-risk students the opportunity to earn a diploma rather than a certificate of attendance, at the same time providing them with the skills necessary to work and live successfully in the community.

Enrollment averaged 54 students per year. Students attending the vocational program were primarily diagnosed as learning disabled and/or SED. A small percentage of the students enrolled were not diagnosed with a handicapping condition, but were considered "at risk" and were therefore enrolled in the vocational program as a means of encouraging school completion. Program eligibility for all students was determined through a review by the ESD's screening team upon referral from the student's high school.

The staff of the vocational program consisted of one special education teacher and one instructional assistant. Also serving this program was a special education vocational assistant and an additional instructional assistant, both of whom worked with other special education programs within the school as well. Students were engaged in vocational courses or activities from one to three periods per day, with the remainder of time spent in the school's special education Resource Center, and/or mainstreamed into regular high school courses.

Interventions

Several avenues were utilized to assist each site in the development and implementation of a unique vocational program.

Needs Assessment

Initial staff training and program modification needs were determined through the use of an instrument adapted from Andrew Halpern's Transition Program Effectiveness Index, (TPEI) (1988). This instrument consists of 130 items distributed across six content areas determined to be critical to a quality transition program: Curriculum & Instruction, Coordination & Mainstreaming, Transition, Documentation, and Administrative Support. Each item is given a value, ranging from 0=not important to 3=critical, and is rated in the degree of implementation ranging from 0=achieved to 3=not achieved.

All school staff and administrators, as well as grant staff, completed these in-depth program ratings at the onset of grant involvement and again at the beginning of each school year. An analysis of these ratings identified specific areas of transition programming that were rated as highly desirable, yet inadequately implemented. All sites identified community vocational placements, accessing community service agencies, the development of functional curriculum, and mainstreaming support as areas in need of development. These areas formed the focus for the interventions conducted with each program.

Additional inservice needs were determined through the use of a training needs survey. All classroom and vocational staff as well as administration completed this survey each spring to identify training needs and inservice format for the following year.

Inservice Training

Inservice training was held for all participating sites on a yearly basis. Training was initiated through a multi-site, three day inservice held in January, 1993. The first day of the inservice provided participants with background information on SED program designs, and presentations from three area vocational transition programs. The second day consisted of extensive training in functional curriculum, behavior interventions, and social skills training, and the organization of a transition program for students with SED. The final day of training focused on community transitioning. Local experts on transition planning shared their systems, and representatives from Vocational Rehabilitation and State Mental Health discussed ways in which school programs could access local services.

The second inservice was held in August, 1993, shortly before the beginning of the second grant year. As the result of an inservice needs survey completed by school staff and administration, we elected to address the following areas: behavior management, job support groups, pre-vocational classes, and functional program design. Day 1 utilized Teaching Research specialists to discuss behavior management at the work site, the function and format of in-class job support groups, and the components of pre-vocational training. Day 2 consisted of in-depth instruction and guided practice in the design and implementation of functional program components.

The third inservice was held in February, 1994. The results of an informal survey and discussion with site administrators and service delivery staff determined the six areas of training needs that we provided during the inservice. On the first day, all staff received information on certificates of initial mastery from the State Department of Education, writing Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for functional skills from a University of Oregon specialist, and assisting students in obtaining a certificate of General Educational Development (GED) as an alternative to returning to high school. On the second day, vocational and instructional assistants were inserviced on behavior management techniques while teachers and administrators received information on the implementation of a job support group from members of a Youth Transition Program Job Club and University of Oregon transition specialists. All staff were provided with information on the implementation of a classroom-based business venture.

Individual Site Training and Support

The degree of support and services offered varied at each site, and within each site, from year to year. Our initial involvement with Site 1 required a very intensive approach that included Teaching Research staff teaching pre-vocational and social skills classes at the site. We also hired a program specialist to conduct a technical assistance visit and evaluation of this site. As a result, we hired a second specialist to provide training on behavior management and intervention techniques to the staff. We also facilitated the classroom teacher visiting a model demonstration vocational program for SED students to observe materials and techniques.

Site 2 utilized the expertise of the Teaching Research data services department in the development of an enhanced, computerized record keeping system. The project director assisted in the identification of pertinent student data and coordinated the implementation of a student data base into the juvenile department's records system.

Site 3 was provided individual support in the form of a vocational special education consultant who worked with the teacher throughout the year to assist in the designing and implementation of the vocational program.

All three sites were provided with opportunities and funding for classroom and vocational staff to visit vocational programs run by

Teaching Research and others throughout the area, and to attend conferences and inservices throughout the state. For example, the vocational assistants from all three sites visited a vocational program for adolescents with SED to observe materials and techniques and to visit employment sites. In addition, we sponsored classroom and vocational staff attending the annual Oregon Association of Vocational Special Needs Personnel conference each spring.

Ongoing Consultation

The two project vocational specialists maintained weekly contact with the vocational staff at all three sites throughout the school year. The project coordinator maintained biweekly contact with the administrators and/or classroom staff, and the project director maintained monthly contact with the administrators at each site. During these contacts, a variety of training, inservices, materials and advice were provided in accordance with the planning meetings conducted each fall at each site. In addition, all sites expressed an interest in establishing school-based businesses, so additional support was provided toward this goal.

Funds

All sites were allocated a portion of the project funds each year, ranging from $1,500 to $3,500 per year. We assisted administration and classroom staff in the designation of these funds each fall toward the curriculum, software, supplies, or support services that were needed. Additional monies were provided twice yearly for the completion of data packets on each student tracked as part of the project.

Data Collection

We hypothesized that by changing the nature of the programs that we would see changes on three levels: program, staff, and students. Therefore data were gathered on each of these components.

Program

Changes observed in the composition and structure of each program throughout each school year were summarized in narrative form in year-end reports. The most significant change noted across all three sites was the implementation and development of community vocational placements. Additionally, data was gathered on changes in program format and population throughout the grant period on a Monthly Program Profile Form. This form detailed the numbers of students enrolled and/or working, vocational courses offered, and contacts with community service organizations. An additional measure of change that will be amassed for each program will be achieved by the comparison of staff program ratings gathered each fall through the use of a revised version of the Transition Program Effectiveness Index (TPEI) (Halpern, 1989).

Staff

The effects of the grant on school staff were measured in several ways. First, a project satisfaction survey was completed at the end of each school year to measure staff perceptions of grant involvement. A second measure was the administration of two stress surveys to all classroom staff in the fall of the last two grant years. These measures were then completed again by all staff in the spring of each year. The third measure of grant impact on staff was the completion of workshop evaluations.

Students

To demonstrate the effects of the project on selected students (up to 20 per year at each site), we gathered extensive demographic and socioeconomic data at the beginning of each school year on measures developed by Teaching Research. We also gathered a detailed description of their social and behavioral aptitude through the use of the Devereux Behavior Rating Scale (Naglieri, LeBuffe, & Pfeiffer, 1993), the Scale of Job-Related Social Skills Performance (Bullis, Nishioka-Evans, Fredericks, & Davis, 1992), and the Scale of Community-Based Social Skill Performance (Bullis, Bull, Johnson, & Johnson, 1994), ad-

ministered at the beginning and end of each year. In addition, we monitored the students' vocational, educational, and social experiences each month throughout the school program, and then interviewed all parents and students at the end of the year regarding their impressions of the school services. Students were also interviewed after they exited the school program—whether through graduation, dropping out, or moving—at six month intervals to ascertain their perceived gains in transition success through participation in the program.

Results

The following is a discussion and summary of results from years 1 and 2. Table 1 provides a description of the student sample obtained through the gathering of extensive demographic and socioeconomic data. This data is gathered on a total of up to 20 students at each site each fall.

Table 2 provides a summary of the vocational training and work experiences of the students at each site. Extensive data were gathered on the monthly school, work, and social experiences of the actively enrolled students. The primary change resulting from grant involvement was the addition and development of community work experiences at each site. An additional achievement at Sites 2 and 3 was the implementation of extensive classroom instruction in pre-vocational and social skills.

The most significant change observed in Site 1 was the implementation and development of community work experience placements. In year 1, the ESD's vocational assistant was responsible for developing community placements for all students and for providing the initial student training at the job site. The majority of student transportation to and from work sites, after initial training, was

Table 1. Table of Particpants (Years One and Two)

	Site 1 (N=17)	Site 2 (N=30)	Site 3 (N=20)
Male	15 (88%)	27 (90%)	12 (60%)
Age (mean)	16	16	16
IEP	16 (94%)	8 (27%)	18 (80%)
Ethnicity	1 (6%)	15 (50%)	1 (5%)
Drug/Alcohol Treatment (Ever received?)	0 (0%)	6 (20%)	2 (10%)
Adjudicated (Past or present)	5 (27%)	30 (100%)	7 (35%)
Single Parent Family (Majority of life)	6 (35%)	14 (47%)	7 (35%)
Runaway (Any living situation)	7 (42%)	26 (53%)	3 (15%)
Paid Work in Past (Before program)	9 (53%)	22 (73%)	19 (95%)

Table 2. Average Monthly Experiences in Year Two

	Site 1 (N=9)	Site 2 (N=20)	Site 3 (N=20)
Number in Community Jobs (mean)	7.0	5.5	11.75
Number in Paid Community Jobs (mean)	2.6	3.0	4.2
Hours per Week in Community	<5hrs	11-20hrs	<5hrs
Number in School-Based Jobs (mean)	3.0	17.25	8.0
Hours per Week in School Jobs	<3hrs	<3hrs	3-5hrs
Hours per Week Instruction in Social/Vocational Skills	2.0	16	13

provided by the classroom assistants. Unfortunately, these placements were primarily inappropriate, low-level positions such as custodial or recycling tasks, and were largely unpaid.

In year 2 a number of changes occurred in the quality and quantity of vocational placements. Additionally, most students assisted in some aspect of the operation of a new classroom-based cookie business. These vocational changes can be attributed to a change in staffing roles and responsibilities in conjunction with the initiation of a state funded Youth Transition Program (YTP). All job development, supervision, and transportation responsibilities were shifted to the two full-time vocational assistants, funded in part by the YTP.

A second area of program improvement, also initiated in year 2, was the addition of the ESD's Assistant Special Education Director. He was extremely involved in both the daily functioning and long term planning of the SED program. He worked closely with the Teaching Research project director and the classroom staff in an attempt to initiate the implementation of a vocational program.

Unfortunately, changes made in the classroom component of the program in the first two years were minimal. In both years teachers were hired late, and both had little experience with adolescents with SED and/or transition programs. Thus, efforts to effect changes in these years were difficult on all sides.

Site 2

At Site 2, the administrator set out to establish the very type of functional, vocational transition program that this grant project advocates through careful staff selection and extensive staff training and preparation. To accomplish this, the site closed down from June to January of the first grant year in order

to redesign the program's policies, procedures, and curriculum focus. This new instructional model included a screening process and year-long commitment requirement, as well as a functional academic focus, pre-vocational and social skills training, and a system of community-based vocational placements in competitive work sites.

The most significant changes in programming and scheduling initiated by grant staff involved the introduction and development of a community work experience component. Staff training was provided in job development and placement techniques. In year 1, community work placements were arranged for the majority of the students. Most of these placements were unpaid work experience; however, the local Job Training Partnership Act Program was accessed and did pay most of the students during the summer months.

In year 2 the variety and quality of placements were upgraded to include an assortment of job clusters and worker skill levels. A job shadowing component, in which students observed and experienced various job sites was initiated. In addition, the community service required of most students was upgraded from a litter detail to valuable work experiences such as volunteer work at a local elementary school. A student-run classroom business involving selling helium balloons was also revived and expanded. These changes in vocational experiences were due to the hiring of a new vocational assistant with extensive experience in vocational placements for at-risk adolescents.

The educational structure and curriculum required few modifications due to the quality of classroom staff and program components, however, grant staff provided training and assistance to classroom and vocational staff as needed. The majority of classroom staff had several years experience with adolescents with SED, but none of the staff had any previous experience with vocational programs. Over the course of the first two years of the grant, all staff members showed an increase in confidence in the selection and instruction of functional and vocational curriculum and activities. Staff members divided up teaching roles and responsibilities and administrative tasks according to their personal strengths and interests. This enabled the program to provide a full spectrum of functional academics and vocational training for this population.

Site 3

Site 3 was added in year 2. The primary development throughout the year included the development of a series of community vocational experiences. Community work placements were arranged for the majority of sophomores, juniors, and seniors. Students generally began their community experiences as part of a landscaping enclave established for sophomores enrolled in a two period block of vocational courses. The juniors and seniors were provided with a variety of job shadowing experiences, and an average of nine students per month were placed in either paid or nonpaid work experience.

Work experiences were hampered by the rural location of the high school and the lack of availability of a school vehicle. The vehicle was available only one afternoon per week to transport juniors and seniors to job shadowing and/or work experience placements. Unfortunately, this arrangement required students to miss one afternoon of their mainstreamed courses, thus requiring students who are typically behind in coursework the additional burden of making up all missed assignments. The landscaping enclave used the school vehicle to transport students to various community worksites three days per week.

The courses taught in the vocational program were driven by the requirements of the school's vocational diploma. The hierarchy of coursework taught advanced from career exploration through paid community place-

ments. The freshman courses stressed career exploration and career interests. The sophomore courses were taught in a two period block in order to accommodate community enclave work experience in addition to coursework in career planning and worker skills. Juniors and seniors focused on functional life skills, community law, and social responsibility. Social skills were an integral part of all courses at each level.

The primary emphasis for the classroom in its first year was the development of courses in social skills and pre-vocational training. Teaching Research made a large assortment of materials available for review and trial by the school staff, and assisted in the purchase of selected curriculum materials. Courses offered toward the school's vocational diploma were implemented at the ninth and tenth grade level, with older students receiving as much living skills and basic vocational training and experience as time allowed before their school completion. Additional courses will be implemented as the younger group of students advance.

A special education teacher and instructional assistant were hired for the program, and a vocational assistant was hired to serve all special education students, including those in the vocational program. Although the classroom staff was new to vocational programs, they were extremely effective in establishing a vocational format. Critical components were initiated and refined throughout the year. Additional courses and vocational opportunities will be added as the program ages. Transportation will be an ongoing problem for the rural program, but attempts will be made to overcome this obstacle.

Discussion

In year 3 we will continue to provide each school program with the training and support necessary for the further development of their transition programs. At site 1, the ESD has hired a teacher with SED transition program experience and a classroom assistant with SED experience. They have purchased a number of functional curriculum materials and software in order to provide students with extensive functional skills training. Classroom support now is offered for community placements, and the classroom-based cookie business has been expanded. In addition, Teaching Research is facilitating the implementation of a consultative model for the mainstreaming of students in their hom igh schools. We will provide teacher coverage one half day per week, beginning in January, so that the classroom teacher may travel to the rural high schools enrolling SED students in the program. There, he will meet with special educators, regular educators and administration having contact with these students in an attempt to facilitate their successful mainstreaming. We will provide training in this model for the teacher, and a series of inservices on SED inclusion to the high school teachers and administrators.

At site 2, we will continue to provide technical assistance in the establishment of a computerized data system. We also will facilitate the training of classroom staff in the implementation of a portfolio evaluation system and a project-based curriculum in order to assist the school in their compliance with the 21st Century act. In addition, we will provide training in SED transition programs to the new classroom teacher being hired this year.

Site 3 has requested assistance in providing mainstreaming support to vocational students in year 3 of the grant. Accordingly, Teaching Research staff strongly encouraged administration to reduce the teaching responsibilities of the vocational teacher in order to facilitate the expansion of a consultative model. Regular educators and administrators will also be provided inservice training on effective mainstreaming of the students. In addition, we will continue to assist in the development of the community work experience component. Transportation alternatives will be ex-

amined, and a program brochure will be printed to assist in community placement recruitment.

By the end of this next year, significant changes will have been made in all three sites. These changes will have significant implications for the programs, staff, and the students. We are optimistic that the sites will continue to offer vocational and transition services, and that their students will benefit from these efforts. Adolescents with SED can be affected positively by focused, relevant programming as described in this paper. Unfortunately, interventions such as these are not widespread and should be promoted in all secondary schools to improve the transition experiences of adolescents with SED.

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