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THE GENERAL REQUIREMENTS OF WORK

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In order to place employment opportunities for the deaf in perspective, perhaps we should first examine the general requirements of work for all individuals. From this examination, some useful applications for job counseling and job placement of the deaf can be gleaned. Starting with general terms, some of the following statements about work are well worth revealing.

1. Every individual is expected to work if he possibly can and, in fact, are usually under strong societal pressures to work. These pressures come from family, peer groups and society as a whole as they derive from both the social values held for work and the requirements of the economic system in which we live. In our free society, we are expected both to choose a job appropriately and to perform it well. Community judgment of the adequacy of an individual's job selection is often assessed on the basis of well-established, widely held, but not very rational stereotypic notions of the merits of individual occupations.
2. When an individual responds to the expectations (pressures) to choose a job well and then to contribute to society as a worker, he is actually faced with a very complex task. He is expected to know about both the world of work and about himself in relation to that world. Beginning with the world of work, we might consider that the number of job descriptions nationally exceed 35,000 (U. S. Department of Labor, 1965), local variations in terms of both duties performed and requirements for success-

ful performance, and that the dynamic nature of the labor market increase the complexity of this picture. To estimate his potential for success, the individual must assess his own skills and capabilities against this uncertain background. Both sides of this coin—self assessment and job evaluation—present problems.

3. Society has a value system for evaluating the relative merits of different occupations through well-established prestige hierarchies for occupations as indicated by Deeg and Paterson (1947). This prestige hierarchy system does not appear to be very rational, but it is with us, and appears relatively consistent over time and across social, economic, educational, and national groups of raters. Of all the studies of occupational prestige hierarchies (approximately 50) all but one agree very closely. That one was done in Russia several years ago, and it too shows the same hierarchy system if you eliminate the first few top-ranked peasant and military occupations. These social prestige hierarchies appear to be well known even though not very rationally organized.
4. Work consumes much of each individual's time, spills over into his family and social life and shapes his economic possibilities. Roe (1956) has indicated that work is probably the single most important activity in which individuals can seek to satisfy their psychological needs.
5. All jobs are important and have dignity across all of the various fields and levels of work. It is important, useful, and dignified to have come to terms with work, even at low levels. One of the earliest job classification systems, proposed by the economist Taussing (1911) used a scale from the "Well to Do" down to the "Diggers and Delvers". Any job anywhere along this scale is worthwhile and has dignity if the worker is properly placed in it.
6. Each individual choosing work and each individual worker is unique in his patterns of capabilities and in his needs. Sometimes we forget about these individual differences when we attempt to make jobs for a particular disadvantaged group, or when we identify a small sub-set of jobs as the jobs that are appropriate for a specific disability group. It is

quite possible that individual differences in people can have disastrous results. Perhaps the unfortunate results of placing uniquely different individuals into a common mold will be illustrated if I read you a favorite fable of mine by Reavis (1941). He wrote the fable to dramatize the need for attending to individual differences in education, but it may have a moral in considering the individual and the requirements of work.

THE ANIMAL SCHOOL

Once upon a time the animals decided they must do something heroic to meet the problems of a "new world", so they organized a school. They adopted an activity curriculum consisting of running, climbing, swimming, and flying; and to make it easier to administer, all the animals took all the subjects.

The duck was excellent in swimming, better in fact than his instructor, and made passing grades in flying, but he was very poor in running. Since he was slow in running, he had to stay after school and drop swimming to practice running. This was kept up until his web feet were badly worn, and he was only average in swimming. But average was acceptable in school, so nobody worried about that except the duck.

The rabbit started at the top of the class in running but had a nervous breakdown because of so much make-up work in swimming.

The squirrel was excellent in climbing until he developed frustration in the flying class, where his teacher made him start from the ground up instead of from the tree-top down. He also developed charlie horses from overexertion which got him a C in climbing and a D in running.

The eagle was a problem child and was disciplined severely. In the climbing class, he beat all the others to the top of the tree but insisted on using his own way to get there.

At the end of the year, an abnormal

eel that could swim exceedingly well and also run, climb, and fly a little had the highest average and was valedictorian.

The prairie dogs stayed out of school and fought the tax levy because the administration would not add digging and burrowing to the curriculum. They apprenticed their child to a badger and later joined the groundhogs and gophers to start a successful private school.

Perhaps there is a moral to this story which can be applied to this discussion. From the short list of general statements about work, a number of implications for practice can be gleaned. Individuals under pressure to make a decision about a complex problem, who have little knowledge about their own uniqueness as it relates to work, and who themselves are aware of social prestige values for jobs, may make unwise decisions. As a result, they may find frustration in both satisfying their own needs and the requirements of jobs. Individuals need help in assessing themselves, in assessing the world of work, and in making proper job choices. The group label the individual wears may affect job choices, but it does not tell us enough about his unique work personality to clearly point to the job in which he will be a successful worker.

While it is important to assist clients to utilize their unique assets, we should also help them to feel at home at realistic job levels. That is, to bring into focus the individual's optimum potential in a society that perhaps pressures all of us a little too much to aim beyond a realistic level. Individual assessment, individual counseling, and effective methods for helping individuals find matching jobs are necessary. Sensitive, permissive, encouragement of clients, if used as the only technique will not solve the problem of meeting the requirements of work. Appropriate choices of jobs for which the general requirements can be met will not well up from within the client. He needs help in solving a very difficult problem indeed.

In much more specific terms, we might conceptualize the requirements of work (the requirements of successful employment) for all individuals first in terms of the requirements jobs place on individuals; next, in terms of the requirements individuals place on jobs, and finally on how the individual will come to terms with his work environment in a process that may be called work adjustment.

In the Work Adjustment Project at the University of

Minnesota conducted by Betz, et al. (1966) over the last ten years, these requirements were described in what we have called the Theory of Work Adjustment as reported by Dawis, et al. (1964). Since this research represents a feasible way of thinking about the general requirements of work, its essential components should contribute to this discussion.

The Theory of Work Adjustment is based on the concept of correspondence between the individual and his environment. Correspondence between an individual and his environment implies conditions that can be described as: a harmonious relationship between the individual and the environment, and the suitability of the individual to the environment and of the environment to the individual. Correspondence, then, is a relationship in which the individual and the environment are corresponsive or mutually responsive. The individual brings into this relationship his requirements of the environment; the environment likewise has its requirements of the individual. In order to survive—to exist in an environment—the individual must achieve some degree of correspondence.

It is a basic assumption of the Theory of Work Adjustment that each individual seeks to achieve and maintain correspondence with his work environment. Achieving and maintaining correspondence with the work environment are basic motives of human behavior.

The individual brings certain skills to the work environment. The environment provides certain rewards (wages, prestige, personal relationships) to the individual. The individual's skills enable him to respond to the requirements of the work environment. The rewards of the work environment enables him to "respond" to the requirements of the individual. In the case of work, then, correspondence can be described in terms of the individual fulfilling the requirements of the work environment and the work environment fulfilling the requirements of the individual.

When an individual enters a work environment, he seeks a correspondent relationship between himself and the environment. If he finds it, he seeks to maintain it. If he does not, he seeks either to establish correspondence, or to leave the work environment. In many cases, the initial relationship to work is not correspondent. In addition, both individuals and work environments are constantly changing. The continuous and dynamic process by which the individual seeks to achieve and maintain correspondence with his work environment is called work adjustment.

The achievement of minimal correspondence enables an individual to remain in a work environment. Remaining in the

work environment, in turn, allows the individual to achieve better correspondence and to stabilize the correspondent relationship. The stability of the correspondence between the individual and the work environment is manifested as tenure in the job.

As the correspondence increases, the probability of remaining on the job increases. Conversely, as correspondence decreases, the probability of remaining on the job decreases. Tenure is the most basic indicator of correspondence. It can be said, therefore, that tenure on the job is a function of correspondence between the individual and his work environment.

If an individual continues on the job, it can be inferred that he has been fulfilling the requirements of the work environment and that the work environment has been fulfilling his requirements. If the individual fulfills the requirements of the work environment, he is defined as a satisfactory worker. If the work environment fulfills the requirements of the individual, he is defined as a satisfactory worker. Satisfactoriness and satisfaction indicate the correspondence between the individual and his work environment. Satisfactoriness and satisfaction, then, are basic indicators of the degree of success an individual has achieved in maintaining correspondence between himself and his work environment.

Satisfactoriness is an external indicator of the individual worker's fulfillment of the requirements of the work environment. Satisfaction is an internal indicator of the individual worker's appraisal of the extent to which the work environment fulfills his requirements. The levels of satisfactoriness and satisfaction observed for a group of individuals with substantial tenure in a specific work environment establish the limits of satisfactoriness and satisfaction from which tenure can be predicted for other individuals.

Satisfactoriness and satisfaction can be used to predict adjustment to work from the assessment of individual's work personalities in relation to specific work environments. The work personalities of those individuals who fall within the limits of satisfactoriness and satisfaction for which tenure can be predicted may be inferred to be correspondent with the specific work environment. The different kinds of work personalities for which correspondence is inferred will establish the limits for specific work personality traits necessary for optimal adjustment to the specific work environment. These limits can be used as a basis for estimating the degree of correspondence between other individuals and each specific work environment. Work personality-work environment cor-

respondence, which is estimated in this fashion, can be used to predict satisfactoriness and satisfaction, indicators of correspondence in the work adjustment process.

Since satisfactoriness and satisfaction, taken together, can be used to predict tenure, work personality-work environment correspondence can be used to predict tenure.

In addition to this brief statement of the main ideas in the Theory of Work Adjustment, it is necessary to consider, at least briefly, what we mean by the Work Personality and the Work Environment.

The Work Personality of an individual can be described in terms of both its structure and its style. Personality structure is easier to describe because much research has been done on it. The major sets of variables we have focused on in this description are the individual's abilities and his needs. We think of abilities as dimensions of behavior underlying several skills while needs are reinforcement values expressed as preferences. These abilities and needs go through a process of development and differentiation, as an individual experiences his reinforcement history, until a point of relative stability is reached.

The Work Environment is described in work-personality terms, i.e., in terms of both ability requirements and reinforcer systems. Ability requirements are established from the study of satisfactory workers with substantial tenure. Reinforcer systems are established from the study of satisfied workers with substantial tenure.

This conceptualization of men and jobs and of a methodology for looking at both in terms of the work adjustment process, has implications for vocational counseling, for vocational placement, and for predicting the outcomes of these activities. It specifies what is to be assessed in each work personality—abilities and needs; it specifies what is to be assessed in work environments—ability requirements and reinforcer systems; and it specifies that both individuals and jobs must be described in the same dimensions. This conceptualization provides a system for looking at how individuals meet work requirements and how work meets individuals' requirements.

Turning to the tools needed to apply the work adjustment concepts to clients in general, several instruments are particularly noteworthy. The General Aptitude Test Battery and the Occupational Ability Patterns illustrate a way of describing individual abilities and the ability requirements of jobs in the same terms. The Minnesota Importance Questionnaire to describe the work relevant needs (or need satisfying requirements) of individuals and the Occupational Reinforcer

Patterns (currently being developed) are useful to describe the occupational systems of satisfiers (or rewards) in specific jobs in the same need-dimension terms.

The outcome measure of tenure is obviously no problem. For the intermediate measures of work adjustment, the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire has been developed in the same terms as the needs and occupational reinforcer measures. The Minnesota Satisfactoriness Scales developed by Weiss, et. al., (1966) is consistent with this concept.

With these instruments we have the kinds of tools needed to assess work personalities, work environments, status in the work adjustment process, and the likelihood of remaining in a particular kind of work. If we are successful in establishing the kinds of work personalities required to achieve work adjustment for a large number of representative jobs, then the implications for vocational counseling practice seem clear.

The vocational counselor, with his assessment tools, with relevant occupational information in the same terms, and with the help of his computer, properly programmed, will be able to function as an expert in knowing what client possibilities for work are most likely to facilitate the desirable outcomes of the work adjustment process: satisfactoriness (the individual meeting requirements), satisfaction (the job meeting requirements), and tenure (the result of meeting both requirements and staying on the job). With this kind of expert knowledge he should be better equipped to broaden his client's possibilities by identifying from the great number of jobs, those jobs and job families that should be considered as "possible" in work-adjustment terms. He should also be able to narrow expertly the number of possible job choices to those most likely to result in success, that is, those most likely to facilitate a stable correspondent situation for his client in a work environment.

This seems a useful way of thinking about human requirements and work requirements, and is likely to lead to counseling and placement efforts (with all classes of clients) that will promote success in work. In some disability areas, some additional special problems must be considered.

In working with the deaf, one must as with all clients, measure abilities and psychological needs, and must be able to compare the ability and need patterns that result with the ability requirements and the need satisfiers (occupational reinforcers) of many fields and levels of jobs. But, in addition, it is important to consider at least two major question areas:

1. With appropriate abilities for certain specific jobs, can the individual communicate his capability suc-

cessfully enough to be judged satisfactory, as he should, or does special provision need to be made

2. If the job reinforcers (satisfiers) match the individual's psychological needs, will they be communicated in such a way that they will be perceived by the individual, or does some tailoring of the administration of rewards need to be done so that they will be perceived and the deaf worker will be satisfied with the job?

These two questions may point up some special responsibilities of the placement worker with the deaf.

Note.

The research and instruments described in this paper are published in the monograph series, *Minnesota Studies in Vocational Rehabilitation*, I-XXII. These monographs are available on request from the Work Adjustment Project, Industrial Relations Center, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 55455.

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