

A COMPREHENSIVE ACTION PROGRAM FOR SHELTERED WORKSHOPS

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The article presented here is a summary of the 1978 U.S. Department of Labor "Study of Handicapped Clients in Sheltered Workshops." It provides an overview of the sheltered workshop as a service delivery system, unmet client needs, and the major problems in the system. Six recommendations are presented and discussed. The author concludes by relating sheltered workshops to the growing interest in, and support for independent living.

Recent studies of employment of handicapped persons in sheltered workshops have shown that there is a trend toward serving the most severely handicapped individuals in workshops, many of whom were considered not feasible for vocational rehabilitation services. But the severity of the disability seemed to be only one of several factors responsible for the relatively low wage earnings of handicapped workers in the workshops. This paper reports on several recent assessments of the sheltered workshop as a service delivery system.

The late Hubert H. Humphrey in a speech before the U.S. Senate in July, 1977, emphasized the needs of the handicapped stating:

"The disabled, like other Americans, measure their success by their earnings and their worth

Mr. Whitehead was an independent consultant, providing technical assistance to rehabilitation facilities and other agencies in program planning and development at the time this paper was written. This paper is based on a study which he completed for the U.S. Department of Labor. The report on the second part of the study, Study of Handicapped Clients in Sheltered Workshops was sent to Congress in April 1978. He was previously employed as Director of Field Services for the Association of Rehabilitation Facilities in Washington, D.C., during which time he had the major responsibility for planning and organizing National Industries for the Severely Handicapped [NISH]. He served as acting administrator and as associate executive vice president of NISH. Mr. Whitehead earned a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling and Administration from Michigan State University and a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration with a major in Industrial Management from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

by their independence, but recent studies show that earnings of disabled workers only rarely sustain even a modest livelihood. Sheltered workshops remain a principal, and often the only, source of long term employment for the severely handicapped. Our goal must be to fully integrate handicapped workers into regular economic and industrial activity, but we must recognize that there are no current alternative systems to provide the services and work opportunities available through sheltered workshops. "

Clearly, the job which is needed has a dual goal—to improve training for those handicapped workers who have potential for competitive employment, and to improve training and employment for those severely handicapped who cannot move out of the sheltered workshops.

The Workshop as a Service Delivery System

Sheltered workshops are operated by public and private non-profit corporations in more than 3,000 communities to provide evaluation, training, other rehabilitative services and employment to physically and mentally handicapped individuals who are unable to secure employment in the regular, competitive labor market. Their basic purpose is to provide services to the handicapped person in a controlled work-oriented environment with professional supervision in order to assist the individual in developing to his or her optimal level of vocational and social function.

Sheltered workshops have operated in the United States since before the beginning of this century. Recent court rulings affirming the right of all individuals to education and treatment in the least restrictive environment have resulted in greater attention to the needs of the handicapped population of our nation with a resultant increase in referrals of handicapped individuals to sheltered workshops.

The concern for services to handicapped persons has also produced a major movement to evaluate programs serving that population. Two national studies were conducted in the period from 1973 to 1976. Greenleigh Associates (1975) conducted a study of a nationwide sample of workshops for the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, and the U.S. Department of Labor conducted a two-phase study of sheltered workshops. Phase one consisted of a workshop survey in 1973, and phase two was a client study in 1976, (DOL, 1977, 1978). In addition, a study of the comprehensive service needs of the severely handicapped was conducted by the Urban Institute for DHEW (Urban Institute, 1975). All these studies provided useful information regarding the needs and services provided to severely handicapped persons. The two workshop studies provided a specific assessment of sheltered workshop practices, policies and operations including wage payments and other benefits for handicapped persons employed in the workshops.

In addition to the studies, a White House Conference on Handicapped Individuals was held in May, 1977, and a National Forum on Pathways to Empiric merit for the Handicapped was conducted in October, 1976, under the sponsorship of the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped. Both conferences included, as participants, handicapped consumer/representatives and leaders from the fields of education, legislation, government, organized labor, private business and industry, and rehabilitation facilities. The issues addressed by the conferees included sheltered workshop operations, as well as other employment opportunities and related services.

The findings and recommendations produced by the studies and conferences suggest that, although many sheltered workshops are doing a commendable job with limited resources for a complex and severely limited population, there needs to be major improvement and expansion of the workshop operation. Special emphasis needs to be given to the employment and competitive job placement aspects of sheltered workshops.

Growth, Development and Unmet Needs

A total of 175,000 severely handicapped individuals are being served daily in the nation's sheltered workshops. This count is expected to exceed 200,000 by 1980. However, the number of severely handicapped persons with unmet service needs is estimated at more than 30 times that number. The 1970 "Census of Population Report on Persons with Work Disability" estimates that 12 million persons

18 to 64 years of age have a work disability. Of that group, 4.8 million have a complete work disability, i.e. are presumably not able to perform any work in the regular labor market. An institutional population of working age mentally handicapped of 700 thousand was excluded in the Census report but should be included as part of the target group (Urban Institute, 1975; p. 87). Thousands of institutionalized mentally handicapped are being returned to their community annually according to a report by the Comptroller General of the United States, and therefore constitute a potential service population.

Estimates on the number of handicapped persons employed suggest that 5.6 million are currently employed in some capacity. It seems safe to estimate that at least one-half of the work disabled group (6-7 million) are unemployed but could benefit from training and employment services such as those provided in sheltered workshops.

The growth of the handicapped population in workshops over the past decade is also indicative of the need for workshop services. Reports of the U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division (1977) on certification of sheltered workshop programs show that the number of handicapped persons in certificated workshops increased from 39,524 in 1968 to 156,475 - an increase of 116,951 or 296 percent. The population in noncertificated workshops is estimated at 15,000 in 1977.

The most significant elements of the workshop growth were in the changes in the workshop program by type of program and disability of the clients served. The work activities centers which serve primarily the most severely disabled persons increased in client population by 614 percent while the regular program workshop client population increased by only 84 percent. Clients in work activities centers now comprise nearly two-thirds of the total workshop population, whereas they represented only about one-third in 1968.

The impact of the growth in the work activities center population is further emphasized by the shift in the type of disability of most of the clients in workshops. In 1968, the workshop population was about equally balanced between physically handicapped and mentally handicapped persons but in the 1976 "Study of Workshop Clients" by the Department of Labor (1977) mentally handicapped persons comprised 75 percent of the workshop population and physically handicapped workers accounted for only 10 percent. Fifteen percent had a social disability. Data on wage earnings from the

1973 and 1978 DOL "Sheltered Workshop Studies consistently showed the mentally handicapped workers to be substantially less productive and earning much lower wages than physically handicapped workers. Thus, the workshop workforce expanded with less productive workers.

Major Problems in the System

The report on the 1973 DOL "Sheltered Workshop Study" showed that average hourly earnings in sheltered workshops had increased very little since the 1968 wage study (DOL, 1977). The average earnings for the total workshop group actually decreased by 5 cents (7 percent). The decrease was partially due to the influx of the least productive clients to work activities centers. An analysis of average hourly earnings by type of workshop program showed that earnings of regular clients increased by 12 cents (9 percent), work activities center clients by 2 cents (6 percent), and trainees and evaluatees by 6 cents (11 percent).

The 1976 DOL "Sheltered Workshop Study" showed that client average hourly earnings increased in the 1973-1976 period, but did not keep pace with other increases. Although the minimum wage established by the Fair Labor Standards Act increased by 14 percent (from \$1.60 to \$2.30) in the 1973-1976 period, the percentage increase in average hourly earnings of clients in sheltered workshop programs was only about one-half of that.

Table 1
Average Hourly Earnings

	1973	1976	Amount Increase	Percent Increase
All Clients	\$.71	\$.81	\$.10	14
Work activities center clients	.34	.43	.09	26
Regular clients	1.38	1.56	.18	13
trainees and evaluatees	.63	.82	.19	30

The average hourly wage for all workshop clients 81 cents an hour represented only 35 percent of the minimum FLSA wage rate of \$2.30. The annual wage earnings data were even less favorable, showing an average of \$666 for the total client population and only \$417 for the largest disability group the mentally retarded. The earnings fell far below 1976 poverty level of \$2,870 suggested by the Social Security Administration for a single individual annual earnings of one-sixth to one-fourth of poverty level meant that most workshop clients need supplemental income. The 1976 DOL workshop Client Study" indicated that about two-thirds of the clients employed in workshops

- d supplemental income or other support.

The major problem of inadequate wages takes on greater importance with a second finding which shows that most clients entering regular program workshops and work activities centers remain in those programs, for an extended period. Although, one-fifth of the clients served in training and/or evaluation programs, where the emphasis is on services rather than productivity, are placed in jobs in competitive employment outside the workshop. Only 12 percent of the regular program workshop clients and seven percent of the work activities center clients served annually were placed in competitive employment, according to the 1973 DOL study. This means that the workshops have a long-term responsibility for the economic well-being of a large number of severely disabled persons.

The rapid growth of the client population in work activities centers compared to regular program workshops and training and/or evaluation programs also means that the workforce will be even more limited in productive capability. By DOL definition, clients in work activities centers generally have "inconsequential productivity"—suggesting a range from near 0 to 40 percent of the productivity of a non-handicapped worker. The 1973 DOL "Workshop Study" found that average annual productivity in work activities centers was only \$487. The 1973 data also showed that the average annual wage payments to clients in the work activities centers represented about two-thirds of the income generated from workshop production. This meant that most of the overhead and administrative costs would have to be derived from support funds, i.e. fees and subsidy.

By comparison, the annual productivity of clients in regular program workshops averaged \$3,992, more than eight times as much as that of work activities centers. However, the regular program workshop had a much higher proportion of the physically handicapped clients, a group which was consistently found to be much more productive than the mentally handicapped group. Also, the rate of growth in the regular program workshop population was steadily declining while the work activities center growth rate increased in the seventies; thus suggesting the need for attention to the faster growing, but less productive client.

Reports from federal agency representatives and sheltered workshop directors at national conferences such as the National Forum on Pathways to Employment for the Handicapped, sponsored by the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped in October, 1976, indicated that the availability of federal funds to support services and long-term sheltered employment would continue to be

severely limited in the near future. Also, there will continue to be keen competition from other agencies for support from the two major fund sources, the State/Federal Rehabilitation Services Administration and Title XX Social Services.

It seems obvious then, that the only practical and feasible course of action is to concentrate on increasing the productivity of workshop clients, especially those in work activities centers. The data from the 1973 and 1976 DOL Sheltered Workshop Studies (1977, 1978) and the Greenleigh Associates Study of workshops (1975) suggested that the severity of handicap of client workers was only one of several causes of low productivity and earnings. These other causes could be grouped into four categories:

1. *Work.* The work provided in many workshops is inadequate in supply, overly simple, and poorly priced. About two-thirds of the handicapped workforce is employed in subcontract work, most of which is simple, bench assembly/packaging work. The need for work often forces the workshop to accept low-paying, subcontract work in order to provide employment.
2. *Technology.* Very few workshops have staff with industrial engineering skills, mostly because of limited funds and workforce. This deficiency limits job procurement, work organization, and operating efficiency. Very little use of equipment is made in workshops. Most work is labor-intensive (manual work) with little or no mechanization or automated production.
3. *Training.* The great majority of client population, mentally handicapped and developmentally disabled, which now represent 82 percent of the workshop population, is more severely limited and requires training and instruction in personal-social skills as well as work performance. Only one-third of the clients served annually received some type of skill training, according to the 1973 DOL Study. Most of the workshop clients interviewed in the 1976 DOL Study indicated that they received some instruction in job performance, but the quality of the instruction was not evaluated. Training for workshop staff and managers is very limited because of declining federal support for such training. But nevertheless, there is a critical need for a knowledge of management and production methods, as well as skills for working with severely disabled persons.
4. *Financing.* Most of the handicapped persons are in extended employment programs but state/federal rehabilitation funds cannot be used to support employment, only rehabilita-

tion services. Funds to support staffing are often short-term and/or very limited, as are funds for purchasing equipment needed to make workers more productive. The size of the operating budget in many work activities centers is too small to support the staff necessary for the operation of the center, often requiring that one or two staff persons perform many diverse tasks.

In summary the major problem facing the workshop is how to make the severely handicapped client more productive and thereby earn more wages. The needs for improvement are in terms of (1) securing an adequate supply of suitable work, (2) upgrading the industrial technology, i.e., better engineering in workshops, (3) improving and expanding client and staff training and, (4) securing a stronger base of financial support

The problem is acute because larger numbers of severely handicapped individuals are being referred to workshops with the majority going to work activities centers in which the program is designed for those with inconsequential productive capacity. The lack of productivity results in low wage earnings and dependency on other sources for financial support. The opportunities for 'upward mobility to a higher paying job in a regular program workshop are very limited. This is true for two-thirds of the handicapped workers because the work activities center is operated separately in the community and therefore regular program workshop employment opportunities do not exist. The transition from work activities centers to gainful employment in the competitive labor market is also difficult because many-work activities centers are not production-oriented and lack job placement staff. Also, the mentally retarded client, representing three-fourths of the WAG population, was found to be one of the most difficult to place in competitive employment, according to the Urban Institute report (1975).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for improving services to severely handicapped persons being served in sheltered workshops were originally presented in the "Sheltered Workshop Report" of Secretary of Labor Willard Wirtz (1967) which urged consideration of:

1. Wage supplements for clients unable to earn a minimum wage;
2. Increased financial support for client training and for workshop equipment and modernization_of facilities and methods; •
3. Opening of new markets for workshop pro-

- ducts;
4. Development of job placement services; and
 5. A program of technical assistance for sheltered workshops.

Workshop studies in the period from 1973 to 1976 by DOL (1977, 1978) and Greenleigh (1975) showed that although there was some degree of implementation of the 1967 recommendations, the need for further implementation had increased substantially over the intervening years because the workshop client population had more than tripled and the disability of the group had shifted from a balance between physically handicapped and mentally handicapped in the 1960s to a population comprised mostly of mentally handicapped clients in the mid-1970s.

The recommendations of the 1967 DOL Report were directed mostly toward the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) of the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare because that agency traditionally had been the primary supporter of sheltered workshops. However, the support provided by RSA was based on the expectation that workshops would be preparing handicapped clients of the state rehabilitation agency for gainful employment, but as the workshop client population grew the increase was produced primarily from referrals from sources other than state rehabilitation agencies. Many of these sources referred clients not considered feasible for gainful employment—the severely mentally handicapped and developmentally disabled. The 1976 DOL Study found that less than one-fourth of the referrals to work activities centers in 1976 came from state rehabilitation agencies, compared to one-half of the referrals to regular program workshops and three-fourths of the referrals to training and evaluation programs. Since most of the growth occurred in work activities centers over the decade, the support of RSA, especially in fees for rehabilitation services, did not keep pace with the growth in need for services.

The 1976 DOL "Study of Handicapped Clients" also showed that most clients had been disabled all of their lives, thus the workshops were more in the business of *habilitation* than *rehabilitation*. With this concept in mind a series of recommendations were developed for a comprehensive action program. The recommendations accompanied the report on the second part of the DOL "Study of Handicapped Clients in Sheltered Workshops" transmitted by Secretary of Labor Marshall to the Congress in February, 1978. In his letter of transmittal, Secretary Marshall stated:

"These recommendations have been developed for the purpose of achieving our goal of creating within sheltered workshops an efficient, work-oriented environment in which severely handicapped individuals can be provided an opportunity to develop to their optimum vocational potential, thereby earning wages adequate to permit a level of economic independence, and/or to promote their graduation from workshop employment to higher paying jobs in the community."

The following is a summary of the recommendations:

Recommendation 1. A nationally coordinated program to develop and expand industrial markets for the products and services of sheltered workshops should be developed with joint funding by the Departments of Labor and HEW. The operation should be established as a private nonprofit corporation in order to have the broadest possible flexibility in operation. This program should be designed as a counterpart to National Industries for the Severely Handicapped and National Industries for the Blind—agencies concentrating on federal government markets. The proposed program is expected to increase the wage earnings of handicapped workers in sheltered workshops, increase the placement of trained workers in competitive employment, and reduce the dependence of such workers on public assistance.

Recommendation 2. A series of pilot demonstration projects should be conducted nationally to explore the feasibility of providing wage supplements for those handicapped workers who are unable to earn a minimum wage because of the severity of their disability. Funding should be provided through the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Program. A program of training and community job placement should be included to reduce the possibility of chronic dependence of handicapped workers on the wage supplement. Funds to support central coordination and research should also be included in the project budget.

The proposed project is patterned after the original wage supplement concept introduced by the late Senator Hubert Humphrey in Senate Bill 506 in January, 1977, and it incorporates an incentive formula designed to encourage handicapped workers to increase their production.

Recommendation 3. Sheltered workshops should be encouraged to provide Workman's Compensation Insurance and Old Age Survivors and Disability Insurance (OASDI) for all workers to make them eligible for retirement and disability benefits. The DOL

Studies showed that most workshops provided workman's compensation coverage but some workshops considered the handicapped persons to be more client than employee and consequently did not provide such protection. This position should be reexamined.

As private, nonprofit organizations, workshops are exempt from mandatory OASDI coverage but two-thirds of the workshops have waived their exemption and provided coverage. Since most workshop clients have not been employed prior to coming to the workshop, and since many may be employed in the workshop for a lifetime, OASDI coverage is important.

Because most workshops operate on a severely limited budget, recommendations on fringe benefits and retirement have, of necessity, been restricted. However, in those workshops which stress industrial production, with no substantial rehabilitation services provided, other fringe benefits such as vacation, sick leave and holiday pay should be provided.

Recommendation 4. The rights of handicapped individuals to equal employment, education and treatment should be recognized and acknowledged at all levels of federal government and other public and private agencies and organizations. Employers and providers of services to handicapped individuals should be aggressively encouraged to actively involve handicapped employees/clients in the planning of programs and benefits. This recommendation is in response to the need to develop affirmative action programs, and provide for some form of collective bargaining for handicapped workers. The 1977 White House Conference on Handicapped Individuals indicated that there was a growing "Civil Rights for the Handicapped" movement in this country. This movement needs our support.

Recommendation 5. The use of federal funds to finance the provision of training and other rehabilitation services in sheltered workshops should be reviewed to evaluate its effectiveness and explore the feasibility of consolidation of funding or shared funding of services for handicapped clients. Consideration should be given to the development of annual agreements between workshops and purchasers of services in an effort to improve the delivery of services. Public funds, mostly from RSA, provided a majority of the support for rehabilitation services in sheltered workshops, but the services were limited. Funds from the Title XX Social Services program, for public assistance recipients under the Supplemental Security Income program, were also provided to some workshops but the agencies providing funds at the state and federal level operate independently even though the target population is fre-

quently identical. The Title XX program usually serves the more severely handicapped. Joint funding would reduce confusion and duplication, and the development of annual contracts for services would assure continuity of services as well as improving workshop operating efficiency.

Recommendation 6. Sheltered workshops should be encouraged to provide, or arrange for, adult education or compensatory education for clients to supplement or complement other services. Federal, state and local education departments should be encouraged to offer assistance and financial support to workshops in planning and providing these services. Most of the workshop clients have been disabled all of their lives and consequently are likely to have been in ungraded special classes. Also increasing numbers of severely handicapped persons have come from state institutions for the mentally handicapped with little or no educational experience. Basic education is a critical need in acquiring and maintaining gainful employment.

In addition to those recommendations provided in the DOL report of the "Sheltered Workshop Study," there are recommendations which are being presented through the White House Conference Report. The National Forum Report and Congressional testimony which relate to sheltered workshops and the habilitation of severely handicapped individuals. Delegates to the White House Conference urged that training in sheltered workshops be expanded and made more realistic and more closely related to jobs in the competitive labor market.

Participants in the National Forum on Pathways to Employment for the Handicapped recommended that the Department of Labor regulations pertaining to work activities centers operating under the authority of the Fair Labor Standards Act be revised to recognize changes in the program content and the productivity focus of some centers. Many considered the current regulations to be hampering effective programming.

Congressional testimony cited the need for funds to support building construction and equipment procurement for sheltered workshops and other rehabilitation facilities.

Independent Living—A New Component

There was also a growing support for developing an independent living program, but the support came from two distinctly different target groups.

Those organizations representing mostly physically handicapped persons urged development of centers to serve higher functioning physically handicapped individuals, while those agencies concerned with the developmentally disabled persons lobbied for a dif-

ferent style of center to serve those who needed personal - social support rather than a physically accessible environment. Reports on the Congressional hearings indicate that the independent living concept has gained substantial new support since the 1973 hearings on the Rehabilitation Act.

The independent living center program has special implications for the development of habilitation services because the proposed legislation adds independent living to the federal rehabilitation program operated under the Rehabilitation Act. This means that the current focus on gainful employment as the goal for handicapped persons served will be revised to include a goal of independent living for those not capable of gainful employment. Although the proposed legislation provides for separate administration of the independent living and the vocational (Habilitation programs within the Rehabilitation services Administration, the inclusion of independent living services in the structure increases the chances of the severely handicapped adult being served.

Many work activities centers serving developmentally disabled persons are now receiving federal support for social services provided to clients under title XX of the Social Security Act and some are receiving fees for services provided to clients of the state rehabilitation agency, but there is no uniformity of federal support. The addition of independent living services could broaden the base of support for work activities centers and other sheltered workshops and thus ensure that more of the severely handicapped could be provided *habilitation* services if such services held a promise of increasing the level of independence of the person.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Sheltered workshops have been moderately successful in providing services to a population that has become less productive as the developmentally disabled segment grew over the past decade. Although most of the handicapped population served in the workshops were pleased with their pay, the services provided and other benefits, Congress and other groups viewed the low wage earnings as a major problem. The DOL studies found that the severity of handicap was only one cause of the problem. Others included inadequate and unsuitable work, lack of training for clients and staff, and lack of industrial technology in the workshop.

The "Bottom Line" in the decade ahead is: *After Work and Better Wages or Total Welfare.* The service providers, i.e. sheltered workshops, must become a better employer, and must do it on a cost-

effective basis or society will decide that it is better to put those handicapped persons on total welfare. We need better methods of marketing the products and services of handicapped workers, improved techniques for preparing severely handicapped persons for gainful employment, and a new large scale movement to improve management techniques in agencies such as workshops.

We also need to develop effective alternatives to sheltered workshops especially for the higher functioning handicapped person. The mainstreaming of handicapped children is moving slowly, but the concept should be translated into a program with private industry. President Carter, in his State of the Union Address stated "...private industry can do a better job than the government in resolving the employment problems." We should work toward getting handicapped persons included in more of the jobs programs with private industry in order to "mainstream" them in the world of work.

At the same time we should not neglect that severely handicapped person who needs ongoing supportive services and whose optimum function is limited to work activities or to non-work activities in a community facility. In assessing the effectiveness of workshops and considering new methods of vocational *habilitation*, perhaps we should first determine whether the workshop can be effective in a program designed to raise the severely handicapped individual to his or her optimum level of vocational and social functioning. We know that there are exemplary programs in which the job is being done effectively but we need to devise methods of replicating those successful programs.

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COMMENTS ON THE WHITEHEAD PRACTICE ARTICLE

By *Barney Dale*, Student, Rehabilitation Administration and Services Program, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale:

Whitehead's article addresses a number of items which are currently at the forefront of issues in rehabilitation. That many of those issues have been at the forefront for a number of years (and *still* are met with looks of astonishment) attests to the ponderous pace at which the society as a whole is reacting to the needs of handicapped people. This fact only serves to accentuate the need for support of these proposals by handicapped people and their advocates.

Attesting to the value of his remarks concerning the need for sounder industrial practices, for example is the story of a sheltered workshop for retarded people in a large metropolitan area. On the verge of bankruptcy, the workshop hired a new manager, who proceeded to mechanize with the latest equipment, cutting down the labor for some phases of production to as little as one percent. Service-oriented personnel objected strenuously, saying that there was already too little work to occupy the clients. However, by reducing operating costs, the shop attracted more contracts, increasing both revenue and the amount of work available. Now the workshop is employing the maximum number of sheltered workers that its building will hold, with very little down time and at higher hourly wages, while placing itself on sound financial footing.

Unfortunately, not all workshops have been able to find good industrial managers, or good business managers, either. And in many cases, when business and industrial practices are improved, new problems are encountered which show that perhaps we are not as ready for them as we would like to be. For instance, as workshops become mechanized, a dependence on certain clients with special skills may develop. At this point, the old conflict between production needs and client growth/placement needs becomes more acute, and the temptation to ignore the client needs (unconsciously, of course!) is intensified.

There are also dangers in the national marketing strategies of NISH and NIB (as well as

the proposed counterpart to NISH for the private sector). Currently, workshops get most of their contracts from local industries, thereby inherently serving as training grounds for competitive placements in their locales. But when national marketing programs increase the opportunities for contracts, will workshops sacrifice this training capacity by losing contact with the local economy? Will there be a loss of community support, as well, for the same reasons?

Regarding wage supports for those severely disabled persons unable to earn the minimum wage, there are possible pitfalls to consider. Presently there are a number of factors to motivate disabled persons to grow and enter competitive employment, among them status and pecuniary considerations. For many, however, the uncertainty of the "world outside" the sheltered workshop is enough to suppress motivation sufficiently to sustain inertia and result in a sheltered worker who might have become a competitive worker. This phenomenon can only increase in frequency as wages for sheltered employment approach those of competitive employment, because the monetary incentive is lost.

If only we could identify accurately those who can and those who cannot aspire to competitive employment, action could be taken to counteract this phenomenon. However, the state-of-the-art in vocational evaluation is not sophisticated enough to make such identification reliably. Despite notable advances in evaluation in recent years, there is excellent reason to suspect that it never will attain the necessary predictive ability to make such discriminations. Witness the fallibility of medical science (which is far more advanced than vocational evaluation) in predicting what level of functioning a given patient will be able to attain.

The purpose here has not been to offer arguments against better business and industrial practices or against wage supplements for sheltered workers. To the contrary, there is a moral obligation to strive in these directions. How can one justify payment, in return for a person's best effort, of less than that required for digni-

fied sustenance of life and financial security? We cannot be satisfied by less than the program Whitehead proposes, especially in the area of wages and benefits. In fact, many mentally and physically disabled persons need more support than that, especially in the realm of recreation, mental health and independent living. Rather than refute Whitehead, the purpose has been to point out pitfalls which we must prepare for while striving toward improved sheltered worker conditions.

By *Harold W. McRae, Jr.*, Director of Rehabilitation, Goodwill Industries, Columbus, Georgia:

Reading *A Comprehensive Action Program for Sheltered Workshops* produced both exciting and disruptive feelings as I read through it. The general overtone of the whole article seemed to be "Leave the sheltered workshops in the hands of the private sector." I agree with this philosophy, however, additional governmental support needs to be brought about in various ways. Senator Humphrey in his speech before the Senate in 1977 stated that "our goal must be to fully integrate handicapped workers into a regular economic and industrial activity." As a private practitioner in a workshop, this goal seems to me to be unrealistic. Primarily due to the increase in the number of severely disabled people attempting to enter the labor market through habilitation and rehabilitation, there is a growing portion of them that will never reach a level of gainful competitive industrial employment. Improved training and improved services while they will have some effect on client outcomes will not produce the goal desired by the late Senator Humphrey. I think as administrators and practitioners in the rehabilitation field we need to realistically accept the fact that a percentage of our client caseloads will not be able to obtain competitive employment. These are the people that the federal government needs to be concerned with.

It seemed clear in reading the article the author's general tone was "bigger and better services in sheltered workshops." He very clearly spells out current problems in the workshops. He states that workshops have a long term responsibility for the economic well-being of a large number of severely disabled clients. This seems to be saying that the American society and business community is left with the responsibility of serving the severely disabled

because sufficient governmental support is not available. The President's Committee on Employment of Handicapped in 1976 indicated that the availability of funds would be limited in the future. The author states, "it seems obvious then that the only practical and feasible course of action is to concentrate on increasing the productivity of workshop clients, especially those in work activities centers." Needless to say this sentence brought a chuckle to me. It seems to be a naive assumption made by someone obviously not a practitioner in a workshop. The entire aim and focus of sheltered workshops is increasing productivity of workshop clients. This is not necessarily approached from a humanitarian standpoint for the good of the clients served, as much as it is from the necessity of economic survival. Clients must be productive if they are to remain in workshops. A great deal of time and effort has been invested in raising productivity and the author seems to think that there may be some mystical, magical approach that has not yet been tried.

I agree with his categories of problems and that subcontract work in sheltered workshops is inadequately supplied along with insufficient technology and training. His fourth statement concerning finances is indeed a problem in working with a severely disabled client through an adjustment services program. When you are halfway in the process of making him capable of earning money. Vocational Rehabilitation services are dropped and the private sector is left with a client in mid-process. The recommendations seemed that they would add some relief or assistance to the program, however, they seem to fall somewhat short.

An additional recommendation which should be thoroughly explored is a tax cut to industries hiring severely disabled employees and an easier paper system to allow them to pay clients minimum wages supplemented by SSI. Keeping a client in a workshop while supplementing his wages to a level of a productive worker is still in itself defeating the whole concept behind the workshop program, i.e. mainstreaming clients back into the industrial market. It seems far more good could be done if the person's wages were supplemented in industry.

Recommendation six, states that sheltered workshops should be encouraged to provide for, or arrange, adult education to supplement other services. The major problem with this is, in trying to increase a client's productivity and train

them to work, it is essential that they be in a work area. Continuous education classes reduces the amount of work and thus even greatly lowers the income of the client. Educational services should be provided outside the workshop by other agencies. Overloading sheltered workshops with services other than work-related services would be defeating its purpose.

The article is well documented and researched and it is my hope that these articles will produce action in lieu of additional studies.

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By *Mary C. Messmer*, Student, Rehabilitation Administration & Services Program, Rehabilitation Institute, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale:

In this article, Mr. Whitehead succeeded in his endeavor to support the contention that sheltered workshops face serious problems with the recent emphasis on serving severely disabled clients. While in some instances, Mr. Whitehead may have been excessive in his use of facts and figures, he nevertheless points out that the number of severely disabled individuals entering sheltered workshops has increased sharply in the past few years, and will continue to increase. The author related additional factual information concerning client wages, pointing out the financial burden placed on sheltered workshops by the relatively low productivity of work activity clients. I suggest that the use of facts and figures may be excessive because the intent of Mr. Whitehead's paper is not to prove that these problems exist, but rather present a course of action in solving such problems.

In answer to the financial woes of sheltered workshops, Mr. Whitehead boldly stated, "it seems obvious then, that the only practical and feasible course of action is to concentrate on increasing the productivity of workshop clients, especially those in work activities centers." To state there is only one practical and feasible course of action seems an oversimplification of the complex financial situation of sheltered workshops. When viewing the recommendations summarized by Mr. Whitehead, however, it is apparent that he, in fact, does not believe the matter to be a simple one. This is evidenced by the inclusion of several courses of action outside the realm of increasing client productivity.

Assuming Mr. Whitehead considers the Department of Labor recommendations as viable options for improving the delivery of services to

severely disabled clients, the rehabilitation practitioner may be hard-pressed to transform these rather general suggestions into practical courses of action. To be useful to those directly involved with the provision of client services, recommendations must provide directions specific enough in nature to guide the activities of the practitioner. For example, Recommendation 4 suggests "Employers and providers of services to handicapped individuals should be aggressively encouraged to actively involve handicapped employees/clients in the planning of programs and benefits." This, in my opinion, is not a course of action, but rather a general direction. Given this example, a course of action should indicate the steps necessary to involve clients in their programming.

As Mr. Whitehead aptly pointed out, low client productivity is a major problem facing sheltered workshops. If the reader assumes Mr. Whitehead truly considers "the only practical and feasible course of action is to concentrate on increasing the productivity of workshop clients," nowhere in the remainder of the paper does he offer such a course of action. He devoted considerable time discussing causes of low client productivity, which he grouped into the categories of work, technology, training and financing. It seems the focus and organization of Mr. Whitehead's recommendations should have followed along the lines which he used to categorize the problems. Besides providing continuity to his paper, had he offered viable courses of action for increasing client productivity, Mr. Whitehead, in my opinion, would have provided a great service to rehabilitation practitioners.

In conclusion, I agree with Mr. Whitehead that the vocational habilitation of severely disabled individuals poses serious problems for rehabilitation practitioners. With recent outbursts of citizens groups lobbying for reduced taxes, plus sharp competition for already limited funding, it is imperative that habilitation services to the severely disabled be defended on a cost-benefit basis. To improve services to the severely disabled, specific courses of action need to be identified and/or developed and disseminated within the field. I believe much of the technology already exists, as is suggested by the fact that, as Mr. Whitehead stated, exemplary programs already exist. It is the task of rehabilitation practitioners to focus on these programs, identify successful methods and procedures, and present them to the field.

By *Edgar O. Murphy*, Director, Atlanta Rehabilitation Center, Georgia Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Human Resources, Atlanta:

Mr. Whitehead's article certainly demonstrates the need for more efficient and productive Sheltered Workshops for all handicapped individuals. His recommendation provides steps that need to be implemented in the near future. Efforts to implement these steps should be made easier because of current emphasis being placed on Title V of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Many of the handicapped individuals currently being served in the Sheltered Workshop will, in all probability, be subject to job opportunities brought about by the current emphasis on their being hired. This should cause the business and industrial world to become aware of the needs for Sheltered Workshops as a source for potential employees.

Much in the article is said about continued and increased support of the Sheltered Workshop movement using federal monies. Certainly more effort should be made in this area; however, there must also be increased efforts for support of the Sheltered Workshop on the local level, i.e., community organization, local city and county governments, business and industry, etc. Until there is a commitment at the local level for both monetary and contractual support, efforts to significantly stimulate the Sheltered Workshop movement will be less than successful.

The article pointed out the significant increase in the Work Activity Centers over the Sheltered Workshop in the past two decades. This certainly points out the necessity of local involvement since a great majority of the effort made on behalf of the mentally handicapped and the developmentally disabled has been made by state and local organizations with a vested interest in these particular handicapped groups. Certainly if such an interest in Sheltered Workshops could be generated in local areas then this program would expand as dramatically as the Work Activity Center for the mentally handicapped and the developmentally disabled.

In summary, Mr. Whitehead's recommendations certainly provide an outline of those efforts needed to expand the ever-increasing needs of the severely handicapped in Sheltered Workshops. However, in addition to his recommen-

dations, there should be more emphasis placed on obtaining support for the Sheltered Workshops at the local level. If this support and interest could be obtained, especially considering the Title V efforts at the present time, the Sheltered Workshop programs should expand at a rate faster than that of the Work Activity Centers in the past.

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LIFE ON THE FARM

"All organizations have two essential purposes. One is to produce widgets, glops, and fillips. The other is to turn people into phrogs. In many organizations, the latter purpose takes precedence over the former. For example, in many organizations, it is more important to follow the chain of command than to behave sensibly.

"The process of producing phrogs is not sexual--it's magical. ---OD generally consists of phrog kissing, which is magical, harmless, and platonic. ---Activities such as phrog chorus-building, interlily-pad conflict resolution, phrog sensing, phrog-style assessment, marsh groups, tadpole development, and phrog coaching in the absence of swamp drainage and area reclamation are examples of phrog kissing.

"Many organization members belong to Phrognarian Networks---. The purpose of such networks and associations is to meet and exchange information regarding the nature of the fog in each member's respective swamp. ---Phrogs seem to get reassurance from noting the similarity among their swamps. ---

"Occasionally, during meetings of Phrognarians, a phrog pharts in the fog. When that happens, that phrog loses some of his or her phroginess and therefore represents a great threat to the balance of the swamp. Phrog pharts are seldom sanctioned in Phrognarians. They are too real. They put holes in the fog and ultimately threaten the atmosphere of magic required to maintain the swamp."

Excerpts from ORGANIZATIONS AS PHROG FARMS by Jerry B. Harvey, an article appearing in the Spring, 1977 issue of Organizational Dynamics, published by AMACOM, a division of American Management Associations. All rights reserved. Reproduced here with permission.