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VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND THE SECONDARY STUDENT
CONSIDERATIONS FOR PROGRAM PLANNING

by

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A RESEARCH PAPER
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REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS IN EDUCATION
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The learning disabled adolescent's educational program should include both academic and vocational training and preparation. As educators of the learning disabled, we are primarily concerned with students' proficiency in basic skills areas, reading, spelling, mathematics or remediating process deficits. Learning disabled adolescents who are moving rapidly toward adulthood will require, more than other students, guidance and preparation if they are to achieve independence and satisfactory careers. This research paper explored the current status of vocational education and program planning for the learning disabled adolescent in the public high school setting.

Based on this research, the purpose included conclusions and recommendations for implementing vocational education in a high school program for the learning disabled.

Problem

High school special education programs for the learning disabled student must include vocational preparation. "We have had vocational education courses for years for 'normal' students, but there is little or no change today at the secondary level."¹ Very little research has taken into consideration the learning disabled secondary student. Many school systems are not serving the needs of these students in terms of realistic career pursuits.

This paper reviewed research to support the need for serious consideration into vocational preparation. Secondly, this research explored considerations and objectives most cited as useful to program development in the public high school setting.

Definition of Terms

The secondary student includes the student population in grades nine through twelve in a public high school setting.

Learning disabled students are students having "neurological impairment of some kind, and are average and above ability."²

¹Winifred Y. Washburn, "Where to Go in Voc-Ed for Secondary LD Students," Academic Therapy 11 (Fall 1975): 31.

²Ibid.

The secondary-level learning disabled pupil:

. . . has at least average mental ability, his learning is not impeded by physical or sensory problems, and his behavior is acceptable and manageable. Despite having made reasonable efforts and having received ordinarily appropriate instruction and environmental support in the past, he cannot cope with academic demands at the secondary level, as a consequence of specific cognitive disabilities. The determination of learning disabilities at the secondary level, must emphasize four diagnostic components: (1) identification of significant academic deficit; (2) determination of average mental ability; (3) determination of process disorder; and (4) determination of neurological dysfunction.³

This definition does not:

include learning problems which are due primarily to visual, hearing, or motor handicaps, to mental retardation, emotional disturbance or to environmental disadvantage.⁴

Estimated size of this population runs from 2 to 20 percent of the school population.

Experts in CANHC and ACLD (nationally known Special Education organizations) say that at least 15 percent of the high school population can be called disabled or learning handicapped.⁵

Vocational education includes guidance and preparatory training needed to obtain a satisfactory career.

³Libby Goodman and Lester Mann, Learning Disabilities in the Secondary School: Issues and Practices (New York, New York: Greene and Stratton, Inc., 1976), pp. 13-16.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Washburn, "Where to Go in Voc-Ed for Secondary LD Students," p. 31.

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited to the population of secondary level learning disabled students, being served in the public high school setting.

The review of the literature was limited to two main areas:

(1) Establishing background and rationale, for the need of vocational education for the learning disabled student at the secondary level.

(2) Programs that included vocational education planning specific to learning disabilities and generally to special education at the secondary level. Many of the programs cited included other areas of special education such as educable mentally retarded, and emotionally disturbed because of the limited material available on learning disabilities exclusively.

Research for this paper was intended to present background and rationale for vocational educational for the learning disabled as well as objectives and considerations necessary in setting up a program. This research was not intended to provide a specific detailed model necessary for the execution of such a program.

Summary

The secondary level, grades nine through twelve, learning disabled student's vocational education needs must be met in the public high school setting. The

purpose of the research paper was to review literature to establish the need for adequate vocational education preparation.

The problem established in this paper was that inadequate research, writing, and program development exists for the learning disabled secondary student in public high schools.

Secondary level students were defined as well as secondary level learning disability, estimated size of the population and vocational education specific to this population.

The study was limited to the secondary level, students with a learning disability in the public high school setting. Research was limited to the establishment of vocational education need for this population as well as presenting general considerations important to program planning and overall objectives.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Vocational Education Needs for the Learning Disabled Adolescent

The greatest portion of literature and research accumulated on the subject of learning disabilities in the past ten years had been concerned with elementary age children. Few special educators had done research or written on the problems of educating the secondary learning disabled student. Furthermore, less had been written on the subject of vocational education as far as this population is concerned. The following review of literature confirmed the lack of available information on vocational education and program description for the learning disabled secondary student.

Winifred Washburn stated in an article that vocational education programs have been available for "normal" children for years at the secondary level.¹

¹Washburn, "Where to Go in Voc-Ed for Secondary LD Students," p. 31.

Likewise, more vocational education programming has been established for the retarded learner in terms of career training, sheltered workshops and rehabilitation facilities.

Washburn went on to quote estimates of this population of neurologically impaired students, from 5 percent to 20 percent of the school population. Nationally known Special Education organizations estimate a high school population of at least 15 percent that can be called learning disabled or learning handicapped.

This population of learning disabled are said to have neurological impairment. The result of neurological impairment is: reading problems; poor number concepts; unreliable visual and auditory memory; lack of self-image; insecurity; mistaken facts of reality; poor knowledge of right and wrong; impulsive and compulsive actions; accident prone; immaturity; emotional blocks; abnormal reserve; fear of failure, and so on.²

This type of student has had a difficult time in the regular school, often being called names by peers and teachers. The students who most often are referred are behavior problems. Many are quiet and will never receive services. They usually just get by. By the time the learning disabled student reaches high school he has

²Ibid., p. 32.

learned how to cope with school failures and frustrations by cheating, dropping out, acting up, or quietly losing himself in the crowd, etc. These students appear to be like most "normal" high schoolers in appearance and often socially. Many are successful in sports, have part-time jobs, and are cheerleaders for example. Many youngsters hide their handicaps to fool the public. Often the students from supportive homes and backgrounds make it because concerned parents and siblings read assignments and help them do the written work.

According to Washburn, "About 3 percent of the total high school population are screened and being helped in a variety of special education settings."³ They receive help from tutors, individualized instruction, remedial reading, and mathematics classes, remediation in process areas, auditory skills, visual areas and behavior modification techniques.

Vocational education courses have often been designed to meet the needs of slow learners with average and even below average skills. However, if the learning disabled student is programmed into such classes, he fails because of extremely poor reading and mathematics skills or inappropriate behaviors like inattentiveness and overactivity.

³Ibid.

In summary, a student may have good performance skills and is good with his hands. He takes woods class, metals or auto-mechanics and fails because he cannot read the books, take notes, and pass written tests. The student is often distracted easily by noises or other students. He loses his place easily, misses directions, and has great difficulty in vocational classes such as these. In many cases traditional vocational education training is not the answer.

Ann Pollard Williamson has suggested that programming the learning disabled into traditional vocational education classes has caused two kinds of problems. First, the learning disabled students may need more academic instruction and program modifications. Secondly, the industrial arts areas might have developed a stigma from the handicapped students, causing more capable students to decide against vocational education courses which may have benefited them.⁴

Employability is the major concern of the learning disabled student, the parents, the educators, and researchers. What are the implications of inappropriate career planning for the learning disabled adolescent?

⁴Williamson, "Career Education: Implications for Secondary LD Students," p. 194.

Washburn said:

The most serious condemnation of special education today is that about 75 percent of all secondary learning-disabled students leave high school unemployed, unemployable, and without any plans for a job or job training.⁵

Raphael Simches has analyzed the current trends in economic inflation and how it is and will affect the handicapped. He reported in 1974 the official CEC (Council for Exceptional Children) statement to the Health, Education, Income Security and Social Services meeting that the future for the handicapped in the work world was grim.⁶ He felt that students are suffering from inappropriate educational programs and from government spending reductions.

In a time of high unemployment, workers without adequate training, face limited work opportunities and that the handicapped face more than the usual difficulty in job competition.⁷

Experience tells us that 40 percent (of handicapped young people who have not received career education) will be severely underemployed and subsist at the poverty level, 10 percent will be partially dependent,

⁵Washburn, "Where to Go in Voc-Education for Secondary LD Students," p. 32.

⁶Raphael Simches, "Economic Inflation: Hazard for the Handicapped," Exceptional Children 41 (1975):119-242.

⁷Paul Irvine, "Exploratory Occupational Education for Learning Disabled Adolescents," Paper presented at a conference sponsored by the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit Title III: Curricular Development for Secondary Learning Disability, Norristown, Pennsylvania, March 1975, p. 309.

and 30 percent totally dependent upon society for their existence, sometimes requiring institutional care.⁸

In view of such statistics, occupational preparation for the learning disabled should be a high priority of educators.

Lauriel Anderson's report on "Employment Barriers for the Learning Disabled Adult" was specific and significant in confirming the need for appropriate vocational educational planning at the secondary level.⁹ She examined the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped Conference stating that the conference dealt almost entirely with the physical limitations and mobility of persons with obvious physical handicaps. Little discussion was given to persons with minimal brain dysfunction or learning disabilities. She cited some notable learning disabled like Churchill, Einstein, Di Vinci, Edison, and Woodrow Wilson as examples of those successful in careers. She continued to report that this was usually not the case for the average disabled person, who does not overcome the barriers. These students were often deprived of success from the beginning, regardless of their

⁸Simches, "Economic Inflation: Hazard for the Handicapped," p. 235.

⁹Lauriel E. Anderson, "Employment Barriers for the Learning Disabled Adult," California Association for Neurologically Handicapped Children (Los Angeles, California, 1972).

strengths. Their weaknesses usually were in the traditional areas of the 3 R's: reading; writing; or, arithmetic. These students may have had abilities with their hands, such as woodworking or speaking abilities, for example, but because they cannot pass required high school courses, may never get a diploma. Many failed GED tests because they were written tests, another failure which posed a barrier to employment. Anderson listed five areas of employment barriers even a skilled learning disabled person might encounter. Summarizing her ideas, she stated:

1. Rigid Academic Requirements: Many jobs require diplomas or GED proficiency. A dyslexic (severe reading handicap) individual without a reader is as handicapped as a blind person.

2. Inflexible Apprenticeship Tests: Requirements for apprenticeship programs often exceed the requirements for the job. Example, high proficiency in English to be a plumber, writing skills to be a carpenter. Tests should be adapted to the job.

3. Inappropriate Application Procedures: Employers should let applicants take forms home or take them orally. Barriers like "What magazines do you read?" are unnecessary on application forms. Many learning disabled applicants are loners, and the requirements of written recommendations from three sources who have known them for five years can be devastating.

4. Restrictive Union Requirements.

5. Inflexible Working Conditions: Partial work days may be considered as a person cannot always be productive eight consecutive hours; or the pressures for on-the-spot job completion decrease effectiveness. Some jobs write up individual contracts for completion of specific jobs, giving hope for more adaptive conditions in some jobs.

Although Anderson did not directly document the above claims in her report, these barriers, however extensive, were considered. She reported further on the lack of services available by rehabilitation and employment agencies. Because the handicaps of the learning disabled were not visible and not identified to the counselor, it often went unrecognized. Many were rejected services; or treated as mentally retarded with no regard to his uneven competencies. Counselors need to be trained to identify this disability, noting strengths with job potential. She concluded her report by stating needed services currently not provided:

- a. The need for social skill training and self-confidence;
- b. The need for sensory-motor integrative therapy;
- c. The need for help to break through employment barriers;
- d. The need for job-training and placement commensurate with intellectual ability;

e. The need for supervision on the job for at least a year after job acquisition.

The question may also be raised: Should the handicapped work at all? Lloyd Tindall said that if employment is the result of vocational education: "Why vocational education for the handicapped?" He felt the answer to both questions was: "To enable the handicapped to enjoy the personal gains from employment."¹⁰

Although Tindall was referring in general to all handicapped learners, these considerations were valid in view of the not too promising employability statistics mentioned earlier. Working gives everybody a sense of belonging, productivity and community involvement. Society gains if the handicapped are employed as opposed to being dependent on welfare programs.

Tindall felt that the measure of progress in vocational education was not the simple task of just assessing vocational courses but that of attitudes and commitment of vocational educators, administrators, public schools, employers, state and federal agencies, and communities in general. All of us were at different stages in implementing vocational education services to the handicapped. Tindall felt that focus of these stages can be identified:

¹⁰Lloyd W. Tindall, "Breaking Down the Barriers for Disabled Learners," American Vocational Journal 50 (November 1975):47.

1. Awareness of the characteristics, needs, and capabilities of the handicapped.
2. Acceptance of the philosophy that the handicapped can and should be educated and a commitment to take immediate action.
3. Modification of educational programs and supportive services to help the handicapped achieve to the best of their ability.
4. Employment of the handicapped through changes in attitude, identifying the work that handicapped persons can perform and adapting jobs accordingly.¹¹

Tindall more specifically referred to the complexities of learning disabilities, in that bright, learning disabled students who lacked reading ability had done well in vocational classes when communication other than reading was used.

Any program for adolescent students with learning disabilities would not be complete if it did not provide for academic as well as vocational training needs.¹² Vocational education programs, if effective, will meet the individual needs of the learning disabled. Williamson examined three basic issues to be considered in successfully implementing career education for secondary students with learning disabilities.¹³

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Goodman and Mann, Learning Disabilities in the Secondary School, p. 108.

¹³Williamson, "Career Education: Implications for Secondary LD Students," p. 194.

Career education programs for learning disabled students must be heavily supplemented with the basic literacy skills--reading, writing, speaking, thinking, and listening.¹⁴

Research supported remedial reading instruction for secondary students as profitable. Williamson continued to point out that motivation to learn may improve as the student works toward future employment. "It would seem inappropriate to make a decision that a secondary student is too old to profit from basic reading instruction, along with the other literacy skills."¹⁵ A reading series which uses career education content, written for secondary students would be most appropriate.

"Career education programs must offer many options to students with learning disabilities, not excluding the possibility of college attendance."¹⁶ In Williamson's second issue, she stated that too often school personnel channel learning disabled students into non-college curricula. Alternatives should be presented, not labels. The secondary learning disabilities teacher should be capable of evaluating a pupil's performance and program accordingly. She pointed out that the high school staff was content

¹⁴Ibid., p. 195.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid.

oriented in their areas of specialty. As a result, it becomes more difficult to convince the high school staff to be flexible when accommodating these students.

Williamson said, "At the secondary level, if not before, curriculum emphasis must move from remediation of deficits to capitalizing on the areas of strength." "These strengths should be matched with jobs or professional requirements."¹⁷ Many colleges are accepting students by their grade points in areas of their strengths. Like colleges, employers will have to adapt to the nature and needs of the learning disabled. Ongoing in-service or awareness programs for general education and employers should be started and maintained.

"Career education programs must offer help in guidance and decision making rather than following the narrow concept of occupational orientation only."¹⁸ Most learning disabled students have emotional problems, poor social relationships, and unrealistic pictures of themselves. Students need vocational education skills that are marketable and apply across many occupations.

Some professionals who work with the learning disabled adolescent suggest that career education should define the student's vocational strengths and then match these

¹⁷Ibid., p. 196.

¹⁸Ibid.

to requirements for specific jobs, thereby increasing the student's employability and his likelihood of job success.¹⁹

Career or vocational help should begin in the high school. Exploring career possibilities should begin in the middle school. Washburn felt that the secondary learning disabled student must be accompanied through a core curriculum combining survival literacy and basic vocational skills training.²⁰ This course of study, she explained, expands upon the scope of existing special education programs and adapts, borrows, and creates equipment for a "skills training center". This course of study should be all inclusive of individualized academic study, career concepts, and practical experiences in job skills. Vocational basic skills training placed in the center of special education programming did two things:

It attempts to give the student useful skills in a short time (not proficiency) and vocation becomes the motivator, with short-term successes, which in turn creates an urgency to learn survival academics in order to succeed further in vocations.²¹

¹⁹ Goodman and Mann, Learning Disabilities in the Secondary School, p. 109.

²⁰ Washburn, "Where to Go in Voc-Ed for Secondary LD Students," p. 33.

²¹ Ibid.

Washburn referred to this curriculum as "Vocational Entry-Skills for Secondary Students."

Washburn's curriculum suggested combining the following areas of study:

Vocational Academics--survival reading, mathematics, spelling, and writing by using practical materials like phone books, newspapers, and forms.

Vocational Physical Education--Visual-motor and coordination training skills set up as a compensatory course.

Vocational Resources--Where to find needed information; using the community, family and local businesses as a resource.

Vocational Know-How--Training and experience in interviewing, conversation, resumes, uses of money, self-knowledge, transportation, and driver's education.

Basic Vocational Entry-Skills--Teaching basic work skills through hands-on experiences. Students, for example, are given one to three weeks of hands-on training in specific skills which can be used in different jobs. A skills center can facilitate these goals. The school may borrow materials from community, businesses and other school departments. Such skills taught may be: sorting, filing, collating, shelving books, library skills, using adding machines, cash register, writing sales slips, short orders, making change, using scales, measuring, and

household repairs. Vocabulary, equipment identification drills and safety tests for vocational shop courses should be available.

Vocational Placement--Work experience, volunteer and job placement, replacement if necessary, makes the other aspects of this programming worthwhile and rewarding.

Examples of Vocational Education Programs Appropriate
For the Adolescent with Learning Disabilities

The following programs were reviewed in order to derive examples of implementing vocational education for the learning disabled secondary student. Many school districts had programs in vocational education, however successful and applicable to the real world, that had been worth reviewing. These researched programs were not intended to be representative of any specific geographic location or community. Most of the following program descriptions were selected because of favorable reviews or recommendations.

Project SERVE

Saint Paul, Minnesota was the site of Project SERVE, aimed at teaching vocational skills to handicapped youngsters through individualized programs.²² A consortium

²²SERVE, Work/Experience Narrative for Senior High School Programs for Handicapped-Disadvantaged, Program Description and Outline, Chuck Wrobel, Manager, White Bear Lake, Minnesota.

of seventeen local school districts established a joint coordinating council in 1969 in order to operate a comprehensive, vocationally oriented high school program for disabled students. This program was called SERVE, for Special Education Rehabilitation and Vocational Education, because it was an interagency effort involving three state agencies: the state board of education, and the state department of vocational rehabilitation.²³

Their philosophy relative to educating handicapped pupils was that public school educational services for exceptional children of all types was to provide opportunity for them to grow intellectually, psychologically, and socially to their optimum capacities and to give the pre-vocational training and experiences so that they could ultimately become productive workers and citizens.

Three kinds of educational services were offered students to carry out their purpose. The services were:

1. Placement in "regular classes" with age-mates for as much of every school day as will be possible.

2. Provision of a Supplemental Resource Room with equipment and material which are appropriate to the development and/or improvement of those skills and competencies

²³Educational Facilities Laboratories, One Out of Ten: School Planning for the Handicapped, by J. E. Jonsson, Chairman (New York, New York: Educational Facilities Laboratories, October, 1974), p. 17.

which are provided for in the regular classroom; and SERVE Coordinator to facilitate learning.

3. Assist students (during junior and senior high years) to find suitable part-time employment and coordinate and supervise this employment relative to pupil's high school academic program.

All handicapped students were encouraged to continue their public school education through grade twelve toward the objective of graduating with a diploma. If graduation was not feasible, every effort was made to find an appropriate alternative.

This program's goal was serving students who were handicapped mentally, socially, educationally, or physically, and who were in need of pre-vocational work experience programs at the secondary level. There was a cooperative agreement among all the school districts involved in SERVE to meet students' needs and share facilities and resources.

The educational objectives of Project SERVE were outlined in four major divisions of growth toward which the high school program should give major attention:

- A. Personality and Character Traits Education
- B. Academic Education
- C. Occupational Education
- D. Social Experiences

Organization and operation of Project SERVE,
according to the SERVE program outlines, included the
following:

A. Eligibility of Students for Admission

1. Students shall be identified as having exceptional education needs according to state requirements.
2. Students shall have appropriate social skills to the extent that they may operate in a work experience program.

B. Admission

1. Interest by parents and student in completing a high school program.
2. Evaluation and recommendations based on the individual's specific needs.
3. Admission on a first-year trial basis.

C. Size of Class

Maximum enrollment of fifteen

D. Instruction

1. Instruction shall be designed to educate the pupil for social adjustment and economic usefulness to the community.
2. Various classroom alternatives
 - a. Individual or small group instruction in literacy skills
 - b. Enrichment instruction--fieldtrips, resource speakers, school function participation, recreational activities
 - c. Regular class placement whenever possible
 - d. Job experiences--occupational education, application for jobs, in school on-the-job training and community experiences

E. School Records

To be identical to other student records

F. Requirements for Graduation

Same as for other students except for:

- a. English and Social Studies requirements can be made in special classes
- b. Credits may be earned for on-the-job employment

G. School Day

1. Students assigned to the SERVE program for their regular school day
2. Each pupil will spend approximately half-time in job placement
3. Attendance to be kept by SERVE

H. Work Supervision

1. SERVE coordinator to observe in the afternoons
2. Job placement agreements must be signed by employer, parent, principal, student, SERVE coordinator, and special education coordinator

I. Personnel

J. Needed Facilities

K. Intake Methods for Project SERVE

L. Yearly Re-entry Programming and Counseling

M. Work Supervision

N. Role Description of the SERVE Coordinator

Every high school in the SERVE Program had a SERVE classroom where handicapped and disabled students followed an individualized curriculum in vocational orientation and job-related academic activities. In addition, a special SERVE center was established in the area, the 916 Vo-Tech. Institute.

BOCES

New York state had passed legislation that allowed school districts to pool their resources in order to offer special services that were not affordable by a single district. In New York's Westchester County, district cooperation of six districts, resulted in the construction of a BOCES (Board of Cooperative Education Services) Special and Career Education Center.²⁴ This board monitored the programs and special services and facilities. This regional public school agency served twenty-one public school districts. The program grew out of a research and demonstration project which developed the model for the Exploratory Occupational Education (EOE) program now conducted at BOCES.²⁵ Paul Irvine, assisted by Russell A. Plumpton, presented the final report of their research. "A Program for the Vocational Rehabilitation of Emotionally Disturbed and Brain-Injured Adolescents in a Public School Setting."²⁶

²⁴One Out of Ten: School Planning for the Handicapped, p. 17.

²⁵Irvine, "Exploratory Occupational Education for Learning Disabled Adolescents," p. 311.

²⁶U. S., Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education, A Program for the Vocational Rehabilitation of Emotionally Disturbed and Brain-Injured Adolescents in a Public School Setting, by Paul Irvine, Final Report Project No. RD-1279-D (Yorktown Heights, New York: ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED 057528, 1970), p. 22.

The BOCES Center consisted of four separate but closely interrelated buildings:

1. An open school for 150 trainable retarded students;
2. An open school for 300 emotionally disturbed, learning disabled and neurologically impaired children;
3. A career education center with occupational training facilities;
4. The Exploratory Occupational Education (EOE) Building.

The EOE building was a new facility to serve the marginal student. It served about 320 pupils each year. About half of these students attended special classes operated either by BOCES or the home school districts. The other half were enrolled in regular school programs in the participating school districts. According to Irvine, each student, referred by the home school or by the BOCES special education staff for admission to the program was examined in a conference attended by representatives of the staff working with the pupil and an EOE team of members representing teaching, guidance, and administration.

Irvine continued to report that the EOE program was designed to serve learning disabled pupils along with students with other handicaps. Admission was not based on diagnostic labels, but on the readiness and needs of the

pupil. According to Irvine, in the EOE population, intelligence ranged from moderate mental retardation to bright normal. Academic levels ranged from primary to senior high levels. Classes were small in order to facilitate individualized learning.

The following guidelines had been developed regarding EOE admission:

1. Students admitted usually of ages fifteen or sixteen.
2. Students admitted must have a demonstrable level of maturity that suggests readiness for occupational preparation.

The instructional program consisted of three phases: Prevocational Orientation; Exploratory Occupational Education; and Specific Occupational Preparation.

The Prevocational phase introduced students to the world of work. A variety of materials relating to employment were worked into the academic program. The shop program was directed toward exploring vocational abilities and interests. The student's interrelationships with his peers were evaluated from a vocational point of view.

The Exploratory Occupational phase provided each pupil with brief experiences in a variety of occupations, making vocational commitments wiser when presented later.

Students were usually fifteen or sixteen years old when entering this phase, depending upon maturity. The student could be moved to the specific occupational phase when he was ready, however, most students spent about two years in this phase. The pupil moved to the next phase depending upon his maturity and development of skills necessary to learn a specifically selected occupation. The exploratory phase was presented in two ways: A classroom-shop exploratory program and on-the-job exploratory program. This EOE program provided for both academic and vocational training usually for one-half day, either morning or afternoon. The other half-day was spent in the home school. The academic and vocational teacher at the EOE center worked closely together to coordinate their efforts. While an occupation was being explored in the shop, the related academic instruction focused on the vocabulary, mathematics and reading of the occupation. There were eight shop areas representing a variety of trades. The classrooms were in every case adjacent to the shops.

The last phase of the program was the specific occupational preparation which provided for final occupational preparation like vocational school, a cooperative work-study program. The student was usually seventeen or eighteen years of age at this point. In New York a handicapped pupil may remain in school until the age of twenty-one.

In summarizing this program, Irvine concluded:

Much of the success of the EOE program can be attributed to the use of vocational teachers to provide the occupational instruction, and special education teachers to provide the related academics, as well as the fact that they teach in adjacent spaces; school systems considering the development of an exploratory occupational education program should give close attention to this feature, which the BOCES staff considers essential.²⁷

Vanguard Upper School

Although the Vanguard Upper School was not a public school, many components of its program could be utilized in a public high school setting and therefore were included in this section.²⁸

The Vanguard Upper School in Paoli, Pennsylvania, accommodated about 150 teenagers, most of whom have had difficulty adjusting to the demands of the regular secondary school. Although the Vanguard School worked to remediate academic skill deficits, they especially recognized the need to encourage the teenager's ego development by advancing the skills, talents and aptitudes in areas of strength. The applied philosophy of the school was

²⁷ Irvine, "Exploratory Occupational Education for Learning Disabled Adolescents," p. 314.

²⁸ Milton Brutton, "Vocational Education for the Brain-Injured Adolescent and Young Adult at the Vanguard School," in Learning Disabilities: ACLD Paper, eds. Samuel A. Kirk and Jeanne McRae McCarthy (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1975), pp. 313-323.

that the special educator's job was to locate, identify and nurture his abilities and help the student bring it to fruition.

The school's concern in view of social and occupational requirements, was to emphasize skill development which was directly applicable, by bridging special and vocational education. Success was encouraged through high-level motivation, areas of interest, and abilities. The Vanguard Upper School's vocational rehabilitation and guidance services were an integral part of their program. The student's needs and society's needs were best served if the youngster's preparation included the development of marketable skills. Brutton stressed the need for training in occupational areas where there was a marketable demand, thus keeping knowledgeable of the latest resources available on job outlooks.

A vocational counselor at the school matched job requirements with student aptitudes, abilities and interests, by administering a job evaluation battery. The Vanguard Career Guidance Center, developed by Watson Klinecizc, developed prototype testing models which simulated realistic work demands and conditions; these models were being consolidated into a formal job evaluation battery. The student was exposed to graduated levels of frustration, as in the work world. These evaluation facilities could pinpoint approximately where the youngster would function

from simple service areas to those requiring college or technical study. The end result should be realistic pursuits of careers along with appropriate training and preparation provided by the school.

The student and vocational guidance counselor set up tentative occupational goals and objectives. The classroom teacher worked within the framework of the vocational program, teaching the necessary academic prerequisites to meet his occupational goal.

Such experience at Vanguard School, consisting of classroom activities, prevocational evaluation, job exploration, pre-training opportunities and others, are clearly defined and arranged in a chronological order according to a natural sequence.²⁹

A simulation laboratory facilitated work experiences in a controlled environment. Utilized also was a problem solving instrumentation called "Gaming" which sets up real situations the handicapped person might face on the job. "Gaming" set up situations with authority figures and dealt with interpersonal relationships.

Project Worker

This program developed a course of study in vocational education which was available to handicapped adolescents including mentally retarded, learning disabled, or orthopedically disabled in grades nine through twelve

²⁹Ibid., p. 319.

in the Fullerton Union High School District, Los Angeles, California.³⁰ The program philosophy was to teach job entry skills, providing occupational experiences which would assist these pupils in obtaining employment in marketable, good jobs better than had been traditionally available to the handicapped. The course of study utilized a variety of community resources like resource speakers, films and field trips. Evaluation of job aptitudes, abilities and interests was assessed by the teacher and student. Exploratory work experience in class and on-the-job performance was evaluated.

This course of study did not have to be self-contained or a closed sequence of study. It could be implemented differently by various teachers and schools, depending on their attitude toward career education. This program was designed to be individualized and unstructured, with the responsibility for completion of the work resting with the student. Project Worker served approximately 220 students and incorporated twenty-three classes in eight high schools. Videotape was used to provide instruction as well as for on-the-job performance evaluation.

³⁰ Goodman, "Survey of Secondary Programs for the Learning Disabled," p. 282.

Career Development Center

The Career Development Center (CDC) was an alternative high school program which served handicapped students fifteen to twenty-one years of age who lived in fifty-six local public school districts in Nassau County, New York.³¹ This school was operated by the Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES). The school enrolled 265 students non-categorically, including those labeled retarded, learning disabled or behaviorally disordered. This program did not provide services for the severely disturbed or socially maladjusted or those with debilitating physical disabilities. The CDC program was "transitional" in that its aim was to build the students' vocational and academic skills so that they could return to their home schools and/or find success in a career endeavor of their own choosing. The main goals of the program, according to Colella were:

1. to improve students' knowledge and application of basic tool subjects in relating these prerequisites to daily life experiences;

2. to expose students to a variety of occupational activities so that the pupils may make realistic vocational choices;

³¹H. V. Colella, "Career Development Center: A Modified High School for the Handicapped," Teaching Exceptional Children 5 (1973):110-118.

3. to return to home schools those students who display positive changes in behavior and an increased ability to deal with the demands of their environments;

4. to help each student within approximately three years to be able to move into more advanced training, return to his local district, obtain employment or begin part-time reintegration into the community at the very least;

5. to provide a therapeutic environment where each student can experience responsibility toward independence through alternative choices in decision making.

The student's program for a week involved forty periods of instruction--eighteen periods in vocational education, twelve periods in core subjects, and ten periods of electives. The curriculum revolved around clusters or units relating to occupational areas, e.g. food preparation, building maintenance, basic auto mechanics, electronics, etc. Each cluster included a range of related occupational activities and core academic material related to the occupational themes. A team of two occupational specialists and a special education teacher staffed each unit. They worked together to interrelate both academic and occupational experience to achieve maximum learning benefits for their students. Overall, the CDC staff had found that the student's success in occupational activities

and awareness of the importance and relevance of basic skills led to a renewed interest and increasing achievement in reading, mathematics, and language.

WECEP

Work Experience Career Exploration Program (WECEP) was a training sponsorship operated jointly by the United States Department of Labor-Child Safety Division, the Minnesota Department of Vocational Education, the Rochester Public Schools and participating employers.³² The Minnesota Department of Vocational Education had funded the project as a pre-vocational exploratory program for educationally disadvantaged ninth grade students. The Rochester Public Schools were operating the program as a dropout preventative, focusing on this grade level, students not responding to the regular school program.

This population may include high risk potential dropouts such as those students who are failing in school, poor achievers on tests, behavioral problems and the handicapped if they are seen as potential drop-outs. Although this program was not specifically designed for the handicapped, like the student with a learning disability, it may include them as they often, through years of frustration, exhibit emotional and behavior problems.

³²WECEP, Work Experience Career Exploration Program, Program Description and Outline, Rochester Public Schools, Rochester, Minnesota, 1970.

In addition to the regular academic program of English and mathematics, the students participated in employability skills seminars and work three to four hours daily, fifteen to twenty-eight hours weekly. Saturday work was at the option of student and employer. The entire program was geared to success and positive reinforcement, with concentrated supportive service and constant communication between academic teachers, job supervisors and parents. This function was carried out by the teacher-coordinators.

Once the trainee had been identified, through the use of school records and personnel reports and observations, the training sponsor and the teacher-coordinator took over. The student was oriented to the program, company regulations, location of facilities and expectations. The student had to be mature enough to accept the program and then the training in skills began. After the student participated in the employability seminars, and was evaluated as ready for work placement, the next step was work experience. This phase was carefully supervised and monitored to assure success. The student-trainee was encouraged to set realistic goals for himself. He was provided with the instruction he needed to meet these goals. This treatment fostered an eagerness and motivation to learn.

According to Kathleen Paris, there was no official WECEP curriculum as such. Most coordinators agreed that a meaningful curriculum should include vocational exploration, personal-social development, and remedial assistance. The nature of the curriculum depended upon the priorities set by the coordinator and the local resources available.³³

According to Paris, some general considerations for implementation must be kept in mind, like setting up the classroom and appropriate lesson planning for unmotivated learners. Get away from the traditional classroom setting. Keep classes small from five to ten students. Utilize teaching stations, audio-visual equipment, tape recorders and high interest reading materials like magazines and comic books. Activities should be varied and manipulative, alternatives available, presentations varied in modality--orally, visually and tactilely. The teacher should participate whenever possible. The teacher must provide students with opportunities to think. An outline of Survival in the Twentieth Century WECEP Curriculum used in Woodstock, Illinois emphasized the following areas of study:

Vocational exploration includes field trips, speakers, individual aptitude tests, role-playing and videotaping of job interviews, completing job applications and employment forms and studying classified ads;

³³Kathleen A. Paris, "The WE/CEP Curriculum," Woodstock Public Schools, Woodstock, Illinois, 1976.

Personal-social development includes providing student practice in values clarification, resolving conflicts, understanding their own behavior, that of peers and adults better, cooperation, finding alternative behaviors and listening to others;

Students are exposed to consumerism: getting and keeping track of checking accounts, procuring loans for cars, getting insurance, understanding the psychology of advertising, reading labels and learning about consumer protection agencies;

Students learn about environmental education and are encouraged to be creative. Basic skills are stressed: learning study skills, using reference material, compensating for learning deficits, studying current events and using the newspaper.

Project HAPPEN

Project HAPPEN was a curriculum guide developed by a team of teachers and administrators for grades seven through twelve for the integration of career education concepts into the exceptional education curriculum in Waukesha, Wisconsin.³⁴

The philosophy of exceptional education, according to the project HAPPEN workshop for curriculum development

³⁴Project HAPPEN Workshop, Curriculum Development Program Description, Waukesha Public Schools, Waukesha, Wisconsin, 14-25 June 1976.

guide, was that the department existed for the benefit of the learner. The department served students diagnosed as having exceptional education needs such as learning disabilities, behavioral disabilities, mental handicaps, and physical handicaps. "The student is assisted in understanding his/her place in society by learning to develop social, personal and vocational skills."³⁵ The exceptional education staff maintained student integration into regular school programs as much as was feasible. Good cooperative relations were essential with teachers, special education teachers and administrators.

Each student's program was considered individually accounting for his/her capabilities, limitations, and areas of interest. This program encouraged active teacher participation, providing challenging experiences and on-going evaluation.

The exceptional education program functioned within and as a part of the regular public high school. The total development of the individual was set as their goal: independence; purpose; management of their lives and attainment of their highest potential as a contributing member of society. Project HAPPEN offered a total program including academic, social, and vocational skills, necessary to meet the demands of industry, community and society. The curriculum guide offered more specific information regarding classroom objectives and activities.

³⁵Ibid.

The student received added support like counseling, remediation, ongoing evaluation, both in the classroom and on the job. This support offered 100 percent placement of all existing students, a complete follow-up of each student, and evaluation of the total program.

Guidelines for Developing a Special Education Program
for Minimally Brain Injured Children and Youth in
the Local Community

This research project under guidelines for Program Development, Special Education, Volume III was sponsored by the United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Office of Education under the direction of Don Partridge in 1968.³⁶ This report was extensive, covering total programming for the learning disabled student K through twelve.

The study suggested that vocational education should begin when the child first enters the school's special program regardless of grade level. Vocational preparation should be ongoing throughout the student's educational

³⁶United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Office of Education, Guidelines for Program Development, Special Education, Volume III, Guidelines for Developing a Special Education Program for Minimally Brain Injured Children in the Local Community, directed by Don Partridge (Austin, Texas: ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED 36010, 1968), pp. 124-130.

career and life. This developmental pattern was viewed in three stages: (1) Work habit training--learned in the elementary grades; (2) pre-vocational experiences--presented in the junior high grades; and (3) on-the-job training and employment in senior high.

Vocational programming continued until the student acquired sufficient occupational proficiency for successful employment. The student could graduate from special education or continue until his/her proficiency was not likely to profit from continued school services.

General educational planning for the secondary student, as recommended by this report, recommended regular class integration as much as possible in industrial arts and vocational training, regular or modified curricula. In planning the work for learning disabled students, the emphasis was placed on regular routine, care of tools, personal safety, individualized instruction and application of task analysis in project work.

The academic program should not minimize subjects like English, mathematics, science and social studies, but activities in these classes should be related to vocational concerns and experiences. The vocational education teacher and the special education teacher must work together for the best interest of the learning disabled student. The program must be flexible, meeting the individual's needs. The student must be able to acquire certain occupational

competencies to be prepared to become a satisfactory worker in society.

Summary

The review of the literature included the major objectives and considerations needed to implement program planning for vocational education of the learning disabled adolescent in the public school setting. This review included examples of vocational education programming.

Little research and writing was available on the learning disabled adolescent. Vocational education programming for this population is a new and growing concern of educators. A critical need to prepare the learning disabled secondary student with marketable skills is essential in view of the economic outlook and current unemployment statistics regarding handicapped persons.

Barriers to employment exist for the learning disabled adolescent. It is the responsibility of public education to provide appropriate preparation for this population if they are to meet the demands of a work-oriented society. The review of literature presented some effective guidelines for vocational education planning for the secondary learning disabled student in a public school setting.

Seven programs were reviewed as having appropriate vocational curricula for secondary learning disabled students. One research project on program planning for

special education was included in this review because of the guidelines set forth on secondary program planning for the learning disabled regarding vocational education.

The programs reviewed were: Project SERVE of Saint Paul Minnesota; BOCES EOE program of Westchester County New York; the Vanguard Upper School, Paoli, Pennsylvania; Project Worker, Los Angeles, California; Career Development (CDC), Nassau County, New York; WECEP, Minnesota; and Project HAPPEN, Waukesha, Wisconsin. The research reported included in this chapter was "Guidelines for Developing a Special Education Program for Minimally Brain Injured Children and Youth in the Local Community."

CHAPTER III

SUMMARY

Analysis of the Literature

In analyzing the literature presented in this paper, the authorities all generally supported the need for more adequate vocational education preparation for the learning disabled adolescent. Little research and information was available concerning this population.

Most of the existing information on vocational education concerned the "normal" student or the handicapped student, including the retarded, behaviorally disordered, physically handicapped and now the learning disabled. Most of the vocational education programming in special education described programs for the retarded learner. Washburn, Williamson, and Goodman felt that career training for the secondary learning disabled student should be a priority in their total educational plans.

Goodman, Williamson, and Anderson directed their research toward more specifically the learning disabled secondary student. On the other hand, Washburn, Simches, and Tindall referred to the disabled student in broader terms, including areas of exceptionality such as learning disabled, mentally retarded, and behaviorally disordered.

The statistical data on the size of the disabled population varied with respect to the author's definition. Washburn, in referring to the learning handicapped, cited a population of 15 to 20 percent. In reference to this all inclusive population, she cited the unemployability figure of 75 percent.

Washburn, Simches, Tindall, Goodman, and Anderson and Williamson felt the employability was the most critical issue concerning this population. They all felt that vocational education must provide these students with marketable skills.

Simches and Anderson reported on existing barriers to employment such as the economic situation and educational requirements for a diploma or trade qualifications.

Williamson, Goodman, and Washburn described good program practices concerning career training. Basic literacy skills were stressed as essential to good curriculum planning. Appropriate curricula combined academic and vocational training, teaching basic skills using career oriented materials.

Williamson, Anderson and Tindall made specific reference to the discrepancies in the abilities exhibited by the learning disabled and the implications toward appropriate, satisfying preparation in a career. It was

pointed out that these students should consider college training as well as training in manual trades like mechanics or plumbing.

Underlying all of the reports were recommendations for appropriate evaluation, counseling, and guidance with respect to matching abilities to marketable career choices.

Anderson, Tindall and Williamson, furthermore, stressed the need for inservice programs for colleges, general education, employers, and the community to foster a better understanding of this population's vocational concerns.

The programs that were reviewed presented exemplary models worth careful study and consideration. All of the programs described vocational education in the public school setting except for the Vanguard Upper School, which was also the only one to serve the learning disabled exclusively. The other projects serviced handicapped students, regardless of categorical labels, however, stressing the individual differences and needs of any student. These programs concentrated on the needs and interests of the individual including the learning disabled adolescent. Projects such as these did not necessarily include the learning disabled in the past.

The major differences in the programs reviewed were in the degree of structure. Project SERVE, the Career Development Center, and the BOCES, EOE Project described

very structured procedures to programming. These projects all involved a special training center or school where the students attended on a half-time or full-time basis removed from the traditional high school setting. In each case the programs were the result of cooperative school district planning involving a number of different school districts.

The WECEP Program, Project Worker, and Project HAPPEN described curricula that were more unstructured and flexible, that could be more easily implemented right within the regular public high school.

All of the programs stressed the need for adequate guidance services, small class sizes, relevant marketable training and follow-up in terms of job placement.

Conclusions

Vocational Needs

This paper dealt with learning disabled adolescents in a public high school setting and their vocational educational needs. In view of the literature and statistical information cited on employability factors and competition for jobs, the rationale for curriculum and program planning was evident.

Special education at the high school level should prepare students for a work-oriented society. Programs

for the retarded have done this. Planning is critically needed for the learning disabled.

The solution is not a simple one. Placing this population in existing programs for the retarded or mainstreaming them in regular classes without individual modifications will not solve the problem. Most of the literature described general program considerations and concerns for the handicapped. These concerns and issues were sound and valuable but only the beginning. The next step is to integrate and combine what has been offered and apply these contributions to another unique population.

Vocational education courses are offered today in high schools for any student who wishes to participate. Often the learning disabled students with the hidden handicap either goes unnoticed or does not have the initiative to take advantage of what is available to them. The challenge of specialists, teachers, and guidance counselors, to name a few, is to individually guide these students toward vocational goals within the framework already existing in the schools. The answer is not in prescribing programs for the sake of convenience. Programming for the retarded or mainstreaming cannot be used to solve this problem. Modifications are needed if educators want to meet the needs of these students.

The literature described the cooperative efforts of many districts joining together to offer services to all handicapped. This has been accomplished in some instances by the establishment of separate vocational training centers that these districts share jointly. This type of programming has proven successful in providing services to individuals regardless of their handicaps and therefore has helped the learning disabled. These programs do not necessarily follow the "least restrictive alternative to education." Projects, such as these, are costly and moreover take extensive planning and organization to be implemented effectively.

School districts that have not participated in cooperative efforts must start somewhere. The place to begin is with the internal organizations and departments already operating within the schools. By coordinating the efforts and services of learning disability specialists, guidance counselors, administrators, psychologists, parents, vocational educators, teachers, and students, the process can begin.

The total needs of these students may never be met if separate programs and services are duplicated and not coordinated. Problems too often arise from having too many programs or setting up new isolated programs. These students need experiences with their peers in the mainstream

as well as remedial help in a resource room. Integrating the existing programs available with respect to the total needs of the child, social, academic, and occupational appears to be the best answer at this time. Project HAPPEN and Project Worker were good examples of these combined efforts. No one set of standards can be employed. Each student must be considered individually resulting in a vocational education program modified differently for each.

The following section summarized conclusions on program need and implementation for learning disabled adolescents.

Program Implementation

The philosophy of good program implementation should be to provide opportunities for the total person to mature into adulthood, intellectually, psychologically, and socially. If the students reach their optimum levels of capacity in these areas, they will be able to cope with the demands of society. The student should be offered many options as a means to meeting goals: mainstreaming; exploring occupational experiences; manual arts training; college preparatory courses; resource room help; community work experience, etc. The program must incorporate flexibility, cooperation, implementation, and sharing for the best interests of the child. The ultimate goal is to

guide these youngsters toward independence, occupational satisfaction, and a healthy sense of well being that means happiness.

Cooperative Staff Planning

Students should be evaluated first as having exceptional education needs. The students' strengths, weaknesses, emotional growth, and aptitudes should be studied and assessed. A student occupational interest inventory must be administered. The student, parents, teachers, academic and vocational, guidance counselors and administrators jointly plan a set of program goals for the student. These goals should be realistic and flexible, set up within the framework of the student's high school. This guidance and planning must be an ongoing process subject to alteration.

Curriculum Considerations

Basic Literacy Skills: The program should be supplemented with basic literacy skills in reading, writing, speaking, thinking, and listening. Motivational materials linked to occupational interests should be available. Practical materials should be utilized like phone books, newspapers, forms, and job applications.

Personal Social Development: Students should be instructed in values clarification, resolving conflicts, decision making, understanding their own behaviors, and that of others. Self-concept development must be fostered along with emotional growth and maturity.

Exploratory Occupational Experiences: This includes field trips, resource speakers, aptitude tests, role-playing and other classroom experiences, and varied career oriented coursework. Depending upon the student's interests, hands-on experiences in shops, labs and in-school work experiences must be offered.

Work Experience: Once the student has acquired some marketable skills, part-time job placements should be available on a trial basis if necessary.

Follow-Up: Adequate follow-up must be practiced throughout the programming process and especially after the student leaves school for full-time employment. The student needs plenty of supportive help and reassurance to make sure he/she is well on his/her way to a productive meaningful life.

Summary

The analysis of the literature presented author comparisons and views regarding vocational education for the adolescent.

Most of the authorities were in agreement that little information has been published concerning the secondary student and less with respect to vocational education.

Existing vocational programs were primarily designed for the "normal" student or the handicapped in general.

Employability statistics and job competition were the most critical issues cited in support of vocational preparation for this population. Employment barriers were reported as an issue for special educators to be concerned with.

The programs that were reviewed, differed primarily in the degree of structure and organization and the physical setting needed to afford appropriate vocational preparation.

In conclusion, the need to establish a plan for the vocational preparation of this population was confirmed. The solution is not a simple one. The place to begin is with the internal structure of the school. The goal of an effective program is to provide services and planning for the individual, however different that programming may be.

A concluding summary of appropriate program goals for implementation was described. Included were

descriptions of the philosophy of a good program, cooperative staff planning, curriculum considerations, including basic literacy skills, personal social development, exploratory occupational experiences, work experiences and follow-up practices.

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