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Douglas W. Roberts

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THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL
IN THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION
OF THE MENTALLY RETARDED

by

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A RESEARCH PAPER
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The School's Vital Service to the Community

Expanded services have developed dramatically in the past fifteen years to meet the multiplicity of growing needs of the mentally retarded in the community. The schools, both public and private, perform a major service vital to the community, the family, and the child. For the purpose of the educational institution is to assist society in its responsibility for the education and socialization of the mentally retarded.

Of major importance is the school's involvement in the preparation of the retarded for occupational and social adjustment found in adult life. Success or failure in these areas are the concern of all who are interested in the retarded. This research paper will review the role schools are taking in the effective preparation of retarded youth so that they will be able, after leaving school, to successfully adjust to working in the community.

Work may be in occupation or job found in the competitive market or in the sheltered workshop. A sheltered workshop is a facility maintained on a non-profit basis by either a public or private agency for the purpose of providing training and employment service to a defined population such as the mentally handicapped. With the

right conditions of training, a vast majority of the mentally retarded will make good workers and therefore contributing members of the community.¹

The Greater Need of Training for the Mentally Retarded

It is fortunate for the majority of children, including the mentally retarded, that schools provide adequate training in the fundamental requirements of living and working so that they find a place in the community for themselves. However, this raises two rather distinct problems. One is the school's role in preparation and training of youth for working, the subject of this research. The second concerns the opportunity and facilities for the student to work in the community.

The transition for a great number of young adults just out of school is very traumatic. Many have great difficulty in finding and adjusting to employment. They frequently find themselves not ready or adequately prepared for the vocational opportunities available. Due to lack of interest in school, high school dropouts often add to the difficulty by placing themselves too early in a job market where employers are becoming more careful in the selection of new workers.

Those at a great disadvantage are the mentally retarded. Poor work habits and virtual ignorance of the realistic demands of working on a job narrow the chances of successfully working in the community. Often it is the mentally retarded in special education, and the great number in the regular school population who receive no special services and guidance, who need the greatest support by the school and vocational

¹Anna M. Engel. "Employment of the Mentally Retarded," in Vocational Rehabilitation of the Mentally Retarded, ed. by Salvatore G. DiMichael. (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1958), P. 81.

rehabilitation agencies that are available to serve them.

The techniques in both the fields of special education and rehabilitation are rapidly changing with new innovative research and the expanding programs. The mentally retarded have traditionally presented difficult problems. The school programs have developed uniquely due to factors present in each local community. Fortunately the educational milieu of these programs has stimulated greater numbers of retarded to be provided for in the community. The attribute of being able to engage in work has been extended to many retarded who formerly stayed in the home or were institutionalized outside the community.

Programs Require Cooperative Efforts

The schools have been faced with evidence that educational programs in the school do not always adequately meet the needs of the individual retarded student. It has been increasingly recognized that state and Federal vocational rehabilitation programs are often well developed, though not always funded, to form cooperative ventures with the school. From the point of view of vocational rehabilitation it is the function and performance of the individual that is the concern. A person who functions and performs as mentally handicapped in the community, in the important responsibilities of everyday life, needs special services. The schools, social agencies and vocational rehabilitation agencies must provide coordinated plans and sequential programs. They must cooperatively extend the training, services, and provide the facilities for successful adjustment of individual mental retardates to work in the community.

The purpose of this research paper is to review the multiple approaches of schools in effectively planning for the vocational

requirements of the mentally retarded. The research will by necessity be limited to the group of mentally retarded provided for by special education programs. These retarded are usually defined in the school setting as educable mentally retarded or trainable mentally retarded. For purposes of vocational planning, this research report will consider the individual child in terms of both competitive employment and sheltered workshop.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Historical View of Vocational Training

A major goal of schools, institutions, agencies, and services, both public and private, has remained the education and training of the mentally retarded for occupational adequacy as adults.

The early training was attempted by optimistic pioneers in state-operated schools that preceded the existing public institutions of today. However, the training of many retardates to return to the community was not feasible. The institutions, then as today, received among their populations high numbers of severely retarded who were unable to profit from the institutional training programs and remained in the institution. The role of the institutions, according to Goldstein,¹ changed to a pattern of care and training with comparatively few cases of extra-institutional placement.

With the change in public policy of segregating the mentally retarded in public institutions, the public schools began to provide for the special educational needs of many of these children. The

¹Herbert Goldstein, "Social and Occupational Adjustment," *Mental Retardation*, ed. by Harvey A. Stevens and Rick Heber (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964), P. 215.

process was slow due to administrative reluctance to allocate the necessary funds to provide the services for these children. Goldstein estimates 95 percent who now receive treatment or training do so in their own communities as opposed to public institutions.²

Dybwad, who for many years served as Executive Director of the National Association for Retarded Children, viewed the growth in community public schools of the last twenty years as dramatic.³ He considered both the quantitative and qualitative progress of the public school systems in his view. However, this dramatic growth in programs serves only one quarter of the students with special educational needs among the many in the school population who would profit from them.

Period of Transition

Academically orientated education in the past was often found to be unsatisfactory in serving the vocational needs of youth. Forty or fifty years ago there were clear alternatives to school. A boy or girl could go to work at the age of fourteen, fifteen or sixteen after elementary school. In the 1920's more than half of all boys dropped out of school before graduating from high school.⁴ They found work and grew up with experiences provided by a variety of jobs. The large number of jobs such as telegraph messengers, delivery boys, office boys, elevator boys, and domestic help have

²Ibid. P. 233.

³Gunnar Dybwad, Challenges in Mental Retardation (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), P. 205.

⁴Ibid. P. 47

become scarce. State and industrial policies of minimum age for employment have eliminated many of these jobs. For the retarded, the Federal government has made this problem even more difficult by frequent increases in the minimum wages employers must pay. The jobs become scarce while the competition continues to increase. The mentally retarded often are the last to be hired.

The schools did not keep pace with the vocational programs as the job markets changed. Concerned parents and organizations brought pressure for change in vocational programs. However, the schools were slow to respond to this realization that the programs of education were inadequate for the mentally retarded. An example of this inadequacy was pointed out by Burchill commenting on the dropout rate in Rochester, New York little over ten years ago.⁵ Of a group of students identified as slow learners in the period of 1952 to 1957 only seven out of 109 students were still enrolled in what should have been their twelfth school year. These results of inappropriate programs caused a committee to be instituted by the city's school superintendent to formulate a program appropriate for the retarded. This group concluded that the public schools are obligated to provide worthwhile educational experiences for post-elementary-school retarded children. They stressed the view that these children needed a program to keep them in school for a longer period of time. More communities now recognize this responsibility and are retaining the youths in programs beyond the mandatory age limits. What seemed essential for this group was that these programs provide an understanding of the world of work as well as a recognition and acceptance of the assets and limitations which

⁵George W. Burchill, Work-Study Programs for Alienated Youth (Chicago: Science Research Associates, Inc., 1962), P. 109.

the retarded possesses in relation to work.

The development of programs past the elementary level has a short history. Kokaska believed the secondary programs began to appear by 1939 or the early 1940's.⁶ These were located in the very large cities of this nation. The expansion of programs developed into new roles for the high schools after World War II. The period saw the schools beginning to recognize their responsibility in work-study programming for all students. However, the schools were unprepared in staff, programs, and classroom space to effectively approach the growing demand for this special service for the retarded.

Influence of the Federal Government

A growing number of concerned parents and educators began to let their needs be known in Washington.⁷ Then in the 1950's legislation to benefit the retarded finally received the support of Congress. Public Law 85-926 was passed to provide grants for training leadership personnel in the education of the mentally retarded in 1958. The involvement of the government at the national level continued. Of major importance was Public Law 88-164 that provided grants for research and demonstration projects in the area of education of the handicapped in 1963.⁸ The momentum had been established in the 1950's and reached the quantitative volume of funds to have a great impact on the state and local school systems to rapidly develop the

⁶Charles J. Kokaska, "Secondary Education for the Retarded: A Brief Historical Review," Education and Training of the Mentally Retarded, Vol. 3 No. 1. (February, 1968), P. 17.

⁷Edwin W. Martin Jr., "Breakthrough for the Handicapped: Legislative History," Exceptional Children, (March, 1968), P. 493-502.

⁸Ibid.

special education programs of the 1960's. The effects of Federal legislation and active leadership from the highest office that of the President of the United States, John F. Kennedy, changed both the attitude of school leadership and the public towards the mentally retarded. The Federal funds were responsible for a great many new programs.

An important evaluation of the Federal Government's policies and programs is provided by the National Advisory Council on Vocational Education created by the Congress through the Vocational Education Amendments of 1968. It is of extreme interest to note that the third report deals with the disadvantaged and handicapped. The council made these recommendations in its report as the mandates of the seventies.⁹

1. "Recognize that employment is an integral part of education.

Much attention has been given to the effect of education on employment. Not enough attention has been paid to the opposite proposition: That employment, as an integral part of education, is essential to the learning experience of many youths.

- a. Every secondary school should be an employment agency.
 - b. Part-time employment should be a part of the curriculum.
 - c. The further education of the dropout.
2. Give priority to programs for the disadvantaged without separating the disadvantaged from the mainstream of education.
 3. Encourage parents and students to participate in the development of vocational programs.
 4. Establish residential schools for those who need them most.

By enacting the 1968 Vocational Amendments, Congress declared its intent that a better society, based upon educational opportunity, should be built. Intent, however, even when it is the

⁹National Advisory Council On Vocational Education, "Third Report," Vocational Education Amendments of 1968, Public Law 90-576, Washington: July 10, 1970.

law of the land, does not alone bring action. The disadvantaged of this country have made it clear that they are tired of intentions which are not backed by adequate funds or by a genuine national concern. Eighteen months have gone by since the passage of the Vocational Amendments, and progress has been slow. Strong Executive leadership designed to translate intent into concrete, workable programs is due. The disadvantaged will no longer accept promises."

The National Advisory Council on Vocational Education recognized that the United States has developed into a technological society with little attention to the needs of the uneducated, unskilled individual. It recognized that 20 percent of population now are excluded from the world of work because of inadequate educational programs in this nation.¹⁰ There is no doubt from this report that the national policy implies that educators must provide a more adequate program for the disadvantaged and the handicapped. The implications of the council's recommendations are directed to further Federal action to influence the states and local schools to provide for these national mandates in appropriate programs.

Vocational education experiences are provided for retarded children by many services. Special classes within the public school systems are one such service. There are also private residential schools, in which the child lives, returning home during the vacation periods or when it is deemed desirable. Such an approach is recommended by Sister Theodore,¹¹ "Placement in a residential school is advisable when circumstances make attendance at the neighborhood school impossible or unfavorable." Since private day schools and residential schools are comparatively expensive and limited in the number they serve in

¹⁰ Ibid, P. 1.

¹¹ Sister Mary Theodore, O.S.F., The Challenge of the Retarded Child (St. Meinrad: Abby Press, 1969), P. 117.

this nation, the great majority of parents can not avail themselves of these facilities. Therefore it is the public school system with greater resources of funds that must take the responsibility for the adequate provisions for the mentally retarded. The role that the school performs is well stated by Weber: "It is the duty and responsibility of the school to provide an adequate program equal to the mental ability and capacity of every child."¹²

Provision of Suitable Programs

Provision of suitable programs and services constitutes one of the most significant problems for special education and for the school system as a whole. Most of the boys and girls terminate their schooling from a special class or school. Many school systems attempt to correlate programs of rehabilitation with community agencies to assist those students as they approach adulthood.

The need for assistance continues to grow as employers seem to insist on employing the most capable individual they can identify. The mentally retarded have limitations that handicap their employment. These limitations are generally in learning speed and adaptive abilities. This affects learning and practice of the simple operations which the average individual picks up casually on the job without supervision and assistance. The normal individual will get the unskilled job because he learns the required work casually. The mentally retarded need to receive extra training in order to have equality of opportunity for employment.

The implication here is for the schools to develop the extra

¹² Elmer W. Weber, Mentally Retarded Children and Their Education. (Springfield: Charles C. Thomas, Publisher, 1963), p. 57.

training necessary for these youths. When the schools can not provide this service agencies in vocational rehabilitation, which are staffed, funded, and experienced in this role, can best serve the mentally retarded.

The vocational preparation on the part of schools and agencies generally considers these vocational objectives according to Heber.¹³

1. To render a student or client capable of productive work which will be of benefit to the community.
2. To assist the student or client in developing a value system which attaches importance to performing a job to the best of one's ability and which will provide the person with intrinsic reinforcement--a feeling of worth and self-esteem that should come from work. This is particularly critical in programs for the mentally retarded.
3. To prepare the student or client to meet the responsibilities of living in a community and to cope with the personal, family and social stresses of everyday life.

Closely related to objectives are the values of work-study programs for the students. They are orientated toward the world of work. Freeland summarized these values for students.

1. Students have an opportunity to explore various jobs for work experience and training.
2. Students develop appreciation and respect for work.
3. As wage earners, students have the opportunity to handle and budget their own money realistically.
4. Students have the opportunity to learn useful work skills on real jobs under actual working conditions and to bring their problems back to the classroom for discussion and guidance.
5. The student's transition from school to the work world is a guided and smooth one.

¹³U.S., Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Proceedings of a conference on Special Problems in Vocational Rehabilitation of the Mentally Retarded, Nov. 3-7, 1963 edited by Rick Heber (Vocational Rehabilitation Administration Rehabilitation Service Series No. 65-16, 1965), P. 28-29.

6. Students are acquainted with and learn the necessary work qualities of a successful worker.

The values of the work-study programs were also summarized by Freeland for the school.

1. The school can more realistically approach educational objectives.
2. Equipment and facilities beyond financial reach of the school are utilized.
3. The school is able to provide work training with minimum expense.
4. Skills and knowledge of individuals outside the school are coordinated in the training of students.
5. The program helps bring the community and the school closer together.¹⁴

Due to these objectives and values, the work-study programs have greatly expanded.

The Transition to Employment

Many schools follow a policy of referring students to agencies to assist the students with work experience and counseling when indicated need of further training is necessary in seeking employment. The mentally retarded often receive more effective vocational counseling from agencies than from the general counseling in school. Few of the mentally retarded are privileged to enjoy guidance services of trained counselors in schools. These services are usually limited to the mainstream of students within academic and vocational programs. The special education teacher is often given the additional assignment of counseling without the requisite training. Thus, unless a student

¹⁴Kenneth H. Freeland, High School Work Study Program for the Retarded (Springfield: Charles C. Thomas, Publisher, 1939), P. 13-13.

goes to an agency, many of the retarded enter early post-school life in need of vocational training, lacking the professional counseling that would, if present, decrease the difficulty of community adjustment. A review of the boys and girls in the Detroit community reveals that few who drop out of school have full-time employment and that many are idle for long periods of time.¹⁵ Professional counseling is needed by all students.

The skills and learning needed to enhance the young person's ability to work at semi-skilled and technical levels of employment are conditioned by the industry and service occupations available in the community. The schools can provide some of this training. If the schools do not offer the training, then the local industry would be forced to provide for its new employees. Often the school's normal programs meets these needs. It is sometimes difficult for special education to become involved in vocational programs already developed and it needs to find other approaches of vocational training.

Development of Work-Study Programs

The active development of work-study programs during the past decade has been given great value in vocational planning. According to Switzer, "Coordinated vocational rehabilitation and special education programs have shown outstanding promise in assisting mentally retarded youth make a successful transition from school to work."¹⁶ Switzer, as Federal Commissioner, had been active in an attempt to develop cooperation,

¹⁵Detroit Public Schools, Preparing Pupils for the World of Work (The Board of Education of the City of Detroit, 1962), P. 42.

¹⁶Mary E. Switzer, "The Coordination of Vocational Rehabilitation and Special Education Services for the Mentally Retarded" Education and Training of the Mentally Retarded, Vol. 1 No. 4 (Dec. 1966), P. 155.

between special education and vocational rehabilitation services in the 1960's since these two services have the same ultimate objective. A joint effort could provide maximum benefits. The experience of programs and sound reasoning have conclusively shown that cooperative undertakings are sound and result in a substantial saving of public monies.¹⁷ The experience of a combination of such programs indicates that it was administratively feasible and operationally necessary that such programs be operated from the school setting, thus providing for continuous and uninterrupted service.

A major criticism of vocational programs of the past for the mentally retarded both in special education and rehabilitation centers has been the tendency to overemphasize and elaborately train individual students for specific occupational placements.

Capobianco views this as a mistaken notion that the retardate is devoid of both skills and aptitudes.¹⁸ He emphasized the success of the Fairfax Plan, a high school program for the mildly retarded youth. The program served the higher range of retarded youth, providing a pattern of increased emphasis on vocational training and relating academic work to this training. The plan started with pre-vocational training the first year. The second year included vocational training. The third year provided for one half the school day on the job. The program was completed when the students worked full time on a job. Capobianco emphasized that the holding power of this sequential and

¹⁷Doyle Best, "Vocational Rehabilitation of Disabled Youth" ed. by David Orzech, Joint Programs In Vocational Rehabilitation San Francisco: San Francisco State College, (1965), P. 23.

¹⁸R. J. Capobianco and Helen B. Jacoby, ("The Fairfax Plan, A High School Program for Mildly Retarded Youth") Mental Retardation Vol. 4 No. 3 (June 1966), P. 15-20.

appropriate program increased attendance 90 percent.¹⁹ The training was directed to upgrading the levels of employment to service and blue collar occupations.

There has been a considerable amount of confusion with the terms "handicap" and "disability." Many times they are used interchangeably as if they were synonymous. In vocational rehabilitation the terms are defined in this manner. According to Lustig,²⁰ a disability is a biological, medical or psychological deficit when compared with the average expectancy. A handicap is a discrepancy between what the situation requires and what the person is able to do in the situation. Viewed in this manner a vocational handicap is something that prevents, or interferes with the person getting and holding a job. Work-study situations may reveal a handicap. With the description provided, the possibility to overcome the handicap with educational and vocational resources has important value.

The movement to work-study programs, work-experience, occupational adjustment or many other descriptive names of programs usually introduces an outside environment as part of the school's program. This has been accomplished with great reluctance on the part of many services who should be involved. The role that the school needs to perform is presented by Johnson in reference to slow learners:

"The solutions to most sociological problems are not easy ones. Many of the problems related to social and community adjustment of the slow-learner are not readily accepted by appropriate agencies because they are among the most difficult ones they have to solve. Only if the school carefully and clearly define its role and refuses to assume the responsibilities of other agencies will

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Paul Lustig, "Overview of the Handicapped," Attitudes and Misconceptions About the Handicapped Madison: University of Wisconsin, (1970), P. 1

these other agencies be forced to accept their true functions. The school will then be able to effectively carry out its own responsibilities."²¹

The responsibility that schools assumed has often extended beyond their capabilities by the nature of a void in agency action in not serving the mentally retarded.

The serving of the mentally retarded did not seem to be the responsibility of vocational education prior to the Vocational Education Act of 1963. This act as amended in 1968 made amply clear the intent that the handicapped must be provided for in service rendered. Funds were earmarked for this purpose. Federal funds became available in 1963 for programs at the high school level. However, the law that provided a clear mandate was Public Law 90-567 in 1968 which stated for vocational education:

"Declaration of Purpose

Sec. 101. It is the purpose of this title to authorize Federal grants to States to assist them to maintain, extend, and improve existing programs of vocational education, to develop new programs of vocational education, and to provide part-time employment for youths who need the earning from such employment to continue their vocational training on a full-time basis, so that persons of all ages in all communities of the State - those in high school, those who have completed or discontinued their formal education and are preparing to enter the labor market, those who have already entered the labor market but need to upgrade their skills or learn new ones, those with special educational handicaps, and those in post-secondary schools - will have ready access to vocational training which is of high quality, which is realistic in the light of actual or anticipated opportunities for gainful employment, and which is suited to their needs, interest and ability to benefit from such training."²²

This public law provided the funds to the states to make provisions for

²¹G. Orville Johnson, Education for the Slow Learners (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965), preface.

²²US Public Law 90-576, Amendments to the Vocational Education Act of 1963 (90th Congress, H.R. 18366, Oct. 16, 1968), P.1.

the vocationally handicapped.

The states now had the support of Federal funds to provide educational and vocational programs that must include the mentally retarded. Part of these funds are handled by the State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency which in Wisconsin has a State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation. The state's approach to its responsibility is reflected in its administrative organization which states:

"The State Board shall assume responsibility for decisions affecting the eligibility of clients, or acceptance for the determination of rehabilitation potential and the nature and scope of vocational rehabilitation service to be provided. This responsibility will not be delegated to any other agency or individual."²³

This gives the State counselors clear control over the clients the services will be provided for. The schools may only request the services for students. The State is directed to work with the schools and agencies both public and private.

"The State Board has established and will maintain working relationships with all public and private agencies furnishing services related to vocational rehabilitation so as to adhere maximum utilization on a coordinated basis of the services available in the state for handicapped persons."²⁴

The importance of how the determination is made of the rehabilitation potential and eligibility is very important for the retarded. The guidelines for eligibility are:²⁵

"The State considers that the eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services in each case will be based upon:

- (1) The presence of a physical or mental disability with resulting functional limitations or limitations in activities.

²³Wisconsin State Board of Vocational, Technical and Adult Education Rehabilitation Division, Wisconsin State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation (Amended April 18, 1966), Section 2-1

²⁴Ibid. Section 2-2.

²⁵Ibid. Section 3-1.

- (2) The existence of a substantial handicap to employment caused by the limitations resulting from such disability.
- (3) A reasonable expectation that vocational rehabilitation services may render the individual fit to engage in gainful occupation."

Additional Factors:

"Persons who are severely handicapped and who cannot be inducted into the regular types of gainful employment may be provided with vocational training or instruction in crafts as may be practical (Section 55.01 (12) (a), Wisconsin Statute)."

The State Plan is the heart of the process for the allocation of Federal money. The State Plan is rigidly structured and amended to meet Federal rules and regulations. It serves as a compliance document with specifications so meticulously detailed that implementing the objectives are often hindered at the local levels.

Limits of School's Provisions

There are limits in vocational training in the public schools.²⁶ With few exceptions schools often lack space and equipment for training the mentally retarded in vocational programs. Even the schools with the best facilities cannot always produce the circumstances of paid employment. Also, the student makes an important adjustment from a teacher to a "boss" who wants results. Often the schools offer a more pleasant program with varied changes of classes throughout the day. In industry the work is continuous for up to eight hours and frequently routine and monotonous.

Another great change is the adjustment from being with peers to being surrounded by strangers who differ in attitudes and are less likely to be pleasant or helpful. These work experiences can rarely

²⁶Stanley Powell Davies, The Mentally Retarded in Society (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), P. 192.

be adequately provided for in educational facilities.

School attendance is work for students without pay. Especially for some families that need income, work is important for its contribution of income to the family. The school should therefore avoid holding back students who have the opportunity to work in industries and services and include these opportunities in the vocational program.

School Work Method

An example of the school-work method was the program developed in Milwaukee by the Milwaukee Jewish Vocational Service with local and State special education representatives. The workshop provides work adjustment training for the student while he continues on a half-time basis in the academic environment. The result of this program showed no significant difference in employment status between those who remained in the special class program and those in the workshop program in the follow-up studies. What did occur was that the approach of providing work experience and school activities together for the retarded became a design for more permanent program development in the State of Wisconsin.²⁷

Work experience programs generally have eligibility requirements similar to those provided for in the Milwaukee Public Schools. The requirements are:²⁸

²⁷George N. Wright and Ann Beck Trotter, Rehabilitation Research (Madison: The University of Wisconsin, 1968), P. 138-140.

²⁸Milwaukee Public Schools, "Operational Policy and Procedure for Milwaukee Public Schools-Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Occupational Adjustment Program, Work Experience Program" (unpublished directives).

"Students must be 16 years of age or older (preference is given to older students 17 and one half last year in school)

Students must exhibit some type of handicap, either physical or mental in nature, that would prevent them from obtaining successful employment without some kind of assistance.

Students must be declared eligible by the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation counselor.

The program's big factor is the State's acceptance of its role in providing the work experience for those it wishes to assume responsibility for.

There are many other examples of cooperative and joint programs in the State of Wisconsin with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Other states, Minnesota for example, follow the same general service contract. The city of Minneapolis has a rehabilitation program in its public schools with services that include:²⁹

1. Comprehensive diagnosis of employment potential (includes educational, psychological, social, medical and vocational evaluation).
2. Vocational guidance and service planning.
3. On-the-job training and job placement.
4. Curriculum experimentation in work-preparation areas.

These responsibilities are very comprehensive in providing for the student. However, the services are operational for the Minneapolis students through a cooperative agreement contract between D.V.R. and the school system. With the contract these services are provided for in agency resources. Cooperation at all levels of State Vocational Rehabilitation Departments, local agencies, State and local school

²⁹Minneapolis Public Schools, The Program of Special Education in the Minneapolis Public Schools (Special Education Division, Minneapolis Public Schools, April, 1966), P. 14.

systems is complex in nature and often time consuming. However, it seems, where programs of a cooperative nature have developed, the different services can perform the necessary function without infringing on each other's area of responsibilities.

Sometimes these programs have been rather limited in scope. Often the working mentally retarded are portrayed as unable to learn the typical industrial and commercial skills needed to work.

Neuhause in his evaluation of the mentally retarded young adults at Abilities, Inc., provided results that showed the mentally retarded could learn industrial procedures.³⁰ His evaluation of production records showed that 60 percent of the mentally retarded workers required average or less than average lengths of training time to gain acceptable job production efficiency when compared to the training time for physically disabled workers. The remaining 39 percent took approximately one and one half times longer than the physically disabled workers. Production of the retarded was average and above for 60 percent of the workers. With few exceptions, retarded workers displayed satisfactory work performance in achieving competitive production standards.

An important implication of this three year evaluation was reflected in the effect of workshop experiences.³¹ Differences were evident between the retarded with prior experience in a sheltered workshop and those without the experience. The results seem to indicate that the sheltered workshop workers needed more supervision and encouragement, and had greater difficulties in responding to

³⁰Edmund C. Neuhause, "Training the Mentally Retarded for Competitive Employment." Exceptional Children (May, 1967) P. 625-628.

³¹Ibid.

production schedules and work pressures than those without workshop experience. The implication suggest that a sheltered workshop climate of protectiveness and permissiveness does not always provide the most realistic and appropriate preparation for competitive employment.

Good Employer Relations

Programs often have developed in the community between the local employer and school. Carefully developing a good relationship with community employers, a school special education vocational program may provide work experience and job placement for the mentally retarded. The studies of this approach are rather sparse for the many who actually benefited from it. One such program in operation in Kansas was reported.³² Working with 160 employers, the local school provided 450 different work experiences for mentally retarded students. The efforts resulted in 95 percent of the graduates becoming productively employed at the time of followup. The efforts included the employer as a member of the training program and received considerable emphasis. This experience showed that employers not only can provide the facilities for the training by on-the-job work, but can contribute in evaluation without compensation. The program would begin with one of the better students being introduced to the employer as a client if this were the employer's first experience with the retarded. The feasibility of this basic program has great promise as well as providing maximum income for the student.

³²D. J. Chaffin, "Employer Relations in a Work Study Program," Education and Training of the Mentally Retarded Vol. 3 No. 3 (1968), P. 133.

Minimum Wages

A major factor in such programs and growing increasingly damaging to the work opportunities for many retarded has been the growth of the minimum wage. Since its first inception in 1938 at twenty-five cents an hour, it has caused unemployment for the mentally retarded by the elimination of marginal jobs. The rapid acceleration of the last few years, generally at fifteen cents a year, has made it more evident that this rapid raise in minimum wages causes an adverse affect on the employment in this nation. Today at the rate of \$1.60 an hour many retarded can not economically produce for a competative employer. Higher rates and many more workers to be covered by the minimum wage are frequently mentioned in Washington.³³ This adds a greater burden to the services who are trying to find the jobs for those who have the lowest economic abilities.

It is critically important that school personnel and those interested in vocational rehabilitation know where graduates find jobs. The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation provided statistics that show the following percentages of categories:³⁴

<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Type, Occupations, Job</u>
30.0	Service Occupations
21.2	Unskilled Workers
19.3	Semiskilled Workers
12.0	Clerical, Sales and Kindred
6.2	Family Workers, Homemakers
5.9	Agricultural Workers
5.4	Skilled Jobs

³³Editorial, Milwaukee Sentinel, April 8, 1972, P. 18.

³⁴John R. Peck, "The Work-Study Program, A Critical Phase of Preparation," Education and Training of the Mentally Retarded Vol. 1 No. 2 (April, 1966), P. 70.

The percentages have remained rather stable over the years with the volume increasing as our population grows. What seems important remains the low economic level of the majority of these jobs. They appear to be the areas most volatile in terms of local economic conditions as well as larger factors of inflation and wage control that affect the nation. The effect of limiting these areas of employment in the competitive world of work will require that greater numbers be served by sheltered workshops and that more intensive training in vocational rehabilitation be provided.

Need For Family Support

To achieve maximum benefits of a school program the parents must be drawn into the total guidance and treatment process.³⁵ Too often this point of view is overlooked. Thus special class teachers and counselors often struggle to achieve progress with a student only to meet continued frustration due to reactions and attitudes of the parent. It is essential that the parents are advised of the specific and current goals of the school's vocational program. They can support the school's objectives in many home experiences and activities outside of school. Continued parental support in vocational programs remains essential as the young adult becomes a client of an agency. The failure of many placements, where the student or client must display greater responsibility involving attendance and being on time, comes from lack of parental interest or support in these critical phases of the work-study program.

³⁵M. L. Hunt and Robert G. Gibby, The Mentally Retarded Child: Development, Education and Treatment (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1955), P. 406.

Pre-Vocational Assessment Laboratory

One approach to understanding the individual's skills and abilities has been use of the services of a Pre-Vocational Assessment Laboratory system, the purpose of which is to evaluate job skills through a laboratory approach prior to a student's placement on the job.³⁶ By providing job samples or activities, administrators and evaluators are better equipped to provide appropriate instruction and recognize the aspirations of retarded students in vocational planning.

For the many retarded who are achieving some measure of economic independence and self-sufficiency by adequate vocational programs, there is this additional benefit. It can be realized when institutionalization does eventually become necessary, that the semi-dependant, cooperative, cheerful patient contributes a more pleasant institutional climate for himself, his co-patients and for the personnel who care for him.³⁷

Future Occupational Outlook

The projections of what the future world of work is going to look like is frightening for any school system or agency. This nation which already has the highest youth unemployment rate in the world will make it more difficult for future young adults. The Bureau of Labor Statistics projections show the unskilled

³⁶Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, "Vocational Education Program for Handicapped Pupils," Pre-Vocational Assessment Laboratory System (Project No. O-1744-S618) Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

³⁷Helen L. Beck, Social Services to the Mentally Retarded (Springfield: Charles C. Thomas, Publisher, 1969), P. 52.

laborer category of our labor force will fall below five percent of the total work force by 1975. There will be virtually no change from the 3,700,000 persons employed now to the number projected by 1980.³⁸ For young people, with the vocational handicaps of the mentally retarded, there will be little room at the bottom.

³⁸National School Public Relations Association, Vocational Education-Innovations Revolutionized Career Training (Washington D.C.: Education U.S.A., 1971), P. 17.

CHAPTER III

SUMMARY

Essential Provisions

It may generally be concluded that public and private schools in this country have accepted the responsibility for preparing children to be contributing members of the community. However, the extent and limitations of this responsibility can not easily be delineated. This problem is reflected in the many approaches and lack of appropriate programs still found in this nation. What is important is the rapid growth in programs and classes directed to serving the needs of the mentally retarded. The growth of programs includes the expansion of services to children often excluded from the school. This refers to the trainable programs both newly developed and greatly expanded to full day programs for extended periods of attendance.

The approach to the problems for all retarded children and the techniques may often vary due to varying conditions, but certain concepts of special education programs appear to be essential.

The first need is for early identification and evaluation of needs for a specific special education program. This special education program for pre-school and school age children must provide for the moderately, mildly, and borderline retarded student who can not benefit from the normal school curriculum. The types of services offered

will vary with the respective needs of the children. However, a continuum of programs would include homebound instruction, trainable services, pre-primary, primary, intermediate, and secondary programs. A comprehensive program should serve children from the ages of four or younger to young adults up to the age of twenty-one. What has become the essential factor in the educational program is that it be vocationally orientated to the real world of work. This orientation should be an integral part of the school curriculum with the major emphasis of vocational objectives at the secondary level. The educational program at the secondary level would include pre-vocational training, evaluation of work potential and occupational education in the school setting. Work experiences would be developed both in school and in the community. No opportunities for these real experiences should be overlooked.

Cooperation with local rehabilitation services and agencies are essential. The good will of community employers and understanding of the job market potential are functions the schools can not neglect. Nor may the school let training, curriculum, and equipment become obsolete so that its services are inappropriate to the real competitive world of work. The sheltered workshop is a major service for the retarded who require extended workshop training or are unable to develop competitive skills. This is especially necessary as the greater number of school age young adults find less opportunity to be employed in competitive labor markets.

The essential provisions are not always available to the mentally retarded due to inherent limitations of the schools and agencies in

the community. The life, the education and training of the mentally retarded can be much more fruitful as these limitations become the focus of community action. Success will depend upon the extent to which all concerned are able to help them to be a part of the regular activities of the community.

The School's Cooperative Role

It is recognized that the schools have a major role in cooperative vocational training with State vocational rehabilitation divisions, local agencies and employers. The confusion often develops as to the limits of this activity which is associated with the completion of the school's vocational program.

The States have the resources, leadership, and responsibility to serve every citizen of that state in matters of education and vocational rehabilitation. They provide the scope and control of curriculum and objectives. However, the efforts are directed in two services, education and vocational rehabilitation. The State provides funds to these services or agencies under the assumption that educational funds are to be used for education and vocational funds are to be provided for vocational purposes. The third party, the Federal government supports the programs with funds and guidelines and has a major influence on both.

With the control of vocational activities under the separate agency, the school's role in vocational rehabilitation will generally be limited to those services and activities it has administrative capacity to perform. The school should not accept responsibilities, especially without funds, for those activities in vocational rehabili-

tation that the State has specifically made provisions for. This is a difficult distinction that conditions the cooperative ventures of many vocational rehabilitation programs. With the same objectives, these services should not view their roles as parts of somewhat different missions, but a necessary and integral part of a total vocational program. The success of work-study ventures shows that there are ways to accomplish successful vocational training for the retarded by cooperative ventures that provide the flexible delineation which the circumstances of local conditions indicate. The development of programs will continue as communities strengthen this approach to vocational planning. As the prospects of employment diminish for the retarded in many competitive areas, the field of vocational rehabilitation will grow in importance as stronger agency services provide for the vocational needs of the retarded.

Some of the categories of services that should be available to students for good vocational training are:

1. A complete physical and medical workup. If necessary, a referral should be made to a specialist such as neurologist, ophthalmologist or dermatologist.
2. This would include a general psychological workup.
3. Application should be made to Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. After acceptance the DVR office would assign a counselor.
4. The client would be orientated to the vocational services that are available and the necessary training for work in specific jobs and occupations.
5. The client would receive an evaluation of work potential and his individual job interest.
6. The client would receive personal adjustment training as it relates to instructional programs. Special services should be available for individuals such as hearing, speech, and vocational orientated remedial reading and arithmetic.

7. A client would receive work adjustment training.
8. Depending on work evaluation and adjustment training, a specific skill training would be developed. This may occur at a different agency, school or on-the-job. The skill training may be secondary to a client's needs for proper attitudes, good work habits and social adjustment.
9. The conclusion of good vocational training involves job placement and follow-up. The job may be in competitive employment, sheltered workshop employment, part-time employment or home assistance and self-care.¹

The sequence of these services is based on the individual.

Not all services may be necessary or available. However, the best use of available school, agency, employer and other community resource will provide for the most suitable program that will lead to the greatest possible success in full time employment.

The schools have expanded their role in education dramatically in the last two decades, both qualitatively and quantitatively, in providing the community services in preparing the mentally retarded for vocational success in our society. The greater public awareness of the real needs of these individuals by greater understanding of their problems has increased the school's real responsibility. This applies also to the agencies' responsibilities.

Today with greater provisions of funds from the Federal government, state government, and local government the special education services of the school are better prepared to perform their role. However, the special nature of mental retardation will remain as one of the most difficult and complex problems for the schools to

¹John DuRand, "Vocational Aptitudes and Assets of the Handicapped Special Needs of the Handicapped, " Attitudes and Misconceptions About the Handicapped. Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1970.

effectively cope with.

The underlying philosophy must dictate that we are educators and not employers. To begin a work-study program is not the same as beginning a "workshop". The role of the school is to create and maintain an environment where conditioning, learning and adjustment to work skills are brought about.

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