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AUTHOR	Boss, Richard
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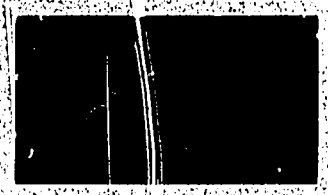
ABSTRACT

The job of the school administrator is to provide meaningful and effective occupational education programs to help the disadvantaged segment of our population become useful, productive, and self-sufficient. This guide describes the special problems of the disadvantaged and the administrative procedures required in programs for the disadvantaged. Existing programs are described to illustrate exemplary practices and procedures for program design, development, and administration. The special problems of guidance counseling, financial assistance, residential support, and health services are considered. Staff selection and training are discussed in depth, with a critical analysis of the role of paraprofessionals and volunteers in a program for the disadvantaged. Related documents are available as VT 013 761 (RIE, April 1972), and VT 013 543 in this issue. (BH)



Information Series No. 41

ERIC

Clearinghouse on Vocational and Technical Education

preface

This publication is designed to serve school administrators interested in reviewing the key administrative concepts relative to vocational education programs for disadvantaged youth in urban areas. The compact nature of the review and its organization into guideline format should provide a ready reference for the practitioner seeking to develop and improve programs in his school and community. Much has been written on the topic. However, the author has been selective by citing only those references believed to be most useful to administrators.

The profession is indebted to Richard Boss for his scholarship in the preparation of this report. Recognition is also due Charles Nichols, Minneapolis Area Vocational-Technical School, Minnesota; Henry Otto, University of Texas, Austin; and Harold Starr, The Center, for their critical review of the manuscript prior to its final revision and publication. J. David McCracken, information specialist at The Center, coordinated the publication's development.

Robert E. Taylor
Director
The Center for Vocational and Technical Education
ERIC Clearinghouse on Vocational and Technical Education

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VT 013 053

WHAT SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FOR DISADVANTAGED YOUTH IN URBAN AREAS

Richard Boss
Director
Residential Manpower Center
Portland Public Schools
Portland, Oregon

ERIC Clearinghouse on Vocational and Technical Education
The Center for Vocational and Technical Education
The Ohio State University, 1900 Kenny Road, Columbus, Ohio 43210

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introduction

Since the beginning of recorded history, we have had persons among us who, for various reasons, are disadvantaged. Whole nations of people have suffered from limitations and the lack of opportunities to develop their potential to the fullest. In America, those who generally fall into the category of disadvantaged are the children of low-income parents who live in our affluent society but do not share in its benefits. However, there is much evidence that the disadvantaged come from all levels of family income but share some of the characteristics of the poor. In the past eight years, an additional three million people have been added to the welfare rolls. At the present rate, at least another four million will be added by 1975, and the cost in dollars and human suffering will be staggering. Most of these people live in or are migrating to the large cities.

Vocational education alone cannot solve this problem. All educators and service agencies must work together in formulating programs which will assure success in the work world and in assisting young people to adjust to a rapidly changing environment. Administrators of large city schools must take bold, unorthodox steps to implement such programs and develop the cooperative attitudes necessary to carry them out. Our youth deserve no less.

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the problem

There exists a segment of our youthful population for whom entry into the work world is extremely difficult.

Although the schools provide many diverse occupational training possibilities, employers are reluctant to employ youth who lack achievement and who terminate their formal education before high school graduation. These young people are known as dropouts or the disadvantaged. Most of the students dropping out of school today would never have entered high school 50 years ago, but would have taken unskilled jobs that were available at the time. Today, the situation is much different. Rapidly expanding technology has wiped out many of these unskilled jobs. In times of national crisis the nation turns to education for solutions. This was true in the great depression, during World War II, in the years after Sputnik, and now with problems in the central city. Poverty, delinquency, unemployment, illiteracy, school dropouts, and the necessity for public assistance are not new to the American people. What is new is the vigorous national effort to do something about it.

Since 1963 our nation has been in the midst of the educational revolution of the century. Congress has passed numerous acts to launch the attack on many social ills. Some of the more significant are the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the National Defense Education Act of 1964, the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, and the Vocational Education Acts of 1963 and 1968. Federal funding of a variety of projects has made it possible to experiment and demonstrate. Much has been learned about the disadvantaged and how to assist in the solution of their problems. Some of the better practices and procedures will be reported here.

exemplary practices

The disadvantaged or dropout has experienced a number of environmental factors which have influenced him throughout his formative years. Some of these factors include living in families where worthwhile jobs are seldom held, are of a menial type, and therefore little valued. Poverty often complicates the problem further. Too often the home lacks a strong father image.

Program Design

There are many kinds of disadvantaged youth who need and want occupational preparation. The recruitment, selection, and admission of those who want to be served must be controlled by the persons responsible for the operation of the programs.

There are two main types of enrollment practices being used in pro-

grams designed for the occupational development of the disadvantaged. The first and undoubtedly the best is used seldom among schools of this type. This is "open enrollment" where, regardless of circumstances, youngsters may apply and be accepted. The second, and most often used, is "restricted enrollment" where applicants must meet predetermined criteria. These criteria usually are based on the applicant being out of school and out of work, a member of a low-income family or minority group, on welfare, etc. A more appropriate criterion, which could be determined only after extensive counseling, should be whether or not the school can really serve the student.

Open enrollment attracts a better cross section of the population and blends together a student body with a variety of cultural backgrounds or life-styles, while the latter type tends to bring together a more homogeneous group of students who frequently share ignorance rather than ideas.

Separate schools designed to assist the disadvantaged are needed. These schools can and should be operated by the local school authorities (the board of education). The kinds of disadvantaged youth who will never make it in the regular schools are:

1. The 18 or 19 year old who has earned a total of two high school credits and needs 19 or 20 to graduate.
2. Those youngsters, particularly girls, who come from families who are "proud but poor" and cannot finance basic necessities to survive. These young people are called tramps by their peer group, which is hard to take.
3. Pregnant girls. Some of our disadvantaged young women have two children before they reach 17 or 18 years of age. Somehow there is a belief that these young people contaminate the other nice kids, and most secondary schools will not allow pregnant girls to attend school.
4. Young people who must stay home to care for other children while parents either work or play. This is a problem in poor minority groups. Some youngsters are asked by parents to leave school and work to help support the family.
5. Extremely capable teenagers who find the regular schools a bore. These youngsters need to be challenged, and must look outside the school for "real" things to do. They generally need money and leave school to work.

There are many other disadvantaged youth who have individual problems and circumstances which make regular attendance in the schools impossible. In order to modify the behavior patterns of the disadvantaged, it takes more time, effort, and talent than personnel in the regular schools either want to give or are capable of giving.

The kinds of services which are impossible to provide in the large high school are: 1) a more personalized instructional program, 2) small classes, 3) an abundance of love and understanding permeating the environment, and 4) a lack of pressure for progress, where the student competes only with his past record rather than with others in a class. Therefore, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. Occupational preparation of disadvantaged youth should take place outside the mainstream of the regular school but within the educational system.
2. This program or project should be in a separate facility with special, sensitized staff members who for all practical purposes have indigenous backgrounds and life-styles similar to the students they are serving.
3. Classes should be small, with personal instruction in an unpressured environment where each student can work at his individual speed and capability.
4. Grades and grade levels should be eliminated in order to erase all unreal elements of competition.
5. The instructional program should be organized so that all the students can work at their respective levels.
6. The learning situation should be free and warm, and acceptance and understanding should dominate the total environment.

Guidance and Counseling

The disadvantaged youngster is so overwhelmed with the problems of coping with his day-to-day environment that he lives in a constant atmosphere of crisis.

The key to personal counseling is involvement. It is very difficult to find staff members who can become involved with students to the degree necessary and at the same time avoid emotional entanglements.

Disadvantaged young people are so far down in terms of mental health, academic capabilities, and economic resources that any attempt to bring order into their lives is extremely perplexing. The typical youngster enrolled in the disadvantaged school has no patience. He needs immediate solutions to his personal problems dealing with health, family, and friends. These problems are so varied and complex that the typical counselor is overwhelmed.

Guidance services similar to those provided students in the regular schools generally are found in every program for the disadvantaged.

Youngsters in disadvantaged families usually have a tremendous love for their parents regardless of parental situations. The father may be in the penitentiary and the mother may be a prostitute—so what! These children care more for their parents than for anyone else. They generally have little regard for schools and teachers who, they feel, have put them down because they don't measure up. These young people are very sensitive to all acts by school personnel that would indicate they are less than adequate human beings. In spite of these problems, the children of the disadvantaged have the same aspirations as young people from other families. They will spend what money they have to purchase symbols of middle class values such as cars, clothes, wigs, televisions, and stereos. They usually purchase these items at the expense of adequate health care, food, shelter, and education.

The life-styles or behavior patterns practiced by most of the disadvan-

taged usually stagger the imagination of the regular school counselor. A typical problem is the young unwed mother who practices prostitution in order to get enough money to care for her children. Another problem involves running away from home when conflicts arise with parents, stepparents, or foster parents. Intensive counseling is required to help these youngsters face problems head-on rather than to sidestep or run away from difficulties, as they customarily do.

Vocational counseling *per se* is extremely difficult to provide. It is always attempted in programs for the disadvantaged. Most youngsters do not know what they want to do or what they are capable of doing. Too many vocational counselors rely on student interest rather than the more important factors of need and potential. Far too often the disadvantaged youngster's need for money is so great that he will take any job so long as the income is sufficient to buy the basic necessities to be like other people.

The better programs of counseling center around a concept known as "Every Staff Member Is a Counselor." The Job Corps is probably the greatest promoter of this concept. The main idea is that each person who comes in contact with a student—the teacher, counselor, cook, nurse, custodian, or grounds keeper—should make an effort to guide him in the right direction. When the employee runs into a problem with the student, he should seek assistance from the administrator or professional counselor.

The Los Angeles Job Corps Center has developed this concept around what they call the "Therapeutic Community." A professional psychiatrist meets daily with those members of the staff who need help or ideas about how to assist the students. The psychiatrist never meets with the student except in an emergency situation. By contrast, many Job Corps Centers and some programs for the disadvantaged employ the services of a practicing psychiatrist, usually on a consulting basis. The psychiatrist meets directly with students, often seeing them on several occasions.

Under the therapeutic community concept, the students are grouped into the smallest possible unit or family, e.g., a dorm, floor, or cottage. Those in each unit live together as a family group, sharing ideas and attempting to help one another with personal problems. Students in each unit meet regularly with staff members and counselors. Whether or not this procedure works for all students is immaterial; if it helps some, it is worth using.

The "Student Advisory System" is utilized in many types of educational systems. The Job Corps is using the idea more extensively than other programs for the disadvantaged. This concept involves the use of all teaching personnel, guidance staff, and others in providing individual students with a personal adviser. The advisers are trained in basic counseling techniques by a professional adviser or counselor. Advisers act as parent-friend and attempt to assist the student in whatever problem he might encounter.

An adviser is appointed when the student enters the programs to monitor his achievement through and beyond termination. The adviser may counsel with the student on all matters relating to discipline, financial need, family difficulty, and employment. If necessary, and if considered

desirable, the adviser will meet the student's family, help the father get a job, or become as involved as possible in order to be of help. CAUTION—a weak and unstable staff member who has been asked to be an adviser may become too involved with the student and may become a part of the problem as opposed to being a part of the solution.

The disadvantaged youngster usually needs a great deal of "shaping up" or "getting with it." The adviser may have a difficult time maintaining rapport during this modification of behavior. The most common error occurs when the student is admitted to the program and crosses the threshold to success—his adviser wants complete conformity at once. Turned-off and hostile youngsters are not psychologically capable of making behavioral changes quickly. A typical response by a student who was attending class on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday instead of every day was, "Look, I'm making real progress; I never used to attend at all." Positive progress and genuine behavior modification come about slowly. It will come about, however, when the adviser can show an abundance of love and understanding mixed with a lot of positive reinforcement.

The adviser's main purpose is to help the student set goals for himself and to point out several ways to reach these goals. The adviser must be able to accept the student for what he is and be completely honest at all times.

The use of "Achievement Boards" or a modified staffing activity is utilized in a great number of programs for the disadvantaged. These achievement boards consist of several staff members who meet occasionally with each student in a free, relaxed, non-disciplinary atmosphere to help the student plan a program of studies best suited to his needs, interests, and potential. These boards maintain records and monitor the achievement of each student throughout his stay in the program. All adjustments in scheduling classes, living arrangements, work experience, and the like are worked out in these achievement board meetings. The board attempts to maximize the benefits accrued by the student in such a way that the student feels he is not wasting time doing busy work, but actually has an employability plan and a career goal. He should feel that the board members are interested in him personally and want to help him achieve his objectives.

The achievement board is only one aspect of the "Maximum Benefits Concept" initiated by the Job Corps. The Portland Residential Manpower Center (RMC), a Job Corps project funded by the U.S. Department of Labor, Manpower Administration, has developed a similar concept. The Portland Public Schools, the contractor for the RMC, had promoted the Personalized Education Program (PEP) philosophy for several years. This philosophy, briefly stated, is that every child of school age should be in school and that his education should be tailored to his individual needs, interests, and potential. Alternatives to the regular school should be available, especially for the student with a short attention span. The Portland Public School District has such alternate arrangements for students. The most innovative and exciting plans recently developed are the Adams

High School, Vocational Village, and the Manpower Center. All three operate on much the same PEP philosophy; however, the organizational structure, management, and student bodies are very different.

Adams is a regular high school located in a typical neighborhood setting. Vocational Village is for high school dropouts and operates in a typical business building on a busy industrial street. The Residential Manpower Center is primarily for poverty youngsters who are out of school and out of work. The three facilities utilized for the Residential Manpower Center are a downtown classroom building (formerly Inter-city Junior College), a girls' dormitory (formerly a hotel) three blocks from the classroom building, and a former Franciscan Seminary 20 miles east in a rural setting. The purpose here is to show that the same practices and procedures can take place in a variety of settings and organizations.

Of the three, Adams High School had the most trouble implementing its program. It is very hard to break away from traditional patterns in the regular schools. People within the system get nervous in the face of radical change, and change threatens the security of personnel who fear the loss of jobs. However, the main problem at Adams was lack of parent understanding and endorsement.

Financial Assistance to Students

The disadvantaged youngster is one who is under-financed in nearly every way. Unless the student receives sufficient funds to buy what he needs to function in some manner comparable with his peer group, he cannot make it.

Far too many programs for the disadvantaged ignore the importance of providing each youngster with the basic necessities. These include getting to and from school daily, a noon lunch, an occasional coke or candy bar, adequate clothing similar to that worn by the peer group, and spending money for such things as hair cuts, a movie, pantyhose, lipstick, comb, or even cigarettes. Without enough money to purchase such items, the youngster often resorts to stealing, borrowing, or, in desperation, trying to drop out of the program.

The Job Corps, Manpower Development Training Act, Neighborhood Youth Corps, and similar Manpower programs funded through the department of Labor provide grants of money to be used to support the enrollee while in the program. The Job Corps offers a more comprehensive program than others in the group, and also provides a readjustment allowance whereby the student who completes the course can be given money to establish himself and become self-sufficient while getting started on the first job. This procedure and a grant of money may be more important to the graduate's success than all the training and professional services combined. No program organized for the disadvantaged should overlook the importance of providing each enrollee with adequate amounts of money for the basic necessities.

Youngsters entering a program for the disadvantaged often have little clothing. What they have is dirty, in need of repair, and generally inade-

quate. Some help can be obtained from "clothes closets" set up for the poor, which gather discarded clothing, clean it and issue it to those who need it. But most of these philanthropic operations are limited in what they can provide. Nearly every garment issued needs to be remodeled to fit the youngster or adjusted to fit the current style. Very few disadvantaged young people can see the potential of this kind of garment or alter it in any way to become acceptable. The Job Corps provides a clothing issue which is not much better but makes up for the inadequacy by giving each enrollee enough money or a clothing purchase letter to buy more appropriate clothing. Without adequate clothing particular to the climatic conditions of the community and in some way meeting current styles, a feeling of inadequacy develops in the youngster and tends to reduce his confidence and well-being.

Travel to and from school in the urban center often is accomplished with conventional public transportation, and the student must be able to finance this daily cost. If the student has an adequate home situation and can commute to school, bus fare must be provided so he can establish a habit of getting to school every day on time just as he must when he takes employment.

The resident students living on campus or near the school generally are given passes on weekends to visit relatives and will need some way to finance this transportation. The Job Corps has provided a very sophisticated procedure for handling this kind of expense and probably has the greatest experience in dealing with student transportation. Other programs either provide money to purchase transportation or own and operate their own fleet of buses or similar vehicles for this purpose.

No school for the disadvantaged can make much progress in helping the student develop the habit of getting up in the morning and getting to school without providing adequate transportation.

Many programs for the disadvantaged provide a noon lunch for students. Residential vocational programs, such as the Job Corps, must provide three meals a day. The importance of an adequate diet is often neglected in establishing programs for the disadvantaged. Even where food is provided, too often the need for special diets is neglected; and in the case of overweight, many students will complicate their problem rather than come to grips with it. Many young people are in the habit of not eating breakfast, and the staff must pay particular attention to this problem. Every center for the disadvantaged must have a highly qualified person to develop menus which provide for a variety of the needs of youngsters. The food service program is one which can easily get out of hand and create unnecessary costs. Those who have the greatest experience in this field usually are trained in the military or in hospitals and similar institutions.

The minimal amounts of money needed by all students to provide the basic necessities can be obtained in various ways. Unfortunately the most obvious, the part-time or weekend job, is one of the most inadequate. Such jobs pay poorly, are hard to find, and offer no challenge to the

youngster who cannot get to school or work on time, wants to leave early, and shows poor work habits. In some Manpower Administration programs, money is provided in the budget to give students cash grants. Loans can be arranged from a student welfare fund. All too frequently, the student must maintain himself with what small amounts he can borrow or beg from parents, relatives, or friends.

Residential Support Services

Many disadvantaged youth do not have adequate living arrangements which are free of conflict and exploitation. The hours away from school many times are so disrupting to the student that nearly all the gains made in school are lost overnight.

The school which provides for the student's basic needs on a 24-hour basis, seven days a week, literally places itself in the position of becoming a parent for the student; therefore, everything parents provide for their youngsters is needed in the residential school.

The boarding school concept is not new, yet seldom is practiced in programs designed to assist the disadvantaged. Job Corps people have the greatest experience in the operation of residential vocational education and a great deal can be learned from their experiences. This is perhaps the most important feature of the Job Corps. For this reason, much of the material in this section comes from Job Corps practices and procedures.

Group living in a dormitory, cottage, or other unit presents a number of problems. Youngsters are not accustomed to living together in large numbers for any length of time. Even the conduct of our well-adjusted young people in college dormitories leaves much to be desired. When you place large numbers of disadvantaged youth together, you need a highly controlled operation.

Residential living units are staffed with counselors and residential advisers, most of whom have little experience themselves in similar living arrangements. Provisions must be made for food, personal belongings, health care, safety, recreation, transportation, and student conflict. Probably the most important and critical need in residential living is to provide each individual with a bit of privacy.

Student government in group living is structured to provide the student an opportunity to participate in the operation of his living unit. The residential living group is usually subdivided into floors, dorms, or cottages where the youngsters have a family-type membership. Representatives are elected from the basic unit to the overall student government. Rules and regulations are developed with the help of the student government and staff, and students assist in dormitory operation and conduct.

A student leadership program should be developed as a separate and different activity from the student government. Students who have leadership potential are often appointed by the staff to carry out security, cafeteria, transportation, office, and housekeeping jobs. Student leaders are identified as such and are given privileges and responsibilities along with special training.

The smart administrator will establish a highly sophisticated student leadership program. In this way, he can get more mileage out of his personnel and at the same time provide a very meaningful training program for potential leaders. Even a novice in sociology can tell you that student leaders will emerge, and if not guided properly, may cause trouble. The energies and ideas of the potential leaders can be channeled into constructive and worthwhile activities. There is no better place to practice leadership than in the sheltered atmosphere of the school. These leaders need close supervision and guidance, and they can be expected to make errors, most of which can be corrected.

The organization and operation of a suitable recreation program is mandatory in order to provide a large number of young people with a meaningful use of leisure time. Providing enough variety and flexibility in recreation is a serious problem in group living. The disadvantaged student has become accustomed to a life of non-participation in most activities because of cost and/or the inability to compete. The recreation specialist may utilize all existing resources in the community, yet a sizable budget is needed to keep a good program operating.

The extent to which a good leisure time program is developed will be limited only by the imagination of those responsible. The staff must constantly be involved with the student in recreation or interest will drop rapidly.

Providing three meals a day for large numbers of residential students is a good deal different from the school lunch program familiar to most administrators. Teenagers are heavy eaters and need guidance in nutritional matters. A balanced diet is something many of the disadvantaged have never experienced. Overweight is a problem for some and dieting may seem impossible. The type of food and the way it is served should be something akin to what the student has known or he will refuse to eat it. Highly seasoned and spicy foods are passed over. The organization and operation of the food service requires a person with extensive experience in quantity food service and a willingness to be flexible and innovative. There is always a need for snacks, picnics, bag lunches, and special food for parties. Students who are in training at some other location, are on a work experience program, or are visiting the doctor also need three meals a day and must be provided money to purchase these meals.

Transporting students to and from school, on field trips, to the doctor or dentist, or home on weekends can create all kinds of interesting problems. Most disadvantaged programs rely on city bus systems or conventional transportation for the most part. However, the need for all types of transportation for staff and students is so complicated, particularly when the school program is designed to fit the individual needs of persons, that a fleet of vehicles is mandatory. Here again, the family concept enters when such recreational activities as cultural programs, weekend outings, camping out, and sightseeing necessitate having vehicles at the disposal of the school at all times. One of the major reasons some programs for the disadvantaged fail is the apparent inability of administrators to recog-

nize that we are a mechanized society. Many young people drop out because parents cannot provide enough money for any type of dependable transportation.

The disadvantaged student is accident prone and vulnerable in so many ways that the school needs a security force to help maintain order. Many young people from poverty backgrounds have had to steal or resort to prostitution just to make ends meet. These habits do not change overnight. Some are caring for children they have had out of wedlock. Others have police records of from one to a dozen violations. Many have experienced confinement in jail, juvenile homes, or reform schools. Nearly all have taken drugs in one form or another if only to remain as "one of the boys" (peer pressures). Security officers with law enforcement experience can be a big help to these students, but they should be "counselors" rather than "cops." A uniform destroys this image.

Security officers should accompany the student to court hearings, advise him of his legal rights, and assist in settling family quarrels. The student who is desperate for money will steal school equipment and sell it; accept a prescription from the school nurse, take one pill and sell the rest as a drug; walk home and sell his bus tickets to buy cigarettes; steal a school tape recorder and give it to his father for a Christmas gift, and on and on. For the most part, they just want to borrow such things as tools from the school shop to fix their father's car, and then return them.

Attendance is another area in which the security officer can be effective. He can go directly to the home and try to bring back the student who attends school irregularly—when he's lonesome or bored. Coeducational schools can cause problems, but are generally best for the disadvantaged because they provide an incentive for attendance. Young people of the opposite sex have a strong drive to be together during adolescent years.

Health and Related Services

The disadvantaged youngster is one who has seldom seen a doctor, perhaps never a dentist, and relies on rumor, gossip, or old wives' tales for remedies.

The level of health care known and practiced by the average citizen is not good; for the disadvantaged, it is something close to a national catastrophe. Any attempt to provide an adequate health care program for the disadvantaged is going to be a budget-buster. Even for the Job Corps, which gives this topic much more than idle talk, the cost is astounding. Very few employers will hire anyone without a good physical examination to determine if the new employee will be a good health risk or cause the health insurance cost to increase.

Every Job Corps center has a consulting physician and dispensaries where nurses can help with minor cases. Enrollees are given physical examinations and referred to hospitals if minor or major surgery is indicated. Consulting psychiatrists are employed if funds permit. Adequate mental health care is extremely expensive and is generally treated as a luxury rather than a necessity. A great deal more needs to be done in this

area. Many Job Corps programs have a practicing dentist on a part-time basis. Others send students to the dentist on a welfare rate financial arrangement or try to utilize existing dental clinics by purchasing time on a flat rate. No program has enough funds to provide all students with complete dental work. Many programs for the disadvantaged provide no help whatever for dental care. This is a serious problem.

Most schools or programs for the disadvantaged try to refer all health care problems to a welfare agency or other public and private free clinics. The best that can be expected in using this procedure is "too little too late."

Developing the Instructional Program

Vocational education cannot solve the disadvantaged problem unaided. All educators must work together with other agencies in the formulation of programs for the early school leaver.

For at least 50 years vocational educators have been organizing programs to educate disadvantaged youth. In recent years students in these programs have been made to realize that they are disadvantaged. The founding fathers, who promoted and finally financed vocational education through the various federal acts, did not set out to develop a system of education primarily for high school dropouts. It was never considered that an academic loser could be much more than a vocational loser. The basic requirements for success were the same for vocational and academic education. As more and more youngsters of school age stayed in school through the 12th grade, educators realized that courses were needed in the secondary schools to prepare the non-college aspirant for entry into the work force.

Many school administrators held to the theory that college preparation was the main purpose of the secondary schools. Those who enrolled in supposedly less rigorous courses were to be provided for only as additional funds could be found. Federal funding did appeal to the more broad-minded administrators who were willing to adjust to the notion that public schools must serve all children. Yet even today, when most blue-collar workers have greater incomes than college graduates, it is hard for the academically-oriented administrator to accept these job titles as equal in any way to the professional. There is no attempt here to solve this problem. It is mentioned only to identify vocational education in the scheme of things.

Vocational education has appealed to large numbers of non-college-bound youngsters, and for this reason is thought of as a solution to the dropout problem. Certainly, what a man does for a living labels him in our society. It is illogical to believe that a disadvantaged youth would be willing to accept the idea that he should aspire to some low-level job. The problem here is that many disadvantaged youngsters are capable of and want to be in occupations which require a college degree. Some have made it and perhaps more will with the help of vocational education.

What vocational education courses or programs will best suit the dis-

advantaged? The answer to this fundamental question is very simple. During all periods of history man has been forced to work at the jobs available during his lifetime. To offset this, the courses or programs offered should be the ones with the greatest employability potential in our work force. There is no basic difference between what ought to be offered to the able or ambitious student and to the disadvantaged. The disadvantaged youngster may take longer to make it, but he will get there just the same, and the extra time and effort may make him a better adjusted and happier worker.

The administrators of vocational programs across the country apparently have been very confused about which occupations best serve the interests and needs of the disadvantaged. On a secondary school level, the choices appear to be ones requiring little training and entry requirements which are relatively easy. Short-term training programs often produce short-term employment, but often the financial needs of the student are so severe that any job is acceptable. Manpower Development and Training Act (MDTA) projects and skill centers for the young adult have provided intensive training in some of the skilled trades and other occupations which require more schooling but have a better long-range job potential. In the early days of MDTA, many courses developed by community colleges required nearly two years of technical-vocational education. Graduates of these programs have become some of our most stable workers. Later, it was thought that less expensive short-term programs would be just as valuable. This is not proving to be the case. The rule of thumb here is that better results are obtained when the student remains for a long time in a vocational education course. The student who completes the program generally gets a better job with better pay and needs little or no retraining.

Offering short courses with limited skills and easy job entry is a more common practice today. The graduate of this type of program may be placed on a job, but far too often his chances of staying are questionable. According to this concept, all the student really needs is a little polishing up around the edges, some know-how, a job placement, and he is on his way to success. This practice makes the statistics look good, but frequently he is back before long for more training in the same or some other program. There have been cases where students become a "program hopper" because they find the benefits of training are better and less demanding than holding a job.

The Job Corps has set up quite a variety of nationwide occupational training programs. Students are sent to centers best suited to their needs and interests. Again, far too much of what is offered is geared to low levels to accommodate the student with limited potential. The students seldom stay in training long enough to get really good jobs. An exception is the building trades, where business, industry, and trade unions have helped the Job Corps to develop good solid training programs, thus paving the road to better placement.

The public schools have some good vocational education programs, par-

ticularly on the post-high school level. Some secondary school offerings are excellent but more often, they are less adequate and sometimes ridiculous. There are many high school work experience programs that fall under the heading of vocational education which simply release the disadvantaged or disenchanted student from full-time studies to work at any available job half time. A work experience coordinator will line up jobs ranging from washing cars to running errands. This at least gets the student out of the school halls and enables him to earn some money. Occasionally, better jobs come along but there is no in-school training related to the job. Labeling this kind of work experience as vocational education is stretching the term too far. Perhaps promoting, supervising, and financing this kind of operation, no matter how valuable to some students, has made vocational education a dirty word in the academic community.

A good, realistic work experience program is needed in the school for the disadvantaged. Many young people are afraid of the first job because they lack self-confidence. A sheltered and well structured employment experience can give the student a chance to get his feet wet in the working world without drowning in the process. This procedure also gives the school a chance to evaluate whether the student is ready for full-time employment or if he should be pulled back for further training.

The residential manpower centers started recently by the Job Corps hold great promise for improving the occupational preparation of the disadvantaged. The student trains in his own community for jobs that exist there. The U.S. Department of Labor envisions these programs as one among many they supervise which make up a "Manpower Delivery System." Occupations with the greatest employment potential are dovetailed into other programs so that duplication of effort is avoided. All public and private vocational schools are surveyed, and vocational programs are offered which supplement or enhance existing programs. Students enrolling in the Residential Manpower Centers are generally a cut higher academically than those in other type Job Corps programs which require leaving the home community.

In Oregon, as elsewhere, much effort has been put into the development of the "Cluster Concept." Families of similar occupations have been grouped together into vocational offerings with the same work processes, skills, and related information. These common elements are taught to secondary school youngsters to enable them to select a more specific occupation following graduation. The community colleges teach more specific occupations or technical fields where specialization occurs.

The high school cluster graduate can seek and accept job entry in any one of a spectrum of similar occupations. He need only narrow his career goal to a field of work rather than a specific occupation. He can take a job where an opening exists and obtain further training in such areas as a company in-plant program, the military, or apprenticeship training. Oregon is mentioned because this concept is being implemented in many of its high schools. Educators are delighted with the new approach and it

seems to be working well. The same procedure is being used in the occupational preparation of the disadvantaged.

Disadvantaged youngsters who enroll in occupational education come to the program with all levels of academic accomplishment. Some would be considered academic casualties, while others are high achievers. Some have a high school diploma or its equivalent (GED). Basic education is a necessity for most, but the range is so great within the group that individualized education is mandatory. Programmed instruction is used in most of these courses. Excellent materials are currently available from the elementary grades through high school.

The basic education developed by the Job Corps is highly structured to accommodate students of all levels. The materials have their limitations but are basically good. Courses offered usually include reading, writing, math, health education, driver training, homemaking skills, social skills, arts and crafts, and music. Nearly every program designed for the disadvantaged makes an attempt to put the student through a GED or high school completion. Residential vocational programs offer some courses in the evening and quite often provide tutors for basic education subjects.

There are a number of special interest groups and agencies that will assist youngsters in completing the GED or high school equivalency. Employers often say they will accept a new, unskilled worker who has the right attitude and wants to work. They generally say to the educator, "You just give this disadvantaged youngster some basic education, get him to work on time every day with a reasonably good appearance, and we will train him." However, employers do not practice what they preach. The people they actually hire must have at least a GED, preferably a high school diploma, and some occupational training or experience. Students who complete a vocational education training program have literally improved their odds when it comes to job placement. A good recommendation from the school helps yet is seldom solicited. The best procedure is for a staff member to take a personal interest and help the student in his job search. Every successful program designed to prepare the disadvantaged for an occupation has a job developer who will place the student and follow up on his job progress.

Many disadvantaged youngsters have had to repeat at least one and sometimes several grades. The practice of schools which requires a student to repeat a whole academic year because he was kicked out in April or May for smoking a cigarette, for example, is demoralizing to the student and nonproductive for the school. Most disadvantaged youth do not have the motivation or stability to repeat many grades. They finally give up and drop out.

The maximum benefits concept designed by the Job Corps has great promise. This idea holds that a student should proceed toward his goal from where he is vocationally and academically, without repeating material he has already learned. A student scheduled within the maximum benefits concept may be taking 70 percent basic education and 30 percent vocational education, or he may be taking 30 percent basic education and 70

percent vocational education. In summary, the student should utilize his time to his best advantage.

Society cannot afford to hold students in classes or in school just to prove to the student that he must "shape up" or he will not be promoted to the next grade level. Portland, Oregon schools use the Personalized Education Program (PEP philosophy), based on individual instruction and performance evaluation, rather than grades and grade levels, which is similar to the maximum benefits concept. The student is placed in classes and begins to learn new material based on previous learning experiences. He establishes a goal and proceeds in that direction. He may change goals but he never repeats material he has already learned. This gives the student a feeling of self-respect since he is constantly progressing or succeeding. The Vocational Village uses a job sheet method that facilitates this concept extremely well. The student is given a job; when he completes it, he moves on to the next job. Job sheets are evaluated in terms of credit and each one completed is like money in the bank. A given number of these jobs sheets are equated to Carnegie units, and the student graduates when he has completed a sufficient number. This procedure has been highly developed and is worthy of emulation.

Another Vocational Village procedure worth mentioning is the method by which students are scheduled into classes. Each student is told that he does not have to take a course he does not want. He does not have to accept a particular teacher. In fact, he does not have to do anything—he can go home and bother his mother. BUT, if he elects to be in school, he must do something every class period every day. He must progress toward his goal. Every six weeks each student is rescheduled on a "go/no-go" basis. If there is no progress recorded for the prior six weeks, the student is given a chance to either "get with it" or get out. Students like this procedure since they are responsible for the decision-making process which determines their destiny. A student must come to grips with his own academic and vocational shortcomings. The success with this procedure at the village has been fabulous.

Each student knows that the Vocational Village can enroll only about 200 students, and if he does not want to be there, another student on the waiting list will take his place. The Vocational Village has always had about 150 to 200 on the waiting list since it opened in August, 1968. The Portland Residential Manpower Center uses this same procedure and the waiting list there is about the same. In both of these programs, the students can begin school any day or any hour and can complete their training at any time. Each student progresses at his own rate and some have completed one or two years of high school in 9 to 12 months. Others take longer depending on how hard they work. Most disadvantaged students have a lot of catching up to do.

Good teachers have always known that a pat on the back and a word of encouragement motivate students to work harder. This kind of positive reinforcement is needed especially by the student who has experienced little success at anything. The disadvantaged youngster is told by nearly

everyone, including his family, that he is no good, cannot do anything right, and is a disappointment to all concerned. Often he begins to believe it is really true. He becomes gun-shy with people in authority, especially teachers. If the teacher is not genuine or does not say it straight, the students sense this immediately and figure the teacher for a phony. The student-teacher relationship is probably more important than what is being taught. A dropout in the disadvantaged school happens because the staff members are unable to accept the student for what he is. These students are hungry for love and affection from someone who cares that they are alive.

staff selection and training

There is an increasing number of young people entering the teaching ranks who want to work specifically with disadvantaged youth. There are also quite a number of people within business and industry who are willing to accept positions within our schools primarily to help the disadvantaged. From these two groups an administrator can find excellent teachers and other employees to staff the school.

Administration

There are many ways to organize and manage the school for the disadvantaged. The most effective is to place the school head, principal, or director near the top in the school system, since relegating the school head to a second-rate position will degrade the entire program. The person chosen for this position should have credentials, salary, and position equivalent to other school administrators. The organizational structure and management procedures should follow the best examples of democratic administration, with all staff and students having a chance to share in the decisions which affect them. The school director should be held responsible for the organization and operation of the school.

Most of the programs for the disadvantaged operate under a key staff utilized in a variety of ways. Usually every school will have a supervisor of instruction, a supervisor of guidance, and some will have a business manager. The most important omission is someone in charge of personnel and public relations. Most employees in these schools do not have the same privileges and job tenure as employees in the regular schools because these jobs depend on continuous federal funding. Very few, if any, of the programs and projects for the disadvantaged have been thought of as permanent in any way. There must be some feeling in the establishment that the disadvantaged will go away or become nonexistent in some magical way, but it appears, at this point, that we will always have disadvantaged youth in our communities.

The need for extensive supervision and coordination of various activi-

ties will depend on the comprehensiveness of the program or project. The most sophisticated in existence today is the Job Corps, which set out originally to attract a school population made up primarily of the most impoverished and disadvantaged youth in our society. There are many within the ranks of the Job Corps who are justifiably proud of their record in working successfully with youngsters no one else wanted. Yet most educators have a different image of the Job Corps record. The high cost of operation and some of the criticism leveled at the public schools for not serving these youth tended to alienate public school people from the outset. In recent years, Job Corps costs have been extremely reduced and administrators realize they would have made little progress without the help of professional educators. There is no other program in existence in this country that provides the comprehensive services of the Job Corps. It would be a shame indeed if these programs were to become nonexistent. It is difficult to believe that the public schools would have had the bold and imaginative ideas to produce anything comparable to what the Job Corps has done. We must learn a great deal from these experiences if we expect the public school structure to succeed with disadvantaged youth.

Probably the most exciting and innovative organizational structure operating in any program for the disadvantaged exists in the Portland Residential Manpower Center. The center is administered by a group of five supervisors and a director. The organizational structure evolves around a management team concept in which the director is a member of the circle rather than an observer from outside or above others within the team. Each person has specific areas of responsibility. The team meets regularly and shares or exchanges ideas with regard to all center activities in such a way that every member of the team is involved in policy determination. Team member selections are based on previous training or experience and each member is delegated activities best suited to his personality and capability.

Professional Personnel

The staff member who grows a beard and wears mod clothing to relate to students seldom becomes an effective employee. The student image of the school teacher is already fixed. Any attempt to be something else is viewed by the student as hypocritical. Being what you are is more important than being something you are not.

Teachers who prepare the disadvantaged occupationally are of two major types. The vocational teacher should have the same kind of work experience and training generally required for any vocational assignment in the public schools. Certification should be uniform for all vocational teachers. Academic teachers also should have the same credentials as other teachers. The most effective academic teacher is one who has had work experience other than teaching. Reading and mathematics teachers, for instance, can make their subjects more meaningful if they use illustrations and examples which show the student how the material can be used in a career occupation. Moreover, the vocational teacher must support and

promote basic education or the student will have a low regard for academic subjects. The best results are obtained when both teaching groups work closely together in a team effort.

In screening teacher applications for the disadvantaged school, the director should look for elements which indicate that the prospective teacher is stable, nonbiased, nonracial, and a good citizen in every respect. Some of the more difficult problems encountered with the teaching staff have been:

1. The young, recent graduates of teacher education usually are either too lax or more demanding than necessary.
2. Many times the single teacher who has never married holds on to the student too much. These teachers appear to need the student more than the student needs them.
3. Academic teachers generally have greater difficulty than vocational teachers in obtaining good class attendance and in maintaining discipline.
4. The older and more experienced vocational teacher often thinks anything less than completion of his course is not enough for the the student to be employable.
5. Some black teachers are too demanding of black students; they set unrealistic goals with expectations too high.
6. Over-sympathetic teachers get too involved with the student's personal problems. They often become part of the problem instead of assisting with the solution.

There are no absolute criteria to assist the administrator in selecting the best possible faculty. A good method of selection is the team approach, in which several administrators interview the same teaching candidate. The seasoned administrator of the disadvantaged school can determine which teaching applicant will make it on the job, based on his years of experience.

Assuming all teaching applicants are qualified, what more is needed from the teacher of the disadvantaged? The best teachers are those who can approach their job relaxed, organized, prepared, and ready to attack any problem that may arise. The excellent teachers are genuine, real, and radiate confidence and understanding. They "say it straight" and never put themselves up as a source of knowledge. They are managers of the learning environment and are always in control of the learning situation.

Counselors employed in the school or on projects for the disadvantaged vary from the traditional high school counselor to some with no experience. The most effective are those who, regardless of background, can administer discipline in a manner complementary to the parent. Most regular school counselors are taught to avoid discipline, and they seldom succeed in the disadvantaged school. Disadvantaged students have a real need for discipline. Self-discipline is one of the most important factors built into every staff-student relationship.

Far too often a nonprofessional in the school becomes the best counselor. This fact should shock most school administrators. Yet if you look into the duties and responsibilities of most counselors in the high schools

of the United States today, you will find that they are largely clerical in nature.

Often the best counselors are those who have YMCA, YWCA, parole officer, or business and industry backgrounds. People with this kind of experience tend to see the world as it really is, not as they would like it to be.

Persons employed to work in the group-living component of the residential vocational school must have quite different backgrounds. The mother, father, big sister, and big brother image are vital to the success of these living arrangements. Most disadvantaged youngsters have sad family backgrounds, and are quick to identify with adult models who temporarily replace the real parent.

Residential advisors often have degrees in such fields as sociology and psychology, but there is no evidence to indicate that the degree is necessary. All of the advisers need special training in human relations, the administration of discipline, and counseling.

Depending on size, organization, and services provided, the school for the disadvantaged will employ medical doctors, nurses, recreation specialists, cooks, bus drivers, security officers, secretaries, and other support personnel. The school administrator will want people in all of these classifications who are especially well-qualified in their occupations, but who also have some of the basic characteristics expected of teachers. All of the staff should be highly sensitive to the goals and objectives of the school.

Paraprofessionals

Differentiated staffing has become a reality in the school for the disadvantaged. Many times the paraprofessional can reach the student more nearly at his level than anyone else. These staff members can perform very effectively at less cost than most administrators believe.

Teacher aides, community agents, and several other types of paraprofessionals generally are employed in the disadvantaged school. These projects or schools always try to personalize, individualize, and work with small groups of students. Paraprofessionals are used in order to include a number of persons who are indigenous to the student group and can bridge the gap between the professional and the student. This can be a dangerous practice unless the paraprofessional is screened carefully and trained properly. Quite often members of this group seem to require more supervision and guidance than their services are worth. A paraprofessional with a life-style similar to the student may actually contribute to his delinquency.

Volunteers

The use of volunteers in the various programs to assist the disadvantaged has been tried. Some are helpful, some are not. It usually takes more administrative manpower to organize and supervise the volunteer than the results can justify.

Administrators of federal projects are urged to seek out and utilize the

help of community volunteers. The hope here is to get help at little cost, but more often than not, the help you get is worth just about what you pay for it. When you need it, it is not there. Moreover, the person with an ax to grind can volunteer to help and often becomes a troublemaker.

The Job Corps has utilized Women in Community Service (WICS), and Joint Action in Community Service (JACS) groups with questionable results. It is difficult to believe that the afternoon bridge club, or the Monday-morning quarterback group, or any do-gooder in general, is well versed enough in all aspects of community life to assist persons who have completely different sets of values and life-styles. On the other hand, without the volunteer groups, very little progress would have been made in promoting funding. Church groups and other groups of community volunteers can be very vocal when it comes to politics. Their support and encouragement is more important than anything else they do.

conclusions

Since the beginning of recorded history, we have had those who were disadvantaged. The federal government, mayors of large cities, and school officials in the urban centers are well aware of current problems. The American dream has become a nightmare for the disadvantaged. The job of the school administrator is to provide meaningful and effective occupational education programs to help this group of our population become useful, productive, and self-sufficient. The solution to these problems requires an educational program designed to make it possible for all of our people to share in the benefits of our affluent society.

Vocational education alone cannot solve this problem. All agencies and organizations of the community must work together to develop programs which will provide effective assistance. The schools which tax all of the people to finance a suitable education for all of our youth must recognize that the disadvantaged are equally as worthy as the high achievers, have potential for achievement and success, can make a significant contribution to our society, and deserve no less than our best effort. There are many exemplary practices and procedures which have proven successful in the disadvantaged school. Many of these practices are educational by design, some are support services by need, and others are human relations by necessity. Now that all efforts have been exhausted to make the American high school comprehensive, a separate facility, faculty, and curriculum for the disadvantaged has become desirable.

The current occupational programs for the disadvantaged are varied and have their roots in many different agencies and institutions. Very little can be found in the literature regarding practices and procedures in these programs. For this reason, the author has chosen several programs across the country for the serious reader to visit and observe (See Reading List and Sources).

Practices and procedures which have proven useful and productive are:

1. The disadvantaged school administrator must control student input. Parents will try to use the program as a place to put the problem child regardless of his need, interest, or potential.
2. Criteria for student applicants should not eliminate anyone who can benefit from the program.
3. The school or program should be within the school "establishment" but outside the regular school. Every effort should be made to provide a comprehensive curriculum in the regular school. The student must be able to achieve identity in his learning environment. The regular schools are too crowded, classes too large, and teachers too busy.
4. The instructional program for each student must be personalized. The educational prescription should be based on a realistic evaluation of needs, interests, and potential.
5. Achievement boards should be organized to evaluate and monitor student progress.
6. Students should not be required to repeat material already learned. The disadvantaged are so defined because they fall short of the norm and have a lot of "catching up" to do.
7. Programs for the disadvantaged should provide adequate funds to support the student while in training and assist him in making the first step to self-sufficiency.
8. The disadvantaged youngster should be provided an improved living arrangement if needed. Many home situations are nearly impossible to tolerate.
9. Every student in the disadvantaged school should have an opportunity to participate in student government, leadership training, and meaningful leisure time activities. These youngsters have been unable to get into the mainstream in the regular school and consequently have become observers.
10. Until this country can develop an adequate health care program for all citizens alike, it is necessary that the disadvantaged program provide medical, dental, and mental health services. Probably no other component is more important.
11. Every program for the disadvantaged should provide a way for the student to complete and receive a regular high school diploma. The high school equivalency, GED, is a poor substitute but is still acceptable.

The large city school districts across the country have a multitude of problems which make it extremely difficult to implement realistic vocational education programs for the disadvantaged. Among the most perplexing are:

1. Inadequate financing of all education.
2. Updating of dilapidated facilities and equipment.
3. The college preparatory syndrome.
4. Shifting population trends.

5. Personnel practices and procedures.

When you place all the needs of our schools in some order of priority, the program for the disadvantaged seems to fall short of getting adequate attention.

Specifically, the weaknesses found most often in programs for the disadvantaged are:

1. The inability of a school administrator and/or board of education to recognize the need for a separate facility, faculty, and curriculum for the disadvantaged youth. There are strong feelings that these programs somehow must be part of the regular school.
2. Inadequate funding to provide comprehensive services to support the student in his basic needs while he is obtaining an education and getting started in the work world.
3. Uncertain funding of programs, projects, and schools for the disadvantaged beyond a given time span. This creates anxieties among staff and students and prohibits long-range planning.
4. Lack of community support or encouragement which creates uncertainties. There are many who are just not capable of understanding the nature of the problem nor its magnitude—some refuse to believe it exists. Our society is not sympathetic with the loser no matter how difficult or impossible his problem.

reading list, sources

The administrators of large city schools who are really serious about providing for the disadvantaged can profit most from visiting existing programs and projects. They should talk with staff and students about the schools in general, vocational education specifically, and problems of the disadvantaged. Administrators of these programs and projects generally say it better than it is. Students and staff more often say it straight.

The author has visited many public school projects, Manpower Administration skill centers, and Job Corps centers throughout the United States. Much of the information in this article comes from observation and the administration of similar programs. There are so many things happening all over the United States to assist in occupational preparation of the disadvantaged that it would be impossible to list or even select the best schools to visit.

Job Corps centers throughout the United States have the most experience in working with the problems of the disadvantaged. Excellent practices and procedures have been developed, extremely good results are being experienced, and much can be learned from visiting these centers.

The Employment Service in any community can direct interested school administrators to excellent vocational programs. This agency, probably more than any other, utilizes, conducts, or shares in the operation of nearly every existing vocational program in the country.

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MISSION OF THE CENTER

The Center for Vocational and Technical Education, an independent unit on The Ohio State University campus, operates under a grant from the National Center for Educational Research and Development, U.S. Office of Education. It serves a catalytic role in establishing consortia to focus on relevant problems in vocational and technical education. The Center is comprehensive in its commitment and responsibility, multidisciplinary in its approach and interinstitutional in its program.

The Center's mission is to strengthen the capacity of state educational systems to provide effective occupational education programs consistent with individual needs and manpower requirements by:

- Conducting research and development to fill voids in existing knowledge and to develop methods for applying knowledge.
- Programmatic focus on state leadership development, vocational teacher education, curriculum, vocational choice and adjustment.
- Stimulating and strengthening the capacity of other agencies and institutions to create durable solutions to significant problems.
- Providing a national information storage, retrieval and dissemination system for vocational and technical education through the affiliated ERIC Clearinghouse.