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# Study of the social demands necessary for job adjustment of the adult retardate

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A STUDY OF THE SOCIAL DEMANDS  
NECESSARY FOR JOB ADJUSTMENT  
OF THE ADULT RETARDATE

by

Sister Mary Carmel Bussen

A RESEARCH PAPER  
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
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This research paper has been  
approved for the Graduate Committee  
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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Maturity is the ultimate aim of the process of becoming. For man, mature adulthood is the goal toward which the whole process of development is directed. This is, however, only a theoretical achievement. Although unwritten sets of standards and actions have been designated by society for the successful attainment of this goal, man never achieves full maturity. He is always in the process of becoming more mature. Various ages have been given for legal adulthood, such as eighteen years for eligibility for the draft, twenty-one years for the right to vote, and sixteen for the permit to drive a car. Nevertheless, it is social adequacy, not chronological age, which ultimately determines the mature adult.

Edgar Doll has coined the word "adultation" to describe the process. As he states it,

This word epitomizes the real business of education as an ongoing facilitation of personal social destiny. . . We define adultation, then, as a process of assisting someone to become an adult and, by implication, a mature competent person who will be relatively self-sufficient and a contributing member of his family and his social community.<sup>1</sup>

For the mentally retarded person the life goal, too, is achieving self-sufficiency as a self respecting adult. He, too, must attain

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<sup>1</sup>E. Doll, "Adultation of the Special Child," The Special Child in Century 21, Washington: Special Child Publications, 1964, p.69.

to the standards set by society or face social condemnation and inadequacy. Social competence becomes for the person of limited intellectual functioning the criterion for adjustment into adulthood. His success will depend on his social skills, on the degree to which he can function in the community as an independent member conforming to the actions expected of an adult. For the mentally retarded this capability will vary. Some will achieve independence; others will be semi-independent; some will remain dependent always on others. However, the goal for all must always be the achievement of socialization as far as possible.

The retarded person because of his lower intellectual functioning must be guided and directed very deliberately toward this goal. His personality must be developed in relation to his environment so that within the limits of his ability, he may become an asset, not a social liability. Davies discusses the vital need of socialization by saying,

On a practical basis, a distinction can be observed between those of the retarded who are socially incompetent and those who are reasonably adequate socially. Fully recognizing that there is no clear cut dividing line between the socially competent and incompetent, just as there is no fixed dividing line in levels of intelligence, nevertheless, those who have social potentials stand out from those with characteristics that make for social disability. Generally speaking, the latter group comes to public attention through the social difficulties they fall into, while the other group merges inconspicuously into the workaday world. The most effective programs seek by training and supervision to keep retarded persons from falling into social inadequacy.<sup>2</sup>

For more capable people, social adequacy might depend on the ability to function intellectually on a job; for the individual less capable intellectually, this adequacy will depend, rather on his ability

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<sup>2</sup>S.P. Davies, The Mentally Retarded in Society, New York: Columbia University Press, 1959, p. 7.

to meet the social demands of his home, job, and community.

#### Purpose of Paper

The purpose of this paper was to investigate the demands most vital for the adjustment of the retarded person into society. The studies and opinions which were researched dealt mainly with the educable mentally retarded. They were also narrowed to include only the social demands necessary for successful functioning on a job. In many studies and evaluations it was found that the success or failure, the adequacy or inadequacy of the mentally retarded person depended upon social competence, not on intelligence, or a diploma, or even vocational skills. The implications for the education of the mentally retarded should be most obvious.

#### Need of Mentally Retarded for Social Competence

However, before discussing the objectives of education for the retarded, an understanding of the person himself and why the emphasis on social development is vital in his education is necessary. It is generally agreed that the retarded person has more problems in personal and social adjustment than the normal person. The reasons most often stated for this are his inability to function adequately intellectually and his problems in handling interpersonal relationships. Adjustment in social behavior often demands a certain amount of intellectual functioning, which for the retarded person is slower and farther behind the development of other individuals of the same chronological age. Lower intelligence also creates a problem in one's competence in reasoning and judging correctly and intuitively--abilities often necessary in handling social demands. While the lag in intellectual development is not always obvious to others and is more easily accepted and under-

stood, the lag in social development can be a cause for rejection and misunderstanding.

The vital need for social competence in adult adjustment and the particular problem which the mentally retarded has in achieving this goal makes this aspect of total development more relevant to the educational objectives of the handicapped person. Engel has asserted that

There is probably no aspect of education of mentally retarded children which is more important than that which concerns itself with the social and occupational adjustment of adult life. Each teacher in special education is concerned with end results in his training and struggles to prepare his young people so that when they leave school, they will be able to adjust successfully to jobs, to home life, and to their own social group.<sup>3</sup>

#### Objectives of Education

Of the objectives generally stated for the education and training of the mentally retarded, two are concerned specifically with the development of social skills, namely, that of achieving adequate social adjustment and that of acquiring personal habits and adjusting satisfactorily to society and its individuals. These objectives remain the same for all levels of education, not just the prevocational or vocational level. Vocational training for the adolescent can only succeed where it has been underwritten by appropriate social concept skills and experiential background. These social skills must be an integral part of the entire curriculum. "As a child moves from the elementary to secondary schools, he is already the man he is becoming. The degree of responsibility, adjustment, and stability he exhibits at this point

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<sup>3</sup>Anna Engel, "Employment of the Mentally Retarded," Vocational Rehabilitation of the Mentally Retarded, Ed. S. DiMichael, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1950, p. 80.



predicts his future job success far better than his reading or arithmetic level."<sup>4</sup> It is the responsibility of the school to develop the social, personal, and work habits which are basic for successful adult adjustment.

#### Definition of Terms

A definition of the important terms with which this paper is concerned is necessary for clarification. A most important term and definition on which much of the concept of mature adulthood for the mentally retarded depends is that of mental retardation as defined by Heber. In 1958 the American Association of Mental Deficiency adopted this definition which marked a milestone in the thinking about the retarded. The definition reads as follows: "Mental retardation refers to subaverage general intellectual functioning which originates during the developmental period and is associated with impairment in adaptive behavior."<sup>5</sup> The incorporation of this second concept is an important addition to the previous definitions. An impairment in adaptive behavior refers only to that behavior which comes to the attention of others, making it necessary to provide special services for them. Adaptive behavior, according to Heber, incorporates two facets in its definition. First, it refers to the degree to which the individual is able to function and maintain himself independently, and secondly, it is the degree to which the individual satisfactorily meets the cul-

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<sup>4</sup>Amy Allen and J. Cross, "Work Study for the Retarded--The Elementary School Years," Education and Training of the Mentally Retarded, Vol. 2, No. 1 (February, 1967), 9.

<sup>5</sup>R. Heber, "A Manual on Terminology and Classification in Mental Retardation," American Journal of Mental Deficiency, Monograph Supplement, Vol. 64, No. 2 (September, 1959), 29.

turally imposed demands of personal and social responsibility.

As part of this definition, Heber refers to three aspects of impaired adaptive behavior in regard to personal-social factors. First, he considers an impairment in interpersonal relations which is the inadequacy to relate to peers or authority figures and an inability to recognize the needs of other persons in interpersonal relations. Second, the impairment in cultural conformity refers to behavior which does not meet standards of dependability, reliability, and trustworthiness. Third, the impairment in responsiveness is the inability to delay gratification needs and a lack of long range goal striving or persistence with response only to short term goals.<sup>6</sup>

The difficulty of measuring the adaptive behavior has long been recognized. The most adequate instrument at the present is the Vineland Social Maturity Scale developed by Doll. The scale presents a series of items which represent progressive maturation in self-help, self-direction, occupation, locomotion, communication, and social relations. All of these may be taken as a progressive development in social competence. The AAMD has used the scale to identify an individual's impairment in adaptive behavior. Depending on the score received on the Maturity Scale, an individual may be classified as average in adaptive behavior or as deviating from this norm either mildly, moderately, severely, or profoundly.

This definition allows for the mentally retarded individual who is able to acquire the skills necessary for social competency to declassify himself as mentally retarded and to live in society as a

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p.65-66.

mature adjusted average adult. Dinger more recently reiterated the concept of the identification of the adjusted mentally retarded adult following a study he did of former retarded students of a vocational school.

These subjects were not identifiable by the writer as being mentally retarded when judged by such factors as their appearance, homes, jobs, conversation, dress, wives, and children. The majority of the group are not identified as mentally retarded by their employers. The question as to whether these adults are still retarded merits serious consideration. It is doubtful whether the criteria for the diagnosis of retardation in adulthood are the same as those raised for this diagnosis in school age children.<sup>7</sup>

One further term to be defined is that of adulthood with reference to the mentally retarded. As used in this paper, the beginning of adulthood refers to that period following the completion of formal education for the individual. It is at this time that the individual must accept the responsibilities of life himself. This includes employment, recreation, social demands and activities. It is in these various aspects that the adjustment must take place.

The present paper researched only one aspect of education in the life of the educable mentally retarded, namely, that of social competence. It has been emphasized that it is on this factor that the success or failure of adult adjustment will depend. It is toward this competency that the entire education of the mentally retarded must be guided and directed.

#### Summary

In summary, it has been noted that this paper was designed to investigate the social demands most vital for the adjustment of the

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J. Dinger, "Post School Adjustment of Former Educable Retarded Pupils," Exceptional Children, Vol. 27 (March, 1961), 357.

retarded person into society. This need for social competence and the problem which the retarded person has in achieving this goal makes this aspect of the total development more relevant to the educational objectives. A definition of the term mental retardation was also given.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### Introduction

The marked expansion of educational facilities available to the young adult retardate can largely be attributed to legislation, (particularly in the area of vocational rehabilitation), federal support, and the effect of applied research. A growing belief in the productive abilities of the retarded has led to increased emphasis on the preparation of the retarded for the competitive world of work.

Various authorities have suggested that as high as 70 to 80 per cent of the total retarded population is potentially capable under favorable conditions of reaching the status of being gainfully employed. According to Nisonger, 3 per cent of the school population are mentally retarded. This estimate would include a total of five million of the U. S. population, 85 per cent of whom are only mildly retarded and would be capable of achieving economical and social independence. Another  $11\frac{1}{2}$  per cent are moderately retarded and could become partially independent in sheltered workshops. Thus only a small fraction,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent of all those classified as mentally retarded, would be so deficient as to offer little hope of activity, useful to anyone but themselves.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>H. W. Nisonger, "Changing Concepts in Mental Retardation," American Journal of Mental Deficiency, Vol. 67 (March, 1962), 4.

The factors involved in the criteria of adult adjustment have been the subject of controversy among educators for many years. It is a major problem of the special educator to determine the specific measures or predictors of successful job adjustment. Emphasis has been placed on successful job adjustment because research has shown that it is primarily on this aspect that successful life adjustment of the retarded depends. As our society is constructed, self-sufficiency is generally not possible unless one is successfully employed. Goldstein notes, however, that

There are no reliable predictors of who will or will not become assimilated into society on society's terms. The best we can do presently is make a probable statement based on measurables and observables. As usual, we are more often correct in our predictions at the extreme of these areas of performance. We come closer to predicting the extent of social competence of the severely retarded child than we do of the mildly retarded. There are some educable mentally retarded youngsters with long careers in special classes who disappear into society, while others become notorious failures in one or more aspects of adjustment. At the other extreme, there are the youngsters who have never been in a special class who leave school--some to disappear into society while others have become notorious failures. . .

There are no conclusive data that tell us why the successful succeed and the failures fail. . . In the final analysis, it seems that it really doesn't make any real difference whether the mature retardate manifests one area of inadequacy or five. Studies show that if he becomes occupationally immobilized, there is good chance that his entire adjustment pattern crumbles.<sup>2</sup>

Many studies and much research in the area of vocational adjustment have pointed to social adjustment as the pivot around which success or failure lies. Follow-up studies have been done of persons who have been classified as mentally retarded and the reasons for their success or failure in adult adjustment. It is from these implications that education should draw its curriculum for the mentally retarded.

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<sup>2</sup>H. Goldstein, "Construction of a Social Learning Curriculum," Focus on Exceptional Children, Vol. 1, No. 2 (April, 1969), 2.

It would be well to remember that this is exactly the way public education for all children came into being in America, and the way it continues to function. The demands of adult society prescribe what shall be taught in schools. . .It is neither the educator nor the parent who decides curriculum content; it is the user of the product, the employer of the adult graduate.<sup>3</sup>

This paper has investigated the research of the past twenty years concerning reasons for success or failure in occupational adjustment of the mentally retarded. First, it has considered the concept of the I. Q. and successful employability. Then, the follow-up studies in job adjustment were researched. These studies were divided into two groups--those dealing with persons who had been in institutions, and those dealing with persons enrolled in non-institutionalized programs. The final group of studies includes those studies of success or failure as were predicted by evaluations.

First, it must be emphasized that many factors contribute to the adult adjustment of the retardate. Success or failure does not totally depend on social skills. However, many studies have shown the degree of social adequacy to be the primary determinant.

#### I. Q. and Employability

In considering the relationship between I. Q. and successful employability, studies have indicated a low predictive correlation. Ladas reported that the use of I. Q. scores as a predictive device for vocational success has not been supported by evidence. He found that it cannot be assumed that of any two individuals with different I. Q.'s the one with the higher I. Q. will enjoy more success on the

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<sup>3</sup>J. Peck, "The Work-Study Program--A Critical Phase of Preparation," Education and Training of the Mentally Retarded, Vol. 1, No. 2 (April, 1966), 68.

job.<sup>4</sup>

In a survey of 1,000 non-academic boys who completed the course at Jarvis School in a ten-year period, McIntosh found that 65.2 per cent had I. Q.'s of 66 to 80. Only 13.9 per cent were below the 66 I. Q. level. He found that the group with an I. Q. less than 60 had a higher percentage of unemployed individuals, but that many in this group were steady workers and were self-supporting. He maintained that other factors, such as emotional stability and personal drive, were as important as even twenty points in the I. Q. range scale within the range of 65 to 75.<sup>5</sup>

Beckham did a study on the relative mental age for jobs in industry. The results of his study showed that a considerable amount of responsibility in industry could be placed on both sexes at the eight year mental age. He found little difference in the intelligence of the good, fair, and poor workers.<sup>6</sup>

Agreement with the findings of these studies, Blatt has reported the insignificance of a person's behavior with I. Q.

For each job failure, there are many others with the same or lower I. Q. who are not failing. If a counselor reviewed the folders of fifty clients, all with the same I. Q. and classification, he would most likely find fifty different levels of functioning, fifty different degrees of success or failure, and fifty entirely different human beings. . . . Certainly the group known as mentally retarded has demonstrated a far greater degree of out-of-school success, both socially and vocationally, as compared with performance

<sup>4</sup>P. G. Ladas, "Workshop Learning Rates of the Mentally Retarded Trainee as Indicators of Production in a Work-Training Center," Personnel and Guidance Journal, Vol. 39 (April, 1961), 396.

<sup>5</sup>W. J. McIntosh, "Follow-up Study of One Thousand Non-Academic Boys," Journal of Exceptional Children, Vol. 15 (March, 1949), 167.

<sup>6</sup>A. S. Beckham, "Minimum Intelligence Levels for Several Occupations," Personnel Journal, Vol. 9 (1930), 309-313.



in school and predictions based on psychological tests.<sup>7</sup>

Dubrow conducted a study of 106 mental retardates who has received training at the workshop conducted by the Association for Help of Retarded Children. He concluded that neither I. Q. nor reading level would differentiate the success from failure groups.<sup>8</sup>

A similar study was undertaken by Bobroff which correlated I. Q. with economic adjustment. One hundred-twenty adults, all of whom were formerly students in secondary classes for the retarded in the Detroit Public Schools, were the subjects of the study. The purpose of the study was to measure to what extent the I. Q. and achievement levels were related to the subsequent earning abilities of the subjects. In computing the correlation for wages and the last scores reported at school for the subjects, he found the relationship weak. The correlation between wage and I. Q. was .32, between wage and reading was .31, and between wage and arithmetic, .23. He concluded that "If the dispersion in hourly income is not related to these factors, we may conjecture that other qualities (promptness, honesty, conscientiousness, etc.) may play an important role in determining the value of economic services."<sup>9</sup>

#### Specific Job Training and Employability

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<sup>7</sup>B. Blatt, "The Mentally Retarded," The Rehabilitation Record, July-August, 1961, p. 3.

<sup>8</sup>M. Dubrow, "Sheltered Workshops for the Mentally Retarded as an Educational and Vocational Experience," Personnel and Guidance Journal, Vol. 38, (1960), 395.

<sup>9</sup>A. Bobroff, "Economic Adjustment of 121 Adults, Formerly Students in Classes for Mental Retardates," American Journal of Mental Deficiency, Vol. 60 (January, 1956), 532-533.

In the past, another element upon which much emphasis was placed for vocational success was specific job training. Research has shown, however, that the jobs on which the retarded are usually placed require a minimum of specific occupational skills. The minimum skills that may be required can often be learned on the job in a short period of time. Studies and reports have shown that more retarded individuals fail on the job because of inability to adjust to the work situation and lack of social and personal skills, than due to a lack of specific job skills. They state that the majority of jobs the retarded will be able to hold will be dependent more upon general personal characteristics than on job skills.

Keys and Nathan analyzed reports of 610 former special class students in San Francisco. They investigated the job skills necessary for each of the employees to succeed in work ability. In the main, the investigation reported that the occupations represented were so diverse and the skills so simple, that they thought it doubtful whether schools need provide specific vocational training on any extensive scale.<sup>10</sup>

If then, as the studies seem to indicate, the I. Q. is a poor predictive device of successful job functioning, and specific job training does not insure success, a good predictor and evaluation instrument remains to be developed. Greenstein has pointed this out by saying

Although much has been accomplished in recent years in creating techniques for evaluating the mentally retarded, much remains to be

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<sup>10</sup>N. Keys and J. M. Nathan, quoted by Anna Engel, "Employment of the Mentally Retarded," Vocational Rehabilitation of the Mentally Retarded, ed. S. DiMichael, Washington, D. C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1950, p. 85.

done and many questions remain unanswered. Not long ago, a person who pioneered in rehabilitation offered the opinion that the current level of knowledge about vocational adjustment of the mentally retarded is similar to the state of the medical profession in the days when bloodletting was an accepted form of treatment for a disease. What we can do now is raise the questions that perplex us and direct our energies toward clarification of issues.<sup>11</sup>

As a consequence, many school programs, which formerly stressed specific skill training, have abandoned this program in favor of one which stresses development of attributes which may be generalized to any job situation. For example, the Marbridge Foundation in Austin, Texas, offers general farm training to all of the clients they serve, not for the purpose of turning out farm hands, so much as to produce good workers with good work habits.<sup>12</sup>

#### Studies of Institutionalized Subjects

The results of reports and follow-up studies indicate that the evaluation and prediction of job success will lie in this area of social competency. An investigation of several studies done at institutions revealed this. Bae reported a follow-up study of 113 vocational trainees at the Rosewood State Hospital Vocational Rehabilitation Unit. His purpose was to determine what kinds of patient variables are significantly associated with vocational efficiency in each of the eight training programs after completing an eight-week pre-vocational evaluation period. During the evaluation period each patient was exposed for two weeks to each of at least four of the eight programs.

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<sup>11</sup>M. Greenstein and T. Fangman, "Vocational Training for the Mentally Retarded," Focus on Exceptional Children, Vol. 1, No. 5 (October, 1969), 6.

<sup>12</sup>W. Fraenkel, The Mentally Retarded and Their Vocational Rehabilitation, A Resource Handbook, New York: National Association of Retarded Children, 1961, p. 48.

The trainees were evaluated on each of the twelve variables. The results of the study showed that the good and fair trainees were not differentiated by verbal I. Q., performance I. Q., full scale I. Q., arithmetic level, chronological age, or length of institutionalization. A significant difference was seen, however, on such traits as work ability, work habits, and interpersonal behavior.

Further investigations showed a slight variation on the variables in several of the programs. It was found that a higher reading level was significantly important in the nurse's aide program and general shoe shop. Better interpersonal relations were important to success in the training programs of food service, ground crew, nurse's aide, and sewing. They were not so important, however, in indoor general shoe shop, upholstery, or in the janitorial programs. Generally, better interpersonal behavior tended to be less significant in types of work which require little contact with people.<sup>13</sup>

In a study done at the Johnstone Training and Research Center, Cohen investigated the reasons for the return of students placed in the community from the Center. He analyzed all the factors related to 73 unsuccessful placements of 57 educable students. Of these, thirteen had two placements, and three had three placements. The reports all revealed that, with only a few exceptions, the students were able to meet the skill and strength demands of the job. The problems of failure were primarily a result of inadequate non-manual skills.

In about one-third of the cases, it was reported that the stud-

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<sup>13</sup>A. Y. Bae, "Factors Influencing Vocational Efficiency of Institutionalized Retardates in Different Training Programs, Vocational Adjustment Scale," American Journal of Mental Deficiency, Vol. 72 (May, 1968), 871-874.

ent had experienced some difficulty in his adjustment in the community, rather than on the job. The difficulties ranged from behavior which might be judged as being completely normal and acceptable for a normal nineteen-year-old, not labeled mentally retarded, to some violation of social convention, making the individual liable to legal prosecution.

Another major reason cited for return to the institution was generally poor attitude with regard to the job. Ten students simply quit their job abruptly without apparent consideration for the employer's need. This exhibits a lack of stability or a lack of responsibility on the part of the trainee.

Reports also indicated that a number of cases showed a lack of readiness for employment which was reflected in immaturity, laziness, or vulgarity. Approximately, six of the trainees failed because they were not able to benefit from any supervision.<sup>14</sup>

Cohen's study points out the apparent need which the institutionalized retardate had for the development of personal and social skills to adjust successfully within the community.

Shafter reported a study done at Woodward State Hospital and School in Iowa. His study was done to determine if the release characteristics that were currently used in the placement of the institutionalized mental defectives differentiated successful from unsuccessful placements. Two hundred-five individuals were included in the study. One hundred-eleven of these were successful which for the purpose of the study was defined as a complete discharge from the hospital. Ninety-

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<sup>14</sup>J. S. Cohen, "An Analysis of Vocational Failures of Mentally Retarded Placed in the Community After a Period of Institutionalization," American Journal of Mental Deficiency, Vol. 65 (1960), 371-376.

four were successful and had to be returned to the hospital through some fault of their own.

In this study twelve characteristics were found significant. It was found that persons with a record of good behavior in institutions were found more likely to succeed on placement than those with behavior problems. Shafter also found that persons who escaped from the institutions or who had a record of quarrelsomeness were less likely to succeed in the community. The next five characteristics dealt with attitudes or habits of behavior, such as aggressiveness, truthfulness, ambition, obedience, and carelessness. All were found to be significant in differentiating the successful from the unsuccessful. The last three characteristics on which there was a significant difference included: patients having a record of punishment within five years prior to placement; patients having a record of stealing; and patients producing a better quality of work.<sup>15</sup>

In a study done by Windle, Stewart, and Brown at the Pacific State Hospital, it was found that failures most frequently were accounted for by inadequate work performance and voluntary departure from the work situation.<sup>16</sup> These latter two reasons for failure again support the results of the other studies cited.

#### Studies of Non-Institutionalized Subjects

The next group of studies include those that were done of in-

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<sup>15</sup>A. Shafter, "Criteria for Selecting Institutionalized Mental Defectives for Vocational Placement," American Journal of Mental Deficiency, Vol. 61 (January, 1957), 599-616.

<sup>16</sup>C. Windle, E. Stewart, and S. J. Brown, "Reasons for Community Failures of Released Patients," American Journal of Mental Deficiency, Vol. 66 (1961), 213-217.

dividuals in a non-institutionalized setting. These are follow-up studies of retardates who had attended a special class program or vocational rehabilitation program. The studies conclude some main reasons for success or failure among individuals on job placement.

Phelps conducted a study in select cities in Ohio to determine how well young people were adjusting in the community after leaving school. He also wanted to determine if there was any significant relationship between what was known about the individuals in school and the quality of their adjustment after leaving school. The total number taking part in the study was one hundred-sixty-three. The median I. Q. for the group was 60.6.

Interviews were obtained with the employers of eighty-seven cases for the purpose of gathering information concerning wages, exact nature of the work, and adjustment to the job. In this particular study an analysis was made in which the characteristics of those earning more than the median wage were compared with those earning less. In relating certain variables to the wage earning, it appeared that employers regarded most highly the ability and perhaps the willingness of the worker to do his share of the work. The ability to do work of good quality and the person's appearance was also noted as being important. It was found that the special teacher's judgment that the subject possessed good social acceptability and a willingness to do his share of the work was related to occupational success.

Phelps asked each employer to rate the retarded adult in his employment on several traits. It is interesting to note that the majority of the employees were rated high in general appearance,

observance of the safety rules, attitude toward supervision and plant policies, punctuality, acceptance of his share of the work, and physical stamina. The majority received an average rating in relations with other employees, general quality of work, amounts of mistakes in work, and amount of instruction required from the employer. Those characteristics receiving the higher rating generally referred to attitudes or habits of work--non-manual skills. Those receiving an average rating referred to manual skills or intellectual ability.<sup>17</sup>

Collman and Newlyn reported another study done in England. The research was an investigation of the adjustment of one hundred former students of three residential schools and one hundred twenty-five former students of six day schools. The mean I. Q. for the group was 60.

In assessing the employment adjustment, the subjects were divided into three groups--those successful, partially successful, and those who failed. A successful individual was one who had secured and held a job in the first year after leaving school and at the time of the interview was settled in employment. Those defined as partially successful were the individuals who had changed jobs frequently in the first year and were not settled in a job. The failures were defined as the individuals who had started work, but failed to hold any jobs. Of the total group, 71 per cent were classified as successful; 7 per cent as partially successful; and 22 per cent as failures.

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<sup>17</sup>H. Phelps, "Postschool Adjustment of Mentally Retarded Children in Selected Ohio Cities," Exceptional Children, Vol. 23 (November, 1956), 58-62.



Information for the study was obtained by personal interview with authorities and employers. In order to insure uniformity in eliciting the main reasons for partial success and failures, a standardized report was used. Of the thirty-five employment failures and twenty-five partial successes, deficits of character accounted for 52 per cent of all failures and employment instability. Within this group, 30 per cent were dismissed for unreliability; 15 per cent of the cases because of unreliability in getting on with the job; and 15 per cent for bad time-keeping and taking time off.

Listed next in order for dismissals came sexual misdemeanors and stealing, each accounting for 7 per cent of the failures. Unruliness and laziness accounted for 8 per cent of the cases and inefficiency in work accounted for 22 per cent of the failures. Further investigation on the latter showed that failure was often as much due to the employer as the employee. Temperamental instability was also found to be the cause of failure in 10 per cent of the cases.

On the basis of these percentages, Collman and Newlyn concluded that almost three times as many mentally retarded young people fail to hold jobs because of character defects and temperamental instability as for a lack of mental ability.

In giving reasons for success, employers were contacted on one hundred-fourteen cases. Although the employers were less definite than when reporting the failure cases, 66 per cent of the time the reason for success was reported as efficiency in doing the jobs, coupled with such character traits as steadiness and reliability, willingness and diligence, trustworthiness on the job and good time keeping.

The reason for success in 14 per cent of the cases was given as suitable work, coupled with sympathetic, understanding supervision, and in 10 per cent of the cases, efficiency and emotional stability was cited. The general comment on physical fitness, mental ability and education was simply that it was sufficient for the job.<sup>18</sup>

In another study conducted in Detroit, Engel reported on sixty-six boys who had been working for a period ranging from one to four years. Of these, 71 per cent were successfully employed for a relatively long period of time. Twenty-nine per cent were unemployed, had made frequent changes of work, and were working only a short period of time at the time of the study. The reasons given by the subjects for leaving a job included: "too hard," "didn't like the work," "too far to go," "too dirty," and "didn't make enough money." These reasons reflect instability and poor work attitudes.

In an interview with the employers concerning the same subjects, reasons for failure were given as: "workers talked too much," "were irregular in employment," "not punctual," and "would not follow directions." None of these reasons included the inability to do the work.<sup>19</sup>

Dinger reported a study of one hundred mental retardates who had been in the special education program in Altoona, Pennsylvania. The study was planned to determine the positive adjustments made by former pupils. Dinger felt that only by observing the finished product

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<sup>18</sup>R. D. Collman and D. Newlyn, "Employment Success of Educationally Subnormal Ex-pupils in England," American Journal of Mental Deficiency, Vol. 60 (April, 1956), 733-743.

<sup>19</sup>Anna Engel, "Employment of the Mentally Retarded," Vocational Rehabilitation of the Mentally Retarded, ed. S. DiMichael, Washington, D. C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1950, p. 105.

could the training program be adequately tested and new recommendations be made. He visited the employers of each of these subjects to make an analysis of each job--to determine employment procedure, job duties, required personal and academic characteristics, and the feasibility of jobs for the mentally retarded.

The results of the study showed that 70 to 80 per cent of the mental retardates, when rated competitively on personal characteristics with other employees of their firms, ranked average. An additional 20 to 30 per cent of the group received above-average ratings on such characteristics as cleanliness, courtesy to others, desirable reaction to criticism, effort, grooming, memory for directions, neatness in the work areas, punctuality, responsibility and speed in working.

Dinger also found that 33 per cent of the jobs required no reading skills and, in all but a very few cases, the remaining jobs required reading ability of a very simple nature. He also found that only 31 per cent of the group were required to perform any writing function other than to sign a check or complete an application form. Ten per cent used no arithmetic functions in their jobs, and only 47 per cent used a process no higher than counting.

This study concluded that there was little relationship between occupational success and academic achievement levels. However, Dinger did demonstrate a relationship between job success and desirable personal characteristics possessed by the worker.<sup>20</sup>

The next follow-up study investigated was made in the Michigan

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<sup>20</sup>J. Dinger, "Post School Adjustment of Former Educable Retarded Pupils," Exceptional Children, Vol. 27 (March, 1961), 353-357.

Program of Vocational Rehabilitation. The research was headed by Peckham and conducted through the cooperative efforts of ten rehabilitation counselors in eight district offices. The study included eighty normal cases of mental retardates which had recently been closed. One of the goals of the study was to define the prominent client problems that occurred immediately following initial placement on the job.

Results showed that a problem common to all of the cases was that of acceptance by fellow workers. Ridicule and teasing were very difficult for the client to accept and frequently resulted in job termination. This problem was not the fault of the trainee.

Another problem characteristically common to the cases was a general lack of social or vocational sophistication or worldiness. Here the retarded individual frequently showed a rather naive disregard for such items as punctuality on the job, dress, and general deportment. They seemed to find it difficult to manage problems in transportation and to communicate with the management or fellow workers. For items, such as sick leave or vacations, irresponsibility was shown by simply absenting themselves from work without calling in or asking permission.

Of the cases, 90 per cent reported salary dissatisfaction and problems in budgeting. Approximately 60 per cent were said to be lacking in initiative and job responsibility. The individual, upon completing a task, would often sit and wait for the supervisor to discover that the work was done rather than inquire about what to do next.

Thoughtless quitting of the job without regard for the immediate consequences of unemployment also seemed to be a problem of the

retardate. Laziness and irresponsibility were believed to be the essential reasons for this behavior.

Job difficulty was not recognized to be a primary source of job maladjustment in any of the cases. It was again in this area of social skills that the majority of the problems occurred.

In this study Peckham also singled out two problems which he deemed unsolvable in job adjustment. The first concerned itself with the presence of physical disabilities, in addition to the mental handicap of a reasonably severe nature. The second was concerned with personality maladjustments such as hostility, unrealistic self-attitude, temper tantrums, and proneness to lie, in addition to retardation.<sup>21</sup>

A program called Abilities, Inc., in Long Island, New York, under the leadership of Viscardi, recently began training and employing the mentally retarded. A group of fifteen educable mentally retarded young adults began in the program. Newhaus reported that the most striking impression of the retardates was their total lack of preparation and readiness for the work situation. They appeared to have no understanding of work pressures and rules. They would wander freely in the work area, have difficulty concentrating, and act indifferently toward supervision. In matters pertaining to personnel forms, time cards, social security information and payroll checks, the retardate showed a complete lack of familiarity and knowledge.

In the work situation, the majority showed difficulty in transferring and applying skills of reading and arithmetic. Requirements

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<sup>21</sup>R. A. Peckham, "Problems in Job Adjustment of the Mentally Retarded," American Journal of Mental Deficiency, Vol. 58 (1956), 448-453.

like counting, making change, simple adding and subtracting, reading simple work operation sheets and instructions usually created problems for the trainees. Even a knowledge of geographical areas and transportation facilities within the county were unfamiliar matters to them. Personal hygiene was another aspect of their behavior that required guidance and advice from the staff.

The termination of the work adjustment period resulted in five of the trainees being dropped from the program because of the inability to adjust to this type of work training while ten continued in employment at Abilities, Inc. Work adjustment as defined by the staff denoted the individual's capacity to perform his job satisfactorily. Effective job performance was measured by proficiency of technical job skills and the cooperation which the trainee exhibited with the supervisors and co-workers. Positive attitudes toward work, satisfactory motivation, and the ability to get along with others were as important, if not more crucial in job success, than skill proficiency.<sup>22</sup>

Another study of a program in three predominantly rural Iowa counties again emphasizes the vital need for non-manual skills in job adjustment. Pratt investigated the adjustment of one hundred-nineteen special class students who benefited from the work-study program. In only twelve cases had it been necessary to remove a student from work experience. The primary reasons for the release of a student from employment had been poor work habits, not the inability to do the work; the inability to get along with fellow workers; and loss

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<sup>22</sup>E. Neuhaus, "A Unique Pre-Vocational Program for Educable Retardates," Mental Retardation, Vol. 3, No. 4 (August, 1965), 19-20.

of a driver's license.<sup>23</sup>

Krishef summarized essentially the same reasons for failure in job adjustment in his study. He found that many retardates quit because they were dissatisfied with the job, which reflects an instability in the individual. Others were discharged because they were unable to handle the job or because of improper work habits.<sup>24</sup>

The consistency of these findings indicates that employers look not for vocational proficiency primarily, but for work habits and attitudes. Industry is as much concerned with the worker's personal adjustment as with the work he can do because it has been found that a contented worker can do a good job. The work skills and specific job training has not been found to be the primary problem of the adult retardate in job adjustment. Rather the differentiating factor between success and failure has been social competency--interpersonal behavior, stability, and other general personality traits.

#### Studies of Evaluation in Vocational Training

The following group of studies which were investigated primarily center around the important concept of evaluation in vocational training. The evaluation or rating scale is meant to serve as the predictor of success or failure for an individual on a job. Much research and study has yet to be done on the specific factors which determine job success or failure. A review of the follow-up studies has offered

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<sup>23</sup>E. Pratt, J. Farr, "A Work-Study Program for Rural Mentally Handicapped Youth," Focus on Exceptional Children, Vol. 1, No. 5 (October, 1969), 6-9.

<sup>24</sup>C. Krishef and M. Hall, "An Employment of the Mentally Retarded in Hennepin County, Minnesota," American Journal of Mental Deficiency, Vol. 60 (1955), 182-189.

many suggestions to counselors for such an evaluation. Several studies of the job adjustment of individuals as predicted by evaluations have also been done.

The first of these studies which were reviewed was done by Warren. His purpose was to determine if certain specific or general factors were instrumental in the employment or unemployment of a group of mentally retarded males who had been enrolled at the Employment Evaluation and Training Project at Southern Illinois University. As the trainees completed each three-week period on any job, their supervisors were asked to complete a rating scale covering the subject's performance. The rating scale was divided into two parts. The specific part dealt with both personality and social adjustment factors, work habits and efficiency habits. The general part dealt with total personality and social adjustment factors, work habits and the efficiency factor.

Thirty-eight subjects who had completed the training period were included in the study. Twenty-seven were employed and eleven were unemployed. A significant difference at the .05 level was found between the two groups on the following specific factors: self-confidence, cheerfulness, cooperation with the supervisors, cooperation with other employees, respect for supervisors, minding one's own business, mixing socially, completing work on time, quality of work, understanding work, and initiative. A significant difference was not found for these factors: accepting criticism, being neat and clean, being on time, being safety conscious, being careful with material and property.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>F. Warren, "Ratings of Employed and Unemployed Mentally Handicapped Males on Personality and Work Factors," American Journal of Mental Deficiency, Vol. 65 (1961), 629-633.



The same rating scale which was used by Warren was employed by Kolstoe in his study of eighty-two former clients from the Employment Evaluation and Training Project. Kolstoe selected subjects for his study who had approximately equivalent experiences in the program and on whom approximately the same information was available for analysis. During the vocational adjustment phase of the program each client worked on five different jobs for three weeks each. Each employer rated the clients on a three-point scale on each of sixteen personal, social, and work efficiency characteristics.

The group was randomly divided into two equal groups. Forty-one were employed and forty-one were unemployed. An examination of the data showed superiority of the employed group in the personal, social factors of cheerfulness, cooperation, respect for supervisors, ability to mind one's own business, being on time, and showing initiative. As a result of the study Kolstoe suggested training in personal independence, social acceptability, and motor coordination since these factors appeared to be the most important determinants of job success.<sup>26</sup>

In the area of evaluation and prediction, little statistical research actually has been done on the factors which condition employability of retarded individuals. Voelker conducted a statistically based study on the value of certain selected factors in predicting early post-school adjustment--a term which he defined as a period

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<sup>26</sup>O. P. Kolstoe, "An Examination of Some Characteristics Which Discriminate Between Employed and Not-Employed Mentally Retarded Males," American Journal of Mental Deficiency, Vol. 66, (1961), 4 72-482.

the individual's life from one to six years immediately following the termination of schooling.

Included in Voelker's study were seventy-one white educable mentally retarded males in Wayne County, Michigan, who had at one time attended the Detroit Public Schools. The subjects had been equally equated on the number of months they had been eligible to work and had been divided into a low employment group and high employment group, according to the amount of time they had been employed. The low employment group had been employed an average of six months or 13.86 per cent of the time. An average of three years seven months was the employment time of the high group which was 92.72 per cent of the possible time.

The study involved an investigation of ten factors which were designed to test the differences between the two groups. Each of the subjects had been previously evaluated on each of these ten points by teachers or tests given while the subjects were in school. Voelker then compared the rating received on these points with the success or failure of the individual. This was done to determine which factors could be considered significant in predicting the success or failure of employability.

Results of the investigation indicate that the difference between the two groups was not significant on four factors. Voelker had hypothesized that the I. Q. levels of the high employment group would be higher than those of the low employment group. This hypothesis, however, was not substantiated in his study. Voelker found the mean I. Q. of the high employment group to be 69.13 and that of the low employment group to be 65.65. The difference was only 3.48 points

which was not significant. This supports the studies cited earlier concerning the relationship of I. Q. to employability. Insignificant also between the two groups were the factors of the socio-economic level, ratings in the shop work, and truancy.

A significant difference did support the hypotheses for six of the factors however. The first concerns the teacher's rating for each individual on personality traits. The traits considered were sociability, participation in class activities, consideration for others, tenacity of purpose, trustworthiness, and reaction to authority. The ratings ranged from one which was poor to five which was very good. It was found that 80 per cent of the low employment group received scores of one to three on the lower part of the scale and 87 per cent of the high employment group received scores from three to five on the higher part of the scale.

A rating was also received on each subject for over-all adjustment and employability. This included adjustment to peers, teachers, and school authorities. It also considered his behavior and attitudes toward others in the special class. The results showed that 58 per cent of the low employment group rated poor and very poor while 78 per cent of the high employment group rated good and very good.

The findings also concluded that the majority of the successful adjustments had a good home environment. The general predictive rating by the educator of post-school success or failure was found to be significant. The results also substantiated the hypothesis that better reading scores and arithmetic scores would be obtained by the high employment group. However, although many employers require the applicant to fill in an application form and occasionally compute,

the completion of these forms does not appear to be a major problem for most individuals.<sup>27</sup>

In another study, also conducted by Voelker, he found that youths had greater difficulty in keeping jobs than in finding initial employment. In most instances, the subjects were discharged for reasons other than employment. Ranking high among the reasons which the employers gave were failure to come to work regularly, lack of punctuality, poor manners, poor personal appearance, and lack of ability to get along with fellow workers.<sup>28</sup>

Realizing the necessity of developing good work habits, an incentive system was developed at the Kennedy Job Training Center. It was based primarily on desirable work attitudes which serves as an evaluation also of work success. There are six levels of pay which relate success and productivity to a series of points or traits. The points on which the trainees are evaluated include: talking too much, failure to be at a work station on time, just not working hard, not paying attention to the quality of work, wandering around, not asking for help when not sure of how to do a job, annoying others, arguing with the foreman, not being willing to do a job he doesn't like, not doing a job exactly as instructed, day dreaming, not keeping his mind on his work, not working steadily, not sitting up and looking like a worker, poor grooming, and not being able to get along with co-workers. This

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<sup>27</sup>P. Voelker, "The Value of Certain Selected Factors in Predicting Early Post-School Employment of White Educable Mentally Retarded Males," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. of Philosophy, University of Michigan, 1961), p. 50-58.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 98.

evaluation is an example of the effort which the vocational training programs have made to prepare their students for the demands of the competitive world of work.<sup>29</sup>

The effort to prepare the mentally retarded for jobs not only demands the preparation in necessary habits and attitudes of work and skills, but also the cooperation of the employer who is willing to give the retarded adult an opportunity to prove his ability. In a discussion concerning the occupational adjustment it seemed logical to ask the employers for their opinion. Few studies have been done directly investigating the factors which employers would consider vital to job success for retardates. Indirectly some opinions and viewpoints have been obtained through follow-up studies, and these have already been noted.

In an attempt to ascertain the relative degree of importance of each of fifteen personal characteristics in the success of employees with low intelligence, Michael-Smith conducted a survey in both industry and institutions. Data were obtained from two hundred personnel directors of leading American industrial corporations and two hundred directors of institutions. To discover which personal characteristics were of primary importance for job success, a list of thirty-eight traits were sent to each participant in the survey.

The results showed that in manual and repetitive jobs, the most significant traits were: that the worker should not tire easily, that he show caution and avoid danger. The ability to perform responsible routine chores and not question orders were also found significant.

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<sup>29</sup>M. Greenstein and T. Fangman, "Vocational Training for the M.R.", Focus on Exceptional Children, Vol. 1, No. 5 (October, 1969), 4-5.

Least essential for this type of work were personal attractiveness, the ability to systematize work, and the ability to change work habits.

In a job requiring machine operation, traits such as the ability to show caution and avoid danger, not being clumsy, not being forgetful and performing routine chores were important.

Jobs which required more interaction with people demanded more social skills. For social employment, it was found that characteristics such as loyalty to the company, personal attractiveness, unforgetfulness, and an even temperament were listed as vital.<sup>30</sup>

Porter and Milazzo reported four working characteristics which were considered as outstanding by the employers when discussing the job placement of retardates. Necessary traits were said to be the ability to stick to a job, dependability, honesty, and getting along well with others. These employers seemed to indicate that so far as the school was concerned, the development of the basic social skills are much more important than the specific job training.<sup>31</sup>

A review of the studies and surveys of evaluations for work, readiness and success undoubtedly point to the vital need for social and personal competence on the job. After reviewing the literature, Engel applied some of the findings and formed the following recommendations for the vocational training of the mentally retarded.

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<sup>30</sup>H. Michael-Smith, "A Study of Personal Characteristics Desirable for Vocational Success of Mental Defectives," American Journal of Mental Deficiency, Vol. 55 (1950), 139-143.

<sup>31</sup>R. Porter and T. Milazzo, "A Comparison of Mentally Retarded Adults who Attended a Special Class With those Who attended Regular School Classes," Exceptional Children, Vol. 24 (May, 1958), 410-412.

(1) The social and vocational adjustment of the student should be given specific attention. (2) School programs should be centered around personal adjustment social skills, and good work habits. (3) The mental level is not as important as personal traits and characteristics of the worker. (4) Hand work in school has no apparent relationship to success on the job. (5) Students should be encouraged to remain in school until they are ready for employment. (6) There is a need for good guidance of the mentally retarded. (7) Personal and vocational counselling should be provided before the termination of schooling. (8) A follow-up program is necessary to provide support for the initial job experience.<sup>33</sup>

Engel's recommendations summarize very well the findings of the research concerning the occupational adjustment of the adult retardate. Research and recommendations, however, which terminate at the printed page are useless. It is the duty of the educator of the mentally retarded, realizing these important concepts, to implement them in the curriculum.

The curriculum for the special child must depart from the traditional course of academic, scholastic study of the humanities. The proponents of the classical curriculum deplore modern departures into non-scholastic areas such as social adjustment, vocational and avocational pursuits, homemaking, health and safety, personality or mental health and so on. For the special child, such conservatism borders on defeat since these departures are so often the very epitome of his needs in relation to his capabilities. Education ideally prepares for living and a livelihood. The living is social as well as cultural; the livelihood is pecuniary as well as productive.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Anna Engel, "Employment of the Mentally Retarded," American Journal of Mental Deficiency, Vol. 57, (1952), 243-267.

<sup>34</sup>E. Doll, "Adultation of the Special Child," The Special Child in Century 21, Washington: Special Child Publications, 1964, p. 83-84.

## CHAPTER III

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Success or failure in life depends on many factors. It is the job of education to gear its objectives toward those factors which will prepare its students for greatest success. For the retarded individual this will mean a successful adjustment into society. The purpose of this paper was to investigate those factors which are most vital for the functioning of the retarded individual into society. It was found that social competence was the criterion for adjustment into society for the retardate. Since education derives its objectives from the needs of the students, it was pointed out that special education must necessarily equip its students with the social skills needed.

A survey of literature of the follow-up studies of persons classified as mentally retarded and the reasons for their success or failure in adult adjustment was made. Three aspects were considered in the research--the concept of I. Q. and employability, specific job training and employability, and social skills and employability.

It was found that I. Q. was a low predictor of employability. Several studies indicated no correlation between the I. Q. and the success of job competence. Research also indicated that specific job training was a low predictor of job success. It was noted that the jobs on which the retarded are usually placed require a minimum of specific occupational skills.



The results of the reports and follow-up studies concluded that job adequacy and competence will depend on social skills. The research was divided into three areas in this aspect--studies done at institutions, those done in non-institutionalized settings, and those studies of evaluations in vocational training.

Studies of subjects in institutionalized settings revealed a definite correlation between vocational competency and social competency. In a comparison between the factors differentiating the successful subjects from the unsuccessful, such traits as work habits, interpersonal relations, stability, responsibility, etc., were the criterion.

These findings were also in accord with those studies done in the non-institutionalized setting. The results of these reports pointed definitely to the relation between job success and attitudes or habits of work. Such factors as general appearance, observance of safety rules, attitude toward supervision, and plant policies, punctuality, acceptance of his share of work, and physical stamina were determinants of success.

Consistent with the findings already indicated were the results of the studies investigating the concept of evaluation in vocational training. This group of studies were those done of the job adjustment of individuals as predicted by evaluations. The evaluations were done to determine if certain specific or general factors were instrumental in employment success or failure of mentally retarded individuals. Those factors making the difference were found to be self-confidence, cheerfulness, cooperation with supervisors, cooperation with other employees, respect for supervisors, punctuality, initiative,

etc. Once again it was non-manual skills which accounted for the success of the subjects.

This paper has researched only one aspect of the education of the mentally retarded individual. However, it was concluded by the reports that much depends on this one aspect. Adjustment into the community depends on the social adequacy of the retarded person. Since this aspect is vital to the lives of those who are the concern of the special educators, it must be toward this aspect that the education must be guided. To again reiterate the words of Doll, education is concerned with the "process of assisting someone to become an adult ... a mature competent person. . .who will be a contributing member of his family and his social community."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Doll, Loc. cit.

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